Insights and Recommendations

greater
manchester
older
people's
network

COMMUNITY FUND

ambition for ageing

Macc

Introduction

The Greater Manchester Older People's Network is a voice for older people in our city region. We aim to make sure that older people can express their opinions and get their voices heard. We look to inform and influence strategy and policy that affects older people and make sure that older people have a say in decision-making. We want an age-friendly Greater Manchester that continues to listen to its older citizens and is the best place for older people that it can be.

This booklet brings together the recommendations developed from our members' ideas, insights and priorities.

We hold regular large-scale events for our members with up to 100 people attending each time. Our events are 'Big Conversations' giving older people the opportunity to get their voices heard on issues they have highlighted as priorities. After each event, we use the findings and insights to produce reports and then from the reports we produce a series of recommendations. This booklet contains all the recommendations we have produced based on the events we have held.

Our network continues to grow and our membership is open to any older people in Greater Manchester over the age of 50 and organisations that support them.
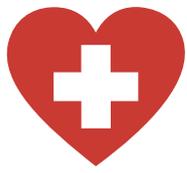
GMOPN Recommendations for Age Friendly Health and Social Care
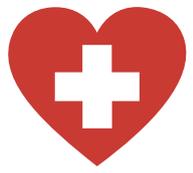
1. SHARE POSITIVE STORIES OF AGEING

Good news and positive stories about older people need to be shared with media outlets to increase positive language and promote a view of older people as valued members of society, encouraging a focus on health and wellbeing rather than illness.

2. ENCOURAGE INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITY

Intergenerational activity should be encouraged to promote better communities and support, such as older people volunteering in schools, and school children volunteering in the community or care homes.

3. DEVELOP SERVICES TO MEET OLDER PEOPLE'S NEEDS

Systemic changes are needed to develop services to meet older people's needs i.e. taking services to older people rather than them travelling to services, and better appointment times for older people.

4. PRIORITIZE ACCESS TO GP

Local clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) need to engage in discussions around ensuring ease of access to GPs for older people. This would limit the possibility of individuals 'falling through the gaps' in services.

5. HOME-CARE SHOULD BE VALUED AS A CAREER

Strategies need to ensure home-care is valued as a career, both financially and other types of rewards and recognition, in order to improve care for older people at home.
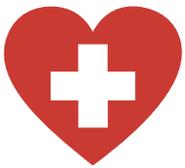
GMOPN Recommendations for Age Friendly Health and Social Care

6 CARRY OUT PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Work with local councils and key organisations, such as Transport for Greater Manchester, needs to be undertaken to encourage consideration around key infrastructure e.g. timings on pedestrian crossings, public transport access and more/better seating in public places.

7 HEALTHCARE WORKERS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Healthcare workers should be available to help older people understand medical letters, appointments and medication. This could be a support network led by their local GP surgery or pharmacist.

8 STRATEGY AND POLICY SHOULD ENCOURAGE LEARNING FROM SHARED PRACTICE

Strategy and policy should always encourage learning from best practice in other areas to ensure that Greater Manchester keeps up with the best examples in the country and internationally.

9 ENCOURAGE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

GPs need to encourage healthy lifestyles to combat isolation, poor diet and lack of exercise. Strategies should focus on social prescribing and signposting to local groups or services via GPs or GP navigators, with particular emphasis on social activities, exercise, learning and involving volunteers to support people to engage.

GMOPN Recommendations for Age Friendly housing

WE NEED HOMES THAT ARE WARM, SAFE AND IN GOOD REPAIR, AND SOMETIMES NEED HELP TO ACHIEVE THIS.

- We need access to free, independent and impartial advice about all our housing options across all tenures
- We need access to a handyperson and home improvement agencies to enable us to maintain our homes
- We need easy access for all adaptations, including new technologies

WE NEED NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT ARE DESIGNED TO BE INCLUSIVE & ENABLE US TO REMAIN ACTIVE MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITIES

- The needs of an ageing population addressed in main documents and strategies
- Health professionals trained to offer a housing assessment as an integral part of the integration of housing, health and social care systems
- Closer links between health and housing so that our health and independence is maintained

NEW HOUSING SHOULD BE BUILT TO MINIMUM LIFETIME HOMES STANDARD TO ENABLE THEM TO TO BR HOMES FOR LIFE

- More imaginative housing options for older people to meet the range of diverse needs in later life
- Housing specifically for older people available in localities so people can maintain social and family connections

OLDER PEOPLE ARE EXPERTS BY EXPERIENCE, SO WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF HOUSING, SERVICES AND STRATEGIES FOR LATER LIFE

Our 10 Recommendations

Transport maps should include more, and accessible, information such as proximity to hospitals and health centres, public toilets and seating areas which would support journey planning.

