
Volunteering & Combating Social Isolation and Loneliness

A report of a survey into the link
between volunteering and
combating social isolation in older people



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1 Introduction

1.1 Volunteer Now

Volunteer Now is the lead organisation that works to promote, develop and support volunteering across Northern Ireland. Our work enhances recognition for the contribution volunteers make, provides access to opportunities, encourages people to volunteer and provides information and support to volunteer involving organisations on volunteer management and safeguarding children and adults at risk.

Volunteer Now Enterprises Ltd supports the work and activities of the charity, Volunteer Now. Volunteer Now Enterprises Ltd delivers training and capacity building programmes, provides assessment against quality standards, consultation and research services, and all forms of bespoke support to volunteer involving organisations.

1.2 Community Projects Team

The community projects team, within Volunteer Now, delivers a range of volunteer led services for some of the most vulnerable groups in our community. This includes volunteer befriending, driving and transport buddy services for at risk younger people, isolated older people and people with a range of disabilities. These services have been delivered over many years and have enabled Volunteer Now to develop good practice models of delivery that can help other volunteer involving organisations wishing to set up or improve similar services.

In addition, Volunteer Now has supported the network of volunteer led older persons groups and forums in Belfast through its capacity-building project. This has helped sustain and strengthen a network of groups which combat growing social isolation among older people and encourage older people to take an active role in their communities. Dedicated volunteers are at the heart of these community projects which showcase how their efforts can make a positive difference to the lives of the most marginalised sections of our society.

1.3 Befriending & Driving in Belfast

1.3.1 Befriending

The Volunteer Now Befriending Scheme aims to reduce social isolation or loneliness experienced by older people, living in their own homes. These older people may have little contact with family and friends or be unable to attend day centres or other social groups due to older age and age related illnesses. Regular home visits by a volunteer befriender can help reduce feelings of loneliness and low moods and can increase confidence and general wellbeing.

1.3.2 Driving

This service is for older and vulnerable people who are unable to use public transport, and who lack support, or anyone whose relatives or friends do not have

the means to help them. Our drivers provide a door-to-door service to enable people to regularly attend day centres that cater for the needs of frail older people, those with physical disabilities, mental illness or dementia. We also provide a service for health related appointments such as medical, dental and occupational therapy.

Volunteer Now provides training, development and support to volunteers involved with these projects, in order to promote and enable best practice.

1.4 The Befriending Network 50+

The Befriending Network is coordinated by Volunteer Now through its Community Projects Team and supported by Belfast Health & Social Care Trust. The Befriending Network was launched in November 2011 to support and build capacity of organisations providing or wishing to establish, volunteer involving one to one befriending services.

The Network aims to:

- Provide opportunity for organisations to network and share information
- Provide support and encouragement to organisations who wish to establish befriending schemes
- Raise awareness of Befriending and those organisations providing support
- Link with and signpost to other services that can provide support to organisations, volunteers and service users

1.5 Impacts of Social Isolation and Loneliness on Vulnerable Older People

A lack of contact with others can have a variety of adverse effects on the individual involved; this can range from suicide to depression to low moods. Whilst social isolation and loneliness are different issues and generally do not pose the same risk to health, as we get older this changes. Older people are more likely to be socially isolated and/or lonely and thereby the risk experiencing a decline in mobility and/or of dying sooner increases. Social isolation has been defined as the complete or near-complete lack of contact with people and society for members of a social species, in this case, human beings. Loneliness has been defined as a subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship.

Age UK (Davidson & Rossall, Revised July 2014) have published a document that reviews the evidence of the impact on vulnerable older people of loneliness and social isolation. The document also considers what has been done to date and how effective it has been. A key message of this report is that one of the most effective ways of combating loneliness is to combat isolation. The report also suggests that targeting those disproportionately affected by loneliness – lower socio-economic groups, the widowed, the physically isolated, people who have recently stopped driving, those with sensory impairment and the very old, has proven most effective.

Volunteers can play a significant role in supporting vulnerable groups' and the role of social support in preventing illness and enhancing individuals' quality of life is well recognised. Further, the document 'Transforming Your Care': A Review of Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland (Department of Health, Northern Ireland, 2011), states that "There is also good evidence of the effectiveness of interventions to reduce loneliness and social isolation and improve health and wellbeing".

1.6 The Benefits of Volunteering

Volunteer Now also recognises the benefits of volunteering for the volunteer involved. It has been agreed that Volunteering is one of the most rewarding things a person can do.

In October 2013 Volunteer Now in partnership with the University of Ulster undertook a survey, funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies. This was a three year study to consider the impact of volunteering on the health and well being of the over 50s in Northern Ireland (University of Ulster, 2013).

