



Towards an Age-friendly Wythenshawe – a partnership approach to developing the Wythenshawe Age-friendly Charter

This paper is based on a presentation given at the Age-friendly Manchester launch in October 2012.

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February 2013

Introduction

Work to develop the Age-friendly Wythenshawe Charter was led by the two major Housing Providers in Wythenshawe, Parkway Green and Willow Park. It was prompted by the development of their Ageing Strategies and informed by conversations with tenants. It has now seen a wide range of new partners sign up and commit to embracing the principles of age-friendliness.

Manchester's Valuing Older People (VOP) programme was established in 2003. Since then, the scope and stature of the programme has seen Manchester gain national and international recognition as a leading age-friendly Local Authority. This culminated with the city becoming the first UK member of the World Health Organisation's Global Network of Age-friendly cities in 2010, and achieving WHO Age-friendly City status in 2012.

"Manchester has established itself at an international level as a leading authority in developing one of the most comprehensive strategic programmes on ageing."

John Beard,
Director of the Department of Ageing and the Life Course,
World Health Organisation

Background

Life expectancy is increasing at the rate of over two years per decade, and the percentage of the population over 65 years is projected to double over the next forty years. By 2030, two thirds of the world's population will live in cities, and 25% of this population will be aged 60 and over.

There will only be a brief opportunity to build the infrastructure necessary to address these trends. At the same time, an unprecedented demand will be placed on social and health care systems, which will have to be paid for by a falling number of working age people.

However, with great challenges, come great opportunities. Older people today are healthier, more socially engaged and more productive than ever before. They can contribute massively to the economy, community life, volunteering and civic participation. In Manchester, Age-friendly Manchester will support them by creating the environment they need to make that contribution long into retirement.

The new Age-friendly Manchester programme involves a range of core projects, delivered in partnership with Manchester residents and a wide range of public, private, academic and voluntary sector organisations. It will contribute to the delivery of the city's ten-year Ageing Strategy, *"Manchester: A Great Place to Grow Older"*, and extend the approach by embracing the World Health Organisation's eight age-friendly city domains. It will also contribute to a range of other local strategies and to Manchester's wider vision of being a world class city which stands out as being enterprising, creative and industrious; that develops highly skilled and motivated people living in successful neighbourhoods, where all residents can meet their full potential and are valued and secure.

By being responsive to the needs and preferences of older people, age-friendly neighbourhoods can support healthy and active ageing. Across the city, over a hundred partners have joined the movement to improve the quality of life of older Manchester residents and, most importantly, older Mancunians themselves are at the heart of the work.

Age-friendly Wythenshawe, led by Willow Park and Parkway Green Housing Trusts, will continue to work with frontline staff from a wide range of organisations, and with older residents, to improve services and opportunities for older people and to make Wythenshawe's neighbourhoods better places to grow older. This case study gives details of those organisations and their commitment to developing an Age-friendly Wythenshawe Charter.

The Charter

The Charter states:

"We commit to support the City Council's Valuing Older People Strategy and will demonstrate this by:

- Promoting amongst all colleagues, service users, customers and partners general awareness of older people, their rights, their needs, their potential and highlighting the positive social, economic and cultural contribution they make;*
- Ensuring that the views and opinions of older people are valued and listened to, and that structures and processes for engagement are developed to ensure older people have a meaningful involvement in decision making;*
- Adopting measures that develop 'places' that are inclusive, shareable and desirable for all, particularly older people, ensuring our publically used buildings promote the dignity, health and wellbeing of users of all ages, and are fit for purpose to meet the changing needs of an ageing society;*
- Promoting and supporting the development of neighbourhoods and communities for all ages that are diverse, safe, inclusive and sustainable, and that include housing for older people that is the highest quality;*
- Working to support transport systems that are available and affordable to older people, and are 'seamless' within and across the various modes of transport that exist;*
- Promoting the participation of older people in the social and cultural life of their community by making available a diverse range of events and activities that are accessible, affordable and tailored to be inclusive of them and promote their integration into the community. This should include the promotion of intergenerational activities;*
- Promoting and supporting the development of employment and volunteering opportunities for older people and recognising their positive contribution, to include the provision of lifelong learning opportunities in order to empower them and promote their autonomy;*
- Promoting the importance of access to and availability of high quality and responsive health and wellbeing services that are able to be tailored to meet the needs of Wythenshawe's older people;*
- Promoting an active partnership of all agencies, bodies, businesses and service providers in Wythenshawe to ensure that older people are at the heart of their work and all practical steps are taken to integrate services and promote best practice."*

The Charter is supported and adopted by a wide range of organisations in Manchester across statutory and non-statutory bodies. They include:

- Silver Service (from Age Concern Manchester);
- Equity Housing Group;
- Your Housing Group;
- Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust (NHS);
- Parkway Green Housing Trust;
- Woodhouse Park Lifestyle Centre;
- Manchester City Council;
- South Manchester Clinical Commissioning Group (NHS);
- Valuing Older People, and;
- Willow Park Housing Trust.

