



DCLG: Ageing in Communities

Place, Localism and Ageing Well

Tue 24th Sept 2013



Context

We are now living longer; the proportion of older people in England's population is projected to increase rapidly over the next 20 years. However we are not necessarily staying healthy for longer, which has its implications for the government and the public services they provide.

Purpose

Organised by DCLGs Strategic Analysis Team, and hosted by Brian Beach from the International Longevity Centre, this roundtable discussion brought together experts from academia, the third sector, local authorities, and central government to discuss the evidence on ageing well in communities, to share promising practice from local areas, and to discuss the gaps in the evidence base.

This was the first in a proposed series of discussions on the ageing population.

- Place, Localism and Ageing Well – September 2013
- Toward a Connected 3rd Age: Digital & Technological Solutions – March 2014



Why the focus on localism and ageing well?

1. Effective community based initiatives and encouraging healthier, more independent and more engaged ageing may help to curb the demand for public services in later life. Evidence indicates a relationship between loneliness and health.
2. The evidence shows a clear economic case for ageing better: just a one-year increase in national 'healthy working life' could increase GDP by around 2.7%. Not to mention the benefits to wellbeing, and to social (and digital) inclusion in the later years.
3. Previous evaluations of government programmes provide some good evidence about the key elements of successful 'place based' local solutions, and how they can be cost-effective. The Ageing Well Programme legacy and the Partnerships for Older People Projects are just two examples that we could build on, with clear lessons to use and take forward.



The Key Questions?

- 1. Following four presentations on ageing (from an economic angle, a localism angle and a forward look at the What Works Centre for Ageing Better), tables were asked to discuss four questions:**

What should local areas prioritise in developing local ageing strategies?

What are the catalysts for engaging and mobilising communities?

How can evidence and analysis be used more effectively?

How do we encourage and support social innovation and sustainability?



What should local areas prioritise in developing local ageing strategies?

Needs

- Focus on looking at wider quality of life: starting from the bottom up in assessing needs and outcomes – not necessarily the top down economic approach
- The principle of inclusion
- Understanding what local data means

Approach to the strategy

- Ownership of the strategy
- Ensure longevity and sustainability beyond short term
- Understand what makes a difference and put it into practice!

Alternatives

- Looking at the best ways of delivering the strategy, e.g. engaging others (GPs, voluntary sector, carers, etc.) as well as innovative ideas (e.g. prescriptions from the GP to deal with social isolation)
- Use opportunities from the public health agenda to focus on longer term outcomes
- Age-proofing new homes
- Look at cheaper alternatives

Possible actions?

- More local assessments around wider quality of life
- More local engagement – e.g. Older People's Forums, Carers forums
- Public service transformation is key. If there are fiscal, economic & social benefits from changing how services around ageing are delivered then we should be considering what the evidence is and the scale of these gains (relative to costs) - especially where there is evidence that it can reduce service pressures or reactive spending (i.e. by using more preventative services, volunteer resources, etc.).



What are the catalysts for engaging and mobilising communities?

Enhancing local structures and capacity

- Expertise, infrastructure, capacity and logic
- Pointing people toward volunteering opportunities
- Improve support and capacity, e.g. Older People's Forums
- No one-size-fits-all age-friendly communities
- Ensure spread of engagement opportunities, from formal to informal
- Develop capacity of local authorities to look for wider opportunities

More awareness of good practice and innovation

- No one-size-fits-all age-friendly communities
- Be inspired by the success of other initiatives

Possible actions?

- Areas to share more about their innovative practice (e.g. Manchester's age friendly city pilot)
- Is there a role for DCLG in helping to share best practice?
- Are there barriers around boosting volunteering that need to be addressed?



How can evidence and analysis be used more effectively?

- Ensure evidence is tailored for different users/the needs of local partners
- Scope for private funding for research
- Join up the influence, the money and the expertise
- Make more use of anecdotal narratives [to add context to statistics]

Possible actions?

➤ Analysts see RCTs as the gold standard of research, but in local areas with limited numbers, are other types of evidence more valuable? Could local data be utilised more effectively?

How do we encourage and support social innovation and sustainability?

- Coordinated leadership, pushing to get traction politically
- Breaking down communication barriers
- More local partnerships (with a need to manage expectations about funding and the need for more innovation)

Possible actions?

➤ Do we need 'policy champions' for the ageing agenda across government to gain political traction?



➤ What are the next steps on preparing for ageing? Locally? Nationally?

➤ Next steps for DCLG

- Policy development on improving housing options for older people
- Ageing in Communities 2
Towards a Connected 3rd Age (March 2014)

The objective of this workshop-style event is to inject some fresh thinking into what the “digitally connected environment” has to offer older people and should play in shaping policy making, service design and delivery.

We are keen understand the “Connected 3rd Age” landscape from the perspective of older people, and to develop the evidence based and encourage knowledge transfer around the potential benefits and opportunities from existing and emerging work around independent digitally enabled and assisted living for older people.

We are also interested in generating policy ideas on how the digital option could support, or be used to address the challenges and opportunities of demographic change to localities. What are the emerging propositions that policy makers and practitioners need to factor into their forward planning? How might improved knowledge transfer support “better for less” outcomes?

This event will coincide with the launch of the Government’s Digital Inclusion strategy, due in Spring 2014.