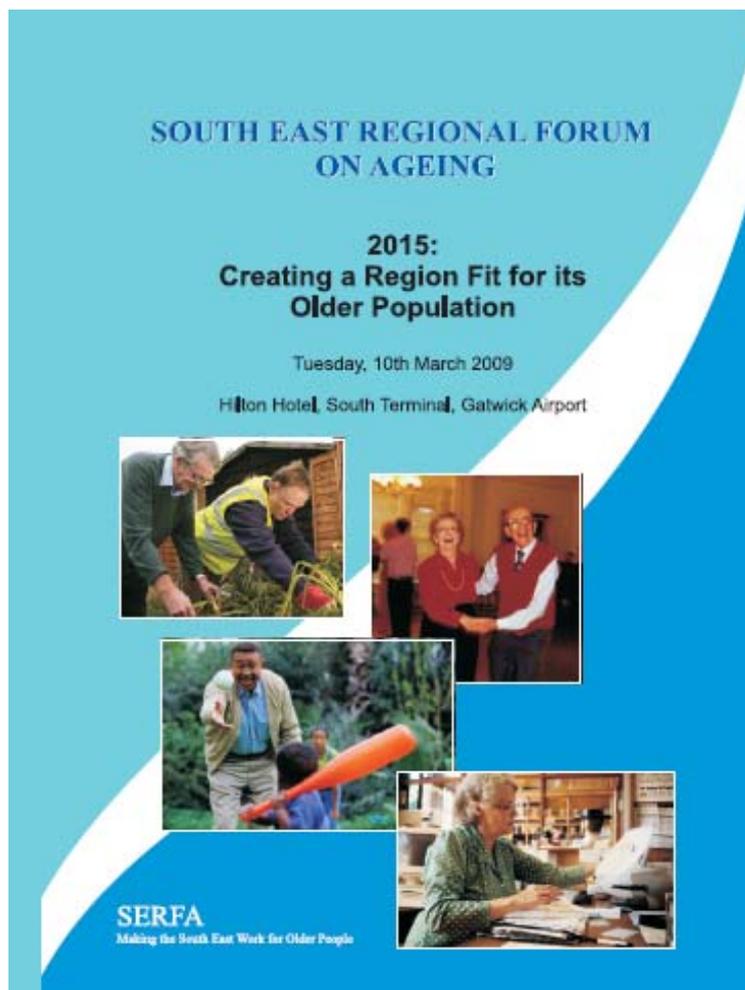


## SOUTH EAST REGIONAL FORUM ON AGEING



**The Report of a Conference: the start of a debate**

**July 2009**

## ***'2015: Creating a Region fit for its Older Population'***

*Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2009*

*Hilton Hotel, South Terminal, Gatwick Airport*

### Introduction

On 10<sup>th</sup> March 2009, the South East Regional Forum on Ageing (SERFA) sponsored a conference which provided a forum for policy makers, professionals and older people themselves from across the South East region to discuss, debate and consider how we might all address the challenges presented by demographic change over the next few years.

The Regional Forum on Ageing is supported by a significant number of organisations and individuals from across the South East, such as the new Age Concern/Help the Aged charity, Equality and Human Rights Commission, South East OPAG<sup>1</sup>, Dept for Works and Pensions and GOSE<sup>2</sup>, all of whom are concerned with improving the lives of older people in our region

The conference provided an opportunity to start a debate which can begin to influence the future for our older people in the region. The report which follows is a summary overview of the discussions which emerged in the plenary and workshop sessions of the Conference. All presentations made at the workshops can be found on our emerging website at: <http://tinyurl.com/SERFA>

### Next Steps

However, SERFA would now like to step up the debate. We want to use the conference to launch a series of discussions over coming year as to how we can build on the initial discussions generated at the Conference about how we can help shape a better future for our older population to 2015 and beyond.

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<sup>1</sup> South East OPAG = South East Older Persons Advisory Group

<sup>2</sup> GOSE = Government Office for the South East

We will be sponsoring a series of regional discussions on each of the key themes of the workshop. This is an appropriate time to hold such discussions in the context of the renewed national strategy on Ageing which is being released in early July 2009.

In addition to our regional discussions, we would like to know how these initiatives can be used as a platform to spark a series of follow-up discussions in as many local areas as possible. We are not seeking special follow up meetings locally, however, we would like to see that the issues raised at the regional event are debated locally within the context of events you will have otherwise planned: e.g. meetings of your LSP; local Age Concern Forum; Older Person's Advisory Groups, etc.

Specifically, we want to promote the better engagement of older people across the region and ensure that all older people in the South East have an opportunity to stay actively involved in their communities.

Members of the Regional Forum will be pleased to support as many local discussions as we are able. On a broader front, we would welcome an increasing dialogue with you, your colleagues and SERFA. We would welcome hearing from you directly as to what areas you might like us to address in future.

We would welcome your comments. You can contact us directly by writing to: [SERFA@gose.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:SERFA@gose.gsi.gov.uk)

or

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## 2015: Creating a Region Fit for its Older Population

*Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2009*  
*Hilton Hotel, South Terminal, Gatwick Airport*

### AGENDA

- 09:30**            **Registration and Refreshments**
- 10:30**            **Welcome** – Conference Chair  
Julia Pride – chair of the South East Regional Forum on Ageing
- 10:40**            **Debating the Age:** A Panel discussion to set the stage for the day's events with:
- Michael White – Guardian Journalist - Panel Chair
  - Dr Nicola Brewer, Chief Executive – Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
  - Stephen Burke, Chief Executive – Counsel and Care
  - Glen Mason, Director of Social Care Leadership Performance – Dept of Health
  - RT Hon Rosie Winterton MP – Minister of State for Pensions and the Ageing Society and Minister for Yorkshire and Humber
  - Tom Wright, Chief Executive designate – Age Concern and Help the Aged
- 11:40**            **BREAK**
- 12:00**            **Workshop Sessions:** 5 Simultaneous workshops  
**(See Annexes for detailed workshop agendas)**
1. Active Ageing / Active Citizenship
  2. Skills and Employment
  3. Housing for an Ageing Population
  4. Health and Wellbeing
  5. Achieving Eng-AGE-ment in the South East
- 13:00**            **Lunch and Networking:** With musical entertainment from the “Zimmers”
- 14:00**            **Concluding Workshop Sessions:** as per above.
- 15:30**            **Feedback, Reflection, Refresh of “Opportunity Age” and Next Steps:**  
Julia Pride, Chair – South East Regional Forum on Ageing  
Charlie Massey, Capability Review Director – Department for Work and Pensions
- 16:20**            **CLOSE**

## **Introductions and Welcomes: Launching the South East Regional Forum on Ageing**

Julia Pride, Chair of the South East Regional Forum on Ageing welcomed delegates to the Conference. Julia the conference had been completely oversubscribed and it was absolutely wonderful to see so many people. This was obviously a subject, which was very, very close to people's hearts and people really want to make a difference. Today was a opportunity to bring people together to consider how we can make all parts of the South East region a better place to grow older.

Julia outlined the four objectives for the day:

- We want to start a region wide debate. We want this debate to continue throughout, and beyond the day.
- Secondly, to consider the role of older people as major contributors and consumers in the region's economy and of public services.
- Thirdly, to share ideas on how we can create more effective partnerships to ensure all people have a greater voice in shaping their futures as they grow older.
- Finally, to launch the South East Regional Forum on Ageing.

Just as important, the conference was designed to provide an opportunity for us all to meet new people, to talk to each other, to find out what other people think, to listen, and to network. It was also intended to provide an opportunity for some really creative, new thinking

Julia then outlined the shape of the day and the exciting events lined up for everyone, including a wealth of material and information from the numerous conference stallholders who had joined us to the singing group, the Zimmers, to entertain us at lunch.

This was also an exciting time for SERFA – the South East Regional Forum on Ageing. Julia reiterated that SERFA was a partnership of agencies, organisations and individuals from across the South East Region. It was not an organisation: - its strength lay in its membership and how, through their networks, they in turn connected with, and raised the profile of ageing issues and the implications of demographic change in the region.

