

CALL FOR EVIDENCE - Local government's response to an Ageing Society

Beth Johnson Foundation

Stoke on Trent

The Foundation has worked successfully in partnership with the City Council on a number of initiatives over the years, including them joint funding our Dementia Advocacy service, but predominantly and more recently on the local authority's action plan for achieving Age Friendly City status.

In the early stages the local authority identified that an external organisation would be better placed to complete the engagement and consultation stage of the process and commissioned the Foundation. They also commissioned a short research project, delivered by a PhD student, around older people's experiences of living in the City and also set up a multi-agency, cross sector steering group.

The City Council don't have an Ageing or Older People's strategy as such and, therefore, the action plan for achieving Age Friendly City status is the framework for Stoke becoming 'a great place to grow older in'.

As part of the action plan the council have commissioned a Small Grants Programme which enables individuals and groups to apply for small amounts of funding to initiate local projects to support their ageing populations and the Foundation is delivering the Commitments Programme which will develop and support a partnership group of older people to influence organisations across all sectors to commit to becoming more age friendly.

Staffordshire Moorlands

In response to the increasing percentage of their ageing population, the District Council wanted to identify a focus, other than that of increasing pressure on health and social care services, for their response and through a couple of workshops facilitated by Foundation staff began to embrace community asset based approaches.

They invested some money into an Innovation Fund so that individuals or groups could apply for set up funding for projects to support older people. This process was managed by the Foundation and we supported the successful projects of which 10 out of the 12 were still operational 12 months following funding.

We are now working together on asset based community development projects targeted at rural villages; engaging with residents and supporting them towards community connectedness using an all age friendly approach and for them to identify approaches which will support the more vulnerable individuals in their communities.