

Beacon Council Scheme 2004

Round 5

Services for Older People¹

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¹ The term 'older people' applies to those aged 50 years or over.

Executive summary

Facts

- Over 19 million people over aged 50 in the UK - 42% of the adult population.
- By 2020, those aged 50 or over will make up 48% of the adult population.
- Older people are the major users of public services.

Current services

- Older people have been seen primarily as a health and social care concern, rather than as citizens and active consumers of services.
- A wide range of central and local government departments, as well as the private and voluntary sector, administer services for older people.
- Service providers usually have to be contacted individually to access services.
- Older people need services that support independence - not undermine it.
- Services could be improved with better co-ordination between service providers in 'packaging' services.
- Care packages are often too inflexible to meet individual needs adequately.
- Better quality information in accessible formats and co-ordination between information providers is required.
- Older people prefer personalised and customer focused information and advice.

Government approach to improving services

- This Government is encouraging government departments to work together and with local authorities and voluntary organisations to develop joined-up policies.
- This has led to the development of services and initiatives designed to deliver more joined-up services.

Local authorities approach to improving services

- Some are developing older people strategies to encompass all services to ensure that older peoples' needs are considered and planned for.
- A few are piloting a more holistic approach and providing 'one stop shops' where older people can access a range of services.

Delivering improved services

- Government departments, local authorities and voluntary organisations should work together to develop joined-up policies and services.
- The difficulties of working in partnership to deliver joined-up services must be acknowledged and good working relationships established at the outset.

Introduction and Definition

Older People

- Over 19 million people over aged 50 in the UK - 42% of the adult population.
- By 2020, those aged 50 or over will make up 48% of the adult population.
- Older people are the major users of public services.

The term 'older people' covers a broad spectrum – services required by a fit person in their fifties in paid work will be very different from the needs of a frail 90 year old living on income-related benefits. Services for older people have tended to focus on the relatively small group who need intensive support from the NHS and social services departments. Older people have been seen primarily as a health and social care concern, rather than as citizens and active consumers of services.

Qualitative research into the attitudes and aspirations of older people² discovered wide variations, as might be expected from such a diverse group. However, common themes emerged around independence, access to information and consultation. These define what values, principles and objectives should underpin excellent services for older people.

Independence

Independence was valued very highly by all, although it meant different things to different people. All wanted to be as independent as possible, for as long as possible: physically, mentally and socially.

- For healthy, active people living in their own homes, independence was defined as being able to look after oneself on a daily basis without assistance.
- Users of care services could still perceive themselves as independent where services allowed them to maintain their physical independence, by enabling them to remain in their own homes.
- Those living in residential care homes saw independence as being able to exercise choice over their day to day living arrangements.

Factors encouraging independence

- Access to relevant, timely and effective government benefits and services.
- Services to support independence not undermine it - albeit unintentionally.
- Home help services targeted to individual needs and practical assistance in home and garden maintenance,
- Improved co-ordination between service providers in 'packaging' services.
- Control over their lives and how they spent their time for care home residents.

Barriers to independence

- Inadequate public transport – unsafe, infrequent services and insensitive staff.
- Security fears restricted independent movement – particularly at night.
- Inflexible and uncoordinated care packages.
- Unnecessary rules in residential care homes.

² Hayden, C., Boaz, A., Bernard, M. (1999) *Attitudes and Aspirations of Older People: A qualitative study* (DSS Research Report No. 102) Leeds: CDS

Dependency / interdependency

An Age Concern consultation report³ revealed a positive approach to dependency.

- Being dependent on others can be a positive strategy in adapting to declining physical capacity; it protects and maximises the use of scarce energies in other areas of life. For example, one might choose to accept help with doing the laundry in order to conserve energy for social activities that are valued more highly. Positively chosen dependencies can therefore help someone remain independent in other key areas of their life.
- Interdependency is the reality in most people's lives – and it is important for self-esteem to be able to reciprocate for help that is given, rather than aspiring to avoid dependency. This perspective is particularly important given the demographic context of growing numbers of older couples and older carers.