Our aim is to positively influence regional strategies and policies and to ensure older people benefit from those. We want to help identify issues of concern to older people and to get people working together on ways forward. In particular, we want to promote engagement between older people and policy makers and, again, very much a theme of today. She added that a key part of SERFA's role is to challenge ageism and promote social inclusion and independence for all older people

## Debating the Age: A Panel Discussion

Julia then handed over to Michael White, journalist with the Guardian newspaper to Chair the Panel session to set the stage for the day's events with a session called, 'Debating the Age'. The aim of the session was to provide food for thought for delegates about the issues we need to address now create a region fit for its older population by 2015 in light of an ageing workforce and a quickly increasing population of adults aged over 65. Both the panellists and the delegates were informed by a 'Factsheet' about ageing issues in the South East which had been prepared for the Conference. (Available on the website). Panelist members included:

- Michael White – Guardian Journalist - Panel Chair
- Dr Nicola Brewer, Chief Executive – Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
- Stephen Burke, Chief Executive – Counsel and Care
- Glen Mason, Director of Social Care Leadership Performance – Dept of Health
- RT Hon Rosie Winterton MP – Minister of State for Pensions and the Ageing Society and Minister for Yorkshire and Humber
- Tom Wright, Chief Executive designate – Age Concern and Help the Aged

Michael White, through a series of skilful questions and prompts, and the panellists considered a wide range of issues, relating to ageing. The detailed transcript<sup>3</sup> of the discussion can be found on the SERFA website. However some of the key issues discussed were

**An Ageing Society:** We've all heard about the ageing population:

- *What do you think an 'age friendly society' would look like?*
- What's an example of where we are NOT an age friendly society.

**Changing Social relationships:** we will have a radically different population structure from that we have been used to in the past: what do you think this will mean to our social relationships what should we do tackle stereotypes about old age? Is this important?

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<sup>3</sup> <http://tinyurl.com/SERFA-Conference-Plenary>

**An Older Workforce:** Not only will we see an increase in the population over 65 – traditionally considered to be the retired population – but we also have an ageing workforce. What are the impacts of an ageing workforce on the British economy?

**Preparing for Later Life and Living Well in Later Life:** At an individual level we want to encourage people to think much earlier about what they might want and need

- At a personal level what do you think we ought to do to support people to make these choices easier?
- What can we as a society do create more opportunities for people to remain active in society throughout their lives?
- How do we address the inequalities in health and income levels

**Providing Stronger Protection and support for when you need it:** We know that there will inevitably be a greater number of older and probably frailer and more disabled – how do we ensure that people get the support, information and guidance they need to make their own decisions in difficult and challenging times.

**Michael then opened the questions to the floor. Issues raised included:**

- Real concerns expressed from a Councillor from a local authority which is trying to prepare for demographic change and the difficult choices this is presenting the authority. In his words, “We celebrate old age and increasing longevity, but it brings its challenges. It brings its challenges in particular to those unpaid, informal carers...” He was particularly concerned about elderly carers looking after their children with learning disabilities who themselves are middle-aged adults sometimes with early onset dementia. Another delegate emphasized the point of the need to support carers. If the aim is to help people to stay in their own homes as people become older and frailer – the feelings of carers must not be taken for granted.
- Concerned about the lack of access to affordable holiday insurance due to age and illness. Older people are being unfairly discriminated against on the basis of age when a younger person would get insurance.
- Another delegate spoke of the need for accessible amenities (eg public toilets), which enabled Older People to continue to go about their lives doing the things important to them and not stereotyping people as unable to do things simply because of their age.

- A representative from Arthritis Care wanted to see whether arthritis, as a disabling, long term condition could be brought within the scope of the quality outcome framework for primary care in the NHS.
- Concern expressed that people from rural areas were being ignored in the debate

**Finally, before concluding the session, Michael invited the Minister, Rosie Winterton to highlight next steps from the government's perspective, which included:**

- taking forward the consultation which will lead in due course to the refresh of the ageing strategy. She encouraged people to come back with comments on what is being proposed

- there is now a Cabinet Committee focusing on ageing issues. The Committee was trying to do is get a focus across government on all the issues that are pertinent at the moment with regards to the ageing society which has viewed as an opportunity and not a challenge.

- there is a need, firstly, to make people very aware of what is happening, and then to put in place the mechanisms for helping people to prepare for older age. This includes some of the huge changes that are coming in in terms of pensions' reform. For example, in 2012, everybody will be automatically enrolled in a pension service

Key questions which need to be addressed include:

- How do people want to spend their old age, what decisions do they need to make to prepare for it. What is it that the state can do to help, what is it we need to look to the private sector to help?

- What are the issues around social care, for example, what are the issues around life long learning.

- the response to the Elbourne Review (Empowering Engagement) sets a guide to make sure that every local authority consults with older people when planning services. The legislative framework has been put in place through the democracy bill which puts a duty on local authorities to consult local people. We have also set up regional champions working from the government offices making sure that people are doing this properly and we will have an advisory committee at national level to make sure that ministers are focused on the points that have been raised today

- Again legislatively, through the equality bill we are outlawing age discrimination, but frankly, none of this will happen unless we have a really thorough input from organisations like SERFA as well as those from younger generations

## **Summary of the Workshops**

Most of the rest of the day was spent in a series of 5 facilitated workshops. Delegates were invited to join one of the workshop sessions and stayed with that one for the rest of the day to enable detailed presentations and inputs being given in the morning with time for reflection and detailed discussions in the afternoon.

The paragraphs which follow represent a summary reflection on the key issues which emerged in the workshop discussions. The more detailed write-ups of the workshop sessions are included in the Annexes to this report.

### **ACHIEVING ENGAGEMENT (Annexe 1)**

Comprehensive, effective representation including harder-to-reach groups, using a bottom-up approach, leading to effective action.

Government to address pensioner poverty and lack of investment in key areas such as social care, particularly within the current financial climate.

### **ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP/AGEING (Annexe 2)**

It is important to recognise and celebrate the contribution of older people, as active citizens to their communities. This activity develops their health and well being. We need to act upon this by identifying and promoting best practice in inter-generational work and supporting volunteering by older people. However, we also need to remove the barriers that prevent some older people from being active citizens.

We need to see continuous improvement across the public, private and third sectors in meeting the needs of older people. It is vital that the services these sectors provide are accountable to all individual older people, regardless of back-ground. Throughout the region, we need to identify varying levels of performance in order to promote best practice and eradicate poor practice.

## **HEALTH & WELLBEING (Annexe 3)**

Individual/personalised care and opportunities – early diagnosis and good quality services.

Sufficient focus on long term strategies, funding and planning – taking account of demographic challenge and rising expectations.

Integrated Health and Social Care Services linked with universal services and information to empower decision-making.

## **HOUSING (Annexe 4)**

CHOICE: A range of housing choices for older people, whether using their own resources or turning to public sector to help get the right housing options for them.

INFORMATION: The ability to access information (and advice) in places where older people will be.

PRACTICAL HELP when faced with changes to housing – e.g. help in moving to a new home or being able to “try out” new housing options before making IRREVERSIBLE decisions.

## **SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT (Annexe 5)**

Find ways to communicate to employers how the workforce is changing and the benefits of employing older workers, and empower older workers to market their skills and expertise.

Improve and simplify access to the information older workers need to have more choice about their working lives.

## **Some Common themes** arising from all the workshops:

- Choice
- Information
- Reaching the parts we don't reach: eg vulnerable groups; isolated localities
- Communications/ language: communicating in clear, accessible language was important to ensure key messages were communicated clearly
- Blazing a trail: dealing with an ageing society was a new feature facing us all. We are blazing a trail and should be encouraged to pilot and try out initiatives to help make a better life for all older people in the region.

## **Plenary Discussion**

Charlie Massey, Capability Review Director. Department for Work and Pensions and Julia reflected on some of the key points which had emerged during the day.

Charlie firstly, observed that there has been a real buzz about the day. He had two areas of reflection:

- The power of engagement – the government is doing work on engagement by setting up a national council, and also helping regional forums to engage better.
  - Where the government is going with this - need for culture change is a key message to come out of the day
1. The new government ageing strategy with focus on creating an age-friendly Britain – need to dismantle age barriers, and explode myths with employers about older workers
  2. Better preparation for older life – not just for older people. Living longer is positive, but not unless harnessed as an opportunity
  3. Participation in both paid work, and community and voluntary activity
  4. Resilience and protection – still a lot of poverty and disadvantage – effective social care system to be in place when and where needed.

