



A Charter for Older People in Plymouth: Making a commitment to older people when they need care or support

This case study looks at the work undertaken by Plymouth City Council's Adult Social Care department with partners and groups of older people within the city to develop a Charter made up of a series of 11 pledges. Launched in 2012, the Charter outlines the standards and approaches to service delivery that older people should enjoy and the lessons learnt.



Written for the Housing Learning & Improvement Network by **Claire Anderson** and **Rachel Silcock**, Strategic Commissioning Team, Joint Commissioning and Adult Social Care, Plymouth City Council

December 2013

Background

Plymouth City Council has a population of around 250,000 of whom 41,200 are over 65 years of age.¹ However, it is projected that that this number will rise to 58,600 by the year 2030 (an estimated increase of 17,400), especially amongst the over 85. At this age, support needs have traditionally begun to increase, with a high likelihood of an older person requiring care.

The council spends around £72m on Adult Social Care with over half of this budget spent on older people, including £12.4m on domiciliary care and extra care housing. To this end, it made a commitment in its corporate plan to provide 'a new deal for older people's care', backed up by a Charter, launched last year at Devon and Cornwall Housing's extra care housing scheme, Devonport Views.

The Charter has 11 pledges that do not just relate to Adult Social Care but incorporate issues that are important for the whole city to enable it to achieve its strategic goal of becoming 'Caring Plymouth'.

Developing the Charter

The development of the Charter involved a number of steps. These included:

Evidence gathering: material was collated from a wide ranging previous consultation – in order to capitalise on what local people had already told the council. This helped shape the 11 core pledges, in particular, around:

- Good information
- Support to access the right service
- Choice
- Advocates to help solve a problem
- Treated with Dignity
- The quality and standards of services are monitored
- Protection from harm and help to manage risk
- Opportunity to shape services
- Services near to where people live
- Support when I need to care for someone
- Help to continue to enjoy and achieve

Consultation: then a city-wide consultation process was undertaken to update and learn more. This involved consulting with organisations such as: WRVS, Age UK Plymouth, Plymouth LINKs, Stroke Association, Alzheimer's Society, Plymouth Befriending Umbrella Service, The Dignity in Care Forum, and Plymouth Senior Citizen's Forum. Crucially, in addition to engaging with local organisations, 28 individual older people were consulted in a range of 'care' settings i.e. day care, residential care and befriending opportunities.

Some of the consultation was in-depth and some was to ask for feedback on the ideas that had already been formed. A draft was then produced and circulated to a sample of those who had participated in the consultation to gain further feedback.

¹ *Market Position Statement 2011-2013*. Strategic Commissioning, Adult Social Care, Plymouth City Council (2011)

Sign-up: The Charter has now evolved into a pledge that is used in a broad context and applied to a wide range of services and approaches to supporting older people. Whilst standards of care are still central to the Charter it was considered important to widen the scope to reflect the values and standards that older people should be able to expect across a wide range of services in Plymouth.

In addition, Plymouth City Council has encouraged its' partners to sign-up to the Charter, thereby encouraging organisations to also make a commitment to work to achieve these shared standards and values.

Objectives for the Charter

In setting out its objectives, Plymouth City Council has publically sought:

- To represent both a pledge to older people and a structure for the council to monitor the standards and values that should be expected.
- To encourage council services and other organisations to adopt these standards and sign up to the charter.
- To make a commitment to further develop the charter in partnership with the statutory, voluntary and community sectors.
- To strategically join up our planning so that Adult Social Care, Housing and Health are committed to developing services together.

What does the Charter say?

1. Provide good information and advice by:

- Providing people with good information about services and entitlements that is easily accessible in places that they routinely visit
- Finding creative ways to reach isolated older people who have difficulty in leaving their homes
- Providing good, jargon free information in different formats
- Endeavouring to make computer information easier to access and building on the effectiveness of the Plymouth Online Directory.

2. Support people to choose and access the right service by:

- Supporting people to maintain their independence for as long as possible
- Understanding that people cannot make good choices until they know what is available
- Ensuring that all staff will have a good knowledge of all the options that are available
- Finding ways to avoid people being repeatedly asked the same questions
- Promoting people's wellbeing and independence instead of waiting for a crisis
- Providing services and equipment in a timely manner
- Ensuring that services which provide support will, with people's permission, communicate effectively with each other

- Understanding that it can be difficult and frightening to ask for help
- Listening well and understanding that people can judge best for themselves their own priorities
- Adopting a creative approach to providing services that best fit people's needs.