A Plan of Action

A number of organisations have undertaken specific projects in support of the Charter. For example:

1. Parkway Green and Willow Park Housing Trusts

Real Neighbours Wythenshawe – Community Project of the Year

This project was initially a pilot service being delivered across Wythenshawe. It was agreed for only one year and was to run from the 1st November 2010 until 31st October 2011. However, due to the success of the project, funding was extended to 31st March 2012, then again until May 2013.

The aim of the project was to promote the concept of Wythenshawe being a place to be proud of, a place to belong, and to do this by linking with the existing groups and organisations which deliver services that support people's wellbeing through practical, social and emotional support. The Real Neighbours Volunteers are actively developing this project and have:

- Continuously developed a service across Wythenshawe that provides new ways of supporting people's wellbeing, to help people remain as active members of their community, help people feel more involved in their neighbourhoods and to help reduce social isolation;
- Helped to ensure easier access to Wythenshawe's existing wellbeing groups, increasing inclusion and reducing isolation;
- Promoted good practice and cooperation between the groups;
- Recruited and developed new volunteers and linked in with volunteer development initiatives to maximise volunteering opportunities for local people and the number of volunteers that can be used by local wellbeing groups;
- Actively promoted the use of volunteers in delivering wider wellbeing, either through involvement with existing groups or in the development of new groups to meet unmet need;
- Promoted the Real Neighbours volunteering opportunities at local events and activities to Wythenshawe residents.

Project Achievements

The project and its volunteers have:

- Increased community involvement and participation;
- Reduced isolation through improved social networks;
- Increased training opportunities and improved basic skills;
- Increased health and wellbeing;
- Increased confidence and self-esteem through improved social interaction and access to training.

The project is working very closely with the Supported Housing Team, linking in to areas they may have identified where a tenant or a group may need either a volunteer or have potential volunteers willing to enroll on the programme. The project is also linked in to a range of partner agencies who offer opportunities and training such as Age Concern, The Law Centre and Manchester Mencap to name a few.

The coordinators have also worked hard to develop relationships with existing wellbeing groups and initiatives. Volunteers have been introduced to new and existing groups to encourage them to become involved, take up new training opportunities and to volunteer whenever possible. This has helped them to gain more confidence and to reduce their risk of isolation.

Volunteers are put through a thorough and full induction before they are able to go out and volunteer in the community. An induction is set up to guide them through what volunteering is about, what is expected of them and what they can expect to gain from their experience. They are given opportunities to train in areas of interest and have regular meetings both as a group and on a one to one basis to discuss further development opportunities.

The project has supported many events, both in the community and corporate, as mentioned above. The 'Get Hired' events have volunteers signposting attendees to information stands, agencies and workshops. 'Grand Day Out', every Wednesday at the Forum Wythenshawe, encourages the over 55's to take part in activities and socialise. They have also assisted with leafleting for events and have done some promotional activity for the project itself.

The volunteers have been given opportunities to train and develop their interpersonal skills. This has boosted their confidence and self esteem. Through this they have improved their employability, skill development and willingness to learn. A training database is in place to see which volunteers have taken up offers of training and work experience, and a skills matrix is developed for each volunteer. This will help them with future employment applications.

Community relationships have also developed and the volunteer base are linking in to a range of voluntary / community groups. They are also keen to develop new initiatives including a new social group that has been established at Frank Price Court with the tenants of the court and surrounding supported housing accommodation, encouraging neighbours to be more sociable and help each other. They are also linked in to support a range of physical projects for older people such as the Tea Dance organised by South Manchester Healthy Living Network and the Wythenshawe Games.

Statistics

- 240 registered volunteers
- 80 active in the projects

Many of our volunteers have accessed first aid training, pre-employment and confidence building, basic construction skills, home maintenance, healthy living, food hygiene, career advice, education advice, self employment advice, internet training, online application training and others through CSV and the Willows Futures programmes.