The following is a summary of the main themes emerging from the study:

- Volunteering supports mental and physical health by providing stimulation, something to do, exercise, as well as routine and structure in life.
- The social aspect of volunteering is highly valued. It provides the opportunity to be socially connected thus buffering the effects of depression, loneliness and social isolation.
- Volunteering has a positive effect on attitudes, stress and coping style.
- Volunteering takes people out of their own environment, helps them to gain perspective and broaden their outlook.
- The additional benefits in terms of positive outcomes for volunteers are the feel good factor of making a contribution to the lives of others and being appreciated and valued for what they do.

Evidence provided by the organisation, the Campaign to End Loneliness that was formed in 2011, suggests that volunteering brings health benefits to both the volunteers and the people they help. It has been shown that helping others can help reduce stress and combat depression. Generally, volunteering changes lives for the better, not just the 'clients' lives, but the lives of the volunteers involved.

1.7 Belfast Population Context (Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service [NINIS])

It is projected that the numbers of those aged 65 and over, in Northern Ireland, will increase by a quarter by 2022, the oldest old, aged 85 and over, are projected to rise by nearly 50% during the same period.

According to the 2011 census, the age 50+ population of the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust (BHSCT) stands 108,850; this represents 31.26% of the total population. [NINIS: Usually Resident Population by five year age bands and sex (administrative geographies)]

Further, on Census day 2011, 14,555 households in Belfast (12% of all households in Belfast) were one person households where the resident was aged 65+; 6,375 (5% of all households) households were one family houses where all people were aged 65+ and 615 households (1%) were other household types where all residents were aged 65+. Equivalent Census 2011 data for those aged 60+ is currently unavailable.

Within BHSCT 832 people aged 65+ received meals on wheels service in 2014. In 2014, there were 828 Persons aged 65+ registered at a Day Centre and the number of clients aged 65+ receiving intensive domiciliary care in the BHSCT in 2014 was approximately 1,097. [Note: Intensive domiciliary is defined as 6 or more visits and more than 10 contact hours, as recorded during the survey week.]

1.8 Current Research

1.8.1 Report on Mapping Isolation and Loneliness Amongst Older People in Belfast

This report (Queens University Belfast, 2016) is the result of a collaboration between the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) and the School of Natural and Built Environment, Queen's University Belfast. Volunteer Now is an active member of HASP.

It is an initial attempt to map loneliness and isolation amongst older people in Belfast. This is achieved through attempting to identify individual-level and area-level characteristics which increase vulnerability to social isolation and loneliness; and spatially locate areas across Belfast where the risk of older people becoming lonely and isolated maybe particularly concentrated.

In order to do this a series of isolation indices have been developed for Belfast, using data derived from the CACI Acorn Customer Segmentation Dataset. These indices have been mapped in order to:

- Identify neighbourhoods where social isolation may be particularly problematic
- Highlight that while social isolation is a city-wide problem, 'pockets of isolation' exist throughout the city

- Provide a detailed picture of additional risk factors which may contribute to social isolation and loneliness

Previous work has suggested that an individual's vulnerability to social isolation and loneliness may be associated with the following socio-demographic characteristics:

- Being aged 75 or older
- Living in single person households
- Being poorly educated
- Having a low household annual income
- Not having access to a car
- Living in areas of higher social deprivation

When these factors were compiled into an isolation index and mapped for Belfast, it appears that older adults living within some of the most socially deprived neighbourhoods in inner city Belfast are at the greatest risk of becoming socially isolated. However, social isolation and loneliness are not just found in deprived, inner city neighbourhoods. The mapping exercise showed that there are vulnerable households located across the city, including those areas that have higher average household incomes and car-ownership levels.

1.8.2 Trapped in a Bubble, An Investigation into Triggers for Loneliness in the UK.

The Co-op and British Red Cross have established a partnership to tackle loneliness in the UK. The partnership commissioned specialist social research agency Kantar Public to carry out rigorous research (KantarPublic, 2016) into loneliness in UK communities. The research focused on potential triggers for loneliness across life stages and built upon each organisation's existing insights. Whilst not specifically targeted at older people, four of the six target groups can be perceived as being largely made up of those aged 50 years or above.

- young new mums (aged 18-24)
- individuals with mobility limitations
- individuals with health issues
- individuals who are recently divorced or separated (within the last two years)
- individuals living without children at home ('empty nesters')
- retirees; and the recently bereaved (within the last six months to two years)

2 The Survey

2.1 Overview

The purpose of this survey was to consider the link between volunteering and combating social isolation in older people, with particular reference to the volunteer role in Befriending and in Driving.

The survey had five sections:

Section One	Focused on contact details, on job role and length of service in current post.
Section Two	Asked respondents to consider Befriending Schemes and Driving Schemes their role in terms of combating social isolation.
Section three	Considered the Befriending Network 50+.
Section Four	Looked at potential new services and volunteer roles and what these might be.
Section Five	Requested that respondents consider contact and links with Volunteer Now.

