

Centre for Policy on Ageing and Local Government Association
Call for evidence on Local Government's response to an ageing society.

Introduction

Older people are an important and growing section of the population due to the fact that people are now living longer. At a national and local level the proportion of older people in the population will continue to rise, meaning it is likely that more people will need to access health and social care services.

This brings challenges for services, however, it also gives an impetus to services, organisations, and to older people themselves, to change the way we work together by developing skills and making best use of the knowledge and experience of older people to the benefit of themselves and others.

Gateshead Council has a long history of partnership working around older people's needs and aspirations, through the Gateshead Older People's Partnership and various other partnership arrangements.¹

1 'Our Today, Our Tomorrow – Gateshead Strategy for Older People 2014 - 2017

Innovative work

Below are some areas of innovation we feel are contributing to an ageing society.

Gateshead Care Homes Initiative

The Gateshead Care Homes Initiative is fully in place in all 24 hour care homes in Gateshead with nursing provision, with the aim to roll out to all residential homes during 2015. This is an Innovative service, partnering mental and physical health care, primary and secondary care to improve healthcare provision to all those in 24 hour care placements within the borough. It has resulted in reductions in hospital admissions and more holistic healthcare for residents. The Initiative offers support for nursing homes and ensures that all nursing residents are regularly seen by the GP, it has helped to link up services, reducing the number of GP practices involved with residents making it more efficient for the home, GP and resident. The link nurse offers regular support and advice to staff and can give referral guidance about other services offered by teams in the borough.

Communications

- The Older Peoples Assembly has developed its role as the strategic 'Voice' of older people in Gateshead through the setting up of Get Together Groups in different parts of the borough, and has worked with others, such as the Safer Gateshead Partnership, to deliver information events throughout Gateshead.
- The number of older people's user-led groups has continued to grow, among older people living in their own homes including sheltered schemes and extra care schemes, and also promoting independence centres and care homes. Equal Arts support 7 existing groups and there are newly constituted Resident and Relative committees being developed in 5 care settings.

Opportunities for volunteering:

- We have developed a more strategic and coordinated approach to volunteering in Gateshead, through Gateshead Council's Volunteers Plan (2013-17) and the Gateshead Volunteer Centre at GVOOC, with the aim of adding value to local service provision, building more resilient communities and offering opportunities for people to use and develop their skills and knowledge. Older people are a significant proportion of volunteers and growing numbers have been volunteering, in particular through organisations such as Age UK the Older Peoples Assembly and programmes such as the Equal Arts HenPower and Grand Gestures projects.

Training and learning:

- In the last three years over 260 people over 50 have attended courses provided through the Moving Forward programme, run by The Gateshead Housing Company, ranging from basic DIY skills to dealing with stress and how to spot a scam.
- Age UK have encouraged the ongoing learning and confidence of frailer older day service users by providing activities as requested, including learning crafts and how to use mobile IT equipment.
- Equal Arts continue to deliver a varied creative learning programme for active living independently and vulnerable older people living in care settings. This has included a carers group exhibiting at the Baltic CCA and helping the Shipley Art Gallery develop interpretation materials.

Access to digital communication:

- Age UK, The Gateshead Housing Company and Gateshead Council have delivered a three year Digital Inclusion Project, a programme of bespoke IT training at council sheltered housing schemes across Gateshead. This provided one to one and group support on the use of laptops and mobile devices in skills such as Skyping relatives, ordering shopping online, emailing and word processing.
- The Older Peoples Assembly have also run intergenerational events around digital inclusion working with young people from the Gateshead Youth Assembly and local primary schools, and offer drop in IT advice and training at their premises.

Early intervention and prevention

- We have continued to develop services and interventions to enable frail older people to remain independent. We now have a range of intermediate care and reablement services across social care and health which can support people in their own homes or in short term community beds. The START reablement at home service was introduced in 2011 and now works with around 1,200 people per year. The intermediate care community beds are now based at Southernwood Promoting Independence Centre. A nursing and therapy team has been attached to these beds, giving access to co-ordinated multi-disciplinary care. A review of community bed provision and need has been started to ensure that timely access is available and the right care is available at all times. The Community Health Services Occupational Therapy Team have led a 'Lifestyle Matters' approach to care, which seeks to work with older people to achieve goals set by themselves.