Action should be taken **to empower older people to voice concerns and to influence change**. Opportunities need to be established and supported to **ensure that older people can be involved in design, planning and decision making.** Clearer mechanisms need to be developed, with designated officers to **support people to resolve their transport issues.**

Volunteer car lift schemes should be included in overall GM strategy with p**roper support and training offered around insurance**.
(Note - this should not be seen as any kind of alternative to an efficient and effective community transport system)

Providers and authorities should work in partnership with the GM Older People's Network to develop an agreed standard for **awareness training.** Training should be provided for all drivers and transport providers, including taxi-drivers. **Existing good practice should be identified and clearly publicised** to encourage providers and individual drivers to prioritise age-friendly standards.

Older people should be **offered training and support to access digital services** which could **make their travel easier and more economical.**

Age-Friendly Transport in GM -

Transport service options for older people need to be **mapped at GM, local and neighbourhood levels.** Populations not well served by public transport should be identified and **assessed for potential social isolation and bespoke solutions planned** and executed.

When **transport services are cut** or changed, **an equalities impact assessment** should be carried out, looking specifically at **how older people would be affected.** For example, if and when the bus service is reregulated this should be done in consultation with older people to ensure that it becomes as age-friendly as possible.

Smaller bespoke bus services should be considered, encouraging **social links as well as meeting transportation needs.** Investment in **community transport** should be included as a strategic aim across GM.

Transport services need to be **designed according to age-friendly principles and consider the range of potential challenges for older people.** Older people's services need to be designed to take account of transport needs and provide integrated solutions where required.

Information on service options should be better publicised and offered in a variety of accessible formats. This information needs to be given at relevant times when an older person's needs may be changing, such as at the point of surrendering a driver's licence or meeting with a sensory assessment team. At the same time, a **wider education campaign should raise public awareness of the potential needs of older passengers,** particularly regarding 'invisible' disabilities.

GMOPN Recommendations for Campaigning and Development

1

The GMOPN should continue to promote recommendations from reports on health, transport and housing through Twitter and other social Media to improve public awareness of the issues.

2

The GMOPN should continue to prioritise supporting partnership working and the involvement of older people in all areas across Greater Manchester in recognition of our role as bridge and connector.

3

The GMOPN should commence working groups on housing, health, and transport to help progress the recommendations of our reports and link with relevant campaigns, groups, organisations and future work in Greater Manchester.

4

The GMOPN should share positive stories about older people through our newsletters and Twitter feed to promote positive images of older people. We should also prioritise challenging negative portrayals and the use of ageist language or stereotyped images.

5

The GMOPN should provide a positive example by avoiding jargon and using inclusive and accessible language in all reports and communications.

GMOPN Recommendations for Campaigning and Development

6

The GMOPN should focus on intergenerational issues in the future and look to hold an intergenerational event.

7

The GMOPN should build on its current relationship with the Ageing Hub and Greater Manchester Combined Authority to make sure we continue to be aware of strategic priorities and can be involved in future work.

8

Future housing work should include a focus on "All Age Housing". The GMOPN should respond to the Spatial Framework. We should also develop links with Greater Manchester Housing Action, Greater Manchester Housing Providers and Manchester Housing Provider Partnership.

9

Future health work should include focus on hospital discharge and accessibility of GPs. The GMOPN should engage with the health priorities identified in the NHS long-term plan.

10

Future transport work should include a focus on age-friendly training for transport providers and the development and dissemination of charters for different modes of transport

11

The GMOPN should balance its focus on the key areas of health, housing and transport (which continue to be high priorities for older people) with work in other areas that emerge as new priorities.

GMOPN Recommendations for Good Participation

Attitudes

Do it wholeheartedly or not at all. Make sure that there really is an opportunity to influence and make changes and be prepared to take people's ideas and input on board. Be open to questions, criticism and new approaches.

Acknowledge that people may be sceptical about participation and you may need to win their trust.

Be transparent about what input is being sought and what influence it can potentially have. Set realistic expectations about how participation can make changes.

Create an environment of equals, where professionals or experts and older participants are all valued for the input that they bring.

Acknowledge people's contributions – ensure that people are thanked for their input and acknowledge ideas that are going to be taken forward. Give credit where it is due.

Process

Be clear about the process and the project timeline and include people at every stage. Provide opportunities to participate and consult as early as possible so that people's contributions can have maximum influence.

