

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE DISTRICT

AGEING WELL Framework

A WELL BEING FRAMEWORK FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Contents

Foreword

1 Introduction

2 Our Vision and Principles

3 Background

Promoting active ageing

Valuing older carers

4 Facts & figures about older people in South Staffordshire

5 A four tiered approach to ageing well in South Staffordshire

6 Areas for Action

Outcome: Older people are healthy and Independent

Outcome: Appropriate housing

Outcome: Out and about, valued and involved

Outcome: Living in a safe environment

Outcome: Older people are financially secure

Outcome: Consultation and information

Appendices

Appendix A- Ageing well delivery plan 2012/13

Appendix B – Consultation Plan

FOREWORD

Councillor Brian Edwards Leader of the Council

I am pleased to endorse this Ageing Well Framework, which has been developed by a range of partner working together from the statutory through to the voluntary and community sectors to establish the vision and principles that seeks to address the priorities for ensuring the ageing community live their lives well.

Current projections indicate that South Staffordshire will have the biggest increase in an older population nationally up to 2019.

The delivery plan has been structured with the following themes which are underpinned by a cross cutting theme of financial security:-

- Older People are Healthy and Independent
- Appropriate Housing
- Out and About, valued and involved
- Living in a Safe Environment

The delivery plan aims to take a more pro-active and preventative approach appreciating the framework covers a 5 year period and will need refreshing in the future.

The Council is committed to playing its part and recognises the significance as part of the Council Plan 2012 – 2016 a key priority is “Supporting the ageing population to be healthy and independent”.

There will continue to be challenges in the future which I believe as a partnership we can respond positively to together by working with our communities.

**Councillor Brian Edwards
Leader of the Council
South Staffordshire Council**

1. Introduction

The negative way that society often sees old age is changing. To improve the lives of older people the South Staffordshire Partnership has produced a framework for the future based on what people over 50 have told us. It promotes a vision for South Staffordshire in which older people live healthier and longer lives, with greater choice and control over the services they receive, and where older people make a full contribution to community life, confident that their experience, skills and time are valued.

There is a strong focus on the aspirations of older people to remain healthy and active as they age. Whilst older people are citizens, and have the right to expect that services take their needs into account, they also have responsibilities for maintaining their own health, well-being and independence, and most older people wish to do everything they can to 'age well'.

Another aim of this framework is to ensure information and preventative services are available to help older people look after their own emotional and mental health and well being, and to provide those small amounts of help that can make a significant difference to the independence and quality of life of older people.

The framework also recognises that when older people do need access to health and social care services, they want to receive services that treat them with dignity and respect, that offer choice and that help older people to remain independent and living in their own homes for as long as possible.

This framework explores how different organisations can work better together to improve the health and well-being of all South Staffordshire's older people.

2. Our Vision and Principles

Our vision is that every older person in South Staffordshire will be able to live their life to its full potential, confident in their choices being respected and supported, and free from preventable health problems.

This plan is based on the following principles:

A whole life perspective

We need to challenge the idea that there is a group of 'old people' – 'ageing' is simply a process and older people have hopes and aspirations just like anyone else – it is disability or frailty, not age, that leads to the need for assistance.

A positive view of ageing

Older people are a valuable resource for our community. We need to use their abilities and experience and not think of them as only users of services.

Combating discrimination

There are still inequalities and discrimination within society despite legislation and codes of practice. Age discrimination needs to be tackled alongside other discrimination.

Citizenship, rights and choice

More older people need to be encouraged to be active participants in actively managing or running the services they receive or in planning and commenting on them.

Communication and consultation

Good communication and consultation is essential. We are duty bound to keep our older citizens well-informed and briefed on the progress we've made on their behalf.

A partnership wide approach

Any strategy that addresses the wellbeing of older people will only work if it is adopted and acted on by all agencies across the District.

This framework has been developed by partner organisations working together to set out the vision and future actions which will require wider consultation with communities. It sets out the longer-term aspirations and the actions partners will take over the next five years to promote the health and well being of older people across the District.

The Public Health White Paper 'Healthy People Healthy Lives' sets out a clear direction for national policy on public health and older people, the white paper is reflected well within this framework. Specific areas mirrored to this framework are the need for stronger communities, keeping people active, transport, neighbourhoods, homes and planning, quality health and social care as well as many others.

Our vision is in line with the Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 'Making a Difference' which focuses on older people as a key area, it clearly states that;

Recognising older people's need to live life to the full is important. We will invest to support older people in staying healthy and active, promoting inclusion in everyday life to enable people to lead active lives. For those whose health is failing, they will receive the services and support they need to manage their condition and remain independent for as long as possible

The strategy focuses on areas such as the challenges for older people, improving physical health, improving mental wellbeing, quality of life and community capacity building, the commitment made in the strategy is that;

Through the £1million Community Wellbeing Fund we will enable small and local, grass roots community groups to provide local services to improve the health, independence and wellbeing of vulnerable adults and older people in their community.

As a result;

- *10,000 older people and vulnerable adults will benefit.*
- *500 local grass-roots community organisations will provide community based health and wellbeing programmes.*
- *500 new local services.*
- *50 luncheon clubs.*
- *50 befriending schemes.*
- *50 social activities.*

This framework is also aligned with the Fire Service's 'Older Persons Strategy' which states that;

Elderly people are more vulnerable to fire due to a variety of factors, such as mobility and sensory dangers causing a lack of ability to respond to danger. Other reasons include mental health issues, poorly maintained and old electrical equipment and a general lack of safety knowledge.

Some of the focus areas of the Fire Service's Strategy are;

- *The older persons advocate*
- *The electric blanket campaign*
- *Older persons wellbeing courses*
- *Busy minds support group*

3. Background

Promoting active ageing

The commonly held definition is that older people includes anyone over 50. We have adopted this as our starting point. However, the needs and expectations of the over 50's population is as diverse as the thousands of individuals within this group – a 50-year old may well have a very different perspective from someone in their 90's or beyond, both in terms of what they want and the age they have lived through. What is clear is that society has changed radically over the past 20 years. People are living longer, demanding better healthcare and higher standards. Many people in their 50's are in employment and will remain fit and active into their 70's. For many, old age has become a state of mind rather than a fixed chronological point.

