



Social & Community Services Strategic Aims

How SCS contributes to building healthy and thriving communities as part of Oxfordshire County Council's overall aims

2009 – 2012

Social & Community Services Strategic Aims 2009 -2012

Introduction

This document sets out the Strategic Aims for Oxfordshire Social & Community Services. Social & Community Services (SCS) wants to make it possible for people in Oxfordshire to lead happy, successful and independent lives. The County Council wants to lead change and work with all its partners to help create healthy and thriving communities as described in 'Oxfordshire 20:30'. Social & Community Services will contribute to building thriving communities and support the successful achievement of the targets agreed in the Local Area Agreement. Social & Community Services will promote services that are of the highest quality.

This document is primarily intended for staff, County Councilors and partners. A concise version is available for the public.

The Social & Community Services vision is to:

Support and promote strong communities so that people live their lives as successfully and independently as possible. We will also provide effective and efficient support to the most vulnerable.

We will deliver on this vision through the implementation of seven strategic aims. The aims are broad but each one is supported by action plans (detailed in the Directorate Plan) which will improve the way that we respond to people in Oxfordshire. Social & Community Services will intensify its efforts on building strong communities, we will work with our partners to make the support we offer more co-ordinated and effective, we will promote real choice with a focus on participation and we will make sure all our services are high quality and treat people with utmost dignity at the end of their life.

Strategic Aims:

1. Improve quality of life.
2. Improve health and wellbeing.
3. Take account of the needs of the whole population.
4. Maximise independence.
5. Promote choice and control.
6. Provide services that are modern, efficient and developed through engagement with service users and their carers.
7. Make an improvement in all areas of performance.



Social & Community Services has a role in improving quality of life in Oxfordshire. Creating a vibrant, prosperous, safe and healthy community will improve everyone's quality of life. Culture and learning make a contribution to economic development, to health and wellbeing, to educational attainment, to enjoyment of community life and to community cohesion. The arts, sport and culture have proven benefits in promoting cohesive, energetic, successful communities. They contribute to a shared identity, engender pride and a sense of belonging and contribute to what makes a place special for residents and visitors.

Social & Community Services believe a strong local identity and sense of place provides all residents with the best possible chance of health, wellbeing and social inclusion. It is important that this continues as people grow older through the creation of lifetime neighbourhood. This requires an accessible and pleasant built environment in which residents of all ages are not unnecessarily excluded by age, physical or cognitive ability, and remain able to work, socialise and participate for as long as possible.

Social and Community Services has an important role in supporting the cultural and educational experiences of children and young people through library programmes focused on reading, through the educational work of museums and heritage services and through the support given to the broader cultural life of the county, which broadens cultural opportunities for all. Children and young people spend a great deal of time learning before school and outside school; the provision and advocacy of high quality cultural services, tailored to suit the needs of the whole community supports the achievement of strong communities across the generations and enhances the quality of life for everyone living in Oxfordshire.

Social & Community Services has an important role in supporting families with children both in its own right and working with Children, Young People and Families (CYP&F). We know that parents under stress may need specialist support, young people with disabilities who may require help to participate in daily life.