The main aim of the survey was to consider current services and to seek information on perceived gaps in provision for older vulnerable people who have little or no support from family and friends. We asked respondents to reflect on how the input of volunteers could creatively respond to those gaps, focussing on the health & social care sector.

Social Isolation has been recognised as an issue that has increasing negative impact on lives of older people in today's world (The Campaign to end Loneliness, 2011). This issue combined with NISRA projections (Nov 2013) that show a large increase in the number of older people are cause for concern.

2.2 Respondents – Section One

In total 53 organisations were identified as potential respondents to the survey¹.

Of these organisations, 38 were groups/agencies with whom Volunteer Now had contact through the Befriending Network; the other 18 organisations were acknowledged by us as having a key interest in the delivery of services for vulnerable older people. The response rate was 49%; information submitted by respondents indicated that they were very experienced and acutely aware of the needs of older people. Further, the majority

¹ For further information about how and when this survey was conducted please contact Volunteer Now

of respondents were in a management role and therefore their input could be considered to suggest both a policy and practice perspective.

The organisations which responded to the survey are listed below. (See appendix A for a full list of organisations that were invited to participate in the survey)

Action Ability Belfast	Family Caring Centre
Action on Hearing Loss	Leonard Cheshire Disability
Age Concern Causeway	May St Church
AgeNI	Mencap
The Alzheimer's Society	Mindwise
Arthritis Care NI	Oasis NI
Belfast Central Mission	Praxis Care
CLARE Project	Quaker Connections
Crossroads Caring for Carers NI	Rainbow Project
Depaul Ireland	RNIB
East Belfast Community Development Assoc	Rural support
Eastside Partnership	SEHSC Trust
Engage with Age	South Belfast Partnership Board

All the respondents had a wealth of experience and expertise; 25 respondents were in a management position and six had other, mostly direct service, roles.

2.3 Befriending & Driving – Section Two

This section asked respondents to comment on Volunteer Now’s Befriending & Driving Services.

2.3.1 Befriending

Befriending Schemes aim to reduce social isolation or loneliness experienced by older people, living in their own homes. These older people may have little contact with family and friends or be unable to attend day centres or other social groups due to older age and age related illnesses. Regular home visits by a volunteer befriender can help reduce feelings of loneliness and low moods and can increase confidence and general wellbeing.

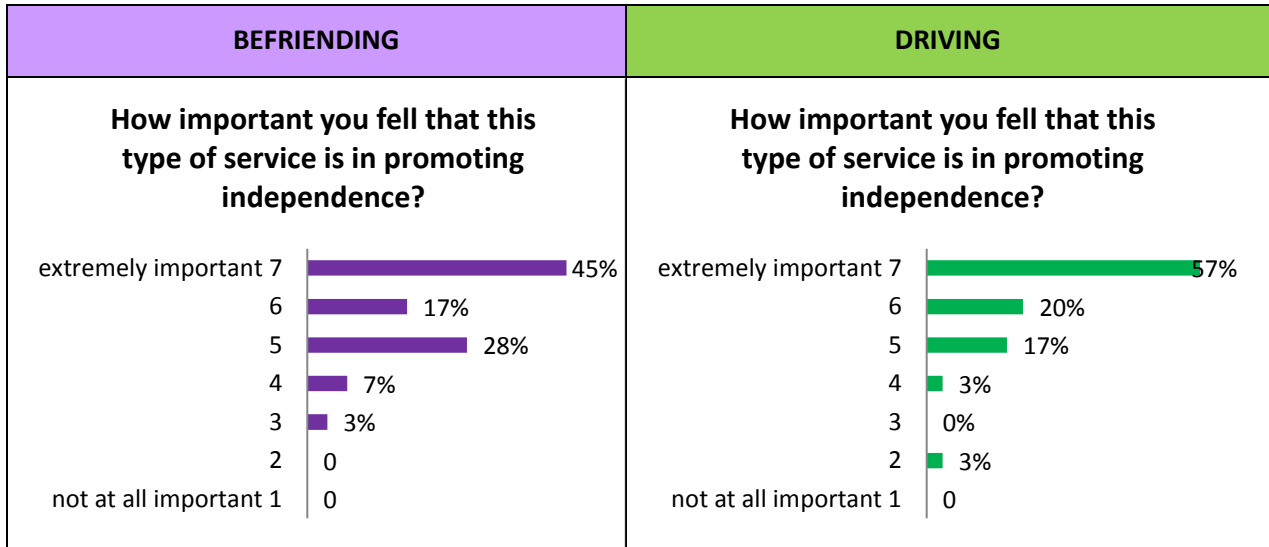
2.3.2 Driving

This service is for older and vulnerable people who are unable to use public transport, and who lack support, or anyone whose relatives or friends do not have the means to help them. Drivers provide a door-to-door service to enable people to regularly attend day centres that cater for the needs of frail older people, those with physical disabilities, mental illness or dementia. They also provide a service for health related appointments such as medical, dental and occupational therapy.

