



## **The South West Senior Network (SWSN) and South West Housing LIN Conference**

**“Working together”**

**5<sup>th</sup> March 2014, Bristol.**

The South West Senior Network (SWSN) was successful in securing some funding from the big lottery with the aim of giving older people the opportunity to come together across the South West to debate the issues that affect them. The Chair of SWSN approached the Housing LIN to suggest a joint conference bringing together the members of the SWSN and the members of the Housing LIN. This was a unique opportunity for over 50 older people and housing professionals to come together to identify and debate the issues of an ageing society.

### **About the South West Senior Network**

Its aims and objectives.

A collective voice for older people of the South West.

- Promote the welfare and interests of older people within the South West
- To act as an umbrella organisation making meaningful representation to regional, national and European governments, agencies and organisations involved with the concerns of older people.
- Provide a communication platform from where matters of concern to older people can be raised and enable an exchange of information, ideas and experience.
- Combat ageism and promote a positive image of all older people, regardless of ethnic origin, disability, faith, gender or sexuality.
- Promote and assist with opportunities for older people to be consulted by statutory bodies.
- Liaise with, but not be controlled by, any local, regional or national authority or organisation.

- Be a democratic, non party political, non sectarian and non profit making organisation, embracing charitable ethics.
- Act within the law to further the attainment of the above objectives.

The organisation has over 6,000 members, a list of organisations in membership are attached.

### **About the Housing Learning & Improvement Network**

The Housing Learning and Improvement Network (LIN), formerly responsible for managing the Department of Health's (DH) Extra Care Housing capital programme, 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 with care for older people.

It has a reputation as a 'trusted brand', strong links and record of involvement with government, the Homes and Communities Agency, major trade and professional bodies and key industry players across the public, private and voluntary sectors. Its aim is to:

- raise the profile about the housing and care needs and aspirations of older people
- act as a champion for housing with care organisations and, in particular, promoting innovations in specialist housing for older people such as Extra Care Housing
- offer unrivaled access to tools that support the way you improve existing housing and related care and support services for older people or deliver new ones
- help you to respond to, inform and influence policy and practice developments and what older people say about service quality
- provide you with an opportunity for effective learning through our national and regional networking activities, and
- enable you to benefit from the latest research, thinking and ideas from the field to help raise standards

The network has over 41,000 members across 9 regions in England. Each region benefits from a regional lead and a wealth of information on housing with care matters is freely available on its website: [www.housinglin.org.uk](http://www.housinglin.org.uk)

### **Theme of the conference**

The theme of the day was “working together” and the agenda was a mix of speakers and round table debate led by table leads around a selection of key topics (outlined below).

***Key topic: partnership working***

The delegates first heard from the Director of the Housing LIN, Jeremy Porteus, whose presentation was entitled “Partnership working to maximise the housing needs and aspirations of older people”. Jeremy asked delegates:

- What type of services do older people want?
- Suggesting more flexible, person centred services closer to home.
- What type of partnerships do older people want?

Suggesting Customer based positive practise, stronger links between housing health and well being agendas, meaningful strategies and better understanding of housing related care and support services that meet needs.

He spoke of partnerships being a confusing language and the latest policy development the Care Bill due in the autumn. A full copy of Jeremy’s presentation is available on the Housing LIN website.

He then posed three questions for the 5 tables to debate,

1. Do you understand the needs and aspirations of existing residents and how best to partner with them to address local housing options?
2. Have you taken into account major policy changes and impact on capital and revenue e.g. Care Bill?
3. How plugged in are you to local partnerships at a corporate level, especially with housing, health and social care?

Some of the feedback from the debate stimulated by Jeremy’s presentation was;

- To fully understand the needs and aspirations meaningful dialogue is essential.
- The Cheltenham Borough Homes communication model was suggested as good practise; the organisation has formed “Community Voice” and communicates in lots of ways including roadshow’s at supermarkets and other places where older people gather.
- To reduce paperwork (surveys) and engage face to face more plus a range of communication methods
- Good interrogation of data collected – what is it telling you? Act upon it!
- Use the forums already developed e.g. Bristol Older Peoples Forum, bringing older people together.

