

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

24 January 2013

Annual Report of the Older People's Champion

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This is my thirteenth champion's report – the contents of this report follow on from the work I reported last year about my involvement and activities in the affairs of older people at the local, regional and national level in the fields of:

- Engagement
- Dementia
- Isolation and Loneliness

My Report

2.0 Engagement

2.1 I reported last year that Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had asked me, as a member of the UK Advisory Forum on ageing, to respond to certain questions relating to Direct Payments:

- How well do they work in rural areas and what choice do people have when buying services?
- What are the opportunities for the voluntary sector to develop their service offer?
- What are the most important features of good practice to counter social isolation in rural communities?

2.2 As you know I am a member of the Older People's Partnership Board (OPPB) which meets quarterly with representatives from around the County. In addition, I attend some of the meetings of the North Yorkshire Forum for older people which meet monthly. These give me the opportunity to listen to the voices of older people in North Yorkshire.

2.3 During the consultation of the refreshment of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), the members of the OPPB raised that they were not in favour of direct payments, mainly due to the bureaucracy of employing someone. They were also concerned about the stability of the voluntary sector, how would older people know what services were available, and how would they also know about the reliability of these services. Ref: Mins. OPPB.

- 2.4 The Chief Executive of the Commission for Rural Communities published a report 'Social Isolation experienced by older people in rural communities' on September 11th 2012. This highlighted that by 2028, 186% of the rural population will be 65 years + and in the whole of the UK it will be 149%. (See Appendix 1 for further detail.)
- 2.5 Also the Rural Statement stated that rural areas receive much less funding per capita for the population of older people than urban areas. For people aged 65+, urban local authorities receive £1750 per capita whilst the 27 shire counties receive £773 per head. Furthermore, the provision of services costs less in urban areas which questions the equity in funding for older people.
- 2.6 In November Norman Lamb MP, Minister for the Care Services announced that the targets for local authorities to have all service recipients on direct payments was to be reduced from 100% to 70%. The Minister said that it had been a pragmatic judgement.
- 2.7 Still on the subject of engagement, I have been working closely with Trading Standards. As a member of North Yorkshire Advice Services Partnership I attend the National Energy Action six monthly meetings. An important issue on the agenda was the Green Deal and I asked how it was to be promoted, hoping that older people were not to be 'cold called'. NPower said 'Well, it would be by telephone'. I therefore contacted the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to object and Graham Venn, NYCC Assistant Director (Trading Standards) also took the matter to the National Association of Trading Standards Officers. This matter is 'work in progress'.
- 2.8 In 2012, the Chair of the OPPB reported an experience with his energy supply company. Without any reference to him or his wife, his energy supply had been transferred to another company along with his direct debit authority. This took quite a long time to resolve and return to his original arrangement. Apparently there have been other cases like this in the UK.
- 2.9 Finally, I have taken up the matter of cold callers when a person has signed up for the Telephone Preference Service. It is reported that National Charities are engaging professional fund raisers to telephone people to persuade them to agree to a direct debit to give to a well known charity on a regular basis. One elderly couple had felt quite harassed when telephoned three times asking for their bank account details. Some companies appear to be selling people's contact details and making a lot of money. A company has now been prosecuted and individuals have been fined heavily, two more cases are under investigation.

3.0 Dementia

- 3.1 This year I attended training in Dementia Awareness from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF). Although I could only attend two days out of the four, I found it so worthwhile. An event at the Galtres Centre in Easingwold celebrated the

making of 60 North Yorkshire dementia champions.

- 3.2 At the request of the WRVS I visited Sheffield Northern Hospital to see the work of the WRVS volunteers to visit and befriend patients in acute wards suffering from dementia. The first 12 months of the scheme has had some remarkable successes, allowing the nurses to get on with their work and resulting in speedier recovery for the patient and thus less hospital bed days.
- 3.3 I facilitated a meeting between the Dementia Champion at Leeds Teaching Hospitals and the WRVS following the hospitals' interest in developing a similar scheme at Leeds. I have been advised to visit Bradford Royal to see their dementia friendly wards and I also plan to visit services at York Hospital.
- 3.4 I attended a reception at Downing Street to launch the first progress report on the Prime Minister's challenge on Dementia. He launched 'one million dementia friends' and announced additional funding of £50m. I received confirmation on January 10th that the hospital will be going ahead and contracting with the WRVS to use volunteers to befriend patients with dementia.

www.dementiachallenge.dh.gov.uk

- 3.5 Both NHS Trusts and Local Authorities are able to bid for this funding to help develop dementia friendly environments. NYCC has submitted a bid in partnership with Harrogate District Foundation Trust and 54 independent care providers. St James Hospital, Leeds has made a bid to develop two wards and has invited me to visit and review the changes using the Kings Fund Criteria.