Implications for services

- Choice and control are central. This applies to:
 - ? how services are offered
 - ? whether services are available/provided;
 - ? how they are delivered.
- Choices can only be made if information about possible options is available; if options are realistic and deliverable; and if support is available to think through the implications of big choices (eg changing living arrangements).
- Security and stability are central to feelings of control. This applies to financial resources and within the wider community, in the physical environment, the changing nature of local neighbourhoods and community safety issues.
- Maintaining house, garden and personal appearance is centrally important in sustaining continuity of self. Opportunities for meaningful social interaction are also likely to be important in sustaining social identity and self-concept.
- Service providers may need to move from a culture of avoiding risk by removing choice (for example by banning smoking in day centres) to managing risk (for example, by installing fire alarms and training staff to respond).
- Supporting interdependency demands attention to the household, family and community networks within which support is both given and received. Maintaining interdependency will need to promote opportunities to give help, not simply focusing on the receipt of help.

Access to advice and information

There was widespread concern about the growth of new technology in information delivery, such as touch-tone phones. Complicated forms and procedures were also a

³ Paraphrased from a paper by Caroline Glendinning on Conceptualising Independence

barrier to accessing services and were experienced as unduly complex, unfriendly and inflexible by older people and those negotiating the system on their behalf.

Improving advice and information

- Better quality information and co-ordination between information providers.
- Using formats accessible to older people.
- Appropriate methods of delivery.
- Personalised and customer focused information and advice.
- A named person attached to their case.
- A 'one-stop shop' for all information.
- Enhanced information role for 'professionals' e.g. GPs, community centre and day centre workers, Asian language speakers.

Consultation and involvement

- Want to contribute on all relevant issues – not just 'older people's issues'.
- Consultation as a two way process - to obtain information about services and benefits as much as about conveying their views.
- Consultation improved if followed by clear action and feedback to contributors.
- Accessible consultation through small groups, using local venues and based around dialogue, rather than formal public meetings.

Common themes that have emerged from other studies are shared by most people, old and young.

Good quality of life

- To lead a full, fun, dignified life and to feel valued. It includes the freedom to choose to take risks.

Healthy living

- This goes beyond 'keeping fit' and encompasses body, mind and general well-being. Making choices and decisions to participate in activities, not only for physical exercise but for social contact, mental alertness or emotional satisfaction.

Policy context

Concepts, values and thinking

Older people are the major users of public services but their hopes and aspirations have rarely influenced the shape of services. A range of central and local government departments, as well as the private and voluntary sector administer services. Older people usually have to contact individual service providers, sometimes several within the same organisation, to access services and the most vulnerable have to contact the largest number of agencies. This is time consuming both in finding out what services are available and in accessing them, as similar information must be repeated to each provider.

This Government has taken a more strategic approach to encourage government departments to work together and with local authorities and voluntary organisations to improve services by developing joined-up policies. A number of initiatives on older people issues support this.

- *Cabinet Committee on Older People* (formerly *Inter-Ministerial Group for Older People*) - responsible for monitoring progress on developing and expanding a strategic cross-government approach to older people.
- *Better Government for Older People* – two-year programme to improve public services by combining action, research and consultation. 28 pilots were set up. BGOP continues as a Network with an Older People’s Advisory Group.
- *Winning the Generation Game* – a report by the Performance and Innovation Unit, examining the declining economic activity of people aged 50 to 65.
- *The National Service Framework for Older People* – defines eight areas of standards applicable to health and social care for older people. Partner organisations include local government, the voluntary sector and older people.
- *Quality and Choice for Older People’s Housing* - guidance developed jointly by Department of Health, Office of the Deputy Prime and the voluntary sector.

This approach has led to the development of services and initiatives designed to deliver more joined-up services.

- *The Pension Service*
All benefits administration based in pension centres. Most customers will contact pension centres by phone, post or via the internet but for those unable to use these, a local service for face-to-face transactions and home visits is provided. Local services are designed to suit local circumstances in consultation with users and partners. They are delivered by different methods with good inter-agency links across the different organisations providing services to pensioners.
- *Care Direct*
Care Direct pilots were created as a single gateway for older people and their carers to get information about and access to health, social care, housing and

social security benefits. It provides practical support when needed, delivered with assistance from voluntary organisations. Access is via a telephone contact point with electronic links to local helpdesks staffed by trained advisers. Staff have access to local and national information databases. DWP has taken over responsibility for Care Direct from DoH and will 'migrate' the six pilot sites into third age service development sites in 2003/04.