3. Provide advocacy services to help solve a problem by:

- Providing independent advocacy services if people need help to resolve a difficult situation or challenge a decision that they do not agree with
- Helping people become more confident to deal with a situation themselves or providing someone to speak on that person's behalf.

4. Treat people with dignity by:

- Respecting people's individual needs
- Ensuring staff treat people with respect, tolerance and compassion
- Understanding that it takes time to make a decision
- Helping people to stay in control when making decisions for themselves
- Working with partners to promote dignity in care across the city
- Helping people access good end of life care provision.

5. Ensure that discrimination is not tolerated by:

- Challenging and removing discrimination
- Monitoring services to ensure they are complying with 2010 Equality Act
- Promoting positive images of ageing.

6. Strive to safeguard people from harm and help them to manage risk by:

- Ensuring the Council commissions high quality services so the risk of harm is minimised
- Providing information to people to increase their awareness of their human rights and their right to protection
- Putting good systems in place to prevent people from being mistreated
- Ensuring that people have access to quick and effective help if they do not feel safe
- Training and supporting staff to be alert to changes in people's wellbeing and respond effectively
- Supporting people to manage risks and maintain their independence, providing extra services where necessary.

7. Ensure the quality and standards of services are monitored by:

- Regularly reviewing the quality of all services that are provided
- Encouraging people who use the services to take part in monitoring the services
- Committing to continually raising standards.

8. Provide people with opportunities to shape services by:

- Offering a range of opportunities for people to have their say
- Supporting people to comment on the quality and range of services that are provided
- Providing feedback from any consultation to those who participated.

9. Provide services near to where people live by:

- Striving to develop a range of localised services
- Making good use of resources that are based in local communities
- Supporting the development of active and inclusive communities.

10. Offer support when people decide to care for someone by:

- Ensuring that good information and advice is available about services to support people who care for others
- Ensuring that people are helped to make informed decisions about the extent of their caring role
- Providing a wide range of services that support and value carers.

11. Help people to continue to enjoy life by:

- Striving to make Plymouth a great place to grow old
- Providing services that can help people plan and prepare for their old age
- Supporting people to continue to pursue their interests
- Not making assumptions about what ageing means
- Recognising and respecting the contribution that older people make
- Linking people into opportunities, friendship and support that are available in their communities.

Conclusion

In adopting this Charter, the Plymouth City Council has made a public commitment about the values and standards that older people should expect from the Council and other services that support older people.

This Charter is one of the council's commitments for developing good quality services. In fulfilling these pledges, the council has stated that it will work in a co-operative way for the benefit of older people in the city.

In addition to the pledges made, it is committed to working with the statutory, voluntary, independent and private sectors. With a growing emphasis on 'integration', this means that Adult Social Care, Housing and Health have stated that they are committed to planning and developing services together.

One year on, there has been a high level of sign-up from providers across the city including all of our Sheltered Housing Providers and many of the care homes and domiciliary care agencies as well as universal providers such as the Befriending Service for People aged over 50 and Age UK Plymouth.

This has been a really useful vehicle to enable providers to share a set of common standards and values. It is also a useful tool for staff training and development and to understand the role of the City Council in supporting the development of these standards.

Learning points

- Plymouth City Council has encouraged providers to sign up to the Charter at their Dignity in Care (Care Homes) and Domiciliary Care Forums as well as at numerous events with provider organisations. For example at a recent Dementia Friendly City evening several organisations signed up including a Dentist practice and Social Care training organisations.
- The Charter has proved to be a really useful focus for Care Home and Domiciliary Care Forum meetings where each quarterly meeting is themed on one of the Charter Pledges. Sometimes this can mean workshops at the event or simply a discussion about good practice around the Pledge.
- Plymouth City Council have been very encouraged by the enthusiasm of providers to signing up to the Charter, in particular Sheltered Housing providers.

Note

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

Copies of the Charter, including an easi-read version, are available from:

www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/socialcareandhealth/adultsocialcare/charterforolderpeople.htm

It is also available in other languages and accessible formats.

About the Housing LIN

Previously responsible for managing the Department of Health's Extra Care Housing Fund, the Housing Learning and Improvement Network (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, including dementia.

The Housing LIN welcomes contributions on a range of issues pertinent to housing with care for older and vulnerable adults. If there is a subject that you feel should be addressed, please do contact us.

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

Published by:

Housing Learning & Improvement Network,
c/o EAC,
3rd Floor, 89 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7TP

Tel: 020 7820 8077
Email: info@housinglin.org.uk
Web: www.housinglin.org.uk
Twitter: @HousingLIN