Opening the discussion out to floor, key points which were made included:

- Funding to help older person's groups is a key issue. The more groups do, the more their membership and/or client base grows, but it is increasingly difficult to get secure funding particularly in the longer term

- The need to ensure that documents are made available for those who are not computer literate and not assume that everyone has access to the internet. Aligned to this was a plea for plain, simple language to communicate messages.
- Engagement: There were several questions/ points made seeking to see how (the government) plans to involve older people in the new strategy and to emphasise that if the government really, really truly means engagement with older people, will they please make it long term? Short term reorganizations over the past years have made it much more difficult to stay engaged and created a bad feeling with volunteers.
- Pensions: a real plea that the Treasury heard that message that for many people, their annuities are now virtually worthless as annuities and new retirees who are forced to take the lump sum they have saved all their life as an annuity are going to be seriously disadvantaged.
- Vulnerable/ 'hard to reach groups': there are groups, e.g. older ex-prisoners, older lesbian and gay groups, who have not been able to access most of the traditional structures and for some, such as prisoners, there are still barriers in the way stopping them from re-integrating back in society successfully.

Charlie responded in detail to the points made in discussion and certainly took away the need to ensure that the forthcoming Ageing Strategy was written as clearly and made as accessible as possible.

## Close

Julia Pride concluded the conference by re-emphasising that SERFA wanted the debate which had been generated today to continue. SERFA would be communicating with all delegates as well as those who weren't able to attend today. Information would also be available on the website shortly.

She noted that SERFA wanted particularly to address the Empowering Engagement agenda. SERFA really wanted the debate to continue at local or sub regional level, and in order for that to happen, we need other people to join in with us. She encouraged all colleagues to think about how that might happen at sub regional level, either through your own networks, through your local strategic partnerships, through other -- be creative. SERFA would try to facilitate and empower as best we can.

Julia summarized by saying that "it feels as if we are embarking on a journey and we don't quite know what the next steps are but we know what's going to happen!"

## Annexe 1

### Summary of Achieving Engagement Workshop

**“By 2015 older people will need to have a stronger voice, set the agenda, and be engaged in policy making and service design at all levels if the South East is to work for them.”**

#### **1. Engagement and Inclusion**

Engagement in its broadest sense means the ability of older people to engage in the mainstream of society as citizens, for example through volunteering - and to have influence and control over those things that affect our lives. Evidence – for example, from the Social Exclusion Unit - shows that many older people suffer exclusion as a result of poverty, ill-health, ageism and inaccessible services, and are unable or prevented from participating and engaging in society in many of the ways that others take for granted.

To secure the engagement of older people as a whole in society, there is a need for action to address poverty, particularly in the immediate in recognition of the impact of the recession on savings and annuity reductions, and the the short term to address levels of poverty amongst specific groups, in particular women in their eighties and those without any occupational pension. More action needs to be taken to tackle fuel poverty.

Second, there needs to be greater investment in social care, and in particular 'preventative' services that support older people to remain healthy and active. Third, there needs to be action to tackle ageism and bring down those barriers that prevent older people being fully engaged, such as accessible transport, digital inclusion, and insurance services.

Fourth, older people need to be able to express their views, have a right be heard, and be able to influence decisions – both in relation to their individual circumstances, but also over the way that services and society is shaped, in which they have a continuing interest as citizens.

#### **2. Effective engagement means hearing the voices of all older people.**

There is no single voice of older people. It is important that older people speak with their own voices, and that unrepresentative organisations and groups do not claim to speak for them

There must be a recognition of the great diversity that exists within the ageing population. The issues people face, their interests, and the ways in which they can engage, will vary for different age groups, faiths, and socio-economic groups. Disabled older people and same sex couples are often not included, and there are significant differences between urban and rural areas. (*Action in Rural Sussex*) Older people also have the right not to engage, or to choose how they engage.

For some this may be through activity groups, ethnic groups (not necessarily older persons' specific groups) or political parties.

Effective representation won't be 'the usual suspects', although often these are people who are active in their communities, and are respected by older people for their efforts. The National Pensioners Convention is an important body, and voice, at national, regional, and local levels.

Elected Councillors as Older Peoples champions have an important role in connecting councils to older people and older peoples' issues, but they need to be properly supported.

### **3. Building locally and developing regional networks**

Effective representation and engagement, at any level, will grow from a broad range of efforts to reach people. The starting point must be the local area, and the local community which is often the primary concern of older people. Effective engagement begins from the 'bottom' up. It is at this level that efforts to promote engagement are also efforts that tackle isolation, and focus on 'the hard to reach'.

Every individual should have the opportunity to be involved, and this might involve the provision of transport, or be through GPs surgeries, health-related groups, and chemists promoting local opportunities. Local shops and services are also valuable ways to promote opportunities for engagement. Older people need to know what opportunities exist, and what support is available, to be engaged. This information needs to be available through the local media as well as through local information channels. Groups and councils need to work together to promote positive images of ageing in the media. Care needs to be taken to secure media coverage of events and issues as it is an important aspect of promoting engagement and building confidence.

Self-organised groups, run by older people, are particularly important and should be supported. To build effective networks and representation, local groups need to have access to funds, and also facilities, as the DWP response to Elbourne suggests. There needs to be investment at a local level to develop the engagement and voice of older people. (*Shropshire*) Seniors groups should also have access to training to improve their skills levels (*Schools sharing IT skills – Chesham High School, Reading 50+ silver Surfers*). Both local groups and local authorities need to recognise that funding doesn't necessarily undermine independence, nor does it provide control. In urban, but particularly rural areas, there is a need for access to buildings in the community where people can meet.

A positive engagement strategy will result in an increase in the number of 'independent' groups, (*Chiltern DC supports local groups with grants*) and increased attendance at forums and meetings. Existing organisations need to be drawn into the umbrella of groups that provide a balanced voice for local older people. Local arrangements need to be sustainable.

Engagement at a regional level can only be built on sustainable local arrangements. Any forum at a county or regional level needs to be properly funded and informed, well promoted, and with participants' cost reimbursed. Geographically, the South East is a difficult area to build a forum in, but the *North East Forum* provides a model of good practice.

As well as a regional forum, there should be opportunities for older people to meet to network, and conferences to discuss important issues.

### **3. Effective engagement to shape policy and services**

At all level, at which decisions are made, and services are shaped, older people have a right to be at the table. They bring a wealth of experience and knowledge, commitment to the area in which they live, and have a vested interest in the future for their children and grandchildren.

Consultation and dialogue needs to be built around older peoples' ability to participate, and this may mean organising engagement around the places they go, and the things they do, rather than expecting people to participate in separate events.

Good engagement is about working with older people, not doing 'for' or 'to' them. It requires building and working with networks of organisations and groups, and taking the trouble to plan and organise to a high standard taking account of needs. The methods are likely to be different to mainstream consultation, and require a different culture and approach. Listening is important, and older people should be able to set the agenda, rather than just response to proposals. Surveys are helpful, but need to be treated with caution, and should supplement engagement.

Genuine engagement is an ongoing process and involves older people in planning, consultation, implementation, and delivery of services, policies and initiatives. Engagement is pointless if older people do not have the ability to influence the allocation of resources within communities. Engagement should span the full range of activity in a local area, including monitoring Local Area Agreements. People involved should always know what the impact of their engagement has been.

### **4. A role for SERFA in engagement**

SERFA should have a broad representation of a wide range of older people. It should have a mechanism to enable peoples' views from across the region to be fed into it. It should develop mechanisms for listening. A majority of its members should be over 50, and it should ensure good representation of normally under-represented groups.

SERFA should promote the engagement of older people in the public, private and voluntary sectors throughout the region. It should do this by both championing the issue, and being a model of best practice and good quality consultation itself, acting as an agent of change. It should also provide or promote training on good practice.

SERFA should develop a strong accountability to older people in the region, reporting publicly on its work, and its achievements. It should also play a key role in engaging and briefing the region's MP on ageing issues.

## **5. Conclusion**

The key messages from the 'Achieving Engagement' workshop were:-

- Comprehensive, effective representation including harder-to-reach groups, using a bottom-up approach, leading to effective action.
- Government to address pensioner poverty and lack of investment in key areas such as social care, particularly within the current financial climate.