The foundations for a good, healthy old age are laid in early life and depend on a healthy lifestyle (including physical activity, good diet, and not smoking), mental stimulation, good quality housing, social support and primary health care and employment opportunities. Many older people in South Staffordshire will carry on enjoying good health and a good quality of life as they grow older. Their needs and aspirations will be similar to those of the general population, and they will want access to services in the same way as anyone else. Our aim is to ensure that access is not barred by discriminatory and ageist attitudes among service providers and employers, and that older people are encouraged to share their skills, time and experience through active participation in the life of the District.

Other older people will experience health problems as they grow older, and some may have been living with a disability for all of their lives. At any one time, around 15% of older people are in regular contact with care services, and this small group account for the 44% of NHS and social care funding spent on people aged 65 plus. People, who do have a disability or health problem want to receive high quality services that treat them with dignity, promote their independence, offer choice and put the service user at the centre of care planning. Those reaching the end of their life want to receive sensitive, high quality and well co-ordinated services, and greater choice to die at home if this is their wish.

Where health needs are beginning to emerge, there is growing evidence that the provision of low level, preventative services can keep older people active and independent and can delay or prevent the need for more intensive help.

Whilst this framework sets out what we will do to work with older people at all stages of life, there is a particular emphasis on the promotion of health and well being which aims to help prevent the emergence of some of the problems associated with poor health in later life.

Valuing older carers

As the population ages, a significant number of older people will find themselves in caring roles. People in their 50's and 60's, and even in their 70's, may find themselves caring for ageing parents, or they may be providing ongoing care for a disabled son or daughter. Those planning an active retirement may find themselves with little time to pursue their interests, and their physical and mental health may suffer as a result of the

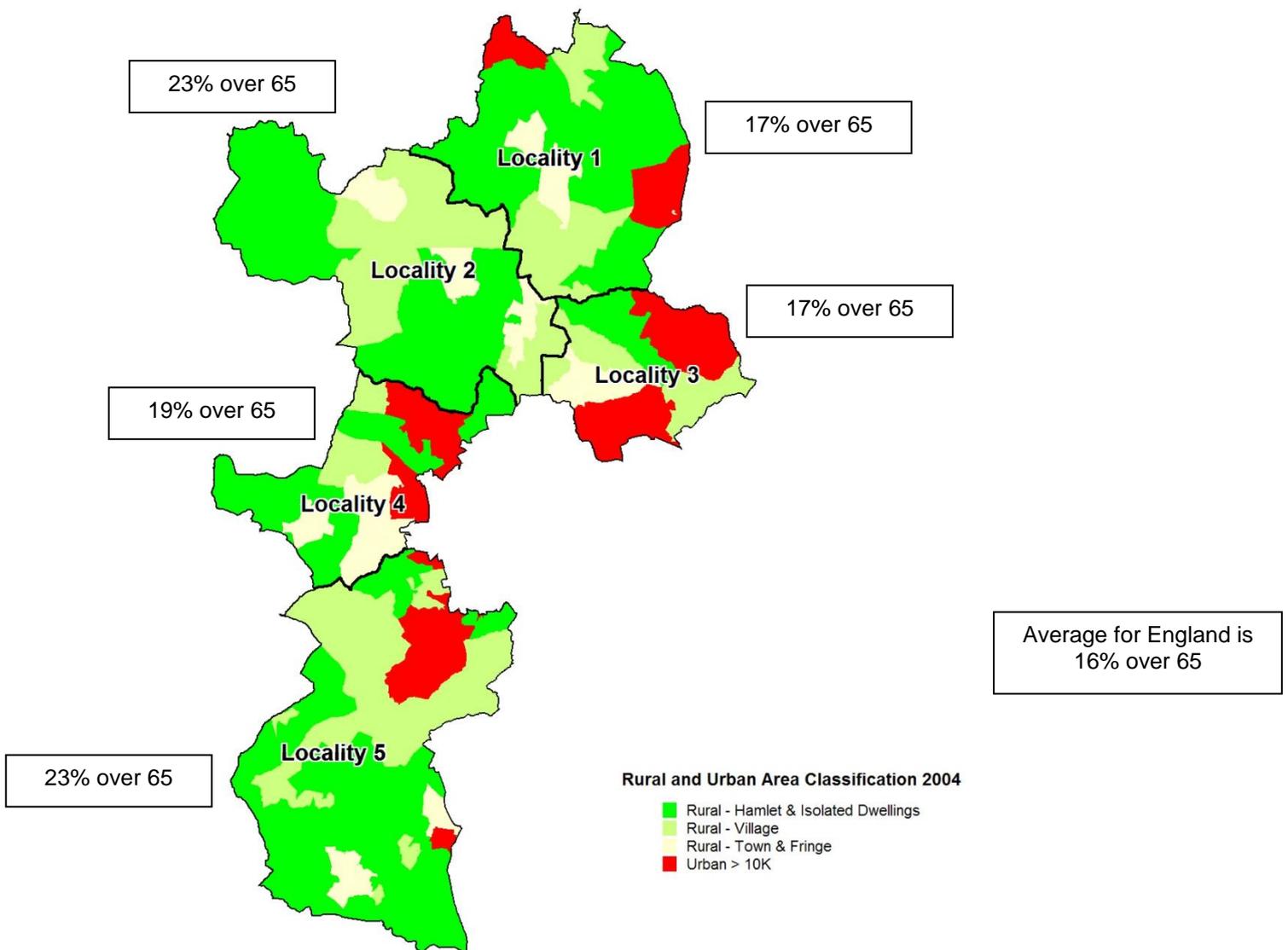
pressures of the caring role. Research shows that carers are twice as likely to experience health problems as people who are not caring. They can also take up to three years to identify themselves as carers, and to seek support and services. It is important that this group of older people is recognised, supported and valued.

4. Facts and figures about older people in South Staffordshire

South Staffordshire has a higher than average number of older people with 48.5% of people in the South Staffordshire District aged over 45 (compared to an England average of 40.8%)

20,000 people in South Staffordshire are over the age of 65 with this figure set to rise to over 28,000 by 2014

In four out of the five South Staffordshire districts there is a higher than average percentage of the area considered to be rural, one of the localities is 100%.



