

John McLuckie 0:17

Hello and welcome to this episode of the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Podcast. I'm John McLuckie, Partnerships Lead for community planning in Argyll and Bute, and in this episode we'll be talking more about the Community Planning Partnership priority of Community Wellbeing, which includes focus on actions related to increasing equality of access to community services, facilities and assets and how partners can work together to maximise the sustainability of these services and facilities, and which also links to the Living Well programme in Argyll and Bute. Joining me today are Sam Campbell, Health Improvement Principal in Public Health team with NHS Highland and Mahalia Kateryna, Wellbeing Development Manager for the Living Well Board and hosted by the Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface. Welcome both to the podcast.

Mahalia Kateryna 1:01

Hi John.

Sam Campbell 1:03

Thanks John.

John McLuckie 1:04

So, Sam, if we could start off with yourself, could you tell us a bit about your role within NHS Highland and the Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership?

Sam Campbell 1:13

Yeah, absolutely. So, my role as Health Improvement Principal in NHS Highland, I focus on working with partners to create the conditions for prevention, wellbeing and supporting communities to live healthier lives. Part of my work is about helping to develop and deliver the Living Well programme, and it is focused around working alongside partners across health, social care and the third sector.

John McLuckie 1:39

Fantastic, and Mahalia for yourself, could you tell us a bit about your role with the Living Well Board and within Argyll and Bute TSI?

Mahailia Kateryna 1:46

Sure. So, my role is hosted by the TSI, but really it's a partnership of the Living Well Board, which is the TSI, HSCP, Macmillan, and LiveArgyll. My focus is on the Communities Working Together work stream, which is part of the Living World Board, with the intention of working on prevention and wellness rather than just illness and putting communities at the heart of self-management for health and wellbeing. So, just like a little bit of background. In 2022, we merged the Prevention and Living Well boards to create a more unified approach and ended up with two subgroups. So, we had the Community Rehabilitation Programme and the Community Working Together programme, and I'm working on coordinating the Communities Working Together side of things.

John McLuckie 2:36

Mm-hmm.

Mahailia Kateryna 2:37

The main focus is on partnership working, which is essential but really challenging. Trying to avoid duplication and really trying to utilise community assets and strengths and kind of looking at system change to create the dynamics that communities need to be able to flourish.

John McLuckie 2:56

Sure, really interesting, and I'm sure we'll be coming back to find out a wee bit more about some of these aspects a bit later on. So, Mahailia, can you tell us just a bit about your background in relation to community wellbeing?

Mahailia Kateryna 3:08

Absolutely. So, I started ten years ago working with LiveArgyll as a Macmillan professional and then managed the Move More programme for Macmillan within Argyll. Personally, I'm really passionate about helping people to be more active for their physical and mental health and that's something that I try and integrate into my own life as well. So, from my Macmillan post, that really evolved because Macmillan were recognising that national programmes didn't really land in the same way in the Central Belt as they did in more rural areas like Argyll and Bute, so they wanted to explore taking a different

approach and they were sort of recognising that really actually in Argyll and Bute ,with our dispersed geography, that they couldn't take cancer-specific routes like they would in other areas just because of the dispersed population.

John McLuckie 4:02

Yeah, yeah.

Mahailia Kateryna 5:29

And, so the importance of partnership and working with people with a similar focus on health and wellbeing came forward as the approach they needed to take, and so we did a scoping exercise that started off with Macmillan, but then also LiveArgyll were needing to explore their Argyll Active programme, the exercise referral programme, and so the HSCP and NHS had been commissioning that service, so they became involved and then the TSI, because of the third sector integration in all of this were also main partners. So, through that scoping exercise, we then had the merging of the two Prevention boards and the Living Well Board and recognising the need for a genuine collaborative approach and not condition specific.

And so my role really evolved from there, with programme management and strategic partnership work being the main focus, and it was felt that the TSI was probably the best place for that given that we really wanted to be working with communities and with the third sector, being that interface with communities, if you like.

So yeah, on the day-to-day, I kind of manage a walking development post. We're working on Art of Hosting, we're running a Winter seminar series and we're trying to take a unified approach. So, we're developing a comms strategy as part of the partnership, trying to improve service access and strategic planning across partners.

John McLuckie 5:29

Yeah, fantastic, thank you. Yeah, and just for yourself, Sam, as well, if you could tell us a bit about your background in relation to community well-being.