## Annexe 1: Achieving Eng-Age-ment in the South East

“By 2015 to have a stronger voice for older people in the shaping of local and regional policies in the region”

12.00	Session 1: Where do we want to be in the future?
12.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Video:</b> on older people and Human Rights</li> </ul>
12.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Introductory statement to workshop by Convenors:</b> Paul Wolf – SEO Community, Cohesion, Equality and Diversity Team, GOSE Dr Heather Mercer – Head of Research and Development – Age Concern England</li> </ul>
12:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>“Empowering Engagement: A Stronger Voice for Older People:</b> Helen Dimmock, Simon Wilkinson , Dept for Work and Pensions</li> </ul>
12:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Visioning Exercise:</b> (Tabletop discussions) Where do we want to be in the future? What would a stronger voice, “sound” and “look” like?</li> </ul>
12:55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Plenary Reflections</b></li> </ul>
13.00	Lunch and Networking with Musical Entertainment from the Zimmers
14:00	Session 2: “Where we want to be in the future”
14:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Introduction to the afternoon’s session:</b> Paul Wolf and Dr Heather Mercer</li> <li>▪ <b>In small groups discuss</b> – with reference to the four conference themes of engagement; accessibility; vulnerable groups; and age discrimination – the following <b>four questions</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do need to do to move us towards the vision? (as discussed earlier)</li> <li>2. What would be different in the future to improve engagement: How we would ‘measure’ it? What would you expect to see: At local level? At regional level? At national level?</li> <li>3. What roles and responsibilities should the South East Regional Forum on Ageing have? What should its top 3 priorities be?</li> <li>4. Are there other areas not otherwise being covered in the conference where we would expect to see changes e.g. transport, security and safety etc.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
14:50	
15.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Plenary Feedback and reflection</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Summary comments to feedback to the following plenary session:</b> Convenors</li> </ul>

## ***Annexe 2***

### **Summary of Active Citizenship Workshop**

**“By 2015, the South East will be a region where active ageing is a reality for all older people”**

#### **1. The importance of active citizenship to the health and well being of older people and society**

The workshop considered and explored the importance of policies and resources that enable active ageing, through leisure, learning and volunteering opportunities in the region, and the roles of the public, third and commercial sectors in arranging and providing those opportunities.

The Government’s first iteration of a strategy for an ageing society, “Opportunity Age” published in 2005, had of course highlighted as a priority for action the need to enable older people to play an active role in society, with an adequate income and decent housing

‘Opportunity Age’ paid significant attention to the concept of “active ageing” for older people. It emphasised the need to ensure that measures were in place for older people to participate fully in both their families and communities-for example, through providing access to learning, leisure and volunteering opportunities. It stated:

“We have a vision of a society where voluntary activity flourishes and where all individuals and communities are enabled to play full part in civil society...We believe that more can be done to draw on the wealth of experience that older people bring to volunteering”.

This ‘policy ambition’ resonated, of course, with the findings of research undertaken for the Department of Social Security, ‘Attitudes and aspirations of older people: a qualitative study’ published a decade ago in 1999. Older people participating in the study wanted to be as active and independent as possible, for as long as possible and wanted government to support their aspirations by:

- creating opportunities for active participation – for example in employment, learning and volunteering for all ages, skills and types of experience;
- removing barriers to independence – through improved transport, customer focused, ‘joined-up’ services, and more accessible, user-friendly information;
- listening to their views – though a variety of forms of consultation, including informal, locally based dialogue between older people and government representatives
- responding to their views – by clear and positive action following consultation with feedback on what has happened as a result of their input.

Volunteering, as an expression of active ageing, is considered important because it can:

- help maintain a sense of purpose and self respect, particularly for those who have retired from paid work;
- lessen the isolation felt by those cut off from social networks in the work place and their families;
- have beneficial effects on physical and mental health; and
- be a particularly effective way of engaging the increasing numbers of older people aged 80 plus

In setting out the terms and direction of the review of the government's strategy for an ageing society for workshop attendees, Charlie Massey, Ageing Society Director at the Department for Work and Pensions, indicated that the emphasis on the importance of active ageing would be reinforced in the renewal of this strategy. This review was being driven forward in the context of a Public Service Agreement (no 17) committed to tackling poverty and promoting independence in later life. The 'prospectus' announcing this review had set out the Government's ambition "to create more opportunities for people to remain active in society throughout their life, so the priority actions under this theme are improving the choice over when and how to 'retire' and significantly increasing the rates of social participation through volunteering and leisure opportunities."

There were, Charlie noted, positive links between social participation and healthy ageing and increased social and civic participation should have significant benefits for the individual and society, such as improving quality of life, preventing physical and psychological decline and improving social cohesion.

Charlie also highlighted the need for more to be done to combat discrimination against older people and outdated stereotypes of ageing, in the context of not only a new legal framework for equality and human rights but also demographic change, which in 2007 saw pensioners outnumber children for the first time and in 20 years would see a quarter of the adult population over the age of 65 in 20 years time and a doubling of the number of people aged over 85.

The risks for society, the state and individuals, associated with a failure to respond to this demographic change included: inter-generational tension; increasing health and social care provision as the disability ratio rises; rising pensioner poverty; and a loss of human and social capital.

## **2. What older people require from services to enable to participate as active citizens.**

In reflecting on Charlie's presentation and the contributions from Jane Carrier of the Audit Commission, Annie Stephenson from the Social Care Institute for Excellence and Barbara Locke from CSV's Retired and Senior Volunteering Programme in Wales, delegates commented on the importance of the availability of opportunities for leisure, learning and volunteering in maintaining their well being and enabling them to participate as citizens.

Many delegates were clear about the importance of volunteering activity being led and defined by older people themselves and of the need for local public services to see older people beyond potential recipients of health and social care services and with the capacity to contribute significant social capital to local communities and wider society.

These observations echoed the findings in the Audit Commission's report 'Don't stop me now', of July 2008, of the extent to which local authorities were taking the lead (as 'Opportunity Age' had indicated that they should) in planning for the ageing of their communities, which highlighted need for local authorities to be both more pro-active and strategic in supporting volunteering and learning opportunities for older people. Jane Carrier reminded delegates that this research had also found that 'Opportunity Age' had had limited impact, that few local authorities were prepared for the additional diversity in their populations generated by demographic change but that increased awareness, better engagement and innovation could help many older people without significant expenditure.

Many workshop participants, whilst noting the efforts by and good practice adopted by some local authorities who were seeking to engage more effectively with older people, reported their agreement with the findings and recommendations of 'Don't stop me now'; some expressed the view that the new Comprehensive Area Assessment framework should be sufficiently robust in probing local authorities' performance on creating environments where older people can enjoy a good quality of life as they age and arranging services relevant to their needs.

Workshop participants agreed that the active participation of older people in communities, through volunteering, could also help to tackle stereotypes of old age, challenge age discrimination and in doing so create an age friendly society. Inter-generational activity was noted as an important tool here and the extensive engagement of CSV RSVP volunteers in schools in Wales was evidencing how volunteering could enhance understanding and respect between the generations and in doing so improve outcomes for children and promote the engagement of older people in local communities, through the sharing of skills and knowledge.

Delegates also commented on the potential value, particularly in the context of an expectation of (and demographic and economic imperatives for) extended working lives, of volunteering and related activities such as mentoring in assisting with skills and knowledge sharing, as a means of opening new employment and training opportunities in later life.

These perspectives underlined Annie Stephenson's view that all services across all sectors needed to do more to recognise, support and celebrate the contribution and achievements of older people, to enable them to enjoy, in every sense, later life to the full and to engage with them in a non-paternalistic way. Services needed to view older people as more than just passive recipients of social and health care services and a burden on the state and (younger) working age population

In this sense, opportunities for leisure, learning and volunteering should be as accessible and relevant to those older people living in residential accommodation as they are for non mobility impaired older people living 'independently' in their own homes. There was much good practice here and a challenge for local authorities was to 'look beyond the local' and to innovation elsewhere in the UK.

Many workshop members felt very strongly that poverty in old age remained a significant issue which undermined the ability of some older people to access opportunities for volunteering, leisure and learning opportunities and their quality of life in general. The financial circumstances of many older people compelled them to forgo these-either because of the costs associated with them or because inadequate income from pensions forced them to carry on working well beyond statutory retirement age.

In a similar vein, it was noted that in some areas, the availability of free bus passes for older people was an irrelevance as there were simply no bus services available.

In these circumstances, it was felt imperative for local authorities to review provision and explore the value of resourcing and support for community and voluntary transport schemes that enabled older people in rural and other isolated areas to access opportunities for leisure, learning and active citizenship.