4.0 Isolation and Loneliness

- 4.1 "The effect of isolation and loneliness upon an individual's health is as bad as smoking 15 cigarettes a day". The World Health Organisation (WHO) rates loneliness as higher risk than lifelong smoking.
- 4.2 As North Yorkshire's representative on the Yorkshire and Humber Forum on Ageing and the Chair of this regional forum, Isolation and Loneliness is the Forum's priority in our Work Plan for 2012/13. We continued to be funded by the DWP and all the UK's Forums have received the same funding for 2012/13 and 2013/14.
- 4.3 The Forum organised a conference in Sheffield on November 15th and Larry Hollando, NYCC Health and Adult Services manager accepted an invitation to take a workshop on the approach adopted by North Yorkshire which has used the Innovation fund to reduce the effects of isolation and loneliness to support eight projects for older people including:
 - Grow your own Community – Rural Action Yorkshire
 - Horton Community Cafe – Horton Housing Association

- 4.4 Laura Ferguson (Director for the Campaign to Reduce Isolation and Loneliness), Lorraine Jackson (leader the 3 person team at Quarry House on Isolation and loneliness for the Department of Health) and Ewan Morris, Chief Fire Officers' Association and lead on Ageing Safely were key speakers. Other speakers gave presentations on good practice in their areas.
- 4.5 North Yorkshire's Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) have been identifying people in the community who are at risk from the effects of isolation and loneliness. I have met with Colin Hunter, lead officer and manager at Selby FRS to monitor the progress and suggest contacts to support this work. Colin reports that work is now being carried out in Ryedale and Scarborough, so the whole of North Yorkshire will have been covered.
- 4.6 Isolation and Loneliness is the second priority for 'Vulnerable Adults' in the North Yorkshire's Health and Well-Being Strategy
- 4.7 At a local level I worked with officers to secure the attendance of Laura Ferguson to take a workshop on Isolation and Loneliness at the NY Partnerships Annual Event in Harrogate.
- 4.8 North Yorkshire has joined the Age Action Alliance which has 8 working groups. I chair the National Working Group on Isolation and Loneliness. A ninth group has been developed for Transport and the Yorkshire & Humber Forum has secured a place on this Group.
- 4.9 The Loneliness and Isolation Working Group aims to identify, develop and test models of collaboration to reduce loneliness and isolation amongst older people. Since forming a year ago the group has welcomed attendance from a diverse range of members to highlight and explore the agenda from a range of perspectives. We have advised policy makers and commissioners such as the Big Lottery Fund about the forthcoming grants programme and the Commission for Rural Communities report on social isolation.

"We have increased our understanding about what works at reducing isolation in local areas. We hope to make these more widely available and explore the potential for developing practical pilots that improve collaboration between sectors and engage the private sector in working with others to reach out to older people at a local level".

Referenced from the First Year progress report launched at a reception at The House of Commons in November 2012.

- 4.10 I continue to attend events where I believe the information will be of use for older people. Information is the most valuable item to give older people confidence to tackle the issues affecting them.
- 4.11 I remain deeply concerned about the equivalent number of excess winter deaths within England. North Yorkshire is only below the national average by 0.3%. Within the County itself, Richmondshire, Selby and Craven are amongst the highest. NYCC's Health and Adult Services successfully submitted a bid to the

Department of Health - Warm Homes Healthy People Fund. This will facilitate a range of projects to help reduce excess winter deaths within North Yorkshire. Reference: Health Profiles for 2012 (County and District Level Atlases from the network of Public Health Observatories).

- 4.12 I will be pressing for a review of the payments of winter fuel supplements for those over 70 years. The UK Advisory Forum on Ageing has asked for and received an answer from the Minister about the perceived anomaly of ex pats in Spain who receive this payment yet we have people in England still dying of cold. It is not reaching those who need it most.

5.0 I would like to recommend to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

- a) That the County Council submits a case to the Government for increased funding based on the evidence and recommendations in the Commission for Rural Communities Report and using the 2011 census figures now published.

Report prepared by Shelagh Marshall

Appendices

Appendix 1: The Commission for Rural Communities Report (Press Release)

Appendix 2: Age Action Alliance (Leaflet)

The Commission for Rural Communities (CRC), Report;

Older people in rural areas facing social isolation

Services for older people in rural areas need to be 'rural-proofed' to help prevent more older people becoming isolated, a new report finds.

The Commission for Rural Communities (CRC), whose commissioner Professor Mark Shucksmith is director of the Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal, has published a major report into social isolation experienced by older people in England's rural areas.

