

Ageing Successfully

The following is a summary of *Ageing Successfully*, which describes the ways in which organisations, communities and individuals will improve the experience of getting older in Oxfordshire. There is a longer paper which gives more detail of the ideas and plans; this is a short version to inform people about the general approach.

If you are someone who uses health and social care services, or a family member or friend who cares for someone, *Ageing Successfully* might not address your immediate concerns and experiences. However, your views and involvement would be especially relevant and welcome.

What is Ageing Successfully?

Ageing Successfully is a framework for planning what services and opportunities there are in Oxfordshire as we get older, but it's not just about older people. We don't think of ourselves as older or ageing when we are in our forties and fifties, but how we live and plan for the future throughout our lives makes a big difference to the experience of getting older.

Ageing Successfully brings together strategies and plans for changing:

- the way we think about ageing;
- how we can all contribute to living healthier and more fulfilling lives as we get older;
- how we can keep our independence for as long as possible and live our lives in the ways we wish.

Over the coming decades, each year there will be more older people as a proportion of the whole population. There is less money to spend on health and social care and potentially more people who will need it.

We all need to change how we work and how we approach ageing. This will mean developing services and opportunities which support people to live healthier more independent lives, and reducing the use of the most intensive and expensive health and social care services such as residential care and hospitals.

What does it include?

Within the *Ageing Successfully* framework there are a great many different pieces of work which are either happening already or will happen in the near future. These include:

- Changing the way people get services, for example by making sure people can choose what they need to live their lives as they wish through 'personal budgets'
- Building up what communities can do to support each other and how we can provide opportunities for people to contribute and enjoy their lives, for example by supporting Good Neighbour schemes
- Making sure people have support and opportunities so they can stay well and maintain their independence

- Supporting families and friends in caring for people
- Making sure people are helped to become as independent as possible again after things happen which threaten that, such as bereavement, illness or accident
- Making sure people who need it have support longer term
- Improving hospital care
- Caring for people at the end of their lives

Within each of these areas there are many different things which affect the whole experience of getting older in Oxfordshire. For example

- Housing
- Employment
- Community groups
- Transport
- Street maintenance
- Bin collection
- District nurses
- GPs
- Home support services
- Policing
- Libraries

Who will do it?

To make the changes for all this to happen, several organisations need to be involved, and the participation of today's and tomorrow's older people is essential if the changes are to work. Planning for a better older age is everyone's business.

The Health and Well-being Partnership Board is responsible for making sure that *Ageing Successfully* works for Oxfordshire's residents. The Board was set up in 2007 to help everyone involved work together to improve our health and well-being.

The people on the Board are from community and voluntary organisations, the NHS, the county council and district councils, as well as some members of the public.

The Board's job is to make sure all the agencies work together and that they all understand the different ways in which our well-being and health can be affected. The Board encourage the organisations who plan, provide and buy ('commission') services to make sure they improve our health. The Board also check that what has been agreed actually happens.

Some organisations, such as the county council and the NHS are responsible for spending public money in ways which affect what it's like to get older in Oxfordshire. They will plan what they do and what they buy as part of the vision of *Ageing Successfully*. In the future more decisions about how the money is spent will be made by people themselves and fewer decisions by the organisations. This could be anything that works for an individual:

- practical help to live at home;
- a personal budget to help with transport to meet up with friends;
- help and advice to stay in work if we're caring for someone;
- a service to help get back mobility and confidence after a fall;
- someone to talk to after a bereavement.

Who will it affect?

Everyone in Oxfordshire will be affected by the changes outlined in *Ageing Successfully*. The ways we expect to live our lives and get support when needed will be fundamentally different. Some of the changes will mean no longer having some services provided, but they should also mean we have much more choice.

There are groups of people, communities and individuals who haven't found it easy or even possible to get the support and options they want as they get older. This can be for different reasons, many of which have been to do with the way services have been provided.

As the changes happen there will be opportunities to make sure that all of us, as we get older, have a fair chance to live as we choose. As *Ageing Successfully* develops people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, gay, bisexual and lesbian people, people who live in rural areas, transgender people, or people who have less money than others, should all have the same chances as everyone else to benefit. The organisations carrying out the work will be making sure this happens.

Involvement of older people

Over the past few years there have been several consultations with older people and with families and friends who care for people. What people said has played a part in putting together the framework for Oxfordshire.

Beyond this there are important ways in which older people can and should be involved and contribute as colleagues in the work to make Oxfordshire a better place to get older. Some examples of what people have said in recent consultations are that they want:

- Good information and advice
- Easy streamlined access to services when needed
- Access to transport particularly in rural areas
- Support at the right moment to maintain independence
- 24/7 flexible care to help people stay at home
- Flexible arrangements for short periods of care ('respite') so friends and families who care for someone can re-charge their batteries
- GP services when they are needed
- Respect for personal freedoms

The ways in which the changes happen, which services and projects are supported, which services are reduced, and how the plans for change are made can all benefit from older people being a part of the work. Overseeing the whole process should include older people.

As the work develops the fundamental changes *Ageing Successfully* outlines will inevitably involve hard decisions and a different way of looking at things. If older people are not involved in this stage it will not work.

We can all make a difference to the experience of getting older in Oxfordshire. As well as being affected by the changes, we can all affect how well they work and get involved in how they happen.

'We celebrate the fact of our ageing population. We want all people as they age to lead lives that are healthy and personally and socially fulfilling. Our mission will be to achieve significant and measured improvement in how we plan and deliver services so that our community will be supported to age successfully.'

**Oxfordshire Health and Well Being Partnership Board
March 2009**

'What we want is to be as independent as possible and to be a part of our community. We want to do what everyone else does as we get older, but with a little bit of help. As I am blind it could be walking with me to the shops, it could be someone reading the newspaper to me or taking me to my sewing class. Or I could help other people, I could visit them and talk, and we could share experiences of what we do to keep well and active.'

**Margaret Higginson
June 2010**

For the full *Ageing Successfully* document contact:

To find out how to get involved contact: Val Wilson Taking Part Team