

Independent Commission for Older People

Consultation on the needs of older people living in and around Norwich



‘Influencing and informing the development of services for older people in the coming years.’

Foreword

It is perhaps worth remembering that older people differ very little from anyone else. They have simply celebrated more birthdays. A recently published all party Parliamentary Local Government Group's publication, *Never too late for Living*, says:

“Public perceptions about ageing need to change. The lives of older people need to be thought of as ‘our lives’ not ‘their problems’. Central government should lead this change nationally by tackling the current crisis that is impeding progress. Local Government should lead locally by providing services which bring people together, particularly across generations.”

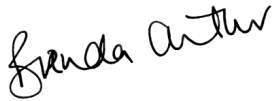
That is why Norwich City Council has helped establish an independent commission to hear from individuals and organisations currently working with and for older people about ways in which the lives of older people in our community can be made more fulfilling.

In doing that, however, we have to take into account the environment in which we are working. Here are some stark statistics highlighted in the *Never too late for Living* publication:

- between 2006 and 2031 the UK population will grow from 60.6 million to 71 million
- over 65s will increase from 9.7 million in 2006 to 15.8 million in 2031, from 16 to 22 per cent of the population
- over 85s will increase from 1.2 million to 3.9 million over that period, and half will have some form of disability
- only one tenth of the 1940s generation was childless – a fifth of the 1980s will be
- extended families are more likely to live further away.

In the future as people live longer there will be fewer young people compared with older people. So who will provide and pay for care? We do know that already many older people are working longer or are volunteering to help others, many of who are also older people.

Thank you for taking the time to read this document. I hope you will feel able to make a contribution to our work by giving us your views on what would make a difference to your life or the lives of those people you seek to support. We will share our final report with those organisations that provide services and hope they will be influenced by what you have to say.



Brenda Arthur

Commission chair

Introduction

The format of this questionnaire is different from many others. We wish to hear your comments, freely given, on important topics. We have provided some space to respond and have avoided tick boxes which might be restrictive for your answer.

Each of the seven topics has a separate section. At the start of each section we have provided relevant information for you. These are not the opinions of the commission, but are intended to stimulate your thinking.

Please feel free to respond to all, some or none of the questions in each section. Your views will be welcome, even if you choose to reply to just one question. Also, please raise any other points that you feel may be relevant.

If you have any queries regarding the questionnaire or would like some help to complete it please contact:

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Contact details

1. Your name

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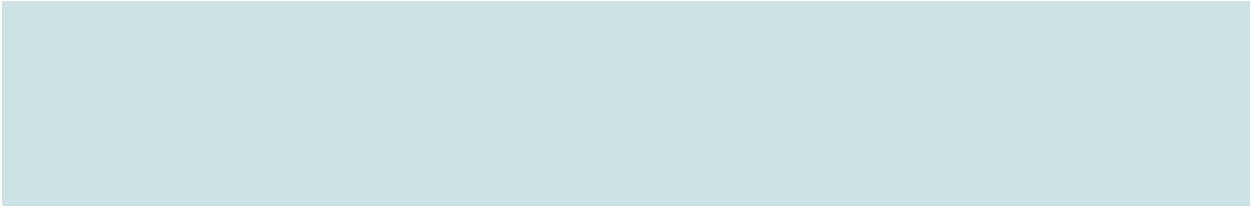
4. Email address

5. If you do not represent an organisation what is your interest in this consultation? For example: are you an older person yourself, a carer, a relative of an older person, or other interested member of the public

6. The name and address of your organisation (if applicable)

7. Your position in the organisation

8. Your organisation's business or interests



9. Approximately how many older people or carers of older people does your organisation work with?



10. How many staff and/or volunteers carry out work for your organisation?



Issue one – Living independently

Some people want to keep as well as possible, and take control of their own health and social care. Government research has shown that people would like better prevention services and earlier intervention, more choice and a louder voice, more done to tackle inequalities and improve community services, with more support for people with long term needs. People asked for more help to achieve this, through better information, advice and support.

Listed below are a number of prompts for areas of discussion. Please feel free to comment on these or raise any other point that you feel is relevant to the issue of independent living.