Sam Campbell 5:37

So, yeah, absolutely. I've had roles within the private sector and the third sector, where I worked in a healthy living centre, supporting people with dual sensory impairment. On moving to NHS, I began to work in an operational health improvement role, and over many years, I've progressed finally to this

post, but through those years I've worked closely with local groups, third sector organisations and services to strengthen community capacity and connect people to the support that helps them to stay well.

John McLuckie 6:07

Right, OK, fantastic, yeah. A lot of really interesting backgrounds that lead into the Living Well programme more widely and the focus the Community Planning Partnership has on Community Wellbeing just now and particularly the Community Wellbeing action which is developing, and which relates quite closely with the work of the Living Well programme.

Sam, can I just ask you to explain a bit more about what the Living Well programme is and how that links into supporting improvements in Community Wellbeing.

Sam Campbell 6:33

Yeah. So, the Living Well programme focuses on supporting people to manage their own health. It's about helping people to take control of their health and building strong networks of supportive communities around them. It focuses on self-management, prevention and connecting people to local groups and activities and information. The programme has four themes of which are people, communities, workforce and leadership. Within those themes, the people theme is about giving people the tools that they need to support and manage their own health, the communities theme is around strengthening that local network and the joined up support as Mahailia had mentioned earlier, the workforce theme was around the focus on equipping staff and partners to take a preventative approach, and the leadership aspect is about ensuring strong and coordinated support in order to deliver the programme of work, and it's these things together that create that healthier, more connected community where people can access the right support at the right time.

John McLuckie 7:40

Yeah, that's the ultimate aim I guess, yeah. Mahailia, obviously you mentioned the Communities Working Together strand within the Living Well programme and you mentioned a few of the aspects within that including walking development programme, for example. Can you just expand on that a little bit more in terms of Communities Working Together within the Living Well programme, but maybe also how that relates a bit to the Community Planning Partnership?

Mahailia Kateryna 8:07

Absolutely, so the core principle of Communities Working Together is that communities already have the innate strengths that they need, and communities themselves are an asset for individuals' health and well-being, but the real challenge within that is, you know, with health inequalities and isolation and uneven distribution of services in Argyll and Bute with our geography, you know it's actually quite a tricky nut to crack. The main objectives of the Communities Working Together strand are really around building relationships, networks and partnerships to help facilitate this work to amplify what's already working within communities, and also to try and shift the control to communities, kind of looking at systems change theory for that.

John McLuckie 8:54

OK.

Mahailia Kateryna 8:55

We're doing a lot of work in spreading understanding, so we have a Winter seminar series running at the moment which we're hoping will continue next winter as well, where we're looking at international best practise and inviting speakers from all over the place. We had someone giving a seminar from Canada the other day, which was quite exciting. So, we're looking at, you know, academic best practise theories around coproduction and systems thinking and asset-based community development. We've got one coming up on Community Wealth Building as well, which is something that we're really lucky to have Neil McInroy in Argyll and Bute.

So that's one big focus. We're also, we've done a lot of work in participatory leadership and Art of Hosting, so trying to really create a shared language around engagement work, and I suppose the ideal is to take it away from just engagement and make it more participatory leadership, that really is an ideal that we're aiming towards.

John McLuckie 9:56

Mm-hmm.

Mahailia Kateryna 9:27

Yeah, and I guess the main challenge there is the translation of those academic theories and strategies and then how we actually take those best intentions and turn them into action, and I guess that's one of the things with how it relates to the Community Planning Partnership. The key to this is how we join

things up, and we've been talking about this for years and everyone's intentions are in the right place, but really turning that into action so we're not duplicating work, I think is in bold for me this year.

John McLuckie 10:30

Yeah, really interesting, and a lot of the added depth that you gave there on Communities Working Together aspects like community leadership, again would feed into the actions that the CPP is taking forward under Community Wellbeing. I'm just interested to know how can communities find out more about the Communities Working Together strand and are there opportunities for communities to get involved, perhaps through, you know, accessing the Winter webinar series and that kind of thing?

Mahailia Kateryna 10:54

Yeah, so we have the Winter seminar series is open to everybody. We've got people joining from outside of Argyll and Bute actually, and from people from all different sectors. So, it really is more the merrier. We want to spread the theory as far as we can, so you can sign up for the whole series through the TSI website, and all the events are on our events page.

