



Living Longer, Living Well in Warwickshire: Adding value to people's lives

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Last year, Age UK Warwickshire (AUKW) initiated the task of writing a strategy for older people in Warwickshire as local statutory bodies had looked at it but could not agree on the age at which older age started. We consulted with and obtained endorsement from the county's Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB), Warwickshire Race Equality Partnership (WREP), Warwickshire Community and Volunteer Action (WCAVA) and, most importantly, Warwickshire Older People's Forum (WOPF), which is a representative body of all 10 Senior Peoples' Forums in Warwickshire. At the same time, momentum to have effective Third Sector representation with statutory agencies gained impetus.

To set the scene, WCAVA (via their Chief Executive) only had observational status at the Health and Wellbeing Board. However, the Third Sector in Warwickshire wanted access to strategic leaders on a formal basis to bring the Sector's immense experience and value to the table, for one to avoid the mistakes of the past but also to avoid duplication and create a partnership that valued the Sector's contribution, especially faced with the mountainous levels of savings that Local Authorities have still to make. Warwickshire County Council alone has to save £92 million, all having a direct impact on the Sector's bottom line.

In November 2014, the first summit, as it was called, between Warwickshire County Council and the Third Sector took place. A second meeting took place in March and we are now on our way to forming an Assembly where strategic leaders from both sides will be able to meet as equals and jointly contribute to the health and wellbeing of Warwickshire residents.

However, back to 'Living Longer, Living Well', this is a short document designed to be read and used as a reference tool and to monitor progress against the agenda of prevention. The aims are:

- Increased choice and control
- Access to quality, impartial information, advice, advocacy and assessments
- Living in housing in a good state of repair and adapt as required.
- Feeling safe in and part of the community
- Promote access to the benefits of technology
- Ageing Well – keeping fit physically and mentally
- Lifelong learning opportunities
- Volunteering – making a positive contribution

The impact of these interventions will provide for an improved quality of life leading to:

- Increased independence
- Activeness
- Enjoying a good social life
- Being valued and feeling part of the community

In summary, successful delivery of this model for prevention is reliant on effective partnership working and integration at both strategic and operational levels of key agencies to ensure services are complimentary and add value to older people's lives.

In November 2014, the document was launched at a conference organised by AUKW and Warwickshire Older People's Forum entitled, 'On the Cusp – Will Housing be Part of Integrate Care Services'. The document is contributing to local strategic decisions but we are still working on the need to integrate housing and are planning a workshop to examine case studies in the Autumn.

Well, there has been progress and there is now an impetus by the Statutory Sector to work more collaboratively with the Voluntary Sector, as they now recognise the need to work with and support the energy and entrepreneurial thinking the sector brings.

The lessons learnt: to find the time in a busy working week to promote the professionalism of the Third Sector and its diversity, which is not always easy to harness, so that we are Partners not just Players.

The 'Living Longer, Living Well' document is available on the Age UK Warwickshire website, www.ageukwarwickshire.org.uk to download, as is 'The Citizens' Charter'.

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