- *Fairer Charging Policies for Home Care and other non-residential Social Services*
The Pension Service is exploring implementation of policies with individual local authorities. Some areas plan to establish joint teams to cover benefits advice and financial assessment for home care charges in a single visit.
- *Local Government On Line project*
Pilots in six local authorities in partnership with DWP, Office of the E Envoy and voluntary organisations to improve access to benefits and other support services by a single point of contact. It will reduce social costs to customers and support The Pension Service local service by providing more face to face contact in council premises and voluntary/community organisations and via outreach visits.
- *Third age services*
DWP are building on work with Care Direct and the Better Government for Older People Programme to develop third age services. The concept is to provide simple local access to a range of proactive, joined-up services that treat older people with dignity to promote independence and combat poverty. A national working group has been established to co-ordinate partnership working between The Pension Service, the LGA, local authorities, voluntary organisations and other partners, such as Primary Care Trusts.

National targets

- *National Service Framework for Older People*
Sets standards with specific implementation milestones for health and social care services.
 - ? Standard 1 - ending age discrimination in institutional policies and practices
 - ? Standard 2 - providing person-centred care – single assessment process, integrated commissioning, integrated equipment and continence services
 - ? Standard 3 - intermediate care services to prevent hospital admission / facilitate discharge / avoid long-term care
 - ? Standard 5 - preventing strokes and improving rehabilitation after stroke
 - ? Standard 6 - preventing falls and providing effective treatment after a fall
 - ? *Standard 7* - promoting good mental health and ensuring integrated services available to diagnose and treat dementia and depression.
 - ? *Standard 8* - promoting health and active life (mainstream and targeted)
- *Local Public Service Agreements*
 - ? An agreement between individual local authorities and the Government to deliver improvements in public services. Local authorities choose around a dozen targets and at least seven must reflect the national targets.
 - ? The Health and Social Services target included a target for older people;

Target 7 – Provide high quality pre-admission and rehabilitation care to older people to help them live as independently as possible, by reducing preventable hospitalisation and ensuring year on year reductions in delays in moving people over 75 on from hospital.

- ? Updated targets were published in July - the target on older people is now;
- Target 5** – Improve the quality of life and independence of older people so that they can live at home wherever possible, by increasing by March 2006 the number of those supported intensively to live at home to 30% of the total being supported by social services at home or in residential care.

Current practice

A range of central and local government departments, as well as the private and voluntary sector administer services for older people. In local authorities, personal care services for older people form the major area of responsibility and these are located in social services departments. Other services, such as housing and transport, are dealt with by their respective departments. More local authorities are developing older people strategies to encompass all services to ensure that their needs are considered and planned for. A few are piloting a more holistic approach and providing 'one stop shops' where older people can access a range of services (see p above).

Initiatives

Social services

Out in the Open. Breaking Down the Barriers for Older People (2000)

Produced by the Public Services Productivity Panel and DH to examine how local councils can improve the commissioning of services to meet the needs of older citizens. It identified considerable variations in the unit costs and patterns of commissioned institutional and domiciliary care. The causes of ineffective commissioning and a range of possible solutions were identified. Four sites were selected for direct external intervention in their processes of commissioning services. The interventions were successful in generating rapid changes in services; similar direct interventions, with greater involvement of central government in providing support for commissioning strategies, the closer involvement of independent sector providers and more consultation with users and carers were recommended.

Improving Older People's Services - Policy into Practice (2002)

A Social Services Inspectorate inspection of older people's services in 23 councils found that overall, services were continuing to improve but identified some areas for further action.

