



CINNAMON
NETWORK

THE CHURCH'S IMPACT ON HEALTH AND CARE

To serve the nation

INTRODUCTION

It is no secret that the National Health Service (NHS) in the UK is under immense pressure. Demand is increasing across the board and Accident and Emergency (A&E) and General Practitioners (GPs), in particular, are stretched.

Cinnamon Network's research into the Church's impact on health and care aims to explore the extent to which church-led social action projects can help to support patients to achieve better outcomes in relation to health and wellbeing and alleviate stress within the health service.

Background

The Cinnamon Network believes that faith is a force for good in our society and wants to build confidence in the work carried out by church and faith-led organisations.

The health research was inspired by successful research carried out by Cinnamon in 2016 into the effectiveness of church-led initiatives that support police forces across the UK.

In response, Cinnamon assessed how effective social action projects run by churches were in helping police forces to respond to non-crime-related incidents. The report highlighted key areas where church-led projects made a significant impact on policing priorities and put forward recommendations to develop best practice partnerships in the future.

Foreword



“The NHS is under considerable pressure; increasing public expectation, increasing life expectancy, improvements in technology and limited resources. If we are able to improve our health and the health of the community, we can contribute to the better use of those limited resources. The Church's Impact on Health and Care research is an important contribution to understanding how the voluntary sector and specifically the church and faith-based projects can promote health and create community and belonging.”

Rt Rev Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, Bishop of London and former NHS England Chief Nursing Officer.

Research

Following on from the successful research into police and church partnerships, Cinnamon undertook similar research to assess the effectiveness of church-led strategies which have been developed to offset pressures within the health service.

The research focused on answering two key questions:

1. What impact do church communities currently have on health and social care?
2. What potential is there for them to be scalable and replicable, in order to have more impact?

Both quantitative and qualitative research was conducted with a sample of ten church-led initiatives working within the areas of general health and wellbeing, mental health, perinatal care, loneliness and isolation, dementia and A&E response.

Five of the ten projects that formed part of the research – Intentional Health, Mega Fitness, Parish Nursing, Peaced Together, and Baby Basics – are Cinnamon Recognised Projects. In practice this means that they are established initiatives that can be replicated in locations across the country.

Three of the projects – Care Home Friends, Lyrics and Lunch, and Renew Wellbeing – are currently on the Cinnamon Incubation Programme, where they are receiving support and training to help them build their capacity so they too can be replicated in other churches. The final two – ED Pastors and The Pain Exchange – are church-led initiatives that are not affiliated to Cinnamon Network at present.

The findings presented in the research identified areas where church-led social action projects offer long-term, effective and sustainable solutions to key healthcare needs. The research goes on to present ways in which health services and church-led projects could work more closely together to address key health priorities and ease the burden on healthcare services in the future.

Steering Committee

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Marcus Chilaka - Health Consultant, GHEM Consultants

Fiona Hibberts - Senior Nurse, St Guy's and St Thomas's Trust

Sandie Keene CBE - Former President of the Association of Adult Directors of Social Services and NHS Trust Non-Executive Director

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HEALTHCARE IN 2018

It appears that challenges within the health services are ever present in the consciousness of the British public. In 2013, total healthcare expenditure in the UK was 150.6 billion, rising to 191.7 billion in 2016, which is 9.8% of GDP. ¹

Pressure on the NHS

- In 2015 the NHS dealt with over 1 million patients every 36 hours.
- In 2015/16 40% more operations were completed by the NHS compared to 2005/06.
- There were 16.3 million total hospital admissions in 2015/16, 28% more than a decade earlier.

(Sources: Department of Health, NHS Digital)

The increase in need is set against a backdrop of uncertainty and austerity. The UK faces an unclear future, with a minority government at the time of writing, the unknown effects of Brexit and a continuing programme of cuts causing a significant constriction of services at both a local and national level.

Part of the complex nature of the problem is within the NHS itself. As one respondent put it, “the NHS is not a single entity; it is a vast network of small businesses, each struggling to balance budget books, to provide market-leading healthcare within the constraints of current quality standards, and to stay current and relevant in a constantly changing world.”



