

Health and Well Being Partnership Board, September 2007

Older People in Oxfordshire

Introduction

This paper sets the scene for future work. Along with the accompanying documents (papers 3 and 4), this paper gives a flavour of the issues which need to be considered and outlines the direction of travel envisaged. Finally, it suggests possible next actions which the partnership may wish to discuss when drawing up future work plans.

The Need to Act

England is undergoing a profound demographic change and Oxfordshire is no exception. The main features are:

1. The number of older people is increasing, particularly the over 85s.
2. The proportion of older people in the population is increasing. This means that the working population will be increasingly stretched to fund public services for the retired.
3. The increase in older people will be uneven across the county, affecting some of our most rural areas.
4. The economic impact on services has the potential of being severe – doing nothing is not an option. We cannot continue to provide our current range of services in the same way – they will simply not be affordable.
5. Change is, therefore, necessary. This is a long term issue which means a long term solution; all organisations in Oxfordshire will need to come together to grapple with it.

This issue is wide, complex, difficult to deal with and politically sensitive. It touches on topics such as housing quality, rural transport, means testing, bed blocking, community hospitals, affordable housing for care workers, mental and physical health problems, an ageing population of people with learning disabilities and the needs of carers.

Work has begun to tackle some of the complex issues described above yet this work is not sufficiently joined up, this groups role is to ensure that join up happens.

Strategy

The overall objective for older people's services is to ensure that people are able to achieve and maintain maximum independence for as long as possible. It is envisaged that this will be achieved by substantially enhancing preventative and rehabilitation services to reduce the overall incidence and prevalence of high dependency care needs and to reduce impact of disabilities and illness. There is also a need to increase user choice, autonomy and control over the services they use. In short we need to ensure that as people become older they remain healthier and active for as long as possible.

Achieving these objectives will not be easy and joint working is required to meet these challenges. This is a long term programme of work which requires careful planning and monitoring to achieve.

Main Achievable Objectives to be achieved

The main purpose of this partnership is to achieve the following objectives

- To improve our current understanding of the aspirations and needs of older people across Oxfordshire, along with a better understanding of the economic impact of demographic and social change.
- Develop high quality services for older people to maintain their independence through rehabilitation and active interventions that is accessible and of the highest standards
- Develop preventative services for Adults and Older people to ensure a long term improvement in population health.
- Develop alternatives to residential care and have fewer people living in residential care.
- Increase specialist Older People with Mental Health (OPMH) needs residential provision and specialist OPMH support in people's homes.
- Develop alternatives to non-intensive home support services and increase the number of people accessing universal services.
- Improve access to appropriate levels of assessment.
- Improve the health and emotional well-being of Carers through increased choice and control.
- To prioritise the needs for development across the community

Next Actions

1. Specific targets and priorities for services should be agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Partnership and included in the refreshed Local Area Agreement by October 2007 so that progress can be explicitly measured.
2. The Health and Wellbeing Partnership should include an explicit preventative strategy which covers both physical and mental health aspects of care as part of its work plan by October 2007. This should include the prevention of problems in older people and also in the adult population.
3. The Health and Wellbeing Partnership should work with NHS and Social Services to calculate the economic impact of demographic change on older people in terms of service costs to NHS and Local Authorities by September 2007.
4. The Health and Wellbeing Partnership should commission work to quantify the savings to be made by investing in preventative services for elderly people from 2008/9 showing return on investment at 1 year, 3 years, 5 years and 10 years by October 2007.
5. The Health and Wellbeing Partnership should work during 2007/8 to ensure that explicit provision to tackle the demographic challenge is included in public sector budgets for 2008/9 onwards, subject to the

funding provided by central government and the impact on council tax for local authorities.

6. The Health and Wellbeing Partnership should identify the areas of greatest need within the county by October 2007. These should be defined as the parts of the county which will experience the greatest rates of growth of older people and parts of the county in which older people experience the highest levels of poverty, whether rural or urban and use these to target resources in financial plans from 2008/9.
7. The Health and Wellbeing Partnership should work with other strategic bodies in the county to influence the development and implementation of transport strategy, economic strategy, workforce strategy, housing strategy, carers strategy and mental and physical health strategy by October 2007.

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