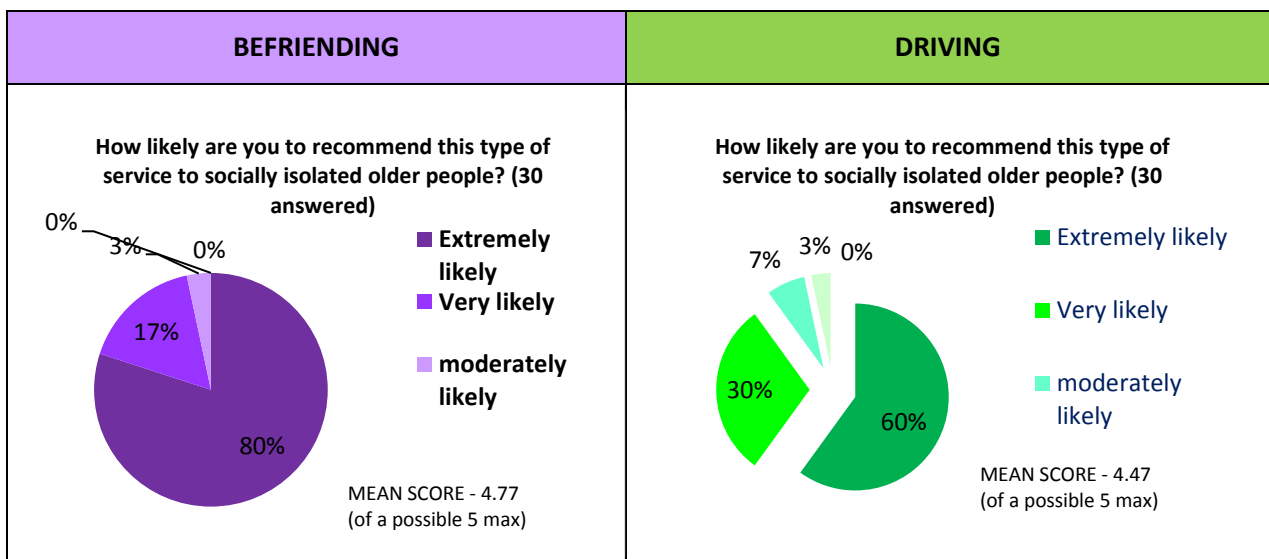
Set out below are the responses to each of the questions. The mean score² for each question is provided

BEFRIENDING		DRIVING	
<p>How important you feel that this type of service is in combating social isolation?</p>		<p>How important you feel that this type of service is in combating social isolation?</p>	
extremely important	73%	extremely important 7	66%
6	20%	6	24%
MEAN SCORE	7%	5	7%
6.33 (of a possible 7)	0	4	3%
4	0	3	0
3	0	2	0
2	0	not at all important 1	0
not at all important	0		
<p><i>These questions above asked respondents to rate the befriending and driving services according to importance. That is the more important the service is, the higher you would rate it, the less important the service is, the lower you would rate it.</i></p>			

² We produced a number for each participant’s response; then averaged this to produce the mean values



These questions above asked respondents to rate the befriending and driving services according to importance. That is the more important the service is, the higher you would rate it, the less important the service is, the lower you would rate it.



The next question asked respondents to give a view on whether the demand for Befriending services and/or Driving services for older people was growing or diminishing. The overwhelming response was that the demand for both services was growing.

DEMAND - BEFRIENDING				DEMAND - DRIVING			
Growing	100%	Diminishing	0	Growing	93%	Diminishing	7%
Reasons Why (in priority order) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Isolation • Less family support • People living longer lives • There is greater awareness of available services • Negative impact of Government cuts • Other: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Impact of Mental Health Issues b. Recognition of positive impacts of befriending c. Increased number of referrals d. Frequent Agenda Item 				Reasons Why Growing (in priority order) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues with public transport • Social Isolation • Personal Experience • Impact of Government cuts • People living longer lives • Less family support • Older people no longer able to drive Reasons Why Diminishing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitations of service • Lack of funding 			

Social isolation was a key reason given for the perceived growing demand for both Befriending and Driving Services. Less family support features highly in respect of growing demand for befriending, whilst issues with public transport are seen as a significant factor affecting the growing demand for volunteer driving. In respect of public transport, both the lack of availability of public transport and lack of confidence when using public transport were mentioned as key factors.

2.4 Befriending Network – Section Three

The next set of questions asked respondents to comment on the Befriending Network 50+. The Befriending Network 50+ brings together organisations that are providing direct befriending services for socially isolated older people.

The Befriending Network was launched in November 2011 and aims to support and build capacity of organisations providing or wishing to establish, volunteer involving one to one befriending services. The Network is made up of a number of different organisations working across Belfast, the Island of Ireland, the United Kingdom, Europe and further afield who support people with many different needs, sensory impairment, disability, mental ill health and challenges that older age can bring.