The Church's Response

The Church has much to offer in response to this incredible need. With access to volunteers, premises and, in many cases, the trust of the community, churches are well placed to help. They also have a long-term commitment to the communities they are based in, through which they can offer sustainable solutions.

The Cinnamon Network currently offers a menu of best practice, social action initiatives, known as Cinnamon Recognised Projects, that churches can take off the shelf and put into action to address key needs within their community. As part of the research, Cinnamon Network explored how a number of the health-focused Cinnamon Recognised Projects, as well as other church-led initiatives, help churches to replicate a best-practice response to key health needs within their community.

The work of the organisations fell broadly into the following categories:

General Health and Wellbeing	Intentional Health, Parish Nursing, Mega Fitness, The Pain Exchange
Loneliness	Care Home Friends, Linking Lives UK
Dementia	Care Home Friends, Lyrics and Lunch
Mental Health	Renew Wellbeing, Peaced Together
Perinatal Care	Baby Basics
Accident and Emergency	ED Pastors

¹ Office of National Statistics, 2018

ADDRESSING KEY NEEDS

While pressure is being felt across a plethora of services, this research focuses on particular pressure points where church-led organisations are already making an impact.

Obesity

Almost two in every three people in the UK are overweight or obese.² Obesity brings with it a whole range of health-related issues including increased risk of type 2 diabetes, colon cancer and high blood pressure. The associated costs of type 2 diabetes alone currently stand at £23.7 billion and are predicted to rise to £39.8 billion by 2035.³

The Church's Response

Two projects studied in the research, namely Intentional Health and Mega Fitness, directly help to tackle the issue of obesity by helping participants to make significant changes to their life style, including exercise and diet. These projects have a direct impact on helping communities to deal with obesity and consequently type 2 diabetes and other obesity-related diseases.

Mega Fitness - Case Study

When Margaret* entered her first Mega Fitness class it was with great reluctance. She'd recently lost her husband, was in great pain with arthritis in her hips and knees, and was taking a variety of medication to manage her diabetes. The last place she wanted to be was at a fitness class.

The offer of lunch was initially more appealing than the exercise itself, but, two years later, and Margaret is still a regular, but with a very different outlook on life. Rather than being stuck at home on her own, Margaret now has a group of friends and is an important part of the Mega Fitness community.

She has found a purpose in life and that renewed sense of hope has brought with it a drive to change aspects of her life. Margaret has lost weight, she no longer uses a walking stick and her diabetes medication has been reduced. She's confident, capable and has become one of the greatest advocates for Mega Fitness in her local area.

*We have changed the name to protect her identity.



Loneliness and Isolation

Loneliness and social isolation have been recognised as contributing to a number of health related issues.⁴ Research published in 2010 calculated that loneliness and social isolation could have a detrimental impact on an individual's health equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes per day.⁵

The Church's Response

There are a considerable number of church-led projects that focus on creating community and supporting isolated individuals. Linking Lives UK works by simply connecting isolated people with a befriender who visits them regularly; Care Home Friends enables churches to take responsibility for visiting older people within care homes; and Parish Nursing offers health care to all people within the community, especially the isolated.

Mental Health

Research shows that one in six people in the UK have a mental health disorder, ranging from anxiety and depression to schizophrenia.⁶ Mental health problems represent the largest single cause of disability in the UK costing an estimated £105 billion per annum.⁷

The Church's Response

All the church-led projects featured in the research address mental health issues to some extent, whether directly or indirectly. Renew Wellbeing has a strong track record in providing a refuge where all sufferers of mental illness can find support and make progress at their own pace. Mega Fitness, Intentional Health, Linking Lives UK, Care Home Friends, Peaced Together and Parish Nursing all cover mental health by addressing specific issues within the context of an individual's wider situation and circumstances.

“The regulars who are using the spaces are so sick of being measured. The nature of mental ill health means that this is going to be as long as it's going to be. So our strap-line is, ‘quiet, shared spaces where it's okay not to be okay’.” Ruth Rice, Renew Wellbeing.