This map details both the percentage of each of the localities classed as rural and the percentage of the population of each locality classed as older people. The percentage of the population of South Staffordshire living with a long term condition is higher than the England average for many of the long term conditions

	Locality 1	Locality 2	Locality 3	Locality 4	Locality 5	South Staffs LA	South Staffs PCT	England
% prevalence Hypertension	12.00%	14.30%	15.10%	14.90%	17.40%	15.10%	13.70%	13.10%
% prevalence Coronary Heart Disease	3.70%	3.80%	4.00%	3.70%	4.40%	4.00%	3.70%	3.50%
% prevalence Diabetes	4.00%	4.20%	4.40%	4.20%	4.60%	4.30%	4.10%	4.10%
% prevalence Asthma	5.10%	6.50%	5.80%	6.00%	5.70%	5.80%	5.70%	5.90%

Synthetic estimates suggest every locality in South Staffordshire has a higher than average rate of adult obesity which will of course have a knock on effect on the aging population.

	Locality 1	Locality 2	Locality 3	Locality 4	Locality 5	South Staffs LA	South Staffs PCT	England
Obesity (adults) - % synthetic estimates	27.3%	26.6%	30.5%	24.6%	25.5%	26.4%	27.1%	23.6%

Estimating Future Health Problems

	2008	2010	2015	2020	2025
People aged 65 and over predicted to have a limiting long-term illness	9694	10329	12015	13408	14765
People aged 65 and over predicted to have a long standing condition caused by a heart attack by local authority	1454	1551	1791	1983	2177
People aged 65 and over predicted to have a long standing condition caused by a stroke	519	554	654	755	864
People aged 65 and over predicted to have a long standing health condition by bronchitis and emphysema	462	494	568	620	673
Estimated numbers of people aged 65 and over who are obese	5081	5418	6241	6861	7473
People aged 65 and over predicted to have an incontinence problem, and living in the community	1801-3230	1920-3440	2212-3960	2439-4370	2663-4770
People aged 65 and over predicted to attend accident and emergency departments as a result of falls	1245	1321	1554	1802	2037
People aged 65 and over predicted to be admitted to hospital as a result of falls	420	444	526	624	716

GP practices maintain disease registers for selected conditions, using these registers the highest prevalence of long term conditions recorded for each locality are as follows:

Locality 1

Hypertension(12%), adult obesity (12%)
depression (9%), diabetes (5%) and asthma (5%)

Locality 2

Hypertension(15%), adult obesity (13%)
depression (8%), diabetes (%) and asthma (7%)

Locality 3

Hypertension(15%), adult obesity (13%)
depression (10%), diabetes (6%) and asthma (6%)

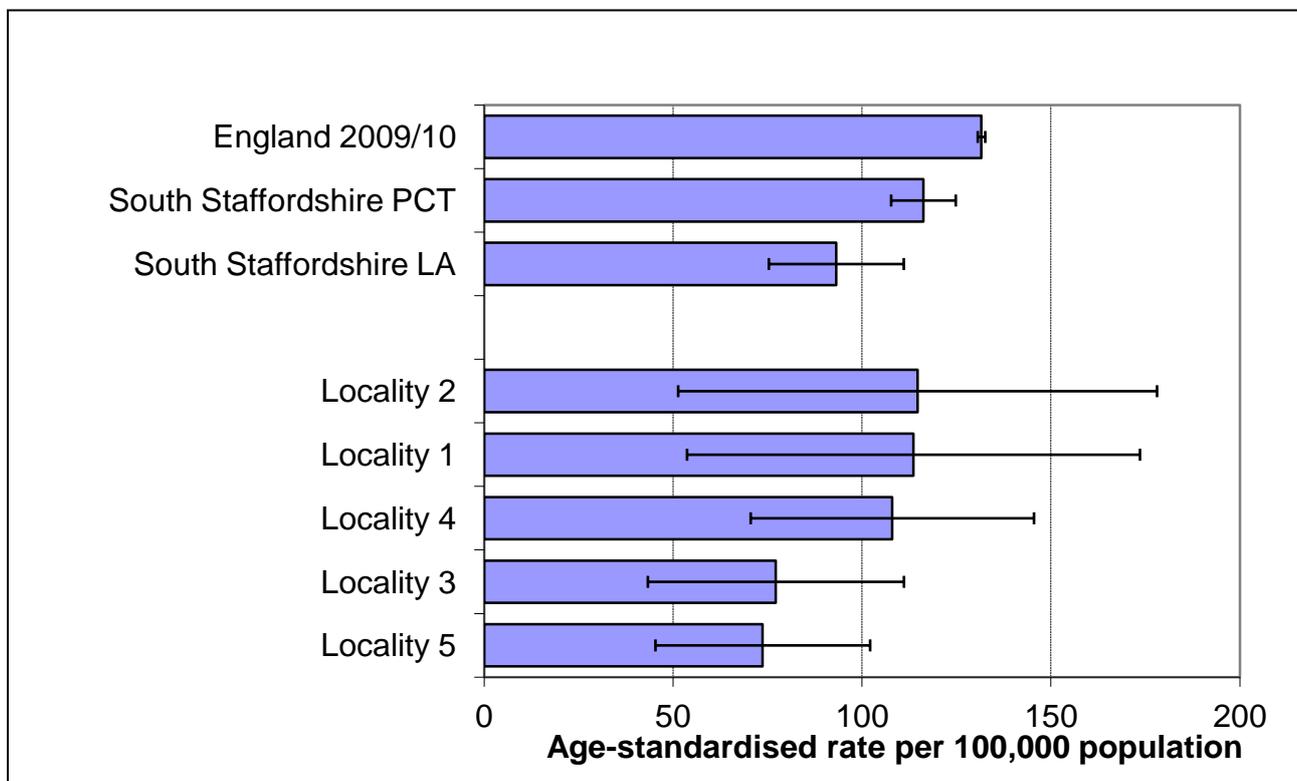
Locality 4

Hypertension(16%), adult obesity (11%)
depression (8%), diabetes (5%) and asthma (6%)