The Network aims to:

- Provide opportunity for organisations to network and share information
- Provide support and encouragement to organisations who wish to establish befriending schemes
- Raise awareness of Befriending and those organisations providing support
- Link with and signpost to other services that can provide support to organisations, volunteers and service users

The Befriending Network 50+ recently published a Directory of Befriending Services. This directory covers Befriending services in Northern Ireland. It is not a definitive list of Befriending Services but covers those organisations that are members of the Network or who responded to an earlier questionnaire. (see appendix B for more details)

Respondents were also asked to comment on how the Network could be improved.

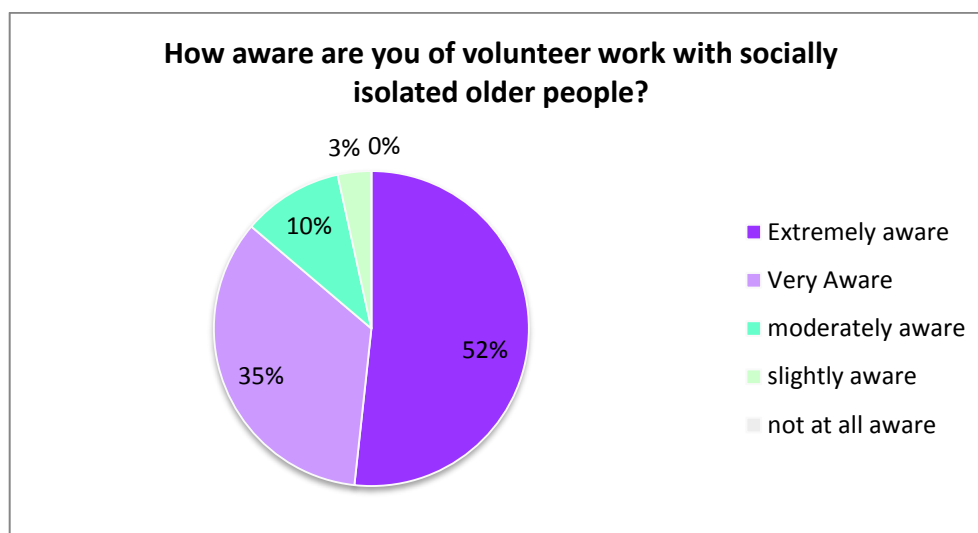
QUESTION	RESPONSE	
	YES	NO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you aware that there is a Befriending Network 50+? 	73%	27%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you aware that the Befriending Network 50+ has published a Directory of Befriending Services? 	70%	30%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you aware that Volunteer Now coordinates the Befriending Network 50+? 	70%	30%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes, if any, do you feel would most improve the Befriending Network? 	The main changes identified by respondents related to the need for promotion of and publicity about the Befriending Network. The need for more staff and more money to enable the Network to develop its sphere of influence was also identified.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of respondents asked for information about joining the Network. 	The purpose of the Network is to support groups and organisations who are directly involved in delivering a Befriending Project. Information will be forward as appropriate to all these respondents.	

3 Developing Services

3.1 Potential New Services – Section Four

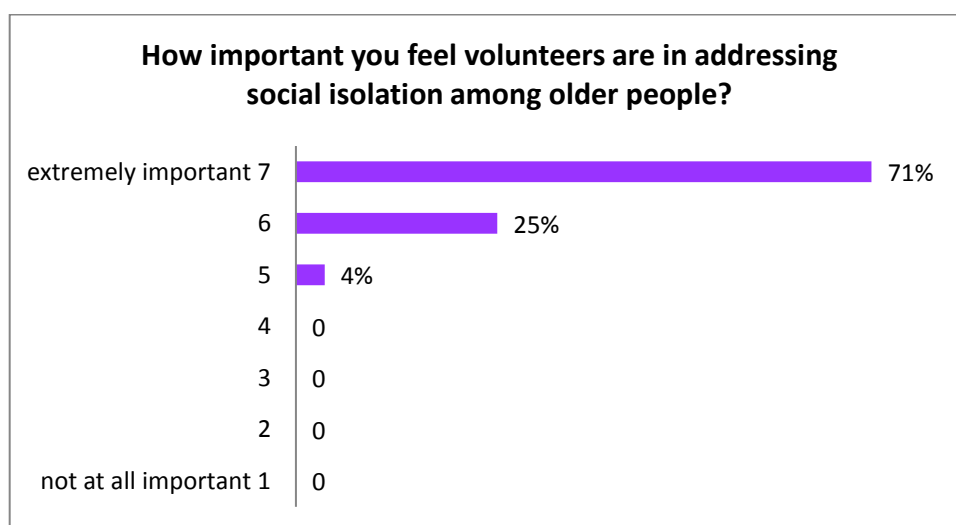
The next series of questions asked the respondent to consider the role of volunteers and also what any potential new services might be.

