

Notes from Workshop Three: 21st May 2013

The day was hosted by ExtraCare at the Pannal Croft Village, Newtown. It focussed on the City of Birmingham and ageing in a place that is highly diverse, economically, ethnically and in terms of health. Discussions focussed on ways that high quality of life can be supported including telecare, new models of housing, and maintenance of health and wellbeing in old age.

These notes outline key points discussed during the workshop only and do not represent the views of the organisations or individuals participating.

Participants:

Angus Malcolm, Good Governance Institute; **John Payne**, Partnership Director, ExtraCare; **Angela Bradford**, Extra Care Commissioning and Healthy Lifestyle Director, ExtraCare; **Melanie Grey**, Birmingham City Council; **Adrian Phillips**, Birmingham City Council Director of Public Health; **Simon Bennett**, Age Concern Birmingham; **Jennifer Lynch**, Doctoral Candidate (UoB); **Chandrika Gordhan**, Birmingham Arthritis Resource Centre (BARC)

The Good Governance Institute (GGI)

- GGI is working with Birmingham City Council to evaluate their telecare systems provided by Tunstall. GGI is collecting qualitative data on the service through for example focus groups, and home visits
- Citizen expert reference groups and surveys of voluntary sector groups. Generally the satisfaction with the service is higher with service users. Feedback indicates that the telecare service enhances confidence and independence
- More awareness among the public and GPs is needed of the service, particularly around 'assessment' and 'referral' to ensure that the service, which is free at the point of use, is taken up and used effectively by older people.
- Asian community and elderly care – at the moment, older people are cared for within families, but while the requirement for telecare at the moment is low, it is changing rapidly and in the future. We can't hide behind culture to assume that the elderly in minority communities are being cared for within families
- Reaching ethnic minorities to ensure that their views about a service is heard, if not English speakers, was discussed. GGI have run focus groups in Punjabi and from this, Tunstall are considering training community interpreters as responders to alarms, so that the language barrier is overcome

ExtraCare Charitable Trust

- The wellbeing of residents is a vital part of the service offered to residents. They are assessed when they start to live in an ExtraCare community, provided with diet and exercise advice and support to improve their health
- ExtraCare grew out of Coventry Churches Housing Association.
- ExtraCare housing is mixed tenure, including rented, privately owned, and some council funded tenures. It is currently investing in a new site on Hagley Road, Birmingham.
- ExtraCare is a product of the community in which it is based. In Newtown, 70% of the residents are Afro-Caribbean which broadly reflects the locality in which the Care home is based. Other social and sheltered housing providers did not want to provide services in this area which is not affluent.
- ExtraCare created a community group in advance of opening which met regularly with around 100 attending. In this way, peer support in the Community was established, and information and interest from locals was generated
- There is a 'Friends' membership option on facilities, so that they can be accessed by non-residents. In this way, facilities are made available to the local community.

Continuous Improvement of Adult Services, Birmingham City Council

- 'Making it Real' covers over 395 organisations, including 66 councils signed up to change adult social care for the better through personalisation and community based support.
- Birmingham City Council has a 'Making it Real' action plan to support ageing well in the city, particularly focussing on information and advice; active support of Communities (including things such as Community mapping); and focussing on the workforce
- Community mapping enabled more focussed engagement with diverse communities
- The Council is committed to improving social care, personalisation and individual control over support services. The Council maintains a framework for quality checking of services offered to the Community and ensuring they meet community needs.
- Co-production is at the heart of this service: The aim is to bring services users and providers around a table to discuss issues. This is very empowering for service users
- The aim is to provide information to the places where people can access it – more than an online presence because access to the internet is not possible for everyone. Multiple language and disabilities are catered for, however the information provided is tailored, so that it meets demand (i.e. not printing many thousands of leaflets in Braille when there are only 50 Braille users – example only not based on actual numbers)
- Opportunities Fair held at Edgbaston Cricket Ground in April 2013 for over 90 services to be able to demonstrate the services they offer directly to service users.
- Focussing on positive outcomes and on-going support, particular about accessing and maintaining social networks
- Targeted information and cascading of information through local networks is important

Public Health in Birmingham

- We have the healthiest generation of old people that we will see for a long time: They have known austerity and have had to be innovative and active just for their survival. What is required is a way to re-activate healthy survival behaviours through 'nudging' and raising awareness about health and exercise
- For today's younger people, rather than re-activation, behaviour change will be needed to ensure that this generation grows old healthy, because they have never known active lifestyles. Used to an inactive lifestyle, changing these lifelong behaviours will be costly and challenging

4 'poverties' were described in relation to older people:

- Information poverty: There are great deals online, with services offered via the internet and far better information available to older people. Training older people in a way that is appropriate for them, how to access this information is vital.
- Fuel poverty: New and better insulated or energy neutral accommodation is needed to ensure that older people do not waste money or suffer cold because of poorly insulated, large homes.
- Food poverty: It is extremely difficult to eat healthily if not asset rich. Planners are allowing corner shops to close, cutting off easy local access to food, and without broadband food can't be ordered online.
- Health poverty: Primary care is moving from a holistic to a medical / technical problem and GP's often deal with the medical issue, not the person.
- Flu vaccinations are lowest in those with fewest assets.
- Vitamin D should be given free on prescription, or it should be supplemented in the water supply
- Safety: Towns and cities are not designed for older people. They should be organised around safety and exercise. Buses are very unsafe for older people, with stop/start motion being hard to cope with if frail. More 20 mile and hour zones should be introduced to slow traffic down, and make public transport motion easier to cope with

Challenges

- Birmingham has very disadvantaged areas and often ethnic groups are concentrated in these areas due to the availability of cheap housing. Technologically, migrants from the Asian subcontinent are more willing to use mobile phones and other technology.
- Not being able to afford the internet, excludes many from accessing services (this applies not just to older people)
- Public sector gym equipment (and also the facilities provided) is not compatible with older people's physical needs, and gyms are not marketed at older clients. Gyms are also not culturally sensitive, so Asian women may be put off. It was noted that the Nishkam Centre has a gym for women only.
- Public services should 'enable' and not simply 'provide' – information, publicity and awareness to ensure that people take control of their health, age, finances and services.

Working in the community: Age Concern Birmingham

- Age Concern Birmingham works to highlight how older people make a positive community
- Birmingham is a very diverse and very young city. It is also a deprived city – one third of people in the city over 65 receive pension credits and one quarter of people living in Birmingham are in fuel poverty
- Neighbourhoods in Birmingham are often in flux with an increasing ‘churn’ of residents arriving in areas of cheap housing and moving out as they can afford to
- Tackling poverty is key to ‘ageing well.’ Current changes to welfare benefits and the ‘bedroom supplement’ is a threat to the ability of those in poverty to live well.
- This generation is richer however some need to continue to work. For some, not working as you get older is a problem both for health and financially. The key to this is bridging work where worthwhile work is undertaken by older people that matches their experience and expertise.

Individual choice and feeling valued were reflected in the evidence heard at this workshop. Transport was also important across the discussion, focussing on personal budgets and using transport in ways that work for individuals. Service provision is rooted in a highly complex range of needs, requirements and situations.

Health and maintaining it through longer old age is going to be challenging, not so much for the current older generation, who may have their healthy, active approach to life ‘re-activated’, but the problem may be facing the younger people of today, who are used to sedentary inactive lifestyles – encouraging this generation to stay active and healthy in old age is likely to be much more challenging and expensive.

Please see further information about the workshop at

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/policy-commissions/healthy-ageing/evidence.aspx>