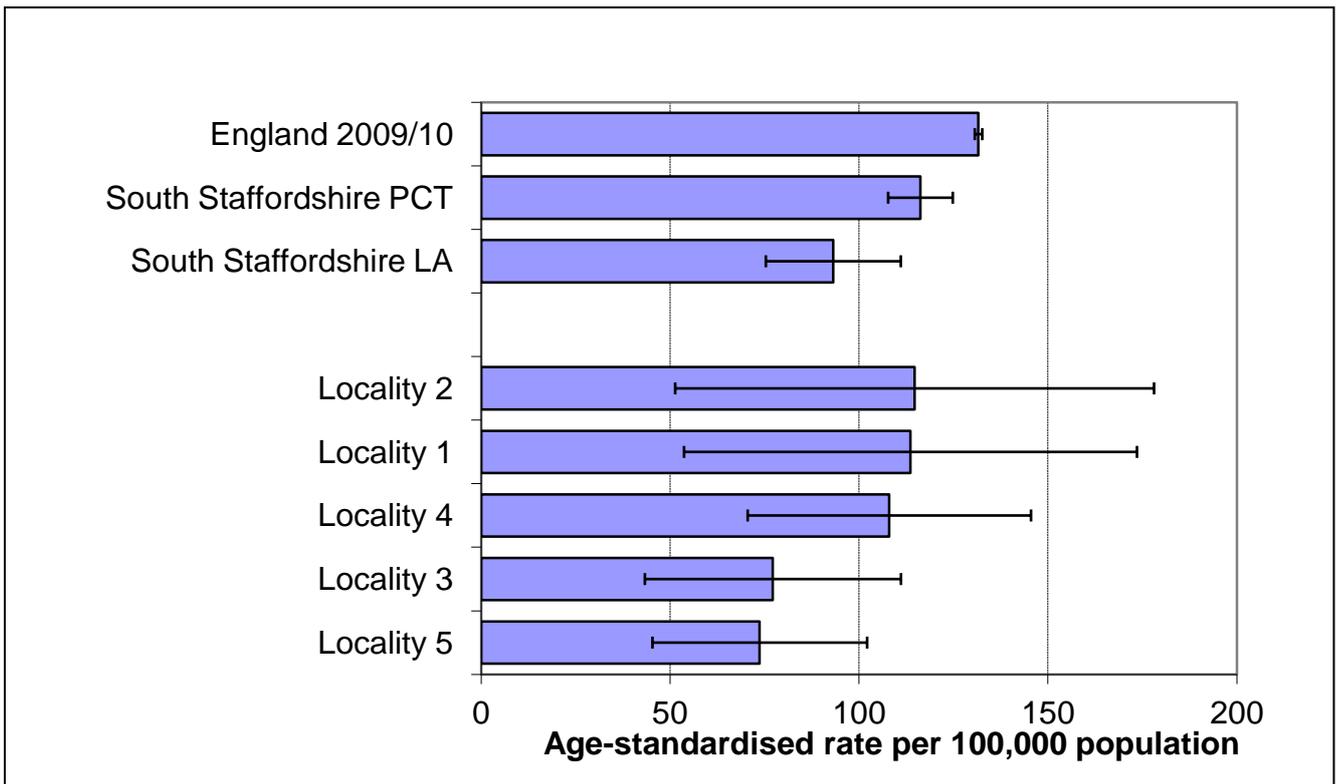
Locality 5

Hypertension(18%), adult obesity (12%)
depression (9%), chronic kidney disease (7%), diabetes (6%) and asthma (6%)

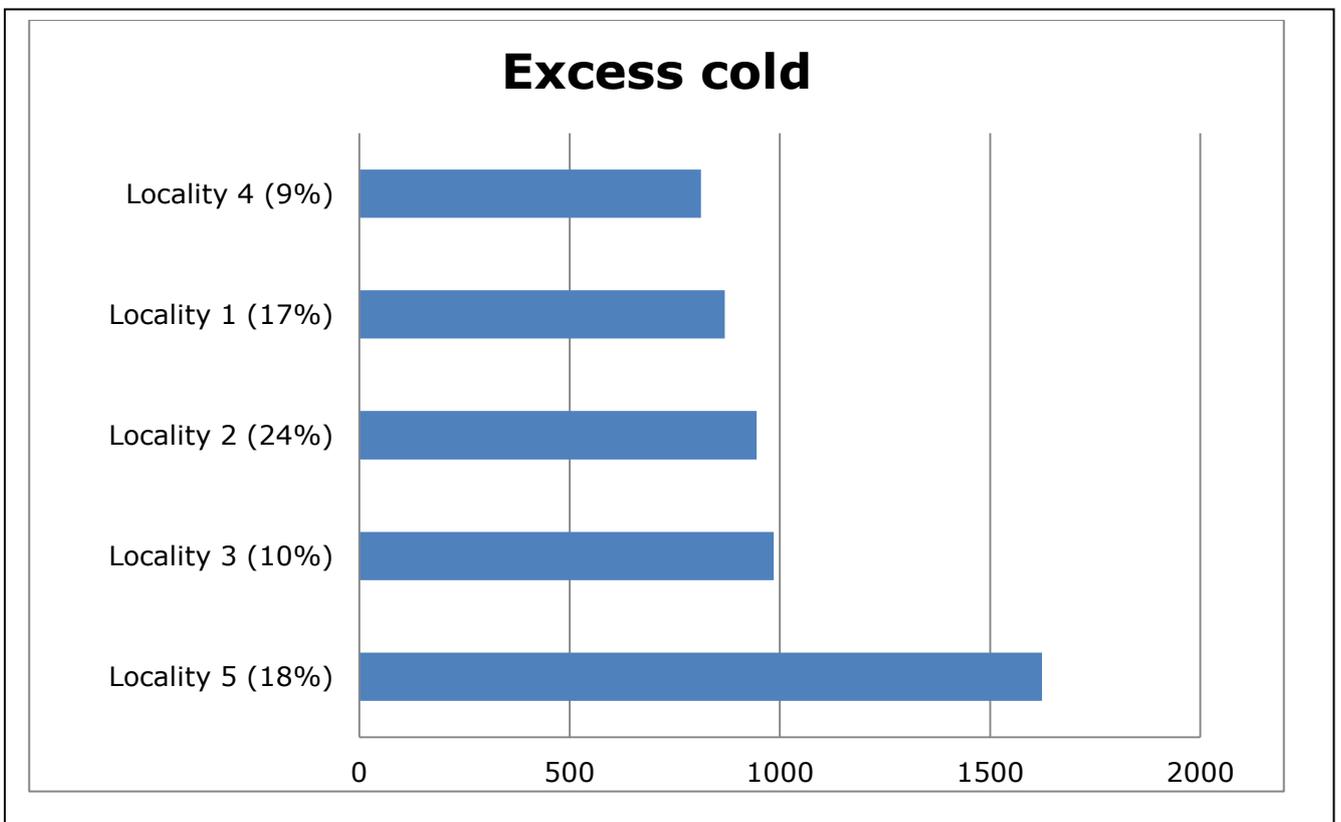
Non Elective hospital admission rates from COPD by locality, 2010/11



