

Please email your response to evidence@cpa.org.uk by **14th November 2014**.

This is not a questionnaire. The questions included are for guidance and to act as a prompt. It is not necessary to answer all of the questions or even to use this form to submit your evidence if you find it more convenient not to do so.

The role of local authorities in preparing for the opportunities and challenges of an ageing society.

The Centre for Policy on Ageing has been commissioned by the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a call for evidence on the role for Local Government in respect of an ageing society. A cross-cutting Task and Finish group has been established by LGA to consider the opportunities and challenges that an ageing society presents and how local authorities might prepare themselves in the immediate and longer term to respond to these. The intention is for this programme to be completed and its report published by March 2015.

We would welcome your views on the contribution that Local Government can offer, and the changes Local Government should make, to adjust to their local ageing communities and to maximize the opportunities for local citizens and communities to age better. It would be helpful if you can cite examples where you are aware of good or innovative practice

Section A

Person answering the call for evidence

Name:	Judith Brown
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Telephone no (optional):	

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Section B

The questions that follow are for guidance and to act as a prompt. It is not necessary to answer all of the questions or even to use this form if you find it more convenient not to do so. We are also happy to receive local reports and evaluations where appropriate.

The call is particularly interested in looking beyond traditional 'care and support' services to strategies that improve older-age quality of life, provide an age-friendly environment and include 'prevention' measures that promote healthy ageing in place.

We would like to hear of any innovative and groundbreaking work that you are doing, or planning to do. Examples may come from any area including strategic planning, commissioning, service design and delivery or activities developed in partnership with local networks of older people and communities.

1. What are the main benefits to your community with regard to an ageing society?

Older people have skills and experience which, used to the benefit of the community, can release energy to carry forward projects which would otherwise be lost for lack of funding. Many Older people who are volunteers contribute considerably to the community as a whole. The unpaid work that they do is in fact preventative, in that an engaged and interested older person is likely to remain healthier longer. Intergenerational work which involves the different generations results in a greater mutual understanding, and the generations have skills which they offer each other to the benefit of all.

2. What are the key issues for your community with regard to an ageing society?

As people age they may lose confidence in their ability to contribute, resulting in depression, loneliness and isolation, which research has shown depresses the immune system, and may cause illness which could otherwise be prevented, with subsequent cost to the tax/community charge payer in social services and more use of the NHS. If Councils and National Government do not involve older people in their planning of services, they may be wasting resources at a time of national austerity. It is also important to see that people are able to join in society by good transport systems, community funded transport, and of course the maintenance of the free bus pass.

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3. *In your opinion or from your perspective - are local authorities important as contributors to a society adjusting to an ageing population? In what ways can they contribute? What should they do?*

Local authorities, who should have an understanding and knowledge of the communities which they represent, are important contributors in engaging older people, whose knowledge of where the money can best be spent can be invaluable in using scarce resources. Bristol for example has an 'Older People's Partnership Board', composed 50% of older people representing local organisations, which scrutinises the work of the council and can suggest ways of using money to the best effect. Councils can also co-opt older people to relevant committees, and can ensure that the 68% of people over the age of 70 are not online have other avenues to take part in consultations, and to make their views known. The little lunch clubs, often set in small communities and attended by local people, can be funded to enable them to continue their community work. Older men, in particular, when bereaved, or living alone, can have difficulty in making social contact, and attending a lunch club where food is prepared by volunteers and there are people to chat to, can be a first step back to community involvement. Sadly, many councils have chosen to stop grants, in a misguided attempt to save money.

4. *If you are not part of a local authority - How might local authorities complement and support your work and what might you envision or what are your particular hopes for local government to achieve?*

I would like local authorities to recognise that money spent on prevention saves money further down the line. I would like local authorities to offer the voluntary sector free use of unused buildings (Bristol Older People's Forum has to spend money on rent which could be better spent on people) ; I would like libraries schools and health centres to offer their warm heated buildings to the community for use when they are empty, and small amounts of funding set aside for security and cleaning; I would like integrated health and social care services; I would like councils to fund learning opportunities for older people because an active mind is a healthy mind; I would like to see councils making a genuine effort to consult with people by taking the council out into the community.

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5. *How do local authorities need to adapt to enable older people to achieve their full potential?
Local Authorities need to recognise that older people can be, not problem makers, but problem solvers.*

6. *What are the key challenges facing local government in respect of health and social care as a result of population ageing? What needs to change (structurally, culturally or financially) to enable local government to tackle these challenges in cooperation with health and other partner organisations?
The culture needs to change, professionals need to let go of their own little piece of funding and realise that money is only well spent if genuine changes occur. Unless true integration of social and health services happens, we shall continue to waste money. One example: Mrs Brown lives alone in a three storey house on a hill in Bristol. She enters hospital and receives a new kneecap; she then goes home to a cold house with no-one to help her up and down the stairs, no physiotherapy visitor, and no bus route nearby, and no one to shop or cook nutritious meals; that NHS money is wasted because Mrs Brown will become malnourished (and depressed) and fall. It is time Government starts to think of the whole person, and how that persons life can be affected for the better if the services all work together- resulting in fewer hospital admissions, GP visits, social service requirements- and a better quality of life.*

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7. *How is an 'ageing' strategy being developed in your area? What are the personnel, structures and processes necessary to support that strategy? What are the means by which 'buy-in' and engagement with the strategy are achieved? How is the strategy informed by the needs and aspirations of older people and how is integration achieved between officers and members and local authorities and partner organisations in the health and voluntary sectors?*

Bristol City Council is a partner in Bristol Ageing Better which recently won 5.9 million pounds for our older isolated and lonely population. This money will result in better quality of life for some people, but Councils need to do more to really integrate the various projects and resources which abound. Cities of service, Green City, the Learning City, the Happy City, all can work together to provide a better social and physical landscape, but unless authorities tap into the huge resource that is older people, they will waste effort and resources. National Government needs to realise that it is false economy to reduce money spent on maintaining community organisations- it is time for a 'National Development Fund' to be used, not to improve overseas development, but our own here in Britain.

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[If a strategy document exists please attach it].

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11. How can or should local authorities support older workers and address the ageing of their own workforces?

12. We would like to hear of any services, activities or initiatives which you believe are good practice and innovative with regard to an ageing society – please note – please provide a short description. If there are any reports or evaluation documents please attach.

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