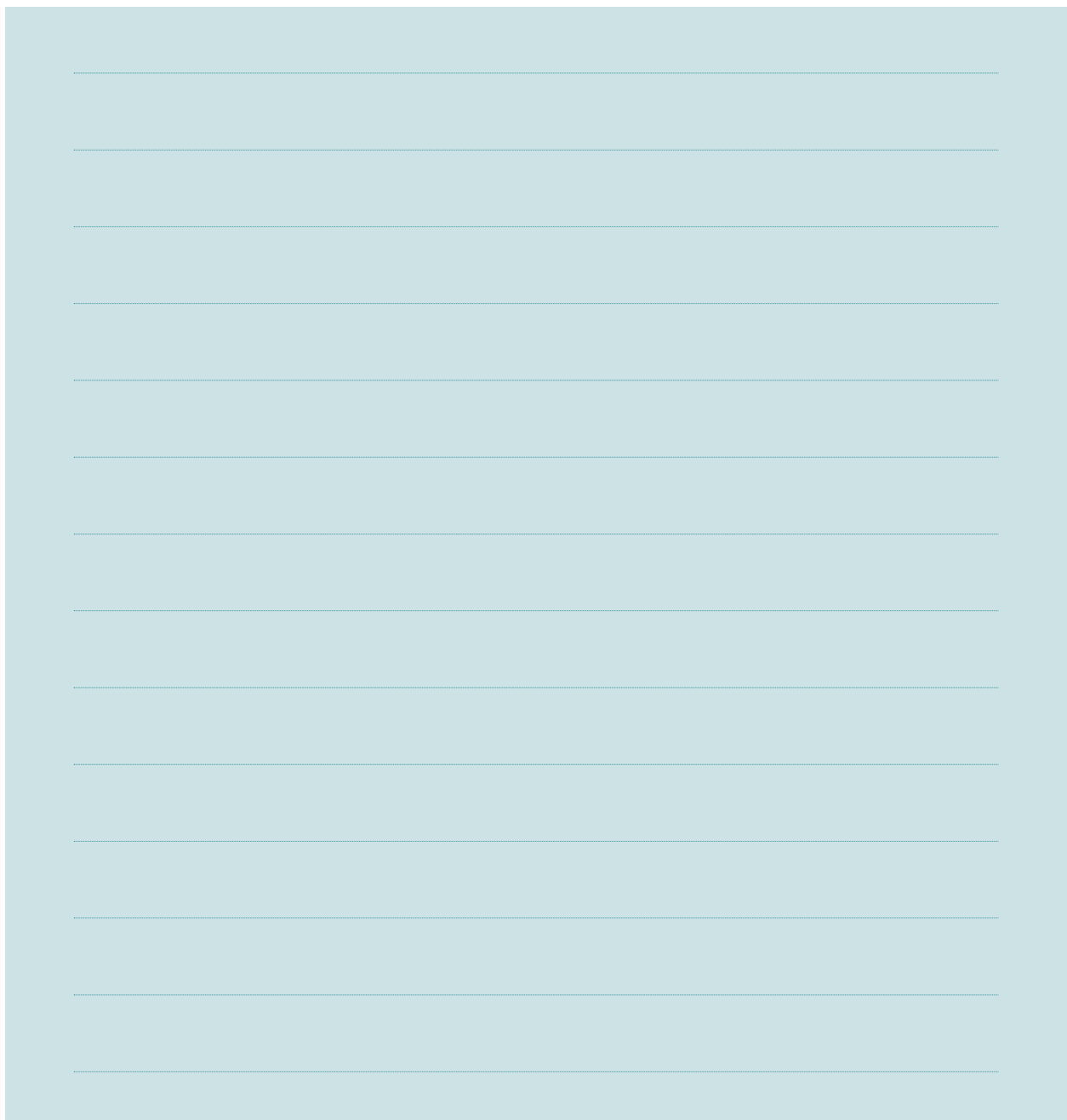
- How easy do you think it is for older people living in and around Norwich to live independently?
- What do you think makes it difficult or impossible for older people to live independently?
- What approaches work well in enabling older people to live independently? Do you have any examples from the past or elsewhere?
- 24 per cent of older people living in Norwich have been assessed as meeting the current criteria to receive a service from Adult Social Services. Do you feel that the remaining 76 per cent have access to the information and advice they need to help them find the help and support they need?
- Direct Payments¹ and Individual Budgets² are a way of enabling older people to purchase care for themselves. Locally the take up of direct payments amongst older people is low at 3 per cent of those who would be entitled to them. Why do you think this is?
- There is a move to increase the number of Direct Payments significantly over the next few years. How do you think giving individuals the funds to buy their own care will help them?

¹ 'Direct Payments' are monies paid to people so that they can organise their own social care. They are not a benefit and do not affect a persons benefits or tax.

