

University of Birmingham launches policy commission report: Healthy Ageing in the 21st Century: The best is yet to come

Posted on Monday 3rd February 2014

Cultural sensitivity should be a vital component in all future services for older people, experts at the University of Birmingham, will say today (Monday).

As the Care Bill 2013/14 reaches its final stages in the House of Lords, a Birmingham Policy Commission report urges policy makers to “recognise and accommodate super-diversity” when planning services for an ageing population. Professor Steve Field, Chief Inspector of General Practice for the Care Quality Commission, headed the Commission entitled Healthy Ageing in the 21st Century: The best is yet to come.

He said: “This is the first time we have looked at ageing in a super diverse society. Birmingham is a multicultural city. Its ‘super-diverse’ population provided an ideal opportunity to explore the implications of ageing for ethnically diverse people from across the world.”

The report, being launched today in the House of Commons, found that some communities and faith groups drew on the huge contribution older people make to society and that “sharing this good practice presents a real opportunity for communities of all kinds”.

It also noted that the Equalities Act 2010 could prove more influential in safeguarding the rights of older people than the Human Rights Act 1998.

Among its recommendations, the report calls for:

- A new statutory post of Commissioner for Older People in England
- The Human Rights of older people to be at the heart of health and social care policy
- Research Councils to gain a better understanding of ageing in a super-diverse society
- More effort to give older people a louder voice when planning any kind of service for an ageing population, not just those related to health and social care

The report also found that health inequalities in younger life must be evened out if the poor are to age as well as the better off.

A copy of the full report can be found here: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/policy-commissions/healthy-ageing/index.aspx> (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/policy-commissions/healthy-ageing/index.aspx>)

Ends

For more information please contact [Deborah Walker \(mailto:d.s.walker.1@bham.ac.uk\)](mailto:d.s.walker.1@bham.ac.uk), Head of Communications, University of Birmingham. Tel: (0)121 414 9041. Out of hours please call +44 (0)7789 921165.

Notes to Editors:

- The Healthy Ageing in the 21st Century report will be launched at 19:00 on Monday 3 February in the House of Commons.
- Professor David Eastwood, Vice Chancellor of the University of Birmingham and Baroness Julia Cumberlege, co-chair of the Associate Parliamentary Health Group, will introduce the panel, which will include Prof Steve Field, Chair of the Commission and Chief Inspector of General Practice, Care Quality Commission; Paul Burstow, co-chair of the Associate Parliamentary Health Group and former Minister of State for Care Services and Lord Sutherland, Crossbench Peer and Chair of the 1999 Royal Commission on Long Term Care for Older People.
- Lead academics Prof Heather Draper, Professor of Biomedical Ethics, University of Birmingham and Professor Jean McHale, Prof of Health Care Law, Director of the Centre for Health Law, Science and Policy, University of Birmingham, will also be on the panel.
- The 'Healthy Ageing in the 21st Century' web page includes a [full list of Commissioners \(/research/impact/policy-commissions/healthy-ageing/members-of-the-commission.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/policy-commissions/healthy-ageing/members-of-the-commission.aspx).
- This is the third in a series of [University of Birmingham Policy Commissions \(/research/impact/policy-commissions/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/policy-commissions/index.aspx).