- The fact that nothing seems to happen is a disincentive to participation – close the loop – feed back.
- Generally not aware of policy changes or difficult to understand, need to look at appropriateness of information.
- To influence partnerships you need evidence, build the case, use pictures (Johnnies story)
- More home owners moving to rental to release capital,
- Quality of accommodation – problems of investing in existing stock.
- The burden of home ownership.
- Effect of benefit reform
- Ineffectiveness of the green deal.
- Policies and strategies needed that promote downsizing.
- Force people to look to the European model.
- Use of 106's and other incentives to private developers.
- Need for informed criticism.
- Need to showcase good practise for example Redditch.
- The power of the media/stranglehold of the media
- Councils hung up on cuts – all short term thinking – not holistic
- Need to involve councillors at a community level
- Keep raising the profile of your group/the collective voice/more sessions like this please!
- More specialist housing needed for the changing needs of the population
- Lack of resources = limited choices
- Enormous diversity in a city like Bristol
- Information is difficult to find
- Growth of private landlords – poorest housing now in the private sector

- Decent homes program for the private sector?
- Insecurity of tenure in the private sector
- Promote more mixed age communities
- Culture change needed/honesty needs to be encouraged
- Volunteers to fill the gap?
- Lack of volunteers as people work longer.
- Help to live at home model- large partnerships – Wiltshire model showing successful savings
- Divided opinion on use of communal spaces/change opposed/safety and security an issue/ key fobbed areas.
- OP's forums not uniform across the region
- Not reaching the right people
- Confusion due to constant change/ period of stability needed
- Still no real discussion/being done unto
- More health monies needed in housing related services
- More open meetings to debate and discuss options
- Challenge is how do we get info out to OP?
- OP on the agenda but still at embryonic stage
- LA's not using forums to engage
- How do we manage expectations within the budget?

***Key topic: Living Well***

After a well-deserved coffee break the conference welcomed Judith Brown to the podium. Judith is deputy chair of BAB (Bristol Ageing Better) and chair of Bristol Older Peoples Forum.

The title of her presentation was “Living well, the Bristol project” The aim of the project is to prevent loneliness and isolation. She told delegates that her objective was that by the end of the session we will have explored together what we mean by quality of life, and how we can help older people to have their quality of life improved.

She asked “so what do we mean by quality?” She suggested it means different things to all of us, when we talk of care & support services, something very specific but hard to describe. We know it when we see it.

Judith suggested we go back to basics to what underpins quality, to what all humans actually need.

She started with a name that she suggested people would be familiar with, Abraham Maslow and his hierarchy of need. Judith shared his theory with delegates working through the tiers suggesting that to be a fulfilled human being we need not only the basics but all if not most of the levels suggested by Maslow.

She suggested that when we apply this to older people we see that Maslow still holds true, if you are lonely and isolated missing out on the belonging layer, and it's very easy to be lonely, even in a crowd, no friends, no-one to talk to, family deceased or maybe you can't speak the local language (Bristol has 91 languages spoken in the City!) you too will not be the fulfilled happy person you were born to be, and therefore the quality of your life is likely to be poor.

She went on to inform the audience of a few emerging facts from a recent survey of all Bristol Older Peoples Forum members. Members were invited to respond to 60 questions, 843 responded to the invitation (a fantastic response!) they are yet to produce a full report but shared some of the summary findings;

- 51% of the members live alone.
- Loneliness and isolation came fourth in their table of problems (high utility bills came top)
- 34% sometimes felt lonely, isolated and cut off from modern life.
- 7% felt that ALL the time they did
- 50% had contact with a family member or a friend daily
- 55% felt that people tended to treat the elderly like children

- 45% felt that health professionals treated older people as a nuisance

So, she suggested if we think of these findings in the terms of Maslow we can see there are a lot of lonely, isolated unhappy people just in Bristol alone. In fact she went on according to the City Council an estimated 6000 to 11,000 older people are lonely and isolated. GP's are reporting being approached by significant numbers of older people presenting with health problems whose basic problem is isolation.