Added Value Activity

The project has been directly involved with many initiatives, the previously mentioned 'Get Hired' events and a range of opportunities for young people to volunteer and gain training and experience. It has also started to work with our supported housing schemes to have befriending groups established where there is an appropriate space to run a group.

The project is also part of the action plan for the Trusts to help deal with any issues should we encounter another cold snap. Volunteers are linked in to vulnerable tenants who may find it difficult to get out and about should bad weather hit. The tenants have the name of their volunteer and, should they need them, can ring the Trust's 0800 number to get in contact with them.

There are also links with the Real Opportunities campaign for getting people off Incapacity Benefit and back into employment or training. The project is now part of the referral process and also offers opportunities for people registered on the programme. Volunteers also have the advantage of banking their hours to be included towards training modules they may be doing for a variety of qualifications.

The project also encourages tenants to participate and be more involved in volunteering and Trust panels and initiatives.

Overall Summary

The project has been seen by all as a huge success in achieving its aims of engaging with the local people, the community and wellbeing initiatives. The work that the volunteers have done with the 'Grand Day Out' initiative has now been used as a model of good practice and is being piloted in other areas of the city starting with Chorlton. The volunteers continue to develop and engage with new initiatives and projects and widen the offer of opportunities for local people. The benefits are evident with statistics that show how the project can nurture and develop volunteers into strong members of our communities and give them employability skills through a range of innovative opportunities.

The volunteers continue to be in demand from the Trusts and its corporate calendar, the local community and volunteers. It also continues to support a range of partner agencies in delivering opportunities and wellbeing initiatives through the Valuing Older People Networking Group, Older People's Sub Group for the Wythenshawe Games, Volunteer Sub Group for the Wythenshawe Games, Manchester Carers' Forum, Volunteering Community Network Group and the City Council's Adult Services weekly service offered at the forum 'A Grand Day Out', aimed at the over 55's who are unable or not eligible to access support services through the regular referral systems.

2. Age Concern

Age Concern Manchester is a local independent charity providing support to Older Adults throughout Manchester.

In Wythenshawe, at Crossacres Centre, we provide a range of services designed to support people and enhance their health and wellbeing in later life. These include Day Care, Home Care Support, Laundry Service, Domestic and Shopping Services.

We also offer a range of activities that give people age 50+ the opportunity to make friends and to learn new skills. Current activities include, Computer classes, Cinema, Cafe, Gym and Chair based exercise sessions, Craft and Art groups, Gardening club, Carers Friendship Group Creative Writing group, Book Club and a Cookery Club. We are also active in the local community and offer a range of outreach activities in a variety of venues throughout the Wythenshawe and Northenden Areas; these include Ageing Well Clubs and regular Come Dancing Events.

We have something for everyone!

3. Woodhouse Park Lifestyle Centre

The Woodhouse Park Lifestyle Centre is a community centre in Wythenshawe owned by Manchester City Council and managed by Willow Park Housing Trust. It is a hub of community activity which is fully accessible and affordable to all members of the community. The Centre gives everyone the opportunity to access a range of community, leisure and sports activities which are open, affordable and fully inclusive.

The centre has a wide-ranging programme of activities for older people which include dance classes, indoor bowls and exercise classes, as well as free IT skills courses and a host venue for a number of NHS health programmes.

The centre has a community cafe on site and holds a number of events for older people throughout the year.

4. South Manchester Healthy Living Network

Health : People : Partnerships

The Healthy Living Network works with people and organisations to encourage healthier lifestyles in South Manchester communities. It promotes capacity building with local groups to tackle health inequalities. For example:

- **Health**

The Healthy Living Network links people and organisations to work together, learn together, develop healthier lifestyles, improve health services and to support communities and professionals to make Manchester's health better.

- **People**

It encourages local people to become more interested in health and involved in improving health in their neighbourhoods. It also offers volunteers training and work experience in the NHS. Their Discovery Team has built up an army of highly trained volunteers and bank staff, who they train to become Community Stop Smoking Advisors, Exercise Tutors, Walk Leaders, Health Information Workers and more.

- **Partnerships**

Over 200 Network members are already working together to create better health in South Manchester. Joining the Network helps members benefit from sharing information, news, good practice and a creative approach to bringing people and health care professionals together.

- **Healthy Ageing work**

Other partnership working in South Manchester includes Come Dancing events, Afternoon Teas, chair based exercise classes, plus other special events and activities aimed at the over 50s. All their Healthy Ageing work aims to bring older people together to socialise, be active, and get access to information and services, plus to let us know what is important to them.

