

Birmingham Policy Commission III

Healthy Ageing in the 21st Century



The third Birmingham Policy Commission is exploring how good ageing in a multi-cultural society is defined. It will look in particular at how good health in later life can be promoted.

Hopes and expectations for good and healthy ageing intersect with:

- An increasingly rights-based consumerised discourse stimulated by recent/current governments
- The contradictory pressures of a discourse of individual responsibility and resilience
- Reduced state expenditure on public services
- Uncertainties about the economics of an ageing population
- The increasingly multi-cultural/faith mix in society

The work of the Commission will run in two phases:

Phase 1 will set the agenda by exploring what is meant by good ageing and what the barriers to good and healthy ageing might be. It will also explore ageing in the context of equality and inclusion.

Questions that will be addressed in this phase include:

What is good ageing and when does it begin? What compromises good ageing, and, leaving death aside, what brings good ageing to end? What, if any, is the relationship between flourishing in later life and ageing disgracefully? How can we ensure that older people flourish as part of their families and communities? Is health in older age different to health when we are younger? What needs to be done to ensure that we remain healthy for as long as possible as we age? Are there cultural or ethnic factors that help to promote or prevent healthy ageing?

Do we have a right to "healthy ageing"? Is this affected by our obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 and indeed should it be? Whose responsibility is/ should be to promote/ensure/facilitate healthy ageing in a multi-cultural society? Is ageing inevitably a factor for social exclusion? What are the major challenges for the delivery of health and social care services for an ageing population in a multi-cultural/multi-faith society today? What, if any will be the impact of the reforms contained in the Health and Social Care Act 2012 on this issue? What will be the implications of the Equality Act 2010 for the delivery of health and social care services to an ageing and increasingly multi-cultural, multi-faith population? To what extent are rights and responsibilities in relation to healthy ageing an inherently gendered issue? Do we need a UN Convention on the Rights of the Older Person?

Phase 2 will concentrate on how good and healthy ageing as determined in phase one can be achieved through improvements to the social, emotional and physical environment and by employing existing resilience. It will also explore where responsibility for ensuring good and healthy ageing rests.

The Commission will:

- Inform public debate of these issues
- Highlight the pertinent issues for UK policy makers and regulators in the next decade
- Connect to the EU's increasing policy engagement with health and with healthy ageing - a central theme in EU policy
- Define the future interdisciplinary research agenda

Multi-culturalism is a cross-cutting theme for this Commission. Birmingham as a city is proud to be multi-cultural and Birmingham as a city will form a case study for the deliberations of the Commission.

Learn more about this Policy Commission -

- [Find out who the Policy Commissioners are \(/research/impact/policy-commissions/healthy-ageing/members-of-the-commission.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/policy-commissions/healthy-ageing/members-of-the-commission.aspx)
- [Listen to Professor Jean McHale introducing the Commission \(/research/impact/policy-commissions/healthy-ageing/future-commissions-podcastmchale.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/policy-commissions/healthy-ageing/future-commissions-podcastmchale.aspx)
- [Read the Questions for Phase 1 of the Commission's Evidence Gathering \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/policy-commissions/healthy-ageing/resources.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/policy-commissions/healthy-ageing/resources.aspx)

This Policy Commission is led by [Professor Heather Draper \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/haps/PrimaryCareClinicalSciences/draper-heather.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/haps/PrimaryCareClinicalSciences/draper-heather.aspx) and [Professor Jean McHale \(/staff/profiles/law/mchale-jean.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/law/mchale-jean.aspx)