

Later Years Partnership Tackling Poverty

Introduction

1. The DWP has the policy lead for older people within Government. In 2004 it published Link-Age, which outlined the establishment of joint teams with local authorities to increase benefit take-up, and the setting up of a Local Strategic Board bring a range of other parties round the table, and to look at a wider range of issues, following the DWP lead on older people.
2. In Southampton, the Local Strategic Board on the one hand co-incided with the setting up of the Later Years Partnership, and on the other became focussed on the difficulties of establishing a Joint Team.

PSA17 and the LAA

3. PSA 17, drawn up by the DWP as previously reported, highlights the need to tackle poverty. Within Southampton's LAA there is an existing target to increase take up of Pension Credit, and also Warm Front grants.

Re-launching the Local Strategic Board

4. Following discussion, it has been agreed to re-establish the Local Strategic Board as a sub-group of the Later Years Partnership. The LSB will be led by the Pension Service, and will focus on tackling poverty and the take up of benefits and grants. The LYP Co-ordinator will work with the Pension Service to get the right people/agencies involved.
5. At this stage there are a number of streams of work already identified:-
 - Getting a Joint Team between the Pension Service and the Council working effectively to increase benefit claims;
 - Targetting a take-up campaign on the two Super Output Areas with the highest levels of senior deprivation;
 - Working with care and health services to ensure that benefit take up is maximised by those passing through hospital – for example after a fall;
6. In addition, two issues that have come to the fore are:-
 - Fuel poverty and reducing fuel costs – where the sub-group can work to support the Southampton Warmth for All Partnership; and
 - Improving the availability of benefits information.
 - Improving the take-up of Council Tax Benefit
7. Like other areas of the partnership, those interested parties will be drawn together onto the LSB or focussed on the work streams with a minimum of bureaucracy, and its work will be reported back to the LYP regularly.

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