Non Elective hospital admission rates from hip fractures by locality, 2010/11



Housing



Crime and the Over 65 Age Group

Violent Crime

Violent crime includes harassment, robbery (from the person and business property), sexual offences, homicide, serious and other assaults.

Other assault includes several crime types including wounding, actual body harm and common assault.

During 2010-11, there were a total of 1083 crimes across the district. There were approximately 35 violent crimes where the victim was aged 65 or over. This equates to just 3.5%.

Where did the violence take place? Were there any hotspots?

Locality	1	2	3	4	5	South Staffordshire
All violence	223	107	356	198	199	1083
Victims aged 65+	4	3	11	4	13	35
%	1.8%	2.8%	3.1%	2%	6.5%	3.2%

Relationship between the victim and the suspect/ accused

Relationship of suspect to victim	No of Crimes
Stranger	5
Husband/ Wife/ Partner	5
Acquaintance	5
Youths	4
Son/Daughter	3
Nursing Home Patient	2
Nursing Home Worker	2
Dog Bite	2
Neighbour	2
Brother/Sister	1
Unknown	4

Age of the victim in relation to the suspect/accused

Of the 20 crimes where ages of both parties are known, 11 involved suspects also aged 65 or over. These included crimes reported between married couples, neighbours, nursing home residents or other family-orientated relationships

5. A Four Tiered Approach to Ageing Well in South Staffordshire

- i) Primary prevention
- ii) Secondary or targeted prevention
- iii) Respond and re-able
- iv) Self directed support

- Primary prevention – stopping a negative outcome happening in the first place

e.g. enabling people to remain healthy longer, smoke alarm, flu vaccination, or creating a support network which enables someone to live independently. The assistive technology house at Codsall is used to find what's available for all levels of need.

- Secondary or targeted prevention – responses to support those living with existing conditions, to minimise their severity and reduce the likelihood of complications developing

e.g. dietary advice and podiatry for people with diabetes, or managing loss of independence so that further deterioration is avoided.

- Respond and re-able - specialist interventions to address health and care crises and to remain at home or return home as soon as possible.

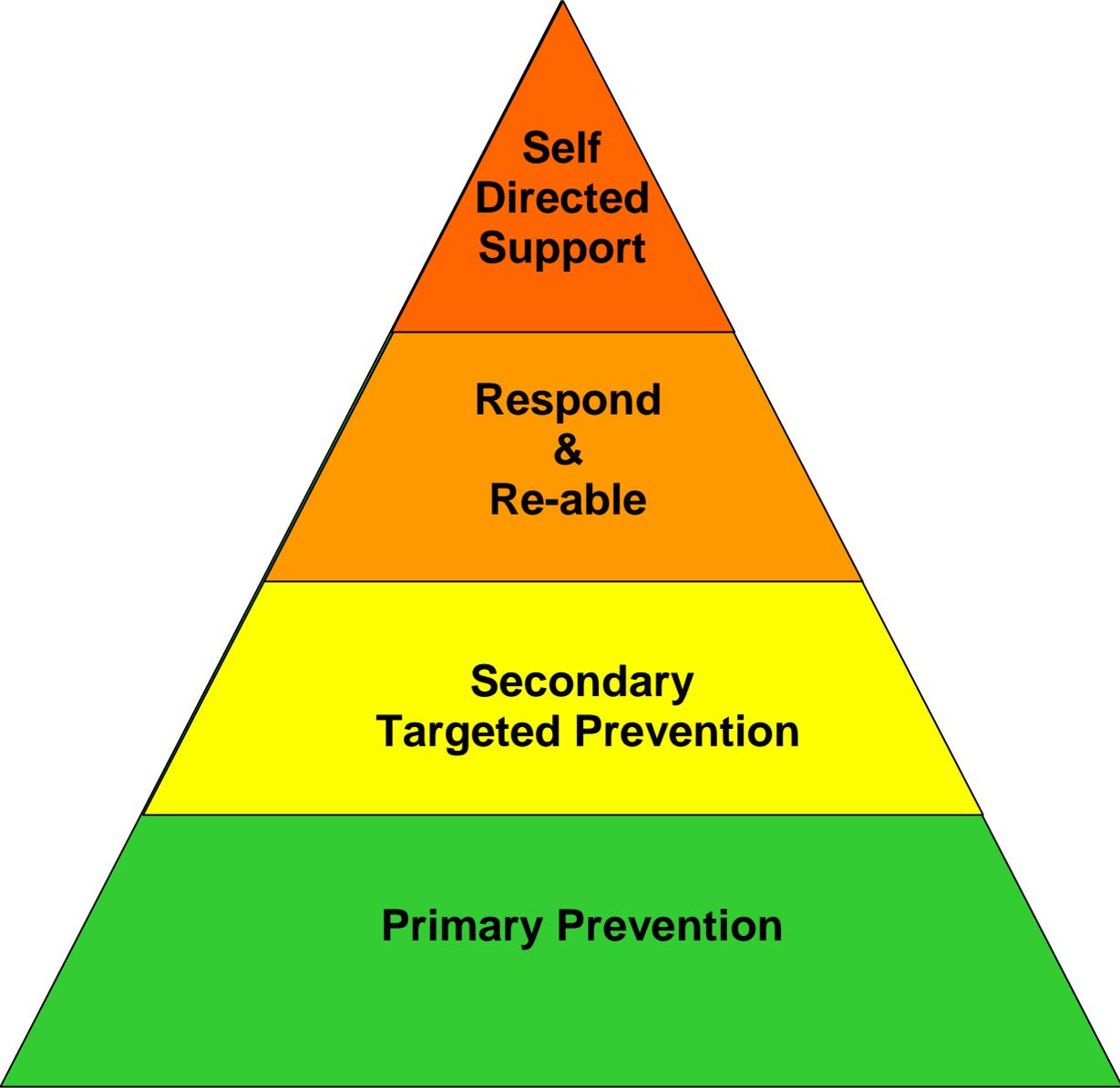
e.g. rehabilitation to enable someone to return home after a stroke.