Firstly, all the respondents were asked about their awareness of volunteer roles with socially isolated older people. The awareness of current services was very high, with 87% being very aware or extremely aware of these services. The 'mean score'³ for this question was 4.3 (maximum 5).



3.2 Volunteering and Social Isolation

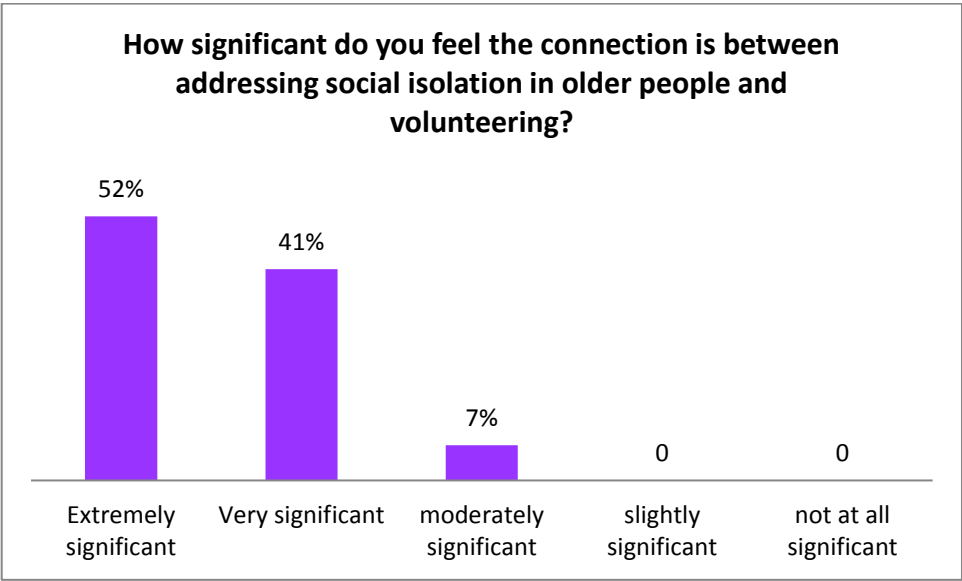
Next, all the respondents were asked about the importance of the role of volunteers in addressing social isolation among older people, 71% of respondents indicated they felt the role of volunteers was extremely important. The 'mean score' for this question was 6.7 (maximum 7)



The next question asked about the connection between addressing social isolation and volunteering. All respondents felt the link was significant, 93% of those who answered

³ We produced a number for each participant's response; then averaged this to produce the mean values

felt the link was very or extremely significant. The 'mean score' for this question was 4.5 (maximum 5)



3.3 New Areas of Volunteering

The next few questions dealt with new areas of volunteering that could be developed. The first of these questions asked about areas of need.

Respondents were asked to think specifically of socially isolated older people, and of volunteering, are you aware of areas of need that are not being met by the current services?

YES	75%	NO	25%
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3.3.1 What are they?

The primary area of need that most people felt is not being met by current services is the need for befriending services.

This need included the need to extend services across Northern Ireland, especially in rural areas. The need to consider the specific needs of co-cultural groups, such as those with mental health issues, or dementia or those within the LGBT community, were highlighted. These views were supported by a number of comments in respect of the need for ongoing and adequate funding for both existing befriending projects or to create new befriending projects.

A need to extend Volunteer Now driving scheme was also mentioned.

3.3.2 Volunteer Roles

Participants were asked to consider a number of potential volunteer roles, related to Health and Social Care and indicate each role they would consider to be beneficial in combating social isolation. Each role assumes the older person had little or no support from family or friends. The following table sets out responses.

Activity Buddy, someone who would encourage the older person to become more physically active. Could be a short term or a longer term role.	20
IT Coach, one-to-one coaching to enable the older person to engage with the digital age and link with others via IT	17
Outings Companion, someone who would accompany the person to get out and about.	19
Walking Companion, someone who would enable the older person to go out walking, particularly those recovering from knee/hip operations	17
Bereavement and Loss Visitor, someone to support an older person who is experiencing bereavement or loss.	17
Home from Hospital Helper, someone to provide practical and emotional support to an older person after a stay in hospital.	19
Social Prescription Coordinator, someone based in a GP practice that will assist an older person to link into local groups and activities.	11
Home Reader, someone to read to a visually impaired older person.	16
Appointment Aide, someone who would accompany an older person, particularly those with poor sight or mild dementia to hospital (or similar) appointments.	19
Personal Shopper, someone to support an older person to go out shopping.	15
Supporting Carers Helper, someone to provide the regular carer with a break.	15
Homecare Assistant, someone who will assist the older person to identify both work that needs done around the home and who might carry out that work.	16
Garden Advisor, someone who will assist the older person to identify both work that needs done in their garden and who might carry out that work.	13

Other roles identified by participants:

- ✓ Arts and crafts buddy
- ✓ Gardening volunteer - someone who supports and older person to be involved in a local gardening group or who helps older person to identify an allotment and supports older person to look after this.
- ✓ Daily Telephone calls like the 'Good Morning' service - for people who just want to connect and maybe are afraid that they will die alone!
- ✓ More awareness of the needs of LGBT people who are more likely to grow old alone than the wider population, grow old without a significant other and having no children

3.4 Other Initiatives

Participants were then asked if they were aware of any services provided in other areas across the UK/Ireland that Volunteer Now should consider providing.