² 'Individual Budgets' are a government pilot scheme that is currently being assessed having ended its initial trial in December 2007. The main idea behind Individual Budgets is to put the person who is supported, or given services, in control of deciding what support or services they get.

- How do you rate older people's access to transport and mobility in Norwich? Please suggest improvements.

Your response to issue one – Independent living



Issue two – Improving lives for carers of older people

"A carer is someone of any age giving unpaid help and support to a relative, friend, neighbour, partner or child, who cannot manage because of disability, illness, old age and frailty, learning difficulty, mental health problem or alcohol/drug misuse."

Most carers would still not recognise themselves under the term 'carer'. They are people trying to cope as best they can while helping to look after an older person who needs advice, support and practical help.

Carers may be juggling paid work with unpaid caring responsibilities at home.

Nationally 9.4 per cent of the population are carers. Therefore, in and around Norwich there are likely to be 20,600 carers, of which 14,400 are likely to be caring for older people.

Listed below are a number of prompts for areas of discussion. Please feel free to comment on these or raise any other point that you feel is relevant to the issue of improving lives for carers.

- A Carer's Assessment is a chance for a carer to talk about their needs with someone from Adult Social Services so they can get the right sort of help. This includes the opportunity to plan for the future. Statistics indicate that the needs of approximately 432 carers of older people are currently formally assessed in and around Norwich, this is 3 per cent of the estimated number of carers of older people.

Do you think there is adequate available access to the formal carer's assessment process, and does it help?

Does the formal carer's assessment process provide advice, information or opportunity that is not available from other organisations?

- Information for carers is available from: voluntary organisations, Adult Social Services, doctors surgeries, chemists, libraries, council information centres, hospitals, carers groups and on line websites. Which work well and can you suggest any other sources of information? Do you think that there are sufficient access channels for information?

Can you suggest any others that would be useful?

Do you have any views on the quality of the information available?

- A number of organisations represent and support carers. Do you have any views on the quality of the support and representation? How could it be improved?
- There are a number of things that help and support carers of older people. These include: money/benefits, respite care, emotional support, special equipment, help with personal care for the person they care for, help with shopping, end of life care for the person that they care for, specialist advice on the condition of the person they care for, help in an emergency and leisure activities.

What do you think is most important? Please do not be restricted to the above list.

- It is recognised that early support and advice is likely to increase a person's ability to care and enable them to care for longer.
How easy is it for carers to obtain such support and advice in and around Norwich?

Your response to issue two – Improving lives for carers of older people

Issue three – Giving people more choice and control

There is growing evidence that you get better results when people are actively involved in choosing services and making decisions about the kind of treatment and care they receive. How might this happen?

Listed below are a number of prompts for areas of discussion. Please feel free to comment on these or raise any other point that you feel is relevant to the issue of putting people in control.

- One of the corner stones of a person being in control is them knowing what they are entitled to. How well do you think older people in Norwich know what benefits and services they are entitled to?
- How well do you think local people plan for older age? Are there enough opportunities locally to plan for older age?
- The majority of older people in and around Norwich do not qualify for a funded service but still need information and support finding the services that they might pay for themselves. How well do you think this need is met in and around Norwich?
- Do you have a view on who should provide these services?
- Do you have an example where an older person has been able to take responsibility for choosing their service provision and this has resulted in a better outcome for them?
- Do you have an example where an older person hasn't been able to choose the service they need and has this led to problems?
- What problems do you anticipate for local service providers when service users are given more choice regarding the services they receive?
- A lot of people are happy with the services that are provided for them. Do you think they will want to move towards being more in control?
- Do you have any concerns regarding older people being more in control of and choosing their own services?

Issue four – Involving older people and understanding their needs

It is important that local authorities, health services, commissioners and other providers of services understand, engage and mobilise the older community. Without this it is difficult to plan or deliver the services tailored to the needs of our local population or to realise the potential in the wider community and encourage self help and volunteering opportunities.

Listed below are a number of prompts for areas of discussion. Please feel free to comment on these or raise any other point that you feel is relevant to the issue of understanding and engaging the older community.

- There are a large number of local organisations that either provide services to or represent the interests of older people living in and around Norwich. Do you think these organisations represent the diverse range of older people groups and interests equally?
- Are the interests of particular groups over or under represented? If so, which ones?
- Are you aware of any hard to reach groups that are not engaged with or understood at all?
- Do organisations work and plan together to achieve better results?
- Do organisations share information for the benefit of the people they are seeking to help?
- Do organisations which represent older people handle personal information with enough sensitivity?
- How well do the different organisations understand the needs of older people in the area?
- How well do the organisations communicate with each other regarding individual cases?
- Are older people involved in the early stages of planning for change in and around Norwich. For example, should they be formally represented as a group on local public bodies?