- Self directed support – support to people in circumstances when they need care or support through a range of services which help people understand and manage their needs. Having control over everyday life does not necessarily mean doing everything for oneself, but being able to decide how and when things are done. Choice and control over daily living activities are also important outcomes for everyone including care home residents,

e.g. personalised budget for all or some care needs and personal health budgets.

Currently, most health and social care resources are directed to acute and long term care. Our aim is to promote an approach in South Staffordshire, which focuses more strongly on the levels of primary and secondary prevention. This approach has been represented as a triangle of care. The goal is to invert the triangle so there is a stronger focus, by all service partners, on appropriate universal services for older people and on commissioning more health promotion, prevention and well being services. The goal is to help older people to look after their own health, to stay active and fitter for longer and to replace the need for emergency, acute and long term care with planned, specialist services when health and care issues do emerge.

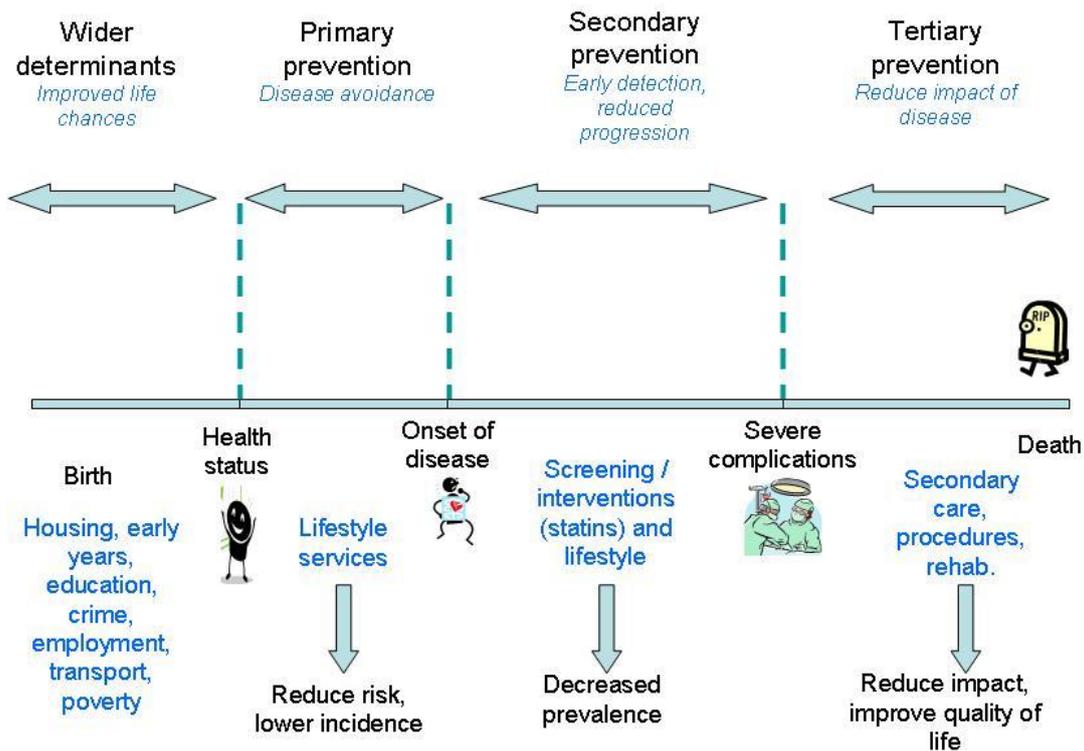
A Four Tiered Approach to Ageing Well in South Staffordshire



The 'Concept of Prevention' model (below) complements the four tier approach. The prevention model is widely used in public health and is a framework reflected in the joint health and wellbeing strategy.

The focus as described in the model itself shows the stages of intervention ranging from addressing wider determinants of health to promoting wellbeing to reduce the impact of long term conditions.

Concept of Prevention



6. Areas for Action

This section describes the outcomes we wish to achieve. Under each outcome there is a description of issues together with a summary of how agencies wish to respond to deliver the outcome which are translated into the delivery plan actions.

Outcome: Older people are healthy and independent

Keep people as independent as possible for as long as possible by improving preventive services, and encouraging older people to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Ensure appropriate, personalised and timely access to health and social care services as near to peoples home as is possible to reduce access barriers and maintain and maximise independence.

Issues for Older People

Older people hope for good health, both physical and mental, and being able to stay active, mobile and avoiding accidents. They have concerns about ageing and possible deterioration in physical and mental wellbeing. Older people want access to services that will enable them to enjoy life and stay independent for as long as possible. Older people often respond positively to the challenge of improving their health and lifestyle but do not want to be dictated to.

Older people in Staffordshire want to continue to learn, and to take part in a wide range of leisure activities. These enable new skills to be acquired and new social networks and friendships to develop. Older people also want to be able to share their skills and contribute to the learning of others. They want to be seen as a resource, to be involved in community activities, to play an active role in educating themselves and younger generations. Older people also want to know what activities are available across the District and how they can access them.

The incidence of serious illness increases with age, and older people want to know that high quality individualised health and social care services will be available to them. They want to know they will be treated with kindness, dignity and respect. They want to remain in control of their lives with as much 'normality' preserved as possible. They want service providers to offer choice of how, when and where treatment and services are provided and health and social care professionals to provide clear, joined-up and accessible information. They want to be given time rather than a rushed appointment and want to be active partners in the management of their long term condition. For older people who are nearing the end of their life, they want to know that skilled and high quality care is available that will enable them to continue to enjoy a good quality of life for as long as possible. They also want to be cared for and able to die at home, if this is their choice.

