

Later years

A sure start to later life in Southampton

Introduction

1. This paper sets out how Southampton is moving gradually towards the Government model of 'A surestart to Later Life'. However, the model being developed draws upon a range of research and learning and suggests a network of inter-related initiatives to achieve the Surestart model.
2. Over the past few years there has been a rapid development in thinking around older people, their position as citizens, and the broader issue of an 'ageing society' – considering the impact of demographic change as a whole on society, markets, the economy, neighbourhoods, and so on. What is emerging is the need to both develop **sustainable** solutions, which in the light of the numbers, cannot be traditional service-focussed; and solutions that **support integration, inter-dependency and social cohesiveness**.
3. These are new challenges, and require new responses. Addressing the ageing society is a new stream of activity, and it requires new channels of funding. Investment needs to be made in achieving long term outcomes, rather than short term service outputs. The indicators within PSA 17 –employment; poverty; healthy life expectancy; satisfaction with home and neighbourhood; availability of support to live independently at home; set the direction, but are unspecific about what services are needed. Our target needs to be a well-informed, engaged, confident, independent, active and secure senior population that is enjoying its later life, and where inequalities between seniors are narrowing.

Background

4. Following *Opportunity Age*, the national strategy on ageing, in 2006 the Government published *A Surestart to Later Life*. It looked in detail at social exclusion amongst senior citizens, and proposed a model for addressing the issues. It established a set of pilots, *Linkage Plus*, to explore the issues in practice, and to gather the evidence for a business case for this type of initiative. Each pilot has developed differently, adapting the model to local conditions and existing circumstances. (Ref: http://www.dwp.gov.uk/opportunity_age/linkage/)
5. In 2008, 'Lifetime homes, lifetime neighbourhoods' – a housing strategy for an ageing society was published by DCLG, setting out a very broad agenda covering housing, health, support, information, advice and neighbourhood.

The Sure Start Model

6. The '*Surestart to Later Life*' model describes "a *single accessible gateway to services*", drawing on the approach applied to children. For children, that approach implied a specific local centre. But a senior version of the 'surestart' hub needs to meet a greater variety of challenges, as the LinkAge Plus Pilots are finding.
7. It is unrealistic to imagine that access to *everything* seniors want or need to improve their quality of life can be co-ordinated under one roof – just as for anyone else. We also know that many seniors do not want to engage with a 'service' model - independence for many means keeping away! Research shows that the availability and accessibility of information is critical, and we also know that seniors best gather information by word of mouth. Information technology offers critical opportunities to be informed, retain independence, and to network. It is widely available in any contact point if it can be harnessed. A key aspiration of the LinkAge Plus programme is for "*no-door to be the wrong door*". On an individual level, demand for IT training is increasing and the 'digital divide' is getting smaller.

8. There is growing evidence that social inter-action and contact plays the key role in mental well-being, motivating and stimulating activity, and even in determining the rate of physiological ageing. Yet the passage through later years coincides with a reduction in social networks – at work, families, and through moving home and reduced mobility, as well as wider social changes. Whilst we could not establish a ‘tackling loneliness’ service, the key element of any initiative must be to support and stimulate networking and inter-action opportunities for seniors.
9. The diagram below demonstrates where the hub ‘sits’, as a key connector across the whole piece, reflecting the SEU model. What does the ‘hub’ for seniors look like? Is it a place; a web site; a telephone number; or a network? The answer must be all of these - a ‘virtual’ hub that:
 - signposts people to the services they need;
 - makes information available through a variety of mechanisms;
 - stimulates and supports networks of seniors;
 - promotes and supports activities that improve health and well-being;
 - supports and connects agencies working with seniors;
 - provides a vehicle for seniors to contribute, have a voice and influence;
 - is easily accessible – although not necessarily a place;
 - delivers ‘prevention’ and also links with statutory services.