YES	21%	NO	79%
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What are they?

There were very few concrete examples of projects in other areas that could be rolled out across Northern Ireland. Whether this is because such services do not exist or that respondents were simply unaware of such services is unclear. Those services that were identified will be followed up on and information made available to others, either through the Befriending Network or by other appropriate means.

3.5 Gaps in Provision

When asked to think specifically of socially isolated people, and of volunteering, and to identify the gaps in support services, gaps in both practical services and in emotional support was identified.

The most common answer was the need to offer more emotional support for older people, primarily through befriending, but also through mentoring and through ongoing support. This was closely followed by a need for more practical services. Example of these services ranging from gardening to cooking meals to shopping. There were comments relating to the need to recruit more volunteers, the need for consistent funding and the need to ensure that all those who are eligible to benefit are aware that the service exists.

4 Volunteer Now

4.1 Receiving information about Volunteer Now – Section Five

Participants were asked three questions linked to receiving information about Volunteer Now. The following is the response received:

- How interested are you in receiving more information about our services?

Extremely interested	12
Very interested	8
Moderately interested	8
Slightly interested	1
Not at all interested	0

- How often?

Monthly	12
Quarterly	12
Every now & then	5
Never	0

- How would like to receive information?

Email	25
Phone	0
Mail	1
Webpage	3
Social Media	0

5 Conclusion

5.1 Synopsis

Overall, respondents to the survey indicated that they felt that high quality Befriending & Driving Services play a vital role in combating social isolation in vulnerable older people. There was view that the need for these services is growing and that changes in our society, such as, increased life expectancy and / or less contact with family and friends had a key role to play in that rising demand.

Overall, the survey elicited an overwhelming recognition of key role volunteers can and do play in combating social isolation in vulnerable older people. When asked to identify what these roles were, including any gaps in services or unmet need; a variety roles of were highlighted. The volunteer roles identified were primarily practical; with some of these roles, consideration could be given to incorporating them into existing befriending and driver roles. Other roles identified were clearly within the remit of existing care packages, for example help with personal care. Finally, others roles are clearly potential new volunteer roles.

Generally, the outcome of the survey indicates the need for support organisations working with volunteers to think creatively about how volunteering can respond to the challenge of combating social isolation in socially isolated vulnerable older people.

Finally, it is clear that a wide range of organisations are keen to have contact with Volunteer Now and want to be kept informed , primarily through regular electronic updates.

5.2 Summary

- a) The respondents represented an excellent cross section of organisations providing front line services to the most vulnerable in our society. The groups demonstrably have a wealth of experience, have a clear understanding of the issues involved and represented staff & volunteers at a number of levels.
- b) Respondents across the board identified that there is a need to provide support for vulnerable, socially isolated older people, within the health & social care sector. The positive impacts on physical health of social intervention are widely accepted, both for the individual and for the Health and Social Care Service, through preventing illness and dependency. Therefore it is essential that organisations involving volunteers in the health & social care field work to respond innovatively to this need.
- c) Volunteer based Befriending and Driving Projects are clearly recognised as making a valuable contribution to reducing the impact of loneliness and social isolation and

in promoting independence. The need for both these services has been acknowledged as growing and there is a fear that there may be an issue in the future of demand outstripping the availability of volunteers.

- d) Gaps in the existing services are identified, as are potential roles for volunteers. Whilst it is clear that some of the gaps and potential new roles fall within the remit of existing care packages and/or were outside the health & social care sector, the majority fall clearly within the remit of this report.
- e) There is a significant awareness of the existence of the Befriending Network and of the Directory of Befriending Services, published by Volunteer Now. There is also a keen interest by the sector in keeping in contact with Volunteer Now, primarily by means of email at regular intervals.
- f) There is a need to creatively involve volunteers in responding to the challenge of combating social isolation in socially isolated vulnerable older people is evidently validated by the feedback provided by respondents to this survey.
- g) There is key learning for Health & Social Care Trusts within the body of this report. It is vital that the H&SCTs continue to consider the positive impact that volunteers can have in combating social isolation and particularly how such work can result in reducing pressure on medical services and therefore there is a high return on any investment made.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Volunteer Now

6.1.1 Develop the Befriending & Driving Services

Volunteer Now should develop the Befriending & Driving Service, both by recognising the input of the existing volunteer group and by taking this opportunity to appropriately develop and broaden the role and function of these two services.