- More training and support to facilitate change among front-line managers and staff to promote a culture of supporting independence.
- Better quality commissioning (including improving quality assurance for domiciliary care services and reducing delays).
- More support tailored to the needs of black and ethnic minority elders.
- Care plans often service-led rather than personalised.
- Improved monitoring and reviews of established care packages.
- Better IT systems for more efficient case management, information management and compatibility with other agency systems (particularly health).

Direct payments

These have been explicitly advocated by the Government as the means of 'modernising' older people's services (including services for those at risk of hospital admission or needing increased support on discharge). However, as with younger disabled people, it is likely that take-up is highly localised; the 2001 SSI inspection of 23 local authorities found only 188 older people receiving direct payments. Five of the 23 local authorities contained 78% of these direct payment recipients, while seven councils had no older direct payment users at all.

Welfare rights

Some local authorities have highly developed units and others fund voluntary organisations to do this work. A recent NAO report⁴ recommended that central and local government work together and with the voluntary sector to increase benefit take-up. The NAO commissioned research that clearly illustrates the advantages of maximum benefit take-up, not only for the health and welfare of individual pensioners, but also to local communities in terms of increased spending on local goods and services. The Local Government Association and The Pension Service jointly published a good practice guide on increasing benefit take-up in 2002 for use by local authorities and voluntary organisations.

Housing

Supporting People

An ODPM programme to provide housing-related support for vulnerable people, it brings together transitional housing benefit, supported housing management grant, probation accommodation grant, income support and jobseekers allowance into a single pot in order to fund housing-related support services from April 2003. Supporting People includes people in sheltered accommodation and those receiving support from housing improvement agencies. However, it is not at all clear how far local schemes are actually investing resources in support for older people (compared to other vulnerable groups such as homeless or mentally ill people).

Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing: A Strategic Framework

Changing demographic patterns requires local authorities to consider what type of housing the future population will need. The poor quality housing in which some older people live, the lack of choice and the challenges of an increasingly diverse older population are highlighted. The document identifies the following priorities:

- ? increasing diversity and choice
- ? ensuring services are responsive and promote independence
- ? providing information and advice
- ? increasing flexibility in housing and service models
- ? improving the quality of housing and support services
- ? improving integration of housing, social and health services nationally and locally

Preparing Older People's Strategies: Linking Housing to Health, Social Care and other Local Strategies

Detailed guidance on preparing local strategies that integrate housing with other relevant services.

Transport

- Ten year transport plan published.
- Minimum half fare on local bus service for people over 60 (local authorities have autonomy to provide more generous schemes).
- Good practice guidelines - with case studies for bus operators to improve personal security on public transport.

⁴ Comptroller and Auditor General (2002) *Tackling pensioner poverty: Encouraging take-up of entitlements* NAO

Current examples of good practice⁵

Tameside - Really Important Questions Conference and Group

Over 100 members of the public attended a conference designed to elicit solutions to some of the major difficulties experienced by older people. Nine discussion groups took place, addressing topics such as Staying at Home with Confidence, The Hospital Experience, Coping with Depression, and Having Your Say. Following the conference the Really Important Questions Group was established to progress the work identified and to provide a forum for older people. The group sends two representatives to the Joint Strategy Sub Group for Older People. A second conference was held in November 2001, and a booklet was produced, updating on progress in tackling the issues identified in the previous year.

Bolton - Better Government for Older People

Since the completion of the pilot project, Bolton has taken a number of initiatives to reinforce the achievements of the project and respond to the 28 recommendations in the national report which fall within the remit of local authorities. These include the identification of an 'older person's champion' at executive member level; appointment of an older people's services co-ordinator; involvement of older people on the policy development group; and an expectation that every Council department will produce action plans for implementing the recommendations. In addition, specific actions taken as part of the pilot have continued; these include the attendance of Benefits Agency staff at community care centres, and other places where older people meet, to provide advice and assistance on benefits issues.

Gloucestershire - Involving Users and Carers in Developing Charging Policies

Since the Joint Review, and in response to Fairer Charging Policies for Home Care Gloucestershire is revising its current charging policies. The Council set up a steering group drawn from representatives of user and carer organisations to look in detail at the draft policy. The group worked through the policy and proposed amendments. They were able to make a range of significant improvements to the proposed policy which were subsequently ratified by the Council.

