

PRIMARY PREVENTION:

“Action on the building blocks of health which stops problems happening in the first place.”

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BEFRIENDING CAITHNESS, HIGHLAND

Social isolation and loneliness can have serious health consequences. It increases the risk of heart disease, as well as the risk of depression, anxiety and alcohol or substance misuse. It can also lead to changes in brain function and increase the likelihood of cognitive decline.

This case study tells the story of a match between two fishermen whose friendship developed with each visit.

Sandy has had a full and exciting life, an avid fisherman, a tradesman and a family man.

Sandy is now 90 years of age, has limited mobility due to a previous fall and is hard of hearing. He is a widower, has no near family and can no longer drive. Sandy was lonely, isolated, and spent most of his day seated at his table looking out of his window. He was housebound, and reliant on others for essentials, a position he found difficult to reconcile with his previous independence.

Befriending Caithness set up an initial meeting between Sandy and Robert, another avid fisherman, and conversation flowed easily. 1-1 Befriending visits commenced weekly, they go out for drives around the local area, visiting old fishing haunts, seeing the changes in the area that had occurred since Sandy was last mobile.

These case studies were developed as part of a joint statement on prevention from Edinburgh Community Health Forum, Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE), Scottish Community Development, and Voluntary Health Scotland.

They show what preventative approaches by the third and community sector look like in action.

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Sandy said:

“Initially we talked about fishing, but now we know each other well we talk about everything, all subjects”.

The importance of the befriending relationship was summed up beautifully when Sandy’s daughter who phoned her father one day, unbeknown to her, during a befriending visit, and upon asking him “What are you up today?”, he replied “I’m out with my friend”.

[Find out more here.](#)

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