



Briefing 07/33 May 2007

All our futures

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and Email Contacts (Scotland)

CC: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts (England, Northern Ireland and Wales)

At a crucial time when life expectancy is reducing in Scotland, is now the time for local authorities to act?

Key issues

The aim is to plan now for a Scotland with an ageing population.

Local authorities remain committed to continuing to achieve improvement in health and life expectancy through the implementation of Delivery for Health.

Success through local authorities creating opportunities for the elderly is central to the future health of the elderly.

1. Introduction

The Scottish Executive is urging local authorities to help eradicate the myth that health is a postcode lottery. Older people play a crucial role in almost every aspect of life in modern Scotland. More needs to be done to support their contribution to society and the economy. The Executive believe that in order to achieve their vision for future generations this will not be the result of one strategy or action plan. There

needs to be a focus and local authorities and the public need to work together to achieve a positive future.

In 1900, the average Scottish life expectancy was 40; in 2004 it was just over 74 for males and 79 for females. It is anticipated that by the year 2031 the number of people aged 50+ is projected to rise by 28% and the number aged 75+ is projected to increase by 75%. Due to the changes taking place in Scotland, it is often noted that the skills and life experience of older people are taken for granted. This perception needs to be challenged as the Executive believes that all generations can plan for and influence the way Scotland prospers.

That is why the devolved government of Scotland has chosen to develop a strategic approach to consider how best to respond to and plan for a Scotland with an ageing population. The implications of an ageing population for Scotland's development and for society are wide-ranging and complex. It is for these reasons the Scottish Executive have gathered evidence and the issues raised by those consulted will form the basis for reflection and forward planning in all local authorities in Scotland. The full document can be viewed at www.scotland.gov.uk/experience

2. Strategy

The Executive believe that the government of Scotland, all local authorities, public agencies, further and higher education bodies and all other sectors, should work together to develop a shared understanding of the wider implications regarding older people. It is important that all areas work in a cohesive and productive manner in order to plan effectively. The Executive believe that through their extensive and in-depth consultation and focus groups with individuals and organisations which have already taken place, will see a shared vision where:

- ❖ All the older years of life are fulfilling and the contribution of older people is valued and appreciated
- ❖ Age is not used to define or make assumptions about the role, value or potential of an individual

- ❖ People are able to work for longer if they wish and therefore enjoy more healthy years
- ❖ Older people are able to participate in learning activities as well as being volunteers in the community
- ❖ Houses and communities should be safe, accessible and user-friendly

3. What the government will do for the future

Much of what the government of Scotland and other bodies do already support older people in living their lives. In the period between 2003-04 and 2007-08 the Executive spending on the 60+ age group increased by 5% per annum in real terms and now stands at £5.1 billion a year. Key policies adopted include:

- ❖ Free personal care
- ❖ National concessionary travel scheme
- ❖ Fuel poverty programmes

The Executive remain committed to continuing to achieve significant improvement in health through the implementation of 'Delivery for Health'. Work is on going on improving health through a range of programmes including:

- ❖ Ban on smoking in public places
- ❖ A range of physical activity programmes which promote the health and well being benefits of being active
- ❖ Paths to Health, which promote walking
- ❖ Free eye examinations
- ❖ Lifelong Learning Strategy, aimed at training and learning opportunities
- ❖ Workforce Plus which promotes the employability of older people

It is anticipated that with the range of programmes available for older people, should provide an impetus for them to lead more active and healthy lives. The Executive and local authorities are committed to their communities and a part of this would be the inclusion of older people as an integral part of it. Without partnership working, the ethos the Executive are trying to carry forward will not be able to take place. APSE

welcomes this position adopted by the Executive and believes that it is right and prudent that local authorities deliver on the services expected.

The Executive will lead the process of removing barriers and supporting communities to include older people whilst at the same time will try to forge better links between generations. The Executive will try to ensure that the right infrastructure is in place in Scotland with housing, transport and planning progressively meeting the needs of all ages.

4. What will success mean?

It is believed that with inter partnership working a safer and more prosperous community can be achieved throughout Scotland. Local authorities working with community planning partners to plan and deliver age-friendly services and the NHS making a strong contribution in local community development should ensure that barriers will be removed and there will be more opportunities for older people.

The government of Scotland commits to provide high quality and essential services to those who cannot rely solely on the support of their families and communities now and in the future. It is important that local authorities working with local partners on priorities for action that will make the biggest impact for the future. Through identifying clear priorities for action and change based on engagement with the local communities they serve, should provide first class service delivery within all authorities.

The Executive are particularly interested in exploring the potential of thematic outcome agreements, as a new approach to services which links funding more directly to the achievement of outcomes. At the same time however, offering partnerships more flexibility on the way funding is used or some relaxation of existing reporting burdens. Funding will be set aside in 2007-08 to support suitable proposals.

It is hoped by the Executive that they will be able to explore particular needs of older people in relation to food and health and introduce best practice guidelines and

nutritional catering standards in a wide range of settings. The aim is to prevent poor dietary habits and malnutrition which may occur through changing life circumstances. The promotion of food preparation and eating of meals in the maintenance of health and well being throughout life and into later years is regarded by the Executive as a main element of their strategy for the future.

Updated guidance will be issued to local authorities on future requirements for local housing strategies by the Executive. This will ensure that they recognise the implications of demographic profiles at local level when considering local assessments of housing needs and planned provisions.

5. Conclusion

The Scottish Executive believes that all the measures together will help make Scotland a place fit for the future. A place where ageing is more than accommodated, it is welcomed, supported and turned to advantage. The programme of engagement set out for 2007-08 will generate more proposals –national and local- as part of a long term process of adapting successfully to the challenge of Scotland's ageing population. The Executive are committed to making it a successful transition.

APSE welcomes this document if it goes some way to highlight the problems facing Scotland and it is hoped that the actions will be measurable and build on existing work being done to prevent older people being outcast within community life. APSE believes in the ability of local government to coordinate in an integrated fashion and its public partners to drive forward change and improvement from within. It is awaited with great interest any further proposals which are intended to aid in this process, all authorities need to work in close partnership with each other to ensure that first class local public services remain the highest priority for all. However, we would welcome further clarity on where the funding for thematic outcome agreements will come from and would not wish to see this diverted from existing local government funding or diverted from direct democratic accountability or scrutiny.

Local authorities should ensure that they have a carefully planned approach to educating communities when it comes to older people and the contribution they make. Overall, APSE has welcomed the approach taken by the Scottish Executive in 'Delivery for Health' and believes that the best outcome for Scotland will be delivered through collaboration and coordination with its partner agencies. APSE would argue that any partnership with the voluntary and community sector needs to be managed via a quality framework and not a transfer of responsibility.

APSE would welcome any comments on the Delivery for Health, which should be sent to ptaggart@apse.org.uk

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