### **3. Conclusion: what this means for agencies and providers in planning future provision.**

A fundamental shift in the mindset of the commissioners and providers of all services relevant to the needs of older people, including and beyond those concerned with health, social care and support services, is required if the South East is to become a region where all older people are able and can access the services that enable them to age actively and enjoy the best possible later life. As priorities:-

The contribution of older people, as active citizens, to their communities must be recognised and celebrated. This activity develops their health and well being. This needs to be acted upon this by identifying and promoting best practice in inter-generational work and supporting volunteering by older people. However, it is also necessary to remove barriers e.g. income inequality, transport, stigma, that prevent some older people from being active citizens.

There must be continuous improvement across the public, private and third sectors in meeting the needs of older people. It is vital that the services that these sectors provide are accountable to all individual older people, regardless of background. Throughout the South East region, the variations in levels of performance must be identified in order to promote best practice and eradicate poor practice.

## Annexe 2: Active ageing in the South East-options and opportunities

“By 2015 to live in a region where active ageing for all is promoted and enabled.”

	<p><b>Session 1: Where we are now and where to we want to be?</b></p>
12.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Video:</b> Equality and Human Rights Commission</li> </ul>
12.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Introductory statement by Chair:</b> Gerry Mahaffey, Territory Director (South), Help the Aged).</li> </ul>
12.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Keynote statement: “The Government’s vision of an actively ageing society”</b> Charlie Massey, Director of Ageing Society Strategy, Department for Work and Pensions.</li> </ul>
12.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>“Older people as active citizens: a vision beyond health and care needs”:</b> Annie Stevenson, Head of Older People’s Services, Social Care Institute for Excellence</li> </ul>
12.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>“An ageing society strategy in practice: the experience in Wales”:</b> Barbara Locke, Director, CSV Retired and Senior Volunteering Programme, Wales</li> </ul>
12.35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>“What can local public services do to help achieve the vision?”:</b> Jane Carrier, National Policy Lead on Older People and Adult Services, Audit Commission</li> </ul>
12.40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Question time</b></li> </ul>
12:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Plenary Reflections</b></li> </ul>
13.00	<p><b>Lunch and Networking with Musical Entertainment from the Zimmers</b></p>
14:00	<p><b>Session 2: Active ageing in the South East: from vision to reality</b> Chair: Gerry Mahaffey</p>
14:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Introduction to the afternoon’s session:</b> Facilitator: Jane Carrier</li> <li>▪ <b>Working in mixed table groups this session will seek to identify, with reference to the four conference themes of (1) engagement; (2) accessibility; (3) vulnerable groups; and (4) age discrimination, what action is required, by whom and by when, if we are to realise our vision of living in a region where active ageing for all is a reality.</b></li> </ul>
15:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Plenary feedback and panel session</b></li> </ul>
15.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Concluding remarks from the Chair</b></li> </ul>

## ***Annexe 3***

### **Summary of Health and Wellbeing Workshop**

“By 2015 to have improved the health and wellbeing of older people in the Region.”

#### **1. What do we need to help people stay healthy?**

There is no single prescription for helping older people to stay healthy in order to add life to years and years to life and a range of approaches are required. As basic determinants of health, the importance of decent housing and adequate financial resources, including access to financial advice, cannot be overstated. This is also the case with easy (and subsidised) access to universal services such as transport, leisure and culture services.

Opportunities for older people to engage and contribute are part of the essential fabric of maintaining health and wellbeing. Churches and faith groups can play an important role in addressing the spiritual needs of many older people, enhancing wellbeing and reducing isolation. Community associations and other community networks can play a similar role in promoting active engagement and older people making a contribution to their local community. Promoting wider use of computers by older people is one way of increasing social networks and potentially creating intergenerational activity.

Information on healthy lifestyles should be widely and easily available throughout the life course, using a range of mediums and settings such as GP surgeries, libraries, community centres, media campaigns. This should assist older people to prepare and positively adapt to the effects of ageing. One stop shop advice centres are an option to be considered.

Information should cover health enhancing options, such as the importance of exercise and food and diet, and include advice on spotting the warning signs of the early symptoms of ill health. Some information may need to be targeted to reflect cultural and gender differences. It was thought for example, that men are more likely to participate in formal activities such as clubs, whilst women often engage in informal networks. Information and advice should be provided in ways that enable people to make choices and informed decisions and should increasingly be personalised.

Greater emphasis should be placed on prevention and early intervention which requires that older people know what services are available to them.

## **2. What do older people require from their health and social care?**

Easy access to services is a key requirement. This does not just apply to health and social care services but requires joined up thinking to improve access to universal services and resources. Assessment processes should be simplified as far as possible and any charges for services should be made transparent early on.

There should be clear care pathways with the opportunity to see the appropriate medical practitioner in a timely way. There should be more integration between health and social care in order to provide a holistic response and greater use made of technology to support independent living. General practitioners are highly valued, but other health and social care professionals have a role to play which could be further developed. Treatment should not just be conceived in terms of medication.

Services should be of high quality which means that care workers need to be well trained, compassionate and motivated to promote health and wellbeing rather than simply meet a person's basic needs for survival. People should be able to complain when standards are not met. Advocacy needs to be made available for those older people who need help to speak up. Services should be personalised and to allow older people to make choices and to take personal responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

There is a need to balance a desire for local determination attuned to community needs and aspirations, whilst avoiding wide variation between places and hence a post code lottery.

Carers, many of whom will be older themselves, need to be well supported and their contribution fully acknowledged. Above all, older people must be treated with dignity and respect as a matter of course.

## **3. How does this differ from existing services**

All too often it was felt that current services are characterised by being difficult and slow to access, lacking in individualised care, of poor quality and unresponsive to the needs of carers. Services are viewed as disproportionately crisis orientated and experienced as resource led. Demarcations between health and social care can be unclear and inconsistent with different and changing eligibility criteria. Silo working is compounded by a lack of common IT systems.

There were felt to be too wide a variation in what services are available in different places. Gaps in current provision that were highlighted include a lack of advice for self funders, underdeveloped use of telecare, and insufficient rehabilitation and intermediate care services. The needs of older people living in rural communities and older people from BME communities are not being sufficiently addressed.

In relation to the workforce, GPs were felt to require training to develop their skills in working with older people, including early diagnosis. Concern was expressed about whether there was a gulf of understanding between older people receiving their services from younger people.

Commissioners of services were not always felt to be willing to listen or engage with older people and their supporters contributing to insufficient long term strategy and financial planning to take account of the demographic challenge and rising expectations.

These shortcomings make it difficult for older people and their supporters to exercise meaningful choice, exercise self-determination, and plan for their future. Age discrimination is still experienced.

#### **4. What Does This Mean for Agencies and Providers in Planning Future Provision?**

At the national level policy affecting older people needs to be joined up and create a framework for ensuring equity of access to provision, whilst allowing local flexibility and individual choice. There is a need to debate and achieve a consensus on the balance of state provision versus individual responsibility.

On the ground commissioners need to work harder to engage with older people and involve them in decision making and capitalize on their skills and experience to directly carry out consultation. Ways of incentivizing such participation should be developed. Commissioning should be for the “whole system” and outcome focused; supporting the shift towards prevention and early intervention, strengthening support for carers, as well as the wider agenda of community cohesion, including intergenerational work. The focus of concern should extend beyond health and social care to encompass universal services, housing (including supported housing) and harnessing the capacity of the communities to support themselves (social capital). A whole system approach should involve a wide range of organisations including the community and voluntary sector and business. For example, businesses should be encouraged to actively promote healthy lifestyles and prevention amongst their workforce. Learning opportunities for older people should be expanded and promoted, including increasing the numbers of older people using information technology, both as consumers and engaged citizens. In order to tackle age discrimination, most services should be provided on the basis of need rather than age. There should be a much greater focus on achieving consistent high quality services that treat older people with respect and dignity. The overriding implication is the need to develop a longer term strategy and vision for achieving these changes and improvements for older people living in the South East, now and in the future.

## **Conclusion...**

In summary, the workshop identified three key requirements:

- Focus on developing a longer term strategy to plan for the increasing numbers of older people and their rising expectations;
- Focus on the developing and delivering of personalised care and support, early diagnosis and good quality services;
- Develop integrated health and social care services linked with universal services and information to empower decision making.