6.1.2 Information Exchange

Volunteer Now should respond to the challenge of keeping the sector up-to-date with developments within Volunteering & the Health & Social Care Sector.

6.1.3 Build Capacity of the Sector

Volunteer Now should contribute to building the capacity of the Sector, to help ensure that it is fit to respond to the challenge of enabling volunteers to creatively respond to growing need to deliver initiatives aimed at combating social isolation in vulnerable older people.

6.2 Belfast Health & Social Care Trust

6.2.1 Funding

The Belfast Health & Social Care Trust should continue to fund effective front line services which, where appropriate, enable volunteers to support vulnerable socially isolated older people.

6.2.2 Policy & Practice

The Belfast Health & Social Care Trust should consider new areas of work, within the health & social care sector, where the positive impacts of projects involving volunteers creatively responding to the challenge of combating social isolation in vulnerable older people can be demonstrated.

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8 Appendices

8.1 Organisations Invited to participate in the Survey:

Action Ability Belfast	Leonard Cheshire Disability
Action on Hearing Loss	Lighthouse Charity
Age Concern Causeway	Macmillan
Age NI	Marie Curie
Age Sector Platform	May St Church
The Alzheimer's Society	Mencap
Arthritis Care	Mindwise
Belfast Carers' Centre	Moira Friendship Group
Belfast Central Mission	NI Chest Heart & Stroke
Belfast Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership	NI Council for Ethnic Minorities
Bryson Group	North Belfast Partnership
Cancer Lifeline	Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
CLARE Project	Oasis NI
Crossroads Care	Praxis Care
Deaf Blind Association	Quaker Connections
Depaul Ireland	Rainbow Project
East Belfast Community Development Agency	Red Cross
East Belfast Counselling	RNIB
EastSide Partnership	Rural Support
Engage with Age	Salvation Army - Bangor
Good Morning Antrim	SEHSC Trust
Good Morning North Belfast	South Belfast Partnership Board
Good Morning West Belfast	Stroke Association
Greater Belfast Senior's Forum G6	The Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland
Greater Shankill Partnership	WAVE
Guide Dogs for the Blind	West Belfast Partnership Board
Jigsaw	

8.2 Directory of Befriending Services

The Befriending Network was launched in November 2011 and aims to support and build capacity of organisations providing or wishing to establish, volunteer involving one to one befriending services. The Network is made up of a number of different organisations working across Belfast and further afield who support people with many different needs, sensory impairment, disability, mental ill health and challenges that older age can bring.

The Network aims to:

- Provide opportunity for organisations to network and share information
- Provide support and encouragement to organisations who wish to establish befriending schemes
- Raise awareness of Befriending and those organisations providing support
- Link with and signpost to other services that can provide support to organisations, volunteers and service users

8.2.1 Definitions of Befriending:

“A voluntary, mutually beneficial and purposeful relationship in which an individual gives time to support another to enable them to make changes in their life.”

Mentoring and Befriending Foundation

“Befriending offers supportive, reliable relationships through volunteer befrienders to people who would otherwise be socially isolated.”

Befriending Networks

This publication has been produced by Volunteer Now in collaboration with The Befriending Network. This directory is a tool for health professionals, organisations, families and individuals when looking for support services for vulnerable people in their community or care. Many of these projects/schemes rely heavily on support provided by volunteers and therefore the organisations would welcome any enquiries from people interested in finding out more about ways in which they can become involved. The Befriending Network meets quarterly and is co-ordinated by Volunteer Now through its Community Projects service supported by Belfast Health & Social Care Trust. For further information please contact:

Volunteer Now
 34 Shaftesbury Square
 Belfast, BT2 7DB
 Tel: 028 9023 2020
 Email: befriendingnetwork@volunteernow.co.uk

Please note this is not a definitive list of befriending services but those who have joined the Network or responded to questionnaires. You can download a copy of this directory at <http://bit.ly/1bkUyeX>

Directory Organisations

Action Ability Belfast	Action on Hearing Loss
Age Concern Causeway	Alzheimer's Society
Arthritis Care NI	Belfast Central Mission
Bryson Charitable Group	Cancer Lifeline
CLARE Project	Community & Voluntary Services
Crossroads Caring for Carers NI	Deafblind NI
East Belfast Community Counselling Centre	Good Morning Antrim
Good Morning North Belfast	Good Morning West Belfast
Guide Dogs NI	Leonard Cheshire Disability
Lighthouse	Lough Shore Care Partnership
Macmillan Cancer Support	Marie Curie
Mindwise	Praxis Care
Quaker Service	Stroke Association
The Rainbow Project	The Salvation Army, Bangor
The Salvation Army, Newry	Volunteer Now
Urban Soul	




Volunteer Now

Skainos Centre

239 Newtownards Road

Belfast, Co Antrim BT4 1AF

: 028 9023 2020

: www.volunteernow.co.uk



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