5. South Manchester Clinical Commissioning Group

South Manchester Clinical Commissioning Group works on behalf of patients registered at any of their 25 practices and residents of the following wards: Old Moat, Withington, East Didsbury, West Didsbury, Burnage, Northenden, Chorlton Park, Baguley, Sharston, Woodhouse Park, Brooklands and Fallowfield. This covers a growing population of approximately 166,000 people with an above average proportion of older people. 44% of children in the area live in poverty and four of our wards have lower life expectancy than the Manchester average. We are responsible for planning, funding and arranging the majority of health services for this population, including local community health services, hospital services and mental health services. South Manchester CCG has four 'patch' working groups in South Manchester which meet regularly to look at how improvements can be made to patient services in their local area. The geographic diversity of South Manchester allows each patch to focus on local issues. Further information about South Manchester Clinical Commissioning Group can be found at: www.manchester.nhs.uk/clinicalcommissioninggroups/southmanchesterccg

6. Supporting People, Manchester City Council

The Supporting People team commit to support the City Council's Valuing Older People Strategy in Wythenshawe and will demonstrate this by:

- Developing new service specifications and delivery models to support all people, including older people, to maintain their independence;
- Commissioning services that increase people's choice and control whilst maintaining their independence;
- Supporting the development of the 'Universal Offer' (Grand Day Out) in Wythenshawe. The 'Universal Offer' is a pilot partnership initiative jointly delivered by the Adults Health & Wellbeing and Community and Cultural Services across the City. The 'Universal Offer' will provide alternative daytime activities in the local community for local older people. These alternative daytime activities will support their individual needs, maintain and improve levels of health and positive mental wellbeing, and reduce isolation;
- Offering a Home from Hospital service which primarily benefits older people. The service prevents unnecessary stays in hospital by providing practical support to enable people to return home safely after a hospital stay;
- Moving from a 'Centre' based Carers Centre to a locality based information, advice and support service for Carers in Wythenshawe;

- Further developing a network of wellbeing groups to meet local needs;
- Promoting greater opportunities for volunteering across Wythenshawe;
- Developing assistive technology at Shore Green Extra Care Scheme to promote independence and ensure better outcomes for residents.

In Conclusion

Wythenshawe has a unique position in the city, and many partners have seen a fantastic opportunity through the Valuing Older People Charter to recognise a significant commitment to the focus on work being done to keep this centre stage.

Everyone recognises that at a time of austerity and challenge for many service organisations, we cannot let our guard down in any way, and ensuring that older people are at the heart of the work we all do across Wythenshawe is vital. The active contribution so many older people already make to the many and varied community organisations in Wythenshawe often goes unseen and undervalued. All the partners recognise that, by pooling our resources, skills and expertise, we can all work together to make the five wards of Wythenshawe more age-friendly.

The Charter is a simple tool that has helped raise the profile of VOP in partner organisation and on its own will do little; but importantly, it is what it represents in terms of commitment and energy that matters more, and members are proud in Wythenshawe that VOP is at the heart of so much work.

And finally, at the time of writing, a range of stakeholders from across Wythenshawe came together to develop their next steps in implementing the Age-friendly Wythenshawe Charter outlined in this case study. Following a period of consultation with local older people, workshop participants - who came from the Voluntary Sector, local Housing Providers, the Regeneration team, Greater Manchester Police and the NHS - will be setting priorities and determining how they can best start to work together to make Wythenshawe more age-friendly. The Housing LIN looks forward to reporting on developments and sharing the learning from Wythenshawe across our wider regional networks. For more information, contact Sally Chandler at the Manchester Valuing Older People team: s.chandler@manchester.gov.uk

Useful resources

For more information on age-friendly communities and a list of useful resources, visit the Housing LIN's age-friendly communities and lifetime neighbourhood webpages at: www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design_building/Neighbourhoods/

Note

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Housing Learning and Improvement Network.

About the Housing LIN

Previously responsible for managing the Department of Health's Extra Care Housing Fund, the Housing LIN is the leading 'learning lab' for a growing network of housing, health and social care professionals in England involved in planning, commissioning, designing, funding, building and managing housing, care and support services for older people and vulnerable adults with long term conditions.

For further information about the Housing LIN's comprehensive list of online resources and shared learning and service improvement opportunities, including site visits and network meetings in your region, visit: www.housinglin.org.uk

The Housing LIN welcomes contributions on a range of issues pertinent to housing with care for older and vulnerable adults. If you have an example of how your organisation is closely aligned to a 'Living Lab' approach, or a subject that you feel we should cover, please contact us.

Published by:

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