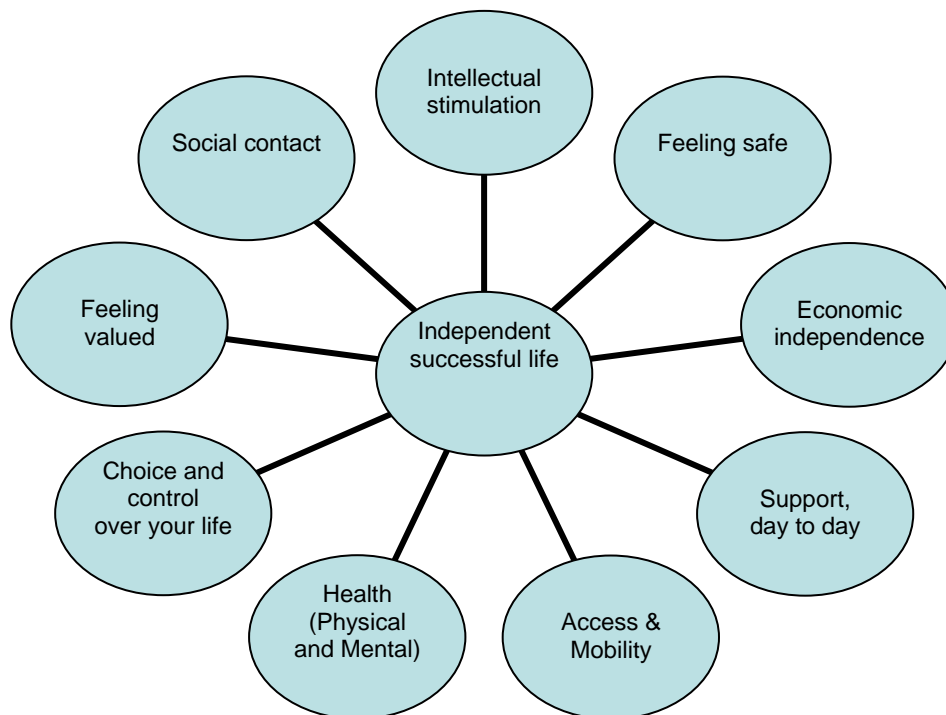
Social & Community Services wants to encourage a strong social and civic fabric where people can make a contribution, perhaps through volunteering or informal networks, and where there is an ethos of consultation and user empowerment amongst decision-makers. Strong communities gain from the active participation of their members. Individuals' quality of life is better when they have opportunities to connect with the life of their community and interact with their neighbours in a variety of ways. Community building sits within the larger 'place' agenda, and will be shaped by any decisions made with regard to priority areas, breaking the cycle of deprivation initiatives and community-led planning. Volunteering may be considered part of the independence/prevention agenda which helps to keep an individual fit and active thereby avoiding, or at least delaying, the need for specialist and costly care.

To achieve this sense of community, everyone's rights will be valued and respected. Social & Community Services recognises that within our communities there is not homogeneity. Each is composed of individuals from all sorts of backgrounds, ages, circumstances and perspectives. The challenge is to ensure that minority needs are understood, valued and properly recognised in community life. Some people are more vulnerable than others or may be going through stages in their lives where they need greater levels of care and support. Older people want to be valued within their community, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to lead purposeful, independent lives. All people in Oxfordshire should be able to live their own lives as they wish, confident that services are of high quality, are safe and promote their own individual requirements for independence, well-being and dignity.