At a time when spending reductions are leading to changes in the way that public services such as care, housing and transport are provided in rural areas, the report considers the impact of those changes on the lives of older people. The report concludes that:

- 23 per cent of the rural population are over retirement age compared to 18% in urban areas, and the proportion is expected to rise. As a consequence ill-health is worse in rural areas
- The cost of providing social care to older people in rural communities is higher than in urban areas, and many local authorities are having to charge more, or provide care only to the most needy, in rural areas compared to urban. For example, rural dwellers are receiving lower personal budgets for comparable needs while having to pay more for the services they receive
- Although Government proposals to increase the level of funding available to rural local authorities are welcome, they are unlikely to address the greater imbalance between the level of need, and the amount of funding available for services such as social care for older people in rural areas compared to urban areas. We call on the Government to consider this further
- Community transport is increasingly important as the number of scheduled bus services in rural areas falls. However, older people can experience very different levels of access to bus services in different areas, including: different levels of subsidy for scheduled bus services in different areas concessionary passes that are valid on community transport in some areas but not others concessionary fares available before 9.30am in some areas but not others

The CRC suggests that the Government investigates the merits of offering older people a personal budget for transport, to replace the concessionary fares system.

- People tend to have changing housing needs as they grow older, and the CRC calls for a wider range of housing, or housing adaptations, to be available - rented or privately owned. We believe that the National Planning Policy Framework will assist in helping local people determine the numbers and types of housing available. It is crucial that Government monitors its success.

- The CRC has come across a large number of volunteer-run projects, led by local communities working in partnership with private or public sector bodies, which have made a tremendous difference to the lives of older people in rural areas. This success could be enhanced further, at minimal cost, if mentoring or leadership training were available to volunteers wishing to establish or manage community activities.

Dr Liz Brooks, a research associate in the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, at Newcastle University, carried out a lot of the background research for the report.

Professor Shucksmith said: "Older people who live in rural areas are often among the first to suffer when cuts are made to key services. This report highlights just how vulnerable they can be face if transport or provision for care for the elderly are affected."

Press release courtesy of the Commission for Rural Communities - published on: 13th September 2012.

Link to the full report: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/crc/files/Social-isolation-experienced-by-older-people-in-rural-communities-final-sep-11-12.pdf>

Fantastic! In our outcomes focussed world this is an excellent example of the Alliance facilitating things that may never have happened to help vulnerable older people.

National Energy Action (NEA)

I joined the alliance to:

“Shift thinking locally and nationally, stimulate innovation, challenge assumptions.”

Alliance Member

The Age Action Alliance has made great progress in bringing together stakeholders to work together to develop practical solutions on the ageing agenda. For Alliance Boots it has been an opportunity to work with a range of partners to support older people in the UK. Importantly it has also presented an opportunity to give focus to our own work on ageing.

Alliance Boots

I joined the alliance to:

“Increase the impact and relevance and ‘value added’ of our contribution to improving life for older people in the UK – now and for future generations.”

Alliance Member



Age Action Alliance

Visit our website
www.ageactionalliance.org

Write to us
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 Tothill Street
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Email us
ageaction.alliance@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Call us
 020 7449 7027

**Join with the Alliance
 and help us improve
 older people’s lives
 ... together**



Age Action Alliance

*Improving older people’s lives
 ... together*

ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

An Introduction



“The network for partnership working and practical action to improve later life”

OUR VISION

The Age Action Alliance is informed and driven by older people themselves.

We share the vision of improving older people's lives, creating neighbourhoods where all older people are secure, valued, able to contribute to their local communities and wider society.

www.ageactionalliance.org

What is the Age Action Alliance?

The Age Action Alliance is the first national initiative of its kind. An independent partnership of over 260 organisations, spanning all sectors (public, private and voluntary) and adopting a new approach to the opportunities and challenges of an ageing society.

The Alliance was launched on 30 September 2011 to coincide with UN Older People's Day.

Why do we need an Age Action Alliance?

We are all living longer. This is cause for celebration but as society ages we must adapt traditional ways of doing things if we are all to age well and continue to thrive economically and socially. In the next two decades the size of the population aged 80 and over will treble and those over 90 will double.

Demographic change demands that we act and adapt.



How can the Age Action Alliance help?

There is a need for society to respond to this shift, to challenge attitudes to ageing and to recognise older people as assets not insurmountable burdens on society. The Age Action Alliance helps to support cross sector organisations make this shift and work together to realise our shared version of an age friendly society.

How does the Alliance work?

Most of the collaboration between Alliance members takes place within the working groups which cover a variety of themes:

- **Age Friendly Environments**
 - **Safe Warm Homes**
 - **Attitudes to Ageing**
 - **Digital Inclusion**
 - **Excluded Groups**
 - **Healthy Workplaces**
- **Loneliness & Isolation**
 - **Public Health & Active Lifestyles**
- **Social & Economic Value of Volunteering**
 - **Research • Finance**

The Alliance Partnership Board made up of representatives of cross sector organisations and at least half are older people themselves. Secretariat support is currently provided by Age UK and the Department for Work and Pensions.

How can I get involved?

The Age Action Alliance is a network which benefits from a wide range of members across all sectors.

It's free to join and members benefit from making connections and forming partnerships with others who share their interests. The Alliance website is being developed to improve opportunities to share and interact.