We have an Art of Hosting Community of Practise which people can join if they're interested in Art of Hosting methodology and participatory leadership, and we meet once a month, again everyone's welcome. We have regular training and peer support through the monthly meetings. In terms of building partnerships, if you're interested in working directly, please just contact me. If you think it would be beneficial to be part of the Communities Working Together subgroup, we're always looking for new people to join.

John McLuckie 11:51

Fantastic stuff. Just to add that the Art of Hosting sessions and training was fantastic having been on that personally as well. So, yeah, and Sam if I can come back to you and just ask about the Living Well Strategy and the update and refresh on that strategy. How do you think that will have an impact on Community Wellbeing across Argyll and Bute?

Sam Campbell 12:12

Yeah, so the strategy as you say is in the process of being refreshed and it supports the development of prevention focused communities and partnerships by working really closely with our third sector and our community planning partners. The refreshed strategy strengthens prevention and partnership working., it places greater emphasis on supporting communities to lead, improving access to self-

management tools and making it easier for people to find the support that they need. We're working closely with partners including the third sector, community planning, LiveArgyll and local groups, and it's this joined up approach which means that we can extend the reach and respond to local needs and build prevention-focused communities with stronger networks and better access to activities and support.

John McLuckie 12:57

Fantastic and just to check as well if that strategy will be available for people to look at once it's been refreshed and updated?

Sam Campbell 13:05

Yeah, the strategy we aim to have ready to go by springtime and it will be available on the Argyll and Bute website and will be promoted very widely. As I say, it's our flagship strategy so it's important that it's shared as widely with partners as it can be, and that we come together to understand and work together on how to implement it effectively and make best use of it.

John McLuckie 13:29

Great, thanks very much. So just finally, I guess, for yourself Sam, I'm just thinking more widely about community wellbeing. What would you consider to be improved community wellbeing in Argyll and Bute? What might that look like in the future?

Sam Campbell 13:44

It means people feeling connected, feeling supported, and able to access what they need in order for them to stay well. So what that looks like for me is more joined up support across services and communities, it looks like people being confident in managing their own health, having stronger local networks and fewer barriers to accessing activities, information or services when they need them, it looks like communities being more actively involved in shaping that local support, and that opportunity to tackle those wider factors that we know are challenges within Argyll and Bute, such as loneliness, such as transport issues and the opportunity for people to access sports, health, recreation, all of those things themselves. So ultimately, it's really about healthier, more resilient communities where everyone has a chance to live well.

John McLuckie 14:35

Brilliant, and same question to yourself, Mahailia. What do you think improved community wellbeing in Argyll and Bute could look like in the future?

Mahailia Kateryna 14:42

Yeah, so I think for me it's really important to just highlight the challenges of this first, which is that these are wicked problems and I think dealing with them at a regional level across such dispersed and different geographies is really, really hard. So, this is a really challenging group activity that's happening over many years and I think it's a cyclical thing that we'll I think constantly need to work on. But, it is really challenging with short-term funding cycles trying to build long-term solutions, and also you can't manufacture community action from the top down, so that our jobs are in some ways a bit of a paradox in the first place, because you're wanting things to come from communities and that's hard to actually implement. But, I think we need to focus on the partnerships, and we just need to now drill down into translating that into action.

So, then, going back to answer the question, I think that improved community wellbeing in Argyll and Bute, at an individual level like Sam said, is people feeling connected, it's self-management, it's reducing isolation. At a community level, it's communities having real agency over their decisions, it's accepting that there's going to be regional variation in what that looks like, in a small village in the islands or in somewhere like Helensburgh and Dunoon, and making sure we're addressing the social determinants of health, and always kind of keeping that in mind, and I think that's really key for partnership working as well. And then at a systems level, we really need to focus on the partnership and making sure we're working together, that we're not duplicating, and looking at culture change, so actually implementing the best practises of coproduction and asset-based community development, participatory leadership and Community Wealth Building, which we're all fairly up on the theory of, I think now it's just the challenge of fitting it into practise.

John McLuckie 16:41

Really interesting and definitely a topic and topics to come back to in future podcasts as well. I think it's such an interesting area for partnership working and something that, as you say there are wicked problems in, and it'd just be really interesting to come back and touch on some of these topics again in in future podcasts.

So Mahailia and Sam, thanks very much for joining me for this episode of the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Podcast. Thank you.

Mahailia Kateryna 17:06

Thanks so much.

Sam Campbell 17:06

Thanks, thanks everybody.