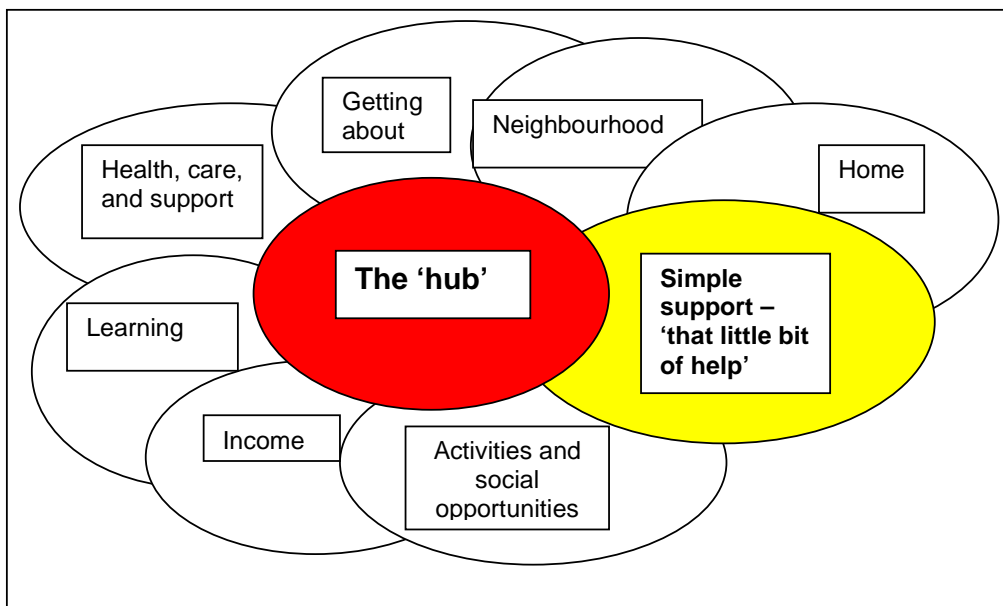


Fig. 1. The domains that affect seniors' quality of life – drawn from the Audit Commission

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10. A round of beacon councils, POPP and LinkAge Plus pilots, has enabled a number of authorities to develop initiatives to address the ageing agenda. In Southampton, we haven't benefited from new funding, but have been able to develop small initiatives, and that must be our starting point to develop others, and create the capacity to achieve a step change.
11. The diagram below shows the components of a Later Years Surestart hub at this stage. Some of these initiatives are already funded, and delivered by a number of agencies working together through the Later Years Partnership. Others have been scoped and developed through previous bidding processes. All the initiatives are designed to build on the capacity of the senior population itself, rather than create unachievable and unsustainable new dependencies, and to strengthen the involvement of the voluntary and community sectors.

That is the only way that we shall adequately address the needs of a growing ageing population.

12. The diagram shows projects that are securely funded, those that have short term funding or are the subject of a current (short term) bid, and some that are still on the shelf awaiting opportunity. This stage has been achieved incrementally and opportunistically. Appendix 1 sets out the current funding situation.