Methods used to develop excellence and innovation

- Best value performance reviews
- Pilots – eg BGOP, Care Direct

⁵ Audit Commission (2002) *Tracking the Changes in Social Services in England*

Obstacles to excellent practice

Communication

The more stakeholders there are in a service the more effort is required in ensuring that policy and practice is jointly developed and agreed. This often results in delays in implementation, which can be frustrating and cause further difficulties in partnership working.

Data sharing

Legislation designed to protect citizens from the inappropriate disclosure of personal information provided to one agency for a specific purpose can cause serious problems in joining up services.

Funding

Working in partnership usually involves some cost sharing. Uncertainty about the availability of funds, restrictions or lack of clarity on how they may be used and different financial accounting periods can result in lengthy delays.

Accountability

Current performance measurement mechanisms are rarely designed to cope with shared accountability. Unclear lines of accountability can lead to risk aversion, indecision, disagreement and ultimate policy failure.

Evaluation

Joined-up services, by definition, often obscure individual stakeholder contributions. This can make it more difficult to relate inputs to outputs and outcomes.

Successful joined-up services cannot hope to avoid these obstacles, they must be acknowledged and tackled. Only by establishing excellent partnership working relationships at the outset can the necessary trust and determination be developed that will be required to overcome the obstacles.

Outcomes

- Older people receive an appropriate level of support to enable them to live how and where they choose.
- Resources are spent on effective and efficient services that take account of the individual needs of older people and their formal and informal sources of support.
- Those responsible for delivering services, from senior management to front line staff, are committed to the principle of supporting independent living and are trained and motivated to provide customer focused services.
- Older people are confident in the fairness, appropriateness and responsiveness of services.
- Services command widespread support from all sections of the community, politically and financially.

Performance indicators

Best Value is a key element of the Government's programme to modernise local government and places best value authorities under a duty to seek continuous improvement in the way in which they exercise their functions.

The Best Value Service Delivery Indicators reflect the national interest in the delivery of local services. They are designed to enable comparisons to be made between the performance of different authorities, including different types of authorities, and within an authority over time. Authorities will need to set targets against all indicators, which are relevant to the services they provide.

Best value indicators relating directly to services for older people;

- Cost of intensive social care for adults and older people by reference to the average gross weekly cost of providing care for adults and older people.
- Average gross weekly expenditure per person on supporting adults and older people in residential and nursing care and providing intensive home care.
- Intensive home care per 1,000 population aged 65 or over.
- Households receiving intensive home care per 1,000 population aged 65 or over
- Older people helped to live at home per 1,000 population aged 65 or over.
- Percentage of items of equipment delivered within 7 working days
- Percentage of people receiving a statement of their needs and how they will be met.

These indicators have the usual limitations of performance measures – they measure what is easily measured and are often more about quantity than quality. However, many local authorities have used them to stimulate significant change leading to improvements in their services.

Indications of excellent practice

- There is a strategy for responding to national objectives (eg National Service Framework) and there are clear signs that the strategy is being implemented.
- Local objectives and performance measures established that reflect national priorities and Best Value.
- Services are planned in a co-ordinated way across departments
- There is evidence of working in partnership with local older peoples' voluntary organisations in developing services – not merely consulting them.
- There are appropriate channels for communicating directly with older people themselves to obtain their views and evidence that the views inform future planning.
- Services
 - ? actively promote independence and choice
 - ? are fair and consistent
 - ? treat customers with dignity and respect individual cultures and lifestyles
 - ? are accessible to all, and address social exclusion issues
 - ? sufficiently flexible to meet individual needs
 - ? capable of adapting quickly to changing circumstances
- Information about services is
 - ? comprehensive and covers all available choices
 - ? in clear, simple language setting out main eligibility criteria
 - ? available in a variety of accessible formats
 - ? freely available to older people, families and carers and voluntary organisations
- Consultation should
 - ? be in forms older people are comfortable with (not formal public meetings)
 - ? involve older people on a wide range – not just 'older people's issues'
 - ? be followed by clear reporting on outcomes and feedback to contributors