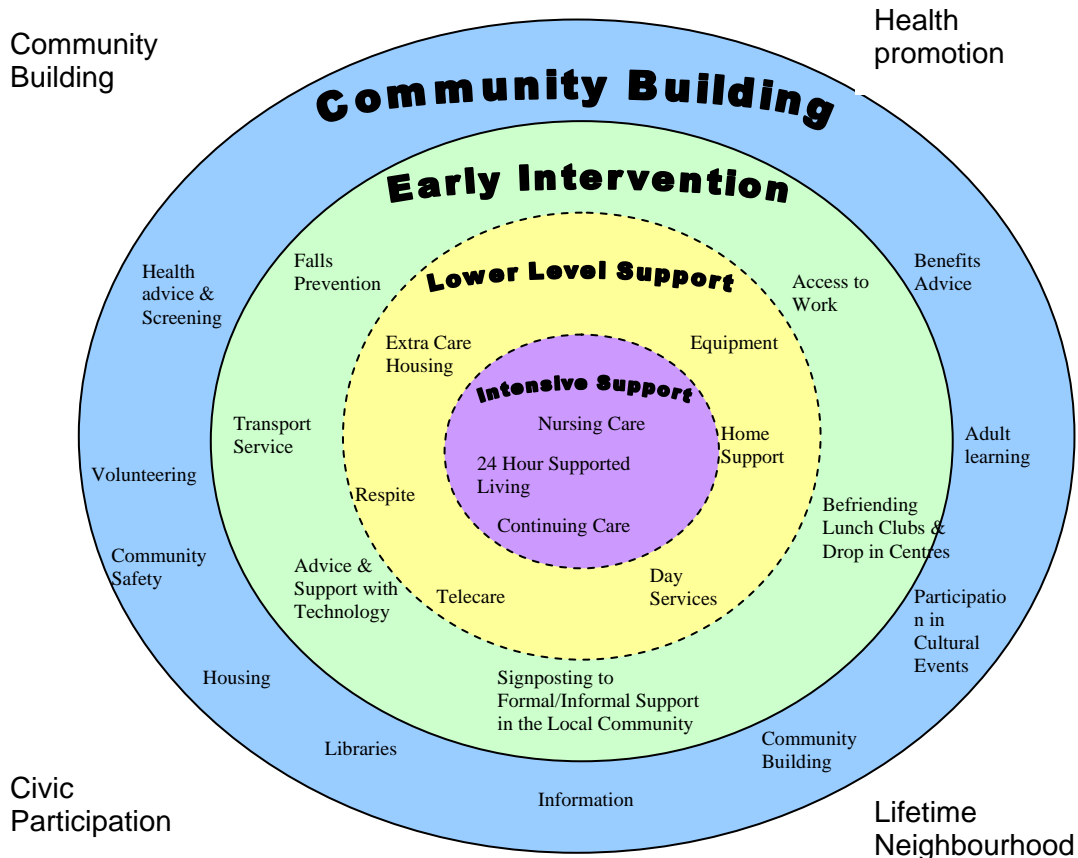
Social & Community Services has a role in improving health and wellbeing. We want to make sure that healthy life expectancy grows as fast as total life expectancy. It wants Oxfordshire to be a place where people achieve their maximum potential, leading happy, successful and purposeful lives with access to high standards of health and social care. It recognises good health is closely related to a wide range of factors such as employment, quality of neighbourhoods, a feeling of purposefulness and having a part to play in society. These factors are linked to issues of housing, transport and infrastructure. Our role is to influence or direct the contributions made from other agencies, to ensure these are based on what is important to a person *from their perspective* and hence more effective in helping people meet their goals.

We are interested in influencing all of the following dimensions that we believe are crucial to individuals and families living successful and independent lives:-



Increasingly we need to engage citizens as part of the solution (persuading residents to take more personal responsibility or to change the way they act). We will move from service delivery that is sometimes paternalistic to participative. Information, social marketing and education will form the basis of this change.

Social & Community Services has a role in maximising independence. The current focus within adult social care on crisis intervention must be replaced by a greater emphasis on prevention, early intervention and enablement. We need to learn from the library service and adult learning which are offering a range of opportunities that individuals can choose whether to access. We will ensure that universal community resources like these will be harnessed to support people in their own homes and localities. This focus on early support relies on a shift of responsibility away from the state and back to communities. To reach the whole community links need to be made into wider local strategies such as a world class economy, neighbourhood renewal and tackling inequalities in areas with the worst health and deprivation. While we recognise that the years between 50 and 65 are a transitional period for many people, with numerous life-changing events, people over 50 do not see themselves as older. Hence a range of settings for engaging this age group is required such as the workplace and healthcare venues. The diagram shows the range of support provided by the Directorate. Our aim is to divert people away from the inner two circles by maximising their independence and re-connecting them to their communities.



Ensuring that carers' needs are taken into account is vital to the success of this approach and we need to further strengthen the support provided to carers. This includes both carers known to social services and carers who are not in contact with Social & Community Services, such as carers of people who are self-funding and carers who don't come forward for help. Social & Community Services must take account of the needs of the whole population. In Oxfordshire we intend to refocus our efforts, ensuring that all people are able to access information and services which meet their needs. We will continue to provide a proportionate response to people eligible for publicly funded social care but will also provide more assistance to people paying for their own care, helping them to navigate the system. This will lead to a fair and sustainable social care system where people, whether they pay for their own care or not, as a minimum get good advice, an assessment of their situation, are safeguarded from harm and get access to high quality services.



Social & Community Services has a role in promoting choice and control.