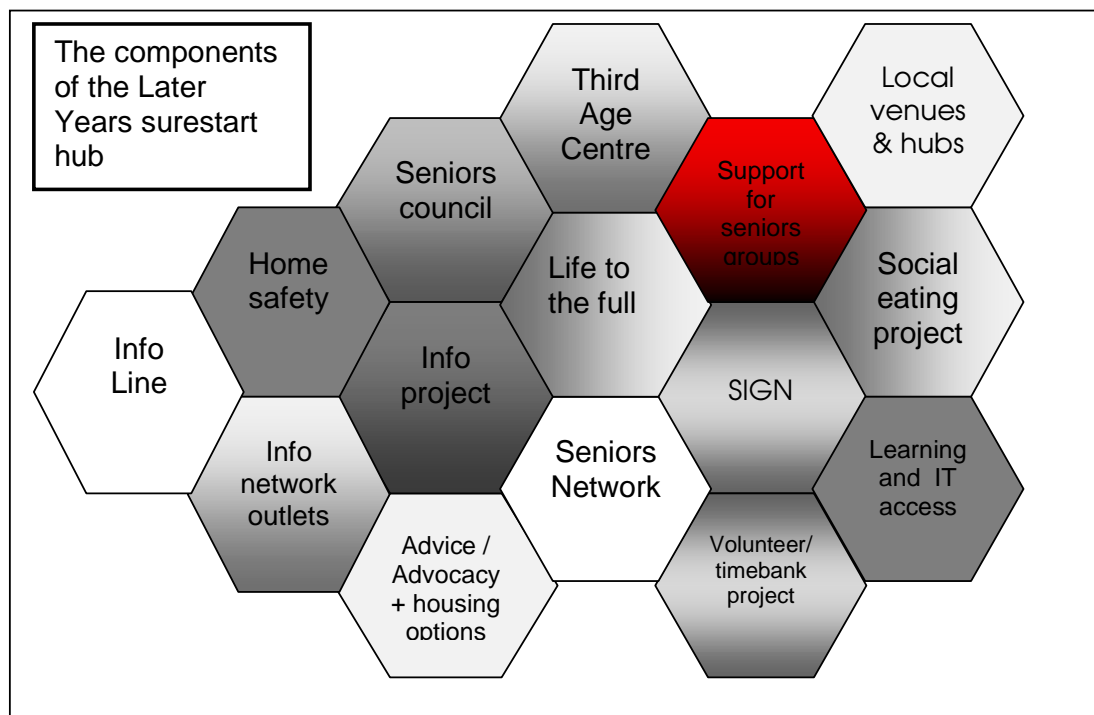


Fig.2

13. The virtual hub is a collection of initiatives delivered through different agencies, and different funding streams. It may well be that in gathering together capacity, across a number of partnership projects, some initiatives can be absorbed within other activities in the hub. This model also allows other initiatives to 'bolt on' – working alongside and inter-depending on other parts of the hub (which will also improve funding possibilities.)

Bridging the gap – offering simple support

14. A number of research studies have identified the need for simple support. Previous consultation in Southampton resulted in seniors saying that what they needed was 'more home help'. It is the availability of that help that has been shown to be fundamental in retaining both independence and home.
15. The issues are access, information, availability, reliability and trust. Research has shown that people want to be able to get the help that they want, when they want it – whether that is a bit of gardening, washing curtains or spring cleaning, a bit of help sorting out paperwork, or posting Christmas cards.
16. In Southampton there are a number of sources that offer some simple support:-
 - Friends, family, faiths and neighbours;
 - Voluntary projects such as Communicare,

- Care services for those meeting personal care eligibility criteria, and some other public sector services;
 - Private businesses (some vetted through 'Buy with confidence')
- However, these are neither uniform across the city, nor universally available. It is unlikely that there is the necessary capacity within the city to achieve, while many services do not offer the flexibility that seniors are looking for.
17. In recent years, there have been a number of initiatives developed to meet these needs. Among these are *Notts 50+* and *Help at Home* run by Age Concern Shropshire. *Help at Home* offers a range of services, but aims to meet whatever needs are presented, either through paid staff or volunteers. Users of the scheme must be over 65, not in receipt of personal care, and living in Shropshire. The scheme is funded by Shropshire CC – a beacon for seniors' services – but the funding levers both volunteers and income. There are small hourly charges. The Shropshire County Council funding is over £300,000pa, funded through the General Fund.
18. The nature of each scheme varies, but most are based on:-
- A variety of contributions from a range of agencies;
 - Strong partnership between agencies, and involvement of the private sector;
 - Flexibility to meet each seniors' needs;
 - Senior-steered projects;
 - A combination of paid and free services;
 - Easy access and good information;
 - Open access, as and when, people want access.
19. In developing the hub, as set out above, some of the components of a simple support network will be drawn together. However, the level of demand is unknown.

Proposals

20. More work is required in developing both of these strands of work. At this stage it is proposed that :-
- a) The Partnership endorses the approach to developing the Surestart for Later Life model;
 - b) Agrees to set up a meeting for those interested, and others, to discuss how we might progress establishing the demand for simple support, the extent of current provision in the city, and the best ways of extending provision.

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