- Some local authorities actively seek to engage with the older communities by forming forums, boards and themed action groups. Do you think this would be positive way forward for older people living in and around Norwich?
- Other local authorities have appointed champions to promote the interests and influence of older people. Do you think that there may be value in doing this locally?
- The needs and wishes of older people living in urban areas can differ with those living in more rural areas. Have you experienced any conflicts of interest which have arisen as a result?
- How well do you think our local community engages to provide help and support for older people in their surrounding community?
- How could local community engagement to provide support be improved?
- Providing support and care for older people involves taking risks. How well are those risks assessed and managed? Does avoiding risk affect the care and support for older people or reduce the quality of their lives? Do we understand and accept the risks older people are prepared to take?

Your response to issue four – Understanding and engaging the local older community

Issue five – Making services more responsive

At present the existing patchwork of service providers can create a complicated pathway to services and frequently a poor response to the needs of a service user or family carer (or potential service user). For example, an older person leaving hospital in need of care at home is reliant on a number of people from a wide range of organisations working together. This is often difficult to manage.

Listed below are a number of prompts for areas of discussion. Please feel free to comment on these or raise any other point that you feel is relevant to the issue of making services more responsive.

- Locally, how well do you feel services work together to make life easier for older people?
- In your experience are there any particular areas, or pinch points, where services seem to have difficulty working together?
- When older people need a service do they tend to get fitted into the existing framework of service provision or is the service tailored to their individual need? What would you estimate the balance to be?
- How responsive is the service referral process? If one service refers the user to another how long is it before the service being referred to responds?
- Is information passed between services or is the same information requested time and time again?
- How accountable do you feel services are for providing good quality service?
- Do organisations ask people about the quality of service they have been given?
- Do organisations actively promote the standards and quality of their services?
- Do organisations have effective complaints procedures?

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Issue six – Focusing on all needs

One of the current challenges of providing services for older people is meeting the needs of those who require a service but do not meet current criteria. Some of the ways in which this challenge can be met are:

- better community engagement
- more voluntary service involvement
- increased signposting and more information to enable people to organise their own services.

It is generally thought that enabling and supporting people to meet their needs before they become critical will reduce, or at least delay, the number of people who will eventually require a provided service.

Listed below are a number of prompts for areas of discussion. Please feel free to comment on these or raise any other point that you feel is relevant to the issue of focusing on all needs, not just complex needs.

- Locally, how effective do you feel organisations are at telling people who do not qualify for a service how they might find help?
- Who follows up a needs assessment to ensure that those not entitled to a funded service actually have the information required, and the ability to, organise the services required?
- In your experience do all organisations now use a common assessment form and share the information, or do people end up telling the same information to a number of different organisations?
- Do you feel that there is a local issue with older people's health and well being deteriorating faster because they do not have access to the preventative services required?
- How effective do you feel the voluntary sector is at providing preventative services, care and support?
- Does the local voluntary sector have any more capacity to provide preventative services, care and support?

- How well do the voluntary sector and mainstream services work together to provide consistent support to individual users?
- Are there gaps or duplications in the help given by different providers?

Your response to issue six – Focusing on all needs

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Issue seven – Getting good results

It has now been recognised that ‘one size does not fit all’ when it comes to the provision of adult social care services. We need to move away from fitting people into a framework of service provision towards tailoring the services to meet the needs of individuals.

Services should aim to achieve:

- improved health and emotional well-being
- improved quality of life
- being an active member of the community
- choice and control
- freedom from discrimination
- economic well-being
- personal dignity.

The challenge in and around Norwich is to provide good results for people in communities which contain a significant amount of deprivation and have low aspirations.

Listed below are a number of prompts for areas of discussion. Please feel free to comment on these or raise any other point that you feel is relevant to the issue of focusing on results.

- Which of the aims listed above do you think is most important and why?
- To what extent do you think that the above set of aims is taken into account when providing support and services for older people in and around Norwich?
- Can you give a local example of where older people are fitted into an existing service or support framework with little regard to their needs and preferences?
- Do you feel that there is enough assessment, measurement and reporting of the results of service provision and support?
- How confident are you that service or support provision could be quickly changed if poor results were being achieved?

Your response to issue seven – Getting good results

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