## Annexe 3: Health and Wellbeing

“By 2015 to have improved the health and wellbeing of older people in the region”

<p>12.00</p> <p>12.10</p> <p>12.15</p> <p>12:35</p> <p>12:45</p> <p>12:55</p>	<p><b>Session 1: Where we are now</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Video:</b> Equality and Human Rights Commission</li> <li>▪ <b>Introductory statement by Chair: “Health and Wellbeing in the South East”</b> (Chair: Glen Mason, Director of Social Care Leadership and Performance, Dept of Health).</li> <li>▪ <b>Facilitator:</b> Ian Bainbridge, Deputy Regional Director, Social Care Dept of Health South East</li> <li>▪ <b>Keynote statement: “Healthy Ageing”</b> (Dr Yvonne Doyle, Regional Director of Public Health, South East Coast SHA).</li> <li>▪ <b>Keynote statement: “Health and Social Care: a personal perspective”.</b> (Gerry Zarb for Baroness Jane Campbell, EHRC Independent Health and Social Care Policy Advisor and Lead Commissioner on Health and Social Care at the Equality and Human Rights Commission).</li> <li>▪ <b>Plenary Reflections</b></li> </ul>
<p>13.00</p>	<p><b>Lunch and Networking with Musical Entertainment from the Zimmers</b></p>
<p>14:00</p> <p>14:05</p> <p>15:05</p> <p>15.25</p>	<p><b>Session 2: “Where we want to be in the future”</b></p> <p><b>Chair:</b> Gerry Zarb, Head of Health and Independent Living, Equality and Human Rights Commission).</p> <p><b>Facilitator:</b> Ian Bainbridge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Introduction to the afternoon’s session:</b> Ian Bainbridge</li> <li>▪ Working in <b>mixed table groups</b> (older people, agencies, providers), discuss – with reference to the four conference themes of engagement; accessibility; vulnerable groups; and age discrimination – the following <b>four questions</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do we need to do to help people stay healthy and independent in later life? (What are the 3 most important things we should be doing)</li> <li>2. What do older people require from their health and social care services?</li> <li>3. How does this differ from existing services?</li> <li>4. What does this mean for agencies and providers in planning future provision?</li> </ol> </li> <li>▪ <b>Plenary Feedback and panel session to reflect on feedback</b> (Panel to include: Workshop Chair and drawn from the workshop contributors) to review ideas coming from table discussions).</li> <li>▪ <b>Concluding remarks</b> from the Chair</li> </ul>

## Summary of Housing Workshop

**“By 2015 to have improved the housing of older people  
in the Region.”**

### 1. SHAPING HOUSING OPTIONS FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN THE FUTURE

**What choices do you want as you move through old age – sheltered housing, retirement villages, extra care homes, specialised private sector housing etc?**

Key points: Transport (buses); space standards – 2 bed in all new build; access to info at life changes – and role of hospitals in this; taster sessions.

All options can be viable – depends on the individual community is important. As much choice as possible.

‘Nursing care and rented cottages’ scheme in development allows both partners to live together – would suit some people.

More OP housing with pets allowed, and gardens.

Tenure – do we all want home ownership? Longer tenancies and better quality private sector.

Reinvent private rental for older peoples’ market – clear market segmentation.

More affordable homes.

Shared equity – how successful in retirement? – applies well in ECH – attractive in care.

We need some clarity on shared equity and policy to regulate - Government scheme needed?

Range of choice essential.

Affordability as a limiting factor.

Conversion of existing home for OP / family – planning is a barrier.

Issue of housing control over choices. Key considerations – respect, safety, security, financial stability, scope for support.

Rural access – unrealistic to be able to access full range of options within small communities but important to keep people in their community as far as possible.

Living with OPs can be sensible but needs links with the community.

Avoid irreversible decisions.

People are an important element of housing choice – family, friends and prospective neighbours.

Remember options like Homeshare. Will OPs be prepared to share with each other?

Not a single group – perception of old. / Choice / Security / Information and advice / Private and public sector housing register.

Care and cluster arrangements.

What is older? We need to think in a different way about this.

Retirement age may be very different from what you choose later.

People want resident Wardens (caveat: people who live in sheltered)

Security is a major issue – people feel vulnerable.

Having choice.

Engage with younger people who will become older – planning ahead (like with pensions).

Awareness – Positive about older age.

Issue of loneliness.

Minimum of two bedrooms.

Information about what the options are.

Help with finding a better property in the private sector - might not be purpose built. Accessible housing register.

Should we be giving more choice? Some people prefer a one bed, some two / extra bed sits? How realistic do we need to be?

Some people like the idea of 'hotel' style living.

TV – local and national / local papers.

Persuade people to plan ahead – raise awareness about older age.

Critical role of information and advice.

Housing options for active older people.

Support enabling choices that would otherwise not be available.

Choice not to move.

Staying Put v specialised – home v security of resource housing and access to resources.

Specialised housing just one part – wider choice agenda.

Key themes – access.

Communication fundamental for choices and ability to access information. Need for specialist support to choice and the physical move process.

## 2. TO MOVE OR NOT TO MOVE – THAT IS THE QUESTION! What do we need to provide to ‘tempt’ older people to move from larger to smaller homes?

- ‘Saying Put’ – loans and charges on home.
  - ‘Taster’ sessions.
  - Package of services as someone does all the move for you. A one stop service.
  - Want to remain as independent as possible.
  - Difficulties in ‘flats only’ – want more choice of other types of housing; noise is an aspect.
  - But flats = more numbers, less social isolation – positive, more space for each unit – especially external space.
  - Two bedrooms should be the standard in every tenure and location.
  - Paying for it – could be overcome? Policy development needed.
  - Larger units are key.
- 
- Should not be about compulsion but about choice.
  - Financial incentives – retain some equity to invest.
  - Prospect of moving can be intimidating.
  - Reliable advice / info / practical help to show the benefits of a move and help achieve it where OP wishes.
  - Establish a regulated service? Chargeable.
  - Life doesn’t stop when downsizing – need to be able to continue lifestyle.
  - Current policies work against downsizing / releasing equity eg. will be means tested for care.
- 
- Some problems with Lifetime Homes – can be more expensive and awkward to design. Could be more flexible.
  - More suitable housing
  - Not having to ask families to provide support.
  - Not feeling like a liability.
  - Social facilities and community health facilities.
  - Safer and more secure.
  - Is there a technology solution to some of that – i.e. emergency buttons and cameras etc.
  - Maybe some of those issues are about advantages for all people.
  - More suitable housing which isn’t so difficult to adapt.
  - If the new housing will accept animals.
  - Neighbourhoods / transport / local facilities and services – should be preserved, not demolished.
  - Accessible housing register (public and private sector)

- Information about –
- where you could move
- education throughout support network
- Practical support with moving
- Cultural change – move away from generic approach to solutions for older people
- Advice and help as well as support – handy person scheme / financial advice / agency or someone to do it / managing stress on their behalf.

### **3. WHAT'S IMPORTANT / WILL BE IMPORTANT TO YOU IN TERMS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WHERE YOU LIVE AS AN OLDER PERSON – BOTH IN SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL TERMS?**

- Transport – more buses please! (Community buses and transport, not service buses)
  - Real problem in some areas with maintaining transport - buses need to be a priority.
  - Able to get out and enjoy entertainment.
  - More public subsidy.
  - More accessible trains and convenient times and frequency.
  - Airports? The Eco argument v people's choice to see the world.
  - Challenges to air industry and fuel – we want to travel!
  - Good infrastructure – pressure on sites, but opportunities at present.
  - Develop the country / out of town?
  - Sensitive development in keeping with local community (no care homes on flood plains)
  - Entertainment - theatres / cinemas / local facilities, but publicise and subsidise.
  - Use the purchasing power of older people.
  - Educational opportunities – subsidies for adult education must be maintained.
  - Activities are vital to build community.
  - Respond to the range of entertainment that people want (not bingo!) – don't make assumptions.
- 
- Neighbourhood and community issues – transport, local facilities – risk of social structure being dismantled.
  - Concerns re social isolation when people become less mobile. Opportunities to combat this: LA home visiting service, role of churches and voluntary sector in organising visits, school projects.
  - Be alert to future changes in communities affected by who lives there, emergence of community leaders.
  - Encourage public sector staff culture of awareness of needs. Move away from targets and outputs.