Reduce loneliness and isolation

- The Older Peoples Assembly has developed a number of Friendship Groups throughout Gateshead, designed to address loneliness and social isolation. These groups are initially supported by the Older People's Assembly with the aim of being run by the groups themselves and to be self-sustaining.
- Age UK have provided opportunities for groups of older people to visit cultural learning venues such as museums and galleries in social groups, and delivered leisure and learning opportunities such as chess and photography clubs, enabling older people to meet and develop new skills together.
- Tenant led budgets and Neighbourhood Pride funding has been used to carry out improvements at council sheltered schemes to encourage the use of communal facilities, for example the development of community gardens.

Access to financial services, products and advice

- We have been working through the Financial Inclusion Partnership to ensure that older people can access advice and services to enable them to maximise their income and access the benefits they are entitled to. Vulnerable older residents have been targeted through local events, and networking with key support agencies, providing access to benefit, housing and fuel advice, which enabled many to increase their household incomes, be fuel efficient (raising awareness of how to keep warm in the winter months or switch suppliers) as well as link into local support networks. Over the past 3 years older people in Gateshead have seen an increase of their take up of benefits to the value of over £3 million.

Falls prevention

- Work has developed under the Falls Strategy, in particular around increasing falls prevention activity, and developing a falls prevention strategy, reflected in a declining trend for hospital admissions for falls. A Falls Co-ordinator post has recently been introduced to ensure a smooth transition from prevention and early intervention through to those with the most complex needs. Falls has been identified as one of the initiatives for the Better Care Fund.
- Gateshead's Falls Prevention Scheme has carried out work to properties where residents were at risk of falls and there now appears to be a downward trend in hospital admissions due to falls on or from steps and stairs. Also responses from clients' questionnaires suggest that a very large proportion (67%) have had fewer falls in the year since work was carried out to their property.

Dementia

- *Improving the environment of care for people with dementia*
Gateshead Council together with Gateshead Foundation Trust, were successful in a bid for funding from the Department of Health to improve the environment of care for people with dementia. This included improving the environment for five care homes, three Promoting Independence Centres, three hospital sites (Woodside Unit, Craggside Court, Outpatients waiting area) and one day centre. The projects were awarded £532,450 in total
- *Promoting Independence Centres*
Within the Council's 3 Promoting Independence Centres (PICs) of Shadon House, Eastwood and Tynedale, there has been the installation of digital audio reminiscence units which record and share people's life history as well as Shadon House constructing a summer house and drinks / social area serving to

increase an environment which is enabling, personalised and accessible to people with dementia. Shadon House, Tynedale and Eastwood now keep hens as part of Equal Arts HenPower project, which utilises creative programmes to improve quality of life for service users.