What the key agencies in South Staffordshire want to do

Action to improve the physical and mental health of older people needs to start well before they become older. Preventing cancer, heart disease, strokes, diabetes and serious respiratory illness all depend on taking action as early as possible. However, it is never too late for prevention to be of benefit. Exercise, healthy eating and stopping smoking all have major benefits for older people and we want to encourage older people to take advantage of the many services available.

We need to reduce the risks of falling, one of the most common causes of hospital treatment for older people. We aim to work in partnership with older people to help them to look after their health and wellbeing and to provide early intervention services when needs first arise.

Agencies in South Staffordshire want to support older people to remain connected with their communities and able to access the services they enjoy. We recognise that when older people do become more reliant on services, social contacts with nurses, home care staff and others are particularly valued. Our aim is to ensure these staff are fully trained and consistently treat older people with dignity and respect.

Agencies in South Staffordshire recognise that, as people age, they need to have their health needs taken seriously and their mental and physical health closely monitored. They need people to take account of difficulties that arise from lack of movement, changes in mental health, and deterioration of sight and hearing, to reduce any disability arising from these common conditions. Depression amongst older people often goes unrecognised and untreated, and many older people are concerned about memory loss or Alzheimer's disease and need advice and reassurance. All of these concerns are especially true for older people with caring responsibilities who are likely to have worse health than other older people.

Examples of what we are doing now

Olive Branch Training – provides an avenue for people to be referred to health improvement services
Walk for Health – Volunteer led organised walks aimed at the over 55's
Fitness classes – run with specific target groups of those over 55
Super active senior citizens – enabling volunteers to run local exercise classes
Carers groups – run to ensure professionals and local agencies meeting with carers to establish support needs
Integrated services – with Primary Care Trusts provider services as part of the Staffordshire and Stoke Partnership
Social Workers – working to locality areas rather than age boundaries
Health profiles – used to identify main health improvement issues
Key or named worker – enabling all users of services to have a direct line to one named person
Personal budgets – allocated to many already, brought in line with personal health budgets

Outcome: Appropriate housing

Ensure the provision of accessible and affordable housing and a choice of accommodation options when appropriate and services to support older people to adapt and maintain their living environment.

Issues for older people

Older people face some specific problems in relation to housing. Some housing may be in poor condition either because owner occupiers do not have enough income to invest in improvements or repairs and maintenance. Some housing may now be too large for older people's needs and be difficult to maintain. And some housing may no longer be suitable following the onset of disability. The need for adapted housing also applies to older people with mental health problems, especially dementia, many of whom can be supported in their own homes if the right adaptations are made.

Older people also want to live in a clean and tidy environment. An untidy house or garden is a threat to self-esteem as it can indicate that an older person is less able to manage her/his own affairs. A clean and comfortable home can help to sustain social inclusion, as older people are more likely to feel confident having visitors if the home is clean, tidy and continues to reflect their social identity. However, it can be difficult to get help in this area or, if hiring your own cleaner or gardener, to know who to trust.

What the key agencies in South Staffordshire want to do

We want to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation suitable to meet the needs of all older people living in South Staffordshire. We want older people to feel secure and comfortable in the home in which they live; be given as wide a choice as possible about where they live; have access to improvements and adaptations so they are able to continue living in their home, and be helped to move to a smaller home if this is what they wish.

We want to develop more Extra Care Housing to enable older people to remain independent for longer as their care and support needs increase.

Examples of what we are doing now

Adaptations grants process – streamlined for easier use
Assistive technology house for assessment – multi agency input
Links with housing associations and adult social care and health
Extra care housing – available in some areas and planning in place for others, enables capital to be put into property in extra care scheme, preventing self funding residents using own up own funds on residential care
Working with private landlords to ensure properties meet the Housing Health and Safety rating system, providing advice and assistance and if necessary taking enforcement action

Outcome: Out and about, valued and involved

Support older people maintaining their independence by ensuring it is as simple as possible getting out of the home and that the community environment is as least restrictive as it can be whilst out.

Value the contribution older people make to South Staffordshire by integrating older people into mainstream activities.

Promote and support the development and maintenance of old and new social networks and prevent social isolation. Increase and maintain independence through offering choice.

Issues for Older People

Older people often face increasing restrictions on their mobility. They may worry about finding somewhere to sit if they need to rest, may find it harder to deal with some of the common obstacles on pavements, and harder to cross busy roads. Parks and open spaces may not feel safe or may feel as if they are only intended for young people or families.

The availability of public transport is an issue. For frail older people this can be a serious issue especially if they do not have access to a car.

It's also important that others are aware of the needs of older people travelling around the District: older people value considerate bus driving, car drivers who always stop at pedestrian crossings and cyclists who use the road rather than the pavement.

Older people face a number of barriers to participating in the life of the community. It might be getting out and about, or not being valued and feeling a lack of confidence. If older people aren't involved in community life, both they and the community lose out. Older people have skills, experience and time to offer their communities. Their involvement not only strengthens community life but can also contribute to the local economy. Above all, it ensures that older people maintain a sense of worth and well being.

Close relationships and social networks are central to wellbeing in later life. Isolation can lead to deterioration in both physical and mental health, and a feeling of 'giving up'. Older people want to maintain their relationships with others, and want opportunities to make new friends, especially when, through ageing, old friends are lost - often, older people who are facing the same experiences can be mutually supportive to one another. They also want easy access to these networks without having to travel too far. When old relationships and friendships are lost, they want easy access to supportive bereavement services. And families, in an age when death tends not to be talked about, often need considerable help coming to terms with the passing of a loved one.

What the key agencies in South Staffordshire want to do

We want to make it easier for older people to get out and about in South Staffordshire. We want to reduce the difficulties they experience, whether as pedestrians, cyclists or using public and private transport. As we develop services we want to have the needs of older people, as well as other age groups, in mind. We want older people to have a say on transport plans.

We want older people to participate in community activities that they enjoy and play a part in shaping what takes place in neighbourhoods. We want them to continue making a valued contribution to community life, whether through volunteering or paid employment, and recognise that social activities prevent isolation and promote good physical and mental health. We believe older people should be seen as a valuable resource for our community, able to use their skills and experience to benefit us all. We want to reduce barriers to their involvement, whether physical or attitudinal. We will promote their participation in social, political and cultural activities and encourage them to serve their community through volunteering. We will ensure that the positive contribution older people make to South Staffordshire life, including the contribution of older carers, is recognised, celebrated and valued, and that steps are taken to counter negative perceptions and discrimination. We will challenge age discrimination and work to identify and eliminate any discrimination preventing access to services.