² NgMet al, 2014, cited in Diabetes UK, 2017

³ Hex, N., et al, 2012, cited in Diabetes UK, 2017

⁴ Caccioppo et al (2002)

⁵ Holt-Lunstad et al (2010)

⁶ Wu et al (2015)

⁷ Wu et al (2015)

Dementia

As the average life expectancy continues to increase, the number of people living with ageing-associated conditions is also growing. According to the Alzheimer's Society, 850,000 people in the UK are living with dementia. This number is set to rise to over 1 million by 2025 and 2 million by 2051,⁷ adding to the burden on the NHS.

The Church's Response

Two relevant projects featured in the research target dementia care. Care Home Friends works through volunteers in care homes to combat isolation and loneliness in individuals both with and without dementia. Lyrics and Lunch also helps to improve the quality of life for those with dementia through group singing.

Lyrics and Lunch - Case Study

When Arthur* started to become more withdrawn, his family didn't understand what was going on. He was in his late eighties at the time and lived with his son, but his mental decline was accompanied by physical decline too. Arthur wasn't eating properly, he wasn't washing properly and he really wasn't taking good care of himself.

Finally, he caught an infection, which landed him in hospital. In many ways it was a blessing in disguise, because it was only then that he was diagnosed with dementia. When he was discharged, Arthur was brought along to Lyrics and Lunch.

Far from being withdrawn and isolated, Arthur came to life when he joined his friends each week. He had a musical background and was recruited as the group's conductor and was thrilled when the team upgraded his conducting 'pen' to a real baton. Arthur smiled, laughed, joked and entertained his friends with his dance moves. Through Lyrics and Lunch, he made friends, experienced joy and his outlook on life was completely transformed.

*We have changed the name to protect his identity.



Accident and Emergency

The total number of people visiting A&E departments was 23.4 million in 2016/17, 23.5% higher than a decade earlier (18.9 million).⁸ Numerous factors are contributing to this rise, but there are still many people coming to A&E who would be better off seeking support from other NHS services.

The Church's Response

One of the issues contributing to the rise of patients in A&E is a fall in the number of district nurses – the number of district nurses has decreased by about 41%.⁹ Parish Nurses are not a replacement for district nurses, but they are helping to address issues of community health and social care. While ED Pastors don't reduce the number of admissions to A&E departments, they offer practical and pastoral care to patients, leaving busy clinical teams free to focus on providing medical care to patients.



⁷ Alzheimer's Research UK (2013)

⁸ NHS Confederation (2017)

⁹ King's Fund (2016)

KEY FINDINGS

After studying the evidence and conducting interviews, it became clear that there are a number of common themes that run throughout all the projects in the research. It is these themes that help to demonstrate the added value that church-led projects bring when tackling health-related issues.

These themes have the potential to become important foundations to further support the development of partnerships between church-led projects and local health services in the future.

Four key benefits of church-led initiatives

- Value for money
- Giving the gift of time
- Holistic health care
- Creating community

Value for Money

It remains a challenge to quantify the financial benefit that church-led health initiatives can provide. However, in comparison to the costs currently being incurred by health services, setting up church-led social action initiatives remains relatively inexpensive. When these costs are aligned with potential benefits, the cost-value potential is huge.

Project Costs

- £650 is the average costs to set up a Cinnamon Recognised Project
- £280 a year is the approximate cost of maintaining a project
- 90% of Cinnamon Recognised Projects continue into a second year and beyond

Health Service Costs

- €28,000 each year is the average cost of supporting a patient with Alzheimer's Disease in Europe
- £124 is the average cost of a single visit just to be seen at A&E
- £700 is the base cost of outpatient appointments for one patient with type 2 diabetes per annum

(Source: Jönsson and Wimo, (2009), NHS Digital, Lean et al, 2017)

“Every hour you can give, we want you.”

NHS Trust in Sheffield commenting on ED Pastors.



Giving the Gift of Time

At the heart of a professional relationship is the core element of costed time; for every interaction, there is a corresponding transaction which has to be accounted for in a budget. Nowhere is this more understood than in a busy hospital or community practice; due to both financial and patient demand, every appointment is meticulously scheduled, and time is a commodity which simply cannot be wasted.