View participation as a process and an ongoing conversation rather than an isolated event. Involve people in a variety of ways and at various stages: in planning, at specific participation events and through follow up and action planning. Use both written and spoken methods and don't rely solely on digital approaches.

Make sure that you include different geographical areas where relevant. If the issue affects people across Greater Manchester, include all areas by going out to communities.

Always focus on inclusion and involving those who do not usually participate – look for who isn't involved and make attempts to address the gaps. Approach a variety of groups and individuals to participate. Approaching the same limited groups has the potential to exacerbate existing inequalities.

Report on events and consultations in a transparent and clear way that is accessible to those that participated.

Practicalities

Prioritise people's comfort. Make sure the venue is suitable, accessible and with good facilities and sufficient refreshments. Make adjustments for people with specific needs and provide transport or expenses where needed.

Provide clear accessible information before, during and after the event, both in summary and more detailed forms. Make sure that people are clear about what is expected from them. Don't use jargon – it makes people feel excluded and limits their ability to comment, contribute and question.

Allow people to participate on their own terms as much or as little as they wish, offering a variety of methods to suit individual preferences.

Use well-trained facilitators to ensure that everyone can contribute if they wish. Don't allow a few voices to dominate and be prepared to ask people to allow others an opportunity.

During events, make sure that actual participation is prioritised. Avoid cutting question time or workshops because speakers run over.

Give feedback and address concerns and arguments, even if response will be negative. Be clear about when feedback will be given and who is responsible. Make sure that feedback includes what action will take place.

GMOPN Age Proud Recommendations

1

CREATE A STRENGTHS-BASED NARRATIVE

Negative ideas about ageing are ingrained in our society and media narratives often reinforce these attitudes. A commitment is needed across organisations that work with older people to create a strengths-based narrative, that represents older people in a positive and realistic way and acknowledges their contributions. This needs to include a stock of positive words and phrases, that can be reinforced through repetition.

2

FOCUS ON WORDS AND IMAGERY

We need to focus equally on words and images and ensure that visual representations of older people are positive and realistic. The GMOPN will hold an Age Proud photography competition to take action on this recommendation.

3

COMMIT TO PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER PEOPLE TO CONTRIBUTE

The narrative of burden is particularly damaging to older people – we need to focus on the opportunities afforded by our ageing population and to commit to ensuring that older people have the opportunity to contribute their skills, experience and knowledge.

4

CREATE A REALISTIC AND INCLUSIVE NARRATIVE

We need to ensure that our narrative on ageing is realistic and inclusive and includes challenges and difficulties connected to the ageing process and an ageing society. However, we need to avoid generalisations about ageing and avoid presenting older people as passive victims. We need to present challenges within the context of the overall opportunities afforded by an ageing society.

GMOPN Age Proud Recommendations

5 ## ACKNOWLEDGE AND CELEBRATE DIVERSITY

A new narrative needs to recognise diversity and celebrate a population with a huge array of interests and different contributions to make. It needs to be acknowledged that every older person's situation is different and making generalisations about the positive aspects of ageing is potentially as damaging as focusing on more negative experiences.

6 ## CREATE AN AGE PROUD MOVEMENT

Older people need to lead in developing an Age Proud Movement that encourages others to see older age as a time of opportunity, where they can be valued for their unique and diverse perspectives and develop their skills and abilities.

7 ## FOCUS ON REAL PEOPLE AND RELATABLE SITUATIONS

The Age Proud Movement should focus on storytelling, and developing role models. It should depict real people in relatable situations rather than exceptional examples. We need to create a narrative that allows people to link being older with the more positive aspects of their identity, as opposed to achieving 'in spite of their age'.

8 ## CHALLENGE AGEISM IN A POSITIVE WAY THAT AVOIDS DIVISIONS

Ageism should be challenged in a context where ageing is seen as part of the life-course and as applying to all, not a group of 'other' older people, separate from the rest of the population. Talking about ageing in the context of different generations is likely to cause further divisions. Although ageism needs to be challenged, this should be in a positive way that presents a balanced alternative perspective rather than reinforces the negative view.

Join our network!

The Greater Manchester Older People's Network is all about getting older people's voices heard from right across Greater Manchester. Membership is open to individuals aged 50 and over and to organisations that support older people.

Our members receive a monthly newsletter, invitations to our events and information about training and participation opportunities. It's up to you to get involved in the network as much or as little as you would like.

For further information or to become a member please contact Liz or Victoria on 0161 834 9823 or email GMOPN@macc.org.uk

Website: www.gmopn.org.uk
Twitter: @GMOPN1