Where older people come together in social settings such as day opportunities or sheltered housing our aim is to promote social activities and friendships among older people. We recognise that social contact is important for older people with dementia as it can promote a sense of continuing social integration. It's also important that agencies and professionals spot those at risk of isolation early on. Ensure options are available in the least restrictive environment possible as we know travel can be a challenge.

What we are doing now

Village agents - provide a bridge between agencies and the local community, there is currently one in each locality.
Volunteering – levels are good in some of the areas of South Staffordshire with Great Wyrley area winning a Queens award.
Citizens Panel – ensuring groups of residents can be independently consulted on a range of issues
My Place My Say – Website forum up and running
Rural Transport Partnership – project looking at all aspects of travel and transport including issues for older people
Fire Service Course – focus on many areas such as fire safety but also keeping active
Good neighbours – work promotes looking after residents and encourages supportive neighbours
Personal budgets – can be used to join local groups
Community grant aid scheme – ensures arts projects can be applied for and arts and sport related activity can be delivered

Outcome: Living in a safe environment

Enhance the feeling of safety and security both within the home and outside by providing accessible and affordable housing, accessible and safe transport systems and a safe environment.

Issues for Older People

The vision of older people in South Staffordshire is to live in a safe and secure environment. Feeling safe and secure is a pre-requisite for anyone to be able to lead a full and active life. Older people want to feel safe both at home and when they leave their homes. Although older people are less likely to be the victim of crime than other groups, they are more likely to be worried about it. Older people have often stressed the importance of being kept informed about what's happening in their neighbourhood and having a trusted person they can contact if problems arise – whether that contact is through their local police station, school or GP surgery. Older people want to feel safe at home, free from bogus callers, protected from abuse, and in a home environment that meets their needs and helps them to maintain their independence.

What the key agencies in South Staffordshire want to do

South Staffordshire has a low crime rate but fear of crime and anti-social behaviour is a major worry. We want to increase older people's confidence by reducing both their fear of crime and the chances of them becoming victims. We also want to protect older people from abuse through the consistent application of the multi-agency adult protection procedure, and we want to protect them from exploitation through the active work of trading standards and others. Key agencies such as the police, the council's housing providers and the voluntary sector, will work with older people to improve their safety.

It is important to recognise the excellent contribution that intergenerational work makes to changing perceptions and attitudes by bringing young and older people together.

Examples of what we are doing now

Good neighbours – work promotes looking after residents and encourages supportive neighbours
Reviewing how people get about – feasibility study going on, how resources can be best used
Social hubs being developed
Olive Branch Training – provides advice around safety, security and wellbeing
Intergenerational grants – enabling communities to run projects and schemes such as the older and younger peoples fashion project, video productions in conjunction with local schools and the Beth Johnson Foundation and theatre productions

Outcome: Older people are financially secure

Enhance the financial security of all older people by improving information on benefits, concessions and other financial services and enabling them to remain economically active for as long as they wish.

Issues for Older People

As people age they may become more concerned about their financial security and their ability to afford a good quality of life as they get older. Some older people want to remain economically active, in employment, and want accurate advice on how much they can earn before incurring tax or pension penalties. Others are concerned about getting trustworthy advice if they are considering releasing equity from their home if they are a property owner. Further on, handing over power of attorney to a relative can be a difficult decision, calling for sound advice and support.

What the key agencies in South Staffordshire want to do

Some older people are unable to work and rely on financial assistance from the state to maintain a decent standard of living and in some cases live below the poverty line. It is essential that information and assistance is provided to these people, who are often among those most vulnerable in our society.

Many older people continue to work beyond retirement age and some would like to work but encounter difficulties in doing so. Barriers vary but can include actual or perceived age discrimination by employers, skills gaps, loss of confidence having left a job of many years, ill health limiting the type of work that can be done, caring responsibilities and lack of information about relevant opportunities available to help them return to work. In April 2005, the Carers (Equal Opportunities Act) required local authorities undertaking a carer's assessment to take into account the carer's wish to work, undertake training, or take part in leisure activities. In October 2006, age discrimination legislation came into force making it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of age in employment and vocational training. It also introduces a default retirement age of 65. Employees also gained the right to request working past their employer's retirement age, which the employer has a duty to consider. We want to work with local employers to ensure they are aware of this legislation, and recognise the contribution that older workers can make. We also want to promote more flexible working hours so older workers can combine work with other responsibilities, including caring.

What we are doing now

Signposting – forums and local groups can be a good route to information and advice
Village agents - provide a bridge between agencies and the local community, there is currently one in each locality.
Providing advice and assistance on fairer charging

Outcome: Consultation and information

Value the involvement of older people through forums and groups and ensure good access enabling all to contribute

Issues for older people

Service providers do not always consult and involve older people in shaping their services, yet this is key to ensuring that services meet older people's needs. There are many reasons why the voices of older people are not always listened to. Frail older people may find it difficult to get to meetings or participate in other ways. Older people are more likely to find reading reports difficult because of the small print. Hearing loss may hamper taking part in discussion or using the phone. In addition, older people sometimes underestimate the severity of their concerns, not always wanting to speak out on certain issues.

Older people often lack good information about what is happening locally because they are isolated. While some older people have an excellent knowledge about services available, and events that they regularly participate in, others know little and miss out on things that could improve their health and well being.

What the key agencies in South Staffordshire want to do

We want to ensure that the quality and availability of information about what is happening in South Staffordshire is as good as possible. We also want older people to be consulted and involved as we plan services, and to tell us what they think of the services they receive. We want older people to be given as much responsibility as they wish to participate in or actively manage the services they need. We want wherever possible to tailor communication and materials to ensure they are appropriate for older people.

Examples of what we are doing now

Carers groups – run to ensure professionals and local agencies meeting with carers to establish support needs
Citizens Panel – ensuring groups of residents can be independently consulted on a range of issues
Engagement – local councillors and agencies are invited to attend local forums
Data profiles – available for each area of South Staffordshire
Our place our say – section of district council website for engagement