In comparison, at the heart of volunteering is the freely-given time of the volunteer, which has no such budgetary ties. Whether it is ED Pastors, Care Home Friends, Parish Nurses or a member of Renew Wellbeing, spending time with individuals, getting to know their wider needs, listening to their deepest concerns and discussing their hopes and fears, not just their prevailing symptoms, are central to the care relationships delivered by churches.

“We can spend time with the patient, and get to the bottom of issues and ongoing problems.”

Ruth McDonald, Parish Nurse in Morecambe Bay.



Holistic Health Care

A holistic approach to health has been identified as one of the most effective ways to address health needs and church-led projects are well placed to respond. The projects see each beneficiary, patient, participant or service user as a whole person: their presented symptoms, which may be musculoskeletal pain, loneliness, dementia or type 2 diabetes, are only one aspect of who they are.

Without the restrictions that many health services are bound by, church-led initiatives can align both health and social care and, in the process, serve the needs of the whole person. For example, by alleviating an emotional need, the chronic pain an individual is experiencing may be relieved and by connecting people together, their ability to make positive changes to diet or exercise increases. There are inherent links between the physical, social, spiritual and emotional wellbeing of an individual that church-led initiatives are able to make.

“We use the physiotherapy to meet that particular need, but what it usually unveils is a whole hoard of other things. So for me, The Pain Exchange is about helping people build their resilience.”

Sharon Morgans, The Pain Exchange.



Creating Community

The church-led projects studied in the research tackle the issues at hand, whether that is raising an individual's metabolic levels through exercise, visiting them in their homes, advising them about medicine, or working with a group to give them strategies to live healthy lives. However, it is the creation of community which brings people into relationships, which, in turn, brings belonging, and hope. For those who have experienced isolation, depression, and, in many cases, chronic pain, being valued as part of a group of people is extremely powerful. It is this broader community that will sustain individuals as they continue to make positive progress in terms of their health and wellbeing.

“Now someone knows my name.”

Beneficiary of Renew Wellbeing.

Peaced Together - Case Study

Maira* came to Peaced Together on the recommendation of a friend. She had been a stay-at-home mum for six years, her husband had just left her with no explanation or contact details, and her confidence was at rock bottom while her stress levels were soaring. To further compound her problems, English was Maira's second language and, although she had begun to study accountancy, she just didn't feel she would ever be good enough to get a job.



At the beginning of the Peaced Together course Maira was very shy and found it hard to join in with the discussion, but over time she began to open up. As the programme moved to focus on thankfulness and finding hope, she began to relax and look forward.

The Peaced Together team weren't simply a source of encouragement for Maira. Through the wider community network, she found people who could help with other aspects of her life. Maira found support to improve her English, guidance to develop her CV and opportunities to increase her confidence and experience through volunteering.

Since completing the Peaced Together course, Maira has gone on to complete her studies and is now getting experience on a placement with an accountancy firm. Her confidence has really grown and she feels more hopeful about her future and her ability to provide for her children on her own.

*We have changed the name to protect her identity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Church-led projects are clearly making an impact, but there is scope to do more. The research identified key areas where attention should be focused. This will help develop and strengthen initiatives to achieve even greater health and wellbeing outcomes across the nation.

Recommendations

- Build strategic partnerships
- Establish practice conferences
- Incubate more Cinnamon Recognised Projects focused on health
- Develop a consultation group

Strategic Partnerships

Given the strained nature of local health services across the UK, and the consequent need to save budgets, partnership models with the voluntary sector afford the best approach for effective working practice. The research suggests four key areas where partnership could help strengthen the role that churches play in helping health services to support patients.

University Partnerships for Church-Led Projects

It's vital that church-led projects can demonstrate quantitatively the impact of what they do. University or Academic partners could help initiatives to develop and implement outcome measurements to ensure the continual improvement of the work.

Local Partnerships for Health Services and Churches

Local partnerships between health services and churches are already happening to great effect, but there is more that can be done to ensure that churches are thinking strategically about who they work with in their region. Every location has a unique set of challenges and initiatives and would benefit from conducting a mapping exercise to identify local health services in their area to partner with.

Inter Church Partnerships for Churches

Many churches are already working together to deliver health initiatives. Individual churches often lack the strength of influence, but together they can present a strong voice into local issues. This has benefits on a number of levels, such as sharing the burden for sourcing volunteers, securing resources, finances and management.

