

PAIL Wellbeing Event 22 October 2018

Recommendations relating to Wellbeing, Health and Social Care agreed by the full conference, following focus group discussions. These recommendations are being submitted to the London Mayor's office and relevant officers plus to relevant government and mainstream politicians and media.

Group 1

Social Interaction

- The idea of encouraging local community participation and social interaction involving older people to help reduce social isolation was widely agreed as an important element of a strategy to reduce social isolation and combat loneliness.
- However, there are difficulties in implementation which politicians and officers must appreciate - potentially other people can pretend to be interested in befriending but, in fact, be trying to gain access and / or confidence in order to steal or scam the potentially vulnerable older person
- Problems include new people coming into the area who are not friendly/or are unable to communicate, despite an older person's attempts to be friendly.
- Not all older people wish to be 'befriended' by their neighbours who are maybe anti- social or in conflict with the older person and may just want to be left alone. Dementia and mental decline can exacerbate older people's ability to respond to community / or personal interactions.
- Many older people face a loss of mobility and incur costs just to be able to get out and about - which is a key component for social interaction.
- There is a big concern over the issue of transport and a concern about whether the Freedom pass will continue and whether the current restrictions will be lifted (especially relating to rail transport). This led to the group focusing on the 'freedom pass issue' - and the perspective of each respective Mayor, politicians, bus companies, rail companies, family and friends, hospital visits, adult learners and voluntary groups. In particular it was agreed that the Mayor should be given powers to run or oversee the provision of rail transport within London (or at least the different railway companies policies as affects travel within London and its surrounds.
- Loss of confidence leads to some older people either not going out or doing so in a very limited way

Group 2

- Put the NHS and social care budget in one pot for greater cohesion, while ensuring there is sufficient funding to adequately cover the additional costs.
- Transport ‘Freedom Pass’ - Mayor to give assurance that this benefit will be continued after 2020 - could also be financed by local boroughs.
- Disabled access to be available in all underground stations
- Cyclists to be kept off the pavements. It is noted that there are far fewer cyclists among the older population, particularly women, especially when compared to such countries as the Netherlands. There is a fear of traffic in London, but also a fear of cyclists who use pavements - thus having separate passenger and cycling routes on all main thoroughfares is crucial
- Blue badges - currently there is a very strict criteria to be eligible
- A large proportion of the public not recognising ‘Please give me a seat’ badges and dedicated seating for frail travellers. This should be addressed through both stricter laws and a promotional campaign
- Bus drivers to be given training about not jolting the bus when driving as part of a wider training programme to help staff understand the needs of older passengers and those with disabilities
- Emphasis on the value of unpaid/voluntary work - if a person is under 65 and needs to travel early or if they are older and need to travel by train before 9.30 a.m. - should they have to pay?
- Don’t assume everyone is digitally aware/connected as many are too disabled or poor to access. Provide alternative forms of communication i.e. the telephone and hard copy information to be available at places used by older people. Training should be given to relevant staff giving advice, (local authorities, housing associations, voluntary agencies) to be able to help older people with accessing relevant information and using online information sources.
- TfL - paper maps and timetables for buses and trains to be available
People, not robots to communicate with / explain how to use / access information
- Keep libraries open and staffed so that people of all ages (especially older and younger) can access books, audio and on-line books, CDs, and use computing facilities (with support available). Libraries also provide an opportunity for local social interaction
- Greater concessions for cultural activities including that a disabled person and their carer is admitted free of charge (currently the case in France).
- More public toilets need to be available
- Google and other major internet companies could sponsor free wifi to some communities as well as local training for ‘silver surfers’
- Housing - more co-housing to be available in London, and accommodation not to be left empty. The building of more local affordable smaller housing would help people to be able to ‘downsize’ while staying in their local communities.
- Greater support should be available for people in all types of housing tenure to be able to afford adaptations to their homes, allowing them to remain at home instead of moving to (far more expensive) social care housing