- *HenPower*
HenPower, ran by Equal Arts, is an exciting project which encourages older people in Gateshead to get involved in hen keeping as a way of reducing isolation and increasing health and wellbeing. As well as looking after hens, hatching eggs and rearing chicks, the 'Hensioners' involve themselves in a range of creative activities from designing their own hen houses, to recording oral histories and designing a range of cards, calendars, tea towels and other merchandise by working with sculptors, visual and new media artists. Taking their knowledge of hens to schools and care settings the HenPower group is also seeing benefits in its work in dementia care settings with staff reporting a reduction in the use of anti-psychotic medication
- *Interactive dementia designs*
Within Blydon Resource Centre, Newcastle University Phd student, Thomas Dykes, is revolutionising specialist dementia provision by utilising interactive dementia designs such as the Iglobe, Paper Street view and Interactive tea ware to connect people with dementia to places that are meaningful to them, serving to demonstrate how important the role of homes and neighbourhoods play in supporting an older persons biography, identity and sense of self. The designs and digital artefacts have been invented to sustain meaningful interaction with older people, serving to maximise people's existing abilities in their daily life, as opposed to scheduled activities.
- *Befriender service*
Four people with dementia who having discharged from PICs have been supported by befrienders with a learning disability, serving to counteract their loneliness and isolation and securing their ability to continue living in their own homes.
- *National Recognition*
Evelyn Parry (Volunteer – Blydon Resource Centre) and Nadine McEvelly (Tynedale PIC Support Worker in the 'Best Dementia Trainee' category) were both finalists in the National Dementia Awards 2014.
HenPower won the Older People in the Media Awards – video and online category, with their trailer The Hen Men, ran by Independent Age.
- *Gateshead Dementia Action Alliance*
Gateshead Dementia Action Alliance is a collection of stakeholders brought together to improve the lives of people with dementia in Gateshead, it includes organisations from the public, private and voluntary sector. Gateshead is the first Local Alliance to be developed in the region.
- *Dementia Friends*
Within Gateshead's Dementia Action Alliance a programme of awareness raising has been developed, this focusses around delivery of Dementia Friend information sessions. Various local organisations have agreed to take part in this and have a Dementia Friends Champion to roll this out, this includes:

- Gateshead Council Customer Service Staff, Education, Adult Social Care Direct, Commissioning and Business Development, Occupational Health and Safety, Public Health.
 - A commitment made by Northumbria Police for every Police Officer to become a Dementia Friend.
 - Lloyds Bank delivering sessions to their staff.
 - 3 members of staff from each Promoting Independence Centre.
 - 80 Domiciliary Care staff.
 - Gateshead Library staff.
 - 150 front line QE Hospital and Doctor Surgery staff (Time out session).
 - Gateshead College, first year Health and Social Care students.
 - Intu retailers within the Metrocentre.
 - Care Call Service promoting within sheltered accommodation which so far has recruited over 100 friends.
 - Equal Arts
 - Baltic
 - Sage Gateshead
- *Equal Arts*
 Equal Arts is working with Shadon House Promoting Independence Centre to share their models of good practice with 2 other PIC's (Tynedale and Eastwood) in developing creative approaches to meaningful activities programmes with older people with dementia including dementia friendly community facing activities with local residents, schools and local business.
 Based on the Gateshead pilot, Equal Arts secured £1m to deliver hen keeping in care settings. In dementia care settings the evaluation reported reduced incidents of violent and aggressive behaviour and reduced use of antipsychotic medication. The programme benefits from the Hen Roadshow where older participants including those with dementia visit other care homes, schools and community venues to talk about their experiences of keeping hens.
 Equal Arts continue to support Older Peoples User-led groups and specifically groups of older people with a dementia diagnosis by improving governance and capacity to deliver creative activities on a sustainable basis.
 Based on 2 pilot projects in Gateshead Equal Arts has secured £96k from Comic Relief to improve the offer for older people with dementia in 6 arts venues across the North East and Cumbria.
 Equal Arts is launching its Creative Friends programme which supports older people, including those with a dementia diagnosis, to enjoy creative and cultural activities in Gateshead as a peer-friends service which empowers older people as part of the solution.
 - *Progress for Providers*
 The North East Dementia Alliance, in partnership with North East ADASS are funding a Progress for Providers project to implement person-centred practices and personalisation in care homes supporting people with dementia across the North East. Tyne and Wear Care Alliance have been working with Helen Sanderson Associates to deliver the training.
 - *Shared Lives*
 The Shared Lives Service helps approved Shared Lives Carers (ordinary people from the local community) to share their homes and time with someone who needs support. Currently the Shared Lives Service is training some Shared Lives carers to support people with dementia related conditions. The service has

successfully matched three Shared Lives carers to people with dementia related conditions.