Network Partnerships for Cinnamon Network

Networks of faith-based and community organisations who are already delivering public services, such as FaithAction, could provide insight and support. FaithAction are already a recognised partner of the Department of Health and could support Cinnamon Network to better understand and connect with health services nationally and locally.

Practice Conferences

A recurrent issue raised by church-led projects in the research was the importance of effective communication with the relevant 'gatekeepers' within the local health arena. Regular regional or national conferences with key stakeholders, such as practice managers within a GP surgery, representatives from clinical commissioning groups, or interested third-party organisations, would help to ensure that practitioners are aware of the relatively inexpensive and highly effective services provided by church-led projects.

Incubate Future Health Projects

Most of the projects studied within the research have proven themselves to be able to scale and replicate at a national level. This means they can maximise their impact while keeping costs to a minimum. There is the scope to find additional projects that meet other challenges faced by the NHS, such as addiction, self-harm and suicide prevention, and incubate them so they too can be replicated in other locations.

Consultation Group

The NHS is constantly changing and it is vital that any response provided by churches helps health services to meet their most pressing needs. The establishment of a consultation group that brings together practitioners within the NHS, clinical commissioning groups, academia, GP surgeries, Cinnamon Network and local churches would help to ensure that voluntary sector solutions deliver projects that help the NHS to achieve the best outcomes for patients and the community.

FINAL CONCLUSION

The church-led projects studied in this research have proven to be a cost-effective, 21st Century healthcare solutions that can help to address the nation's major health needs.

As well as expected benefits, which include beneficiaries exercising more, feeling less lonely, dealing with long-term chronic pain, or long-term and seemingly insurmountable mental illness, the initiatives have also succeeded in creating strong communities. This secondary outcome helps isolated individuals to feel a sense of belonging, which, in turn, helps them to make positive progress.

Most of the projects within the research have proven themselves able to scale and replicate to a national level. Cinnamon has a track record of helping projects to build capacity so they can be easily replicated in other locations – offering a cost-effective way to support communities across the nation.

The need is immense and it is precisely at such a time as this that the voluntary sector can come into its own, by drawing on local knowledge, connections and expertise in order to ease the burden and allow healthcare professionals to channel their resources, time and energies most effectively.

CINNAMON NETWORK

Cinnamon Network began emerging in 2010 in response to growing social need, public sector reform, increasing recognition of the role of voluntary organisations and the economic cuts.

The network serves the nation by enabling people and resources to transform their communities and help those in social need. Cinnamon does this by championing brilliant church-led social action, by building partnerships between churches and civic organisations, and by delivering actionable research to enable growth.

www.cinnamonnetwork.com

PROJECTS INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH

Intentional Health - Intentional Health enables local church volunteers to support the wellbeing of individuals in their community which, in turn, inspires healthy communities.

Parish Nursing - Parish Nursing enables the local church to work with GPs and other health services to care for individuals of any age within their community.

Mega Fitness - Mega Fitness helps local churches to run community fitness programmes that are accessible to people of all ages and take a whole-person approach to health and wellbeing.

The Pain Exchange - The Pain Exchange is an exercise-based programme run by local churches to help individuals to manage pain by providing advice on nutrition, advice on social benefits and links to debt counselling services and foodbanks.

Linking Lives - Linking Lives enables the local church to provide a befriending scheme for isolated people in local communities.

Care Home Friends - Care Home Friends addresses issues of loneliness and social isolation within older age groups by training church volunteers to befriend those living in residential care.

Lyrics and Lunch - Lyrics and Lunch is run by local churches who use music to bring joy and friendship to those with dementia.

Renew Wellbeing - Through a safe and friendly café space, churches help people who are struggling with mental health to find friendship and trust.

Peaced Together - Using a variety of themed craft projects, Peaced Together enables churches to help women set out on a personal journey from brokenness to hope.

Baby Basics - Baby Basics is a church-led project that supports new mothers and families who are struggling to meet the financial and practical burden of looking after a new baby.

ED Pastors - Trained volunteers from local churches listen to patients, relatives and staff and offer pastoral and spiritual support with within Accident and Emergency departments.



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To serve the nation

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