

Centre for Ageing Better

Update Note for UK Advisory Forum on Ageing 19 March 2014

The Centre is in its planning phase and should be operational by early 2015.

Role

“To identify, apply and promote evidence of what makes for a better quality of life in older age and to empower older people to stay active, healthier and happier for longer”.

As well as generating evidence the Centre aims to help bring the changes needed to impact meaningfully on people’s lives. It has been promoted by Government and BIG and will be independent of both.

Timetable

Nine trustees have been appointed. An initial consultation paper will be issued in April. By autumn the endowment of £50m from BIG should have been received and its CEO should have started. Extensive consultations will take place over 2014 with older people and stakeholders about the Centre’ priorities, partnerships and its operational model.

Audiences

Five groups need evidence of what works to improve well-being in later life: 1. Individuals, families and carers. 2. Communities. 3. Commissioners. 4. The private sector 5. Policy Makers.

Selecting priorities

The Centre’s remit is vast, so the selection of its priorities is crucial. These priorities will be determined after extensive consultation with the public and stakeholders and will be topics that matter, where evidence is available and relevant; where there is a theory of change as to how the promoted evidence will help bring change and where there are committed and powerful partners who will work with the Centre for 2-5 years to make change happen.

Possible priority areas

The list below illustrates potential fields of work:

- Preparing and planning for a better later life
- Sustaining independence in later life (and reduce institutional care)
- Stimulating markets, investment and innovation to address ageing better
- Maximising community engagement with local ageing
- Better ageing locally, how to assess, develop strategies and commission
- Extending working life – how to make it happen.

There are many other possible areas and major sub-topics within each of these, such as how to reduce loneliness or to increase informal social care, etc.

A Catalyst

The Centre will have most impact if it acts as a catalyst: to use evidence, knowledge, its strategic understanding and position to stimulate others to focus on issues that matter and to work together to synthesise and generate evidence, to apply it and to commit to working to bring about change.

Partnerships

Partnerships and some small funding stimuli will be how the Centre gives effect to its catalysing role and maximises the value of the evidence and knowledge it develops.

The Centre will seek committed partnerships with research synthesisers, research funders, with funders of innovation and investment and delivery partnerships with government departments, selected VCS organisations and other public, private and voluntary bodies.

Early discussions

The Centre has met with most What Works Centres who have been supportive and helpful and with a wide range of other bodies. It will deepen and extend these discussions over the next six months to help determine priorities and processes and to agree and develop partnerships.

Embedding the voice and views of older [people in its work

A key issue for the Centre is how it ensures it listens to, understands and is ultimately accountable to older people present and future.

Geoffrey Filkin

Chair, Centre for Ageing Better

17 March 2014