- Derek lives in his own bungalow and his family were worried he was lacking company – SL carer Lucy has been matched and they enjoy walking and talking together either in Lucy’s home or in the local community. Derek’s family are very complimentary about the support being given and they feel assured Derek is being cared for well.
 - Mary lives with her husband who said he felt he did not need any respite from his caring role- SL carer Evelyn has been matched and they enjoy going to Evelyn’s home to reminisce and bake scones. Mary husband feels the match is working really well and it gives him and his wife quality time apart.
 - Joe lives with his son who works full time and Joes family felt Joe would benefit from support on a particular evening to prepare his meal etc. - SL carer Val has been matched and they enjoy traveling by public transport back to Val’s for tea with her and her family. Joes says when he was younger he bred pigeons and he really enjoys the company of Val’s husband because he likes pigeons as well. Joe family are very complimentary about the support given.
- *Commissioned Services*
Our commissioned services take dementia training into account. All service specifications include a requirement for dementia awareness training; this is included in the contract monitoring process. New Domiciliary contracts include the requirement for providers to provide specialist training including dementia care.
 - *Living with Dementia Group*
This group follows through from an eight week information programme and addresses many of the issues people newly diagnosed with dementia and their families face. It is run by the Alzheimer’s Society alongside health and social care professionals. The aims of the group are to help people who have dementia:
 - Gather and exchange information
 - Share experiences
 - Support each other and feel less isolated
 - Enjoy the company of other people who have dementia in a relaxed and friendly settingAs at August 2012 the group meets on a monthly basis with a membership of six people
 - *Carers Group*
The Alzheimer’s Society runs an established group specifically for people who are carers for those with dementia. Two groups in different areas run once a month with on average 20 people attending each group at all times.
 - *Dementia Café*
The first Dementia Cafe in Gateshead launched on Monday 21 May 2012. It runs on a monthly basis providing a friendly, supportive and informative monthly meeting place for people with any type of dementia, their family and friends. It is facilitated by Alzheimer’s Society Gateshead Dementia Support Service and is supported by a wide range of professionals in health, social care and the voluntary sector. The cafe has run three times to date, with a total of 13 attendances by carers, 7 attendances by people with dementia and 36

attendances by 21 individual workers from the health, social care and voluntary sector.

- *Community Dementia Forum*

The Alzheimer's Society in Gateshead runs Community Dementia Forums on a quarterly basis. The aim of the forum is to bring together a wide range of people from across the Gateshead community including people with dementia, their families and carers, statutory services, voluntary organisations, businesses, to learn from each other and work together to improve the lives of people living with dementia and work towards achieving a dementia friendly community. The forum feeds back issues to the Dementia Action Alliance which is made up of members from the charity, public and private sector who are working to radically improve the lives of people with dementia and are united behind the National Dementia Declaration, a set of seven outcomes developed by people with dementia and their family carers.

The Gateshead Community Dementia Forum currently has a membership of more than 50 individuals and organisations and up to 29 people attending the forum meetings.

- *Challenging Behaviour*

Challenging Behaviour teams from Gateshead Health and Mental Health Concern now having joint meetings. Both teams are working across all care homes in Gateshead and the MHC team are working into people's own homes. Outcomes remain successful with few hospital admissions, few changes of care setting and ongoing reductions in psychotropic medication usage, especially antipsychotics.

- *Older people's mental health Liaison team at QEH*

The Older Peoples Mental Health Liaison Team has achieved accreditation from the Royal College of Psychiatry.

- *Providing an excellence level of support* The In-House Domiciliary Care Rapid Response service are the initial responders in providing crisis support (2 hour response) to people with dementia in their own homes to assess and stabilise the situation, thus, minimising the risk of people being admitted into secondary care.

Eastwood PICs Centre of Excellence, an 'admit to assess' facility in which people with dementia can be admitted 24/7 for reablement, rehabilitation and recuperation. The centre possesses a 24/7 'wrap around' social care, therapy and nursing support MDT to facilitate hospital admissions and prevent inappropriate hospital admissions.

Facilitating through our Special Olympics Gateshead model a consistent range of weekly physical exercise / sports sessions (Boccia / New Age Kurling / Athletics / Table Tennis and Walking Football) for people with dementia to enhance physical and mental health and feelings of self-worth.