## A menu of things

- Safety and security
- Street lighting
- Pavements and access
- Good means of crossing the road
- Being near to facilities and green space, parks etc.
- Near bus route
- Near a doctor, dentist and podiatrist
- One stop shop
- Good neighbours – being friendly to each other
- Really good events / community facilities / inter generational activities – adult education and leisure such as computer classes
- Engaging through schools
- Design of community space it brings people together and provides security
- Multicultural

Role of voluntary public sector in plugging isolation gap.

Want an active role and influence neighbourhoods

Key facilities – community centre

Inter-generation activities.

Active older people – leisure facilities, cinema.

Living rather than existing

Tenure choice – retirement village model, single tenure development choice for some.

## 4. WHAT'S THE BEST PLACE AND WAY TO ACCESS THE INFORMATION OLDER PEOPLE WILL MEET TO BE ABLE TO MAKE INFORMED CHOICES ABOUT THEIR FUTURE HOUSING OPTIONS?

- Free service? Yes, universal with more specific chargeable services.
- Easy to access, single source of information, easy to digest.
- Advice face to face to enable questions to be answered.
- Signposting / referral to more specialisations.
- Service needs to be up to date – role of estate agents in explaining options?
- 'Gateway' – one stop shop from allotments to health advice, bill paying etc.
- Face to face service – multi services, plus private organisations.
- Town and rural locations; good for signposting.
- Backed by IT / web site.
- Point of access is crucial – time and where.
- Public / private sector balance – fragmentation.
- Develop a 'trusted hub'
- Niche for 'proper' housing options. Robust signposting needed.

- Rural areas – parish Council offices have a role – a series of ‘mini hubs’?
- Isolation is the worst aspect.
- Housing choices often made at times of crisis – e.g. in hospitals – better information needed. Tastes of alternatives needed. Hospital discharges are badly planned – educate consultants.
- More information about respite / short stay / intermediate care.
- Many people wouldn’t know where to start.
- Shouldn’t there be something on local media?
- Local Council drop in can be very helpful.
- Age Concern very good for information.
- National Conversation by the new regulator for social housing (TSA)
- Provide information through families and younger people (and vice versa)
- Signposting as well as providing services. People trust the council so they or the CAB should provide this service.
- Perception of older age – not a homogenous group.
- (gear) up people that come into contact with older people, i.e. OTs have housing knowledge and access to financial advice
- Information directory.
- Initiatives around sharing information among agencies and professional organisations.
- Referral pathways – clear facilitation roles / routes – seniors association.
- Best place -
  - GP surgeries / hospitals / district nurses
  - Own home
  - Shops both local / supermarkets
  - Library service
  - Post office
  - Bank
  - Leisure activities

## Annexe 4: Housing for an Ageing Population

“By 2015 to have improved the housing of older people in the region”

<p>12.00</p> <p>12.10</p> <p>12.15</p> <p>12:45</p> <p>12:55</p>	<p>Session 1: Where we are now</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Video:</b> Older people and some housing issues</li> <li>▪ <b>Introductory statement by Chair: “Housing for older people in the South East”</b> (Chair: Richard Ellis, Deputy Director of Adult Social Services Hampshire County Council. Facilitator: Bill Flood, Executive Director Sentinel Housing Association).</li> <li>▪ <b>Keynote statement: “So what’s being planned for your future housing?”</b> (Clare Skidmore, Extra Care Housing Programme Manager, Care Services Improvement Partnership and Sue Terry, Argon Associates).</li> <li>▪ <b>Question Time</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Plenary Reflections</b></li> </ul>
<p>13.00</p>	<p><b>Lunch and Networking with Musical Entertainment from the Zimmers</b></p>
<p>14.00</p> <p>14:05</p> <p>15:05</p> <p>15:20</p> <p>15.25</p>	<p>Session 2: “Where we want to be in the future”</p> <p><b>Chair:</b> Richard Ellis, <b>Facilitators:</b> Bill Flood, Cath Stubbings, Clive Parker, Clare Skidmore, and Sue Terry).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Introduction to the afternoon’s session:</b> Bill Flood</li> <li>▪ Working in <b>mixed table groups</b> (older people, agencies, providers) discuss – with reference to the four conference themes of engagement; accessibility; vulnerable groups; and age discrimination – the following <b>four questions</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shaping housing options for older people in the future – What choices do you want as you move through old age – sheltered housing, retirement villages, extra care homes, specialised private sector housing etc?</li> <li>2. To move or not to move – that is the question! What do we need to provide to ‘tempt’ older people to move from larger to smaller homes?</li> <li>3. What’s important / will be important to you in terms of the neighbourhood where you live as an older person – both in social and physical terms?</li> <li>4. What’s the best place and way to access the advice and information older people will need to be able to make informed choices about their future housing options?</li> </ol> </li> <li>▪ <b>Plenary Feedback</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Panel Reflections</b> to review the main ideas coming from the table discussions. (Panel to include: Richard Ellis, Clare Skidmore, Sue Terry, Cath Stubbings, Clive Parker and Bill Flood).</li> <li>▪ <b>Concluding remarks</b> from the Chair.</li> </ul>

### Summary of Skills and Employment Workshop

**“By 2015 older workers must be recognized and valued as being essential to our economic success”**

#### **1. The value of older workers to employers**

Older workers offer a range of benefits to employers, and by extension, the wider economy. They have a range of ‘softer skills’ and attributes which are highly valued by employers, including loyalty and motivation, flexibility, attention to detail, organizational skills and communication skills. Older people tend to be better at handling customers, especially in high-pressure situations or when dealing with older clients.

Rates of absenteeism amongst older workers are lower, particularly in cases of short-term sickness absence. At B&Q, for example, absenteeism is 39% lower amongst older staff. Retention rates are better for older employees. At Nationwide, for example, the annual turnover rate for older people is 4%, compared to 10% for younger staff, leading to a saving of £7 million a year in recruitment costs. People in their 50s and 60s normally still have a third of their lives to live and, if recruited at that age, are long term assets. For example, people recruited to Nationwide in their 50s and 60s stay for an average of 13 years.

Older workers can draw on their knowledge and experience to act as informal mentors to younger colleagues and pass on their skills. Older workers are also a source of creativity and innovation. A US study in 2000 found that 80% of the most workable and worthwhile new production ideas come from employees aged over 40.

Not only are older workers an asset to employers, but future demographic changes will make it increasingly necessary for firms to recruit and retain more older staff if they are to avoid labour and skills shortages. Between now and 2015 the number of school leavers is projected to fall year on year, and the number of 35-45 year olds will fall by 130,000 in the South East, but the number of 45-65 year olds will grow by 124,000. With a forecast growth in employment of 80,000 between now and 2015, the number of younger workers will be insufficient to meet employer demand.

There are opportunities to recruit older workers to help address skills shortages in sectors such as Social Care and the Security industry. This is amply demonstrated by two projects within the South East *40-70 Tomorrow’s Workforce Programme*. The Care to Share project run by RBLI raises awareness of employment opportunities in the care sector for people who may previously have worked in completely different careers and offers them pre-employment training to prepare them for finding work in this sector. Currently 70% of care homes in the South East have unfilled vacancies and care home managers find older people’s transferable skills highly valuable. Older people have the necessary life experience, reliability and empathy to enable them to make an invaluable contribution to the day-to-day running of care homes in the region. Older people are ideally suited to careers in the security industry too.

The sector employs half a million people in a very wide range of activities – beyond the stereotype of the nightclub bouncer – including CCTV installers, burglar alarm engineers, and ID card workers. Security staff are now more commonly employed in offices and shops than factories and building sites. The industry is keen to recruit level headed, mature men and women who are honest, reliable, can remain calm in a crisis and can work on their own initiative. A pilot project run by Skills for Security has just got underway in the Thames Gateway, aiming to bring more older recruits into the security industry.

However, despite the compelling nature of these arguments, ageism remains the most commonly experienced form of discrimination. One in five people over the age of 50 have experienced age discrimination in the workplace. There is a pressing need to inform and educate employers about the benefits of recruiting older workers, and to alert them to future changes to the workforce. Participants in the workshop discussions were clear that we should not only focus on supporting older people themselves to return to or remain in work, but should be promoting a structural change in employer attitudes as well. It was argued that a strong culture of ‘youth’ still exists in many workplaces, with prejudice and discrimination evident amongst some younger people towards their older colleagues. There is a need to challenge stereotypical views of older workers as resistant to change, difficult to manage, and slow to pick up new ideas and practices.