Tomorrows older people will not be passive recipients of what Local Authorities have traditionally offered, they have high expectations of what the welfare state should provide. SCS wants everyone receiving social care support, regardless of their level of need, whether they live in the community or in residential accommodation or whether their support is funded by themselves or by the State, to have choice and control over how their own support is designed and delivered. Over time, people who use social care services and their families will increasingly shape and commission their own support. Individual Budgets will ensure people receiving public funding use the money to buy their own care. SCS will do everything it can to ensure that people who direct their own support on a daily basis are able to benefit from

appropriate and individually tailored safeguards. The state and statutory agencies will have a different role – more active and enabling, less controlling. Service providers will have to market their wares as in any other consumer driven system.

If a person needs help to make decisions then decision-making will be made as close to the person as possible, reflecting the person's own interests and preference. Each person using their Individual Budget they should be free to spend their funds in the way that makes best sense to them, without unnecessary restrictions. Older people or adults of working age who are experiencing disability or mental ill health and their families will not be assumed to be incapable of managing their own support.

Social & Community Services will provide or promote services that are modern, efficient and developed through engagement with service users and carers.

Services providers will be supported to provide services of the highest quality where people are safe. We will work with people and partners to understand better the needs of the whole population and move towards more personalised approaches, which will be increasingly tailor-made to suit each person's unique circumstance, enabling them to be as independent as possible. We will get involved early so that in the long run people are less dependent on state support. Local services will have to respond to locally identified needs, including those expressed through self directed support. A focus on localities will encourage more active

engagement in community planning by service users and in some cases direct involvement in the commissioning of services.

Social & Community Services will make an improvement in all areas of performance.

The transformation of local services will combine greater responsiveness with continuing improvements in efficiency and performance.

SCS works in partnership with service providers to maintain and promote high quality services. To this end it identifies companies that can provide services in terms of sufficiency, responsiveness, value and price in an effective and efficient operating environment. Our service development work ensures that providers recruit and train their staff appropriately, and the key service standards of safeguarding vulnerable adults and promoting a service users' dignity when delivering care are upheld. Where weaknesses are identified Social and Community Services works proactively with its providers to support them and ensure that any required improvements are quickly made. SCS will demonstrate active leadership on safeguarding building on the strong partnership in Oxfordshire.



In order to deliver the transformed services and value for money that communities want, SCS will have to challenge traditional methods of delivery and share data, skills and knowledge more effectively with partners. Currently we work with people who need services, with the PCT, with District Councils, with the Learning and Skills Council, the police, service providers and the voluntary sector. We believe this system-wide transformation must be developed and

owned by local partners. The modern Local Authority has a crucial community leadership role. This is an important development which needs to be grasped by all local authority services.

In response to this challenging agenda set out above Social & Community Services has developed seven Strategic Aims. The Strategic Aims provide a framework for the delivery of the Directorate's services; they help Social & Community Services to set priorities; to allocate resources; to build partnerships and to measure success in meeting the needs of the communities it serves.

Strategic Aims

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In order to translate the Directorate's Strategic Aims into measurable targets, the Directorate has published a Directorate Plan for 2009 – 2010 that explains how we will deliver our strategic aims. There are a number of action plans that will change over time. There follows a few example of what we will deliver:

- Working with the local community to provide a secure Future for Cogges Manor Farm Museum through handing it to a new Trust by 2010.
- Provide more support to communities and individuals at an early stage so that they can maintain their independence through an increased proportion of social and communities net budget spent on preventative and community services by 2% per year, so that by 20013 over 50% of the net budget is spent on preventative and community services.
- Provide more support to families and carers through an increase the number of carers having their needs assessed and receiving a service to 25% of carers of services users by 2012.
- Creating real choice through all new people who need long term social care support being given a personalized budget by 2012.
- Creating more choices as alternatives to institutional care by securing at least 120 additional extra care housing places by 2012.
- Improving quality by making sure 90% of registered care services in Oxfordshire will be awarded a 'good' or 'excellent' provider rating on the adult protection outcome by 2012.
- Taking opportunities to improve and develop library services across Oxfordshire, commencing with a new library in Thame by the summer of 2010.

Underneath the Directorate Plan sit number of more detailed Business Plans and Commissioning Strategies. Detailed action plans and targets that will deliver the SCS strategic aims can be found in the plans.

If you want to comment on this document please contact:

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