

New friendship scheme in Mansfield helps tackle loneliness

Over one hundred and sixty people have so far signed up to the free, new scheme in Mansfield & Ashfield which is helping older people to improve their wellbeing and reducing loneliness by using an innovative new technique to identify compatibility amongst people to help them form successful friendships.

The **Together We Are Better** initiative, which launched in December, is joint funded by Mansfield and Ashfield Clinical Commissioning Group and Nottinghamshire County Council and is being delivered by Jigsaw Support Scheme.

A large number of GP practices in the area have supported the service by identifying patients who they believe would benefit. Around 1,000 invitation packs have been delivered and the uptake so far has been very encouraging.

Registered participants complete a questionnaire developed by world renowned psychologist Dr Meredith Belbin, with a Jigsaw Field Worker in their homes. Completed questionnaires are then compared and those who are considered likely to be socially compatible are identified.

Alison Clarke, from Jigsaw, said:

“We were very pleased to be approached by a psychologist of Dr Belbin’s calibre and to be involved with delivering this service. The feedback we have received so far from the people involved has been very positive. One of the ladies who has chosen to participate in the scheme, but was unsure of what her family might think, was delighted when her daughter told her 'to go for it!’”

If your practice is not yet involved in the service and wants to be, please contact Jigsaw on 01623 662200, or email alison.clarke@jigsawsupportscheme.org.uk