The default retirement age is enforced by most employers, despite Government efforts to encourage employers to allow staff to work beyond the age of 65 if they wish to. It was pointed out that enforcement of this ‘default’ retirement age is in effect discriminatory, particularly where it is used as an alternative to making people redundant. One reason for defining the South East older workers programme as ‘40-70’, or indeed ‘40 plus’ is to challenge pre-conceptions about working lives ending at state pension age.

## **2. What older people require from employment and skills services**

One of the strongest messages to come out of the workshop was the need for a single access point/‘one stop shop’ approach to advice on careers, training, job applications, pensions and planning for retirement. There needs to be better co-ordination and integration of the raft of different support services that currently exist. An example of how this might work in practice is the ‘Routeway 40’ programme being run by VT Enterprise. This offers free one-to-one support for anyone over the age of 40, providing advice on identifying skills, accessing training courses, flexible working, career planning and changing, job applications and self employment options. It acts as a single point of contact to link older people to a range of other services and organizations.

Older people are looking for support to be assertive in applying for and doing their jobs. Boosting their confidence to be able to market their skills to potential employers, and to identify their untapped skills, is key. As one participant suggested, the most powerful marketing tool would be for older people to attend job interviews armed with the ‘business case’ for employing older workers, to convince their potential employer of their value as an employee.

Once older people are in work, they are seeking greater flexibility from employers, to enable them to work part-time or on flexible hours, to stay on in work beyond ‘conventional’ retirement age, and perhaps to draw their pension while working part-time. DWP and its agencies, including Jobcentre Plus, recently removed the mandatory retirement age – a policy which is now being rolled out across all

Government departments. One JCP office in Hampshire recently recruited a 60 year old man who had spent his entire working life in the construction industry. His experience of this sector and his ability to provide common sense solutions to customers looking for work are invaluable. Another company, FirstGroup, which belongs to the largest bus operator in the UK, has no retirement age, and 40% of its customer-facing staff are aged 50 or over.

Although older people have not always been priority recipients for training, they do find training courses valuable, provided that they are tailored to their needs. Older people tend to prefer shorter, more focused courses aimed at specific job-relevant skills, rather than longer courses leading to a formal qualification. The new Train to Gain flexibilities will provide opportunities for shorter courses or 'bite-sized' qualifications that are better suited to older workers. Already 27% of people on the Train to Gain programme in the South East (22,000 learners) are aged over 40, and this proportion has increased since last year. The ReGROW project run by A4E aimed to improve the retention of people aged 50 plus in the workplace through the provision of information, advice and guidance and Skills for Life training, usually delivered through short, focused courses. More than 1,100 people have engaged with the programme in the past year, at a total cost of less than £1,000 per employee. Eighty per cent of employers saw a marked difference in their workforce after the training – in particular productivity, attachment to the employer and motivation were all improved.

Some older people may be considering self-employment as an option if they find themselves out of work or seeking a change of career. More information on the opportunities available to them would be welcome. A pilot project starting in April in Medway will help to address this need. The Business Link 'Shape your Future' project is aimed at people aged over 40 who have either recently faced or will shortly be facing redundancy (within 2 months). A two stage process is involved, with the first stage focusing on building confidence, identifying skills and interests, and exploring whether self-employment may be an option for the individual. The second stage involves developing a business plan. If a participant decides that self-employment is not a viable option they can be signposted to other support services.

### **3. How this differs from existing services**

There is currently a large number of schemes to help people move into employment, which participants felt need to be simplified to make them more accessible to older workers. Constant shifts in Government policy, with the integration and separation of services, can be confusing. However, at the same time as looking for a simplified service, it was suggested that traditional employment and skills services have too narrow a focus, and their scope should be broadened to cover a wider range of advice and support for older people's lives, relating to pension choices, caring responsibilities, volunteering, and so on, as well as employability and skills training.

It was suggested that employment and skills services should be more focused on people with skills at Level 4 and above, because this is likely to be more relevant to older people as they are more experienced and more likely to have reached executive level. Tailored support to managers and other highly skilled people who have been made redundant is already being provided by a network of Executive Job Clubs across the region. These are aimed specifically at managers and are run by volunteers.

Weekly meetings are held, with a job search presentation and one-to-one support being offered by employees who have been made redundant themselves in the past. This makes them credible and able to empathise and boost confidence.

Finally, the importance of taking positive action to tackle age discrimination was emphasized – rather than simply reacting to it, as has usually been the case in the past.

#### **4. What this means for agencies and providers in planning future provision**

There were two key messages here. Firstly, further professional development for careers and training advisors is important, particularly if provision is to be broadened to encompass areas of older people's lives beyond employability and skills training. There is a need for highly trained, expert advisors, who are familiar with the complexities of the pensions and tax systems. An interesting point was raised about the need for advisors also to be honest and realistic about older workers' career prospects. The new national Adult Advancement and Careers Service will have a key role to play in providing career advice, including for older people both in and out of work.

Secondly, providers should not only be informing, advising and training older people themselves, but also employers. Agencies and providers need to find more effective ways of communicating with employers about future trends in the workforce and the value of employing older people. There were several suggestions as to how to do this. Employers tend to listen most to other employers, so finding firms who do value older workers to act as 'business champions' could be effective. Convincing arguments are needed, drawing on up to date data and research about the value of older workers and forecasts of future workforce demographics and employer skills needs, presented in a user-friendly, relevant way. It is important to avoid employer 'engagement', whereby businesses are contacted by multiple public sector organizations seeking to 'engage' with them. The best approach, as encouraged by Business Link, is to use a single, knowledgeable point of engagement to speak on behalf of other providers and act as a signpost to them. However, it will always be difficult to reach the smallest businesses, many of whom may not have the time or resources available to consider boosting the number of older people in their workforce. The Routeway 40 programme, run by VT Enterprise, is already working with employers to raise awareness of the benefits of employing older people, and to link employers to people with the skills they need.

As well as educating employers about the value of older workers, it was suggested that employers should be offered training in 'age management' – that is, how to ensure that recruitment practices do not disadvantage older applicants (through the use of online applications for example) and how to find ways of designing jobs, and career paths, to make best use of older workers.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the workshop identified three key requirements:

- To communicate to employers about how the workforce is changing and the benefits of employing older workers.
- To improve and simplify access to the full range of information older people need to have more choice about their working lives.
- To empower and support older workers to market their skills and experience to employers.

## Annex 5: Skills and Employment

“By 2015 older workers must be recognised and valued as being essential to our economic success”

### Session 1: Where we are now

- 12.00      ▪ **Video:** Equality and Human Rights Commission
- 12.10      ▪ **Introductory statement by Chair:** “Older workers are important in a period of recession” (Chair: Barbara Smith, Director for Employment and Skills SEEDA).
- 12.15      ▪ **Keynote statement:** “Why older workers are so important in a period of recession” (Allan McColgan, Regional External Relations Manager, Jobcentre Plus).
- 12.25      ▪ **Facilitated session:** “What’s happening now?” (Facilitator: Nick Wilson. 40-70 Tomorrow’s Workforce). Inputs to include:
  - Train to Gain (LSC)
  - ReGROW and ROW (A4E)
  - Routeway Brokers (VT Enterprise)
  - Older Entrepreneurs (Business Link)
  - Care to Share (RBLI)
  - Opportunities in security industry (Skills for Security)
  - Executive jobs club (Branshaw Foundation)
- 12:55      ▪ **Programme for afternoon workshop session (Chair)**

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13.00      **Lunch and Networking with Musical Entertainment from the Zimmers**

### 14.00      **Session 2: “Where we want to be in the future”**

Facilitator: Nick Wilson

- 14:20      ▪ **Presentation:** “Opportunities for Older Workers” (Claire Hann, Skills and Labour Market Economist, SEEDA).
- Working in **mixed table groups** (older people, agencies, providers), discuss – with reference to the four conference themes of engagement; accessibility; vulnerable groups; and age discrimination – the following **four questions**
  1. Why should employers value older workers?
  2. What do older people require from employment and skills services?
  3. How does this differ from existing services?
  4. What does this mean for agencies and providers in planning future provision?
- 15:00      ▪ **Panel session** (panel drawn from this morning’s contributors) to review ideas coming from table discussions.
- 15.25      ▪ **Concluding remarks** from the Chair (Barbara Smith).