This is why when Judith was invited to join in the City of Bristol's bid to get millions of pounds of lottery funding into the city to help with projects that will improve the quality of life of people who suffer with loneliness and isolation the reply was, yes!

The Bristol project is called BAB (Bristol Ageing Better).

102 cities were invited to enter the bidding race by the national lottery. BAB has written their submission and invited organisations and agencies who work with older people to join in a citywide partnership. This partnership now consists of 80 partners ranging from small to very large.

They are through the first stage and have chosen a lead body to administer the funds, Age UK Bristol has been chosen. 70 cities were then eliminated and Bristol are now in the final 32.

They have since formed a Board (of which I (Judith) am deputy Chair) because older people have to be at the heart of the bid 90% of the Board are older people.

To date we have;

- Held Board meetings
- Three wider partnership meetings
- Set up a website
- With Aardmans help chosen a logo

If successful we will see more of BAB (or even see her!)

- Started a citywide conversation with older people
- Asked 3 questions about loneliness
- Results will form the next phase of our bid
- Reporting back to the partnership in a conference in March 2014

- 3000 members of Bristol older Peoples forum received a letter asking their views (again fantastic response huge numbers being received)
- Held interviews on all the local radio stations
- Asked all partners to collate views from their members

Judith digressed by saying only yesterday I was talking through an interpreter to two groups of Chinese elders and other communities about their best practise so at the very least if Bristol do not get through we will have already formed a strong network of agencies, many of whom, have never met, or heard of each other before and that she suggests, can only be positive for the community as a whole.

Judith also asked delegates to join with her in her outrage that if you pay for yourself in a residential care or nursing home then you are not covered by the human rights act.

A full transcript of Judith's notes is now available on the Housing LIN website [www.housinglin.org.uk](http://www.housinglin.org.uk) as Judith gave a verbal presentation.

Judith ended her session by posing three questions for the tables to debate;

1. What affects the quality of life of people who are cared for by domiciliary/extra care staff
2. What can we do to improve the quality of life of the people for whom we care?
3. You are the Manager of an extra care housing/domiciliary care team, what would you put into a "good practise" handbook?

### ***Table top discussions***

The tables were then given 30 minutes to discuss and debate Judith's inspiring presentation and to respond to her three questions.

Some of the feedback is below;

- Personal budgets for care & support – prevention not just substantial and critical need
- Do the right thing – ask how would I like to be treated
- Holistic approach – integrated care & support is value for money
- Prevention is far better and cheaper than cure
- Constantly review and change according to needs



- Well informed staff – know what's out there to effectively signpost
- Listen to the person behind the task
- Understanding and embracing the benefits of empowerment
- Value life experiences
- Older or infirm does not = stupid or not important
- Encourage participation/ give control over decisions
- Recognise that all people have worth
- More enablement closer to home
- Lack of planning around hospital discharge
- Lack of focus on prevention
- Insufficient time allowed on care visits
- Need better community care post hospital
- Quality of staff/ minimum wage/commissioners view of hourly rate
- Consistency of staff/ hard to recruit/high turnover
- Empathy and time to train
- Reliability and timekeeping
- Person centred plans
- Outcomes focus – what are the individual's goals?
- Involving family members/carers
- Feeling of belonging
- Respect/values/behaviour use of technology and help to access it
- Encourage independence
- Pay a decent wage including travel time crucial in rural areas
- Providing choice
- Positive risk taking

- Treat as individuals
- Support for families
- Can do not can't do
- Choice and quality what's important to you?
- Quality of life
- Feelings of the individual – fear – resistance- lost – confusion
- Staff attitude to the individual
- Time allocated
- Continuity of carer
- Time frequency
- Flexibility care when you need it and want it
- Good handovers (introductions for new and cover staff)good facilities either on the scheme or at hub
- 7 day services
- Allow time for talking (self worth)
- Opportunities for people who can help (volunteers)
- Social opportunities
- Engagement
- Put user first
- Welcoming and positive attitude
- Communicate effectively and appropriately
- Be realistic of what can be achieved

Conference broke for lunch and networking.

***Key topic: Influencing – having a voice***

The afternoon session was introduced by Brian Warwick (Chair of SWSN) and Tony Watts (Chair of the SW Forum on ageing and former editor of Mature Times)

Brian told delegates how pleased he was to be able to have the support of the national Lottery "awards for all" to be able to put this event on and to partner the Housing LIN and that this was one of three events, one had already been held very successfully in Torbay, this event and finally an event in Wiltshire in April.

The feedback from all of the events would be fed back directly to DCLG (Department for Communities and Local Government) when Brian and Tony and a few other colleagues visit the House later this year to lobby for issues to be included in the all party manifesto. Brian and Tony urged delegates to have their voices heard, not a bit of good moaning in private, join a forum, respond to surveys, enter debate, be more informed, vote! Tony also spoke of the Bristol ageing well project and urged delegates to take part.

The final session of the afternoon was led by Jeremy Porteus (Director of the Housing LIN) he was asked to speak on "how to influence government policies"

He started his keynote by quoting a remark by Lord Filkin in 2013 whilst chairing the select committee on public services and demographic change when replying to the question "Ready for ageing?" he replied "we are woefully underprepared for an ageing society....."

Jeremy then suggested the traditional ways of influencing;

- Ballot boxes
- Lobbying
- Responding to consultations
- Debate in the house of lords etc
- Public speaking, local events, conferences
- National and local press.

He went on to suggest collective mobilisation

- Representation e.g. charity etc
- Special interest groups
- Petitions
- Canvassing

- Civil disobedience
- Increasing use of social media

He illustrated by giving some examples of collective mobilisation, like;

- The Somerset levels
- Protest of fuel levy
- Poll tax
- State pension
- Welfare reform
- In the future the increasing 'grey' vote

He went on to give examples of housing and care issues where the collective voice had influenced decisions and some good positive examples of positive action. He also described ways in which older peoples housing were 'on the 'map'. He then talked in terms of the next election and of what parliament could look like and what issues will be taken seriously. A copy of Jeremy's presentation is available to download from the Housing LIN website.

He posed the final three questions for conference to debate;

- Who are the key people you need to influence in the SW?
- What are the burning housing and/or care issues for you?
- How can you make it happen?

Feedback from the tables is captured below;

- Local councillors
- Local GP's and commissioning groups
- RP's (registered providers) and Boards
- TARA's
- Housing LIN
- Local press and media

- Twitter
- Minimum wage v funding for carers
- Not enough specialist housing for older people
- All housing should be future proofed to negate the necessity for moving
- Head in the sand mentality – blinkered – not my problem – short term thinking
- More joined up thinking on hospital discharge
- Produce more evidence of social value as a return for investment/spending
- Power of networking/collective voice
- Keep it real – listen to the customer
- Highlight areas of good practise to evidence base the changes you wish to make
- Lack of appropriate housing options
- Changing the attitude to an ageing society
- Elderly need to respect the young too
- Older people as carers especially to grandchildren
- More complex care and long term conditions supported at home
- Assisted dying
- Ageing society as wealth creator
- OPF – meeting all parliamentary group for SW of England to lobby for manifesto commitments for 2015
- Letter writing campaigns and the press
- Personal stories influence
- Use respect for elders in other cultures as examples
- Protect older people from universal credit
- Pro=active preparation for later life
- Dutch auction bidding for care services

### ***Conclusion and summing up of the day***

A break for tea was followed by a National Housing LIN update by Jeremy, to give delegates a flavour of new reports and viewpoints available freely from the LIN as well as some areas of good practise elsewhere.

This was followed by a summing up from Brian Warwick (Char of SWSN) he described the day as groundbreaking, the start of effective dialogue between professionals and older people. He again applauded the Housing LIN and its work in the South West by giving and facilitating regular opportunities for people to network, become more informed and a platform to have their voice heard. He urged delegates to use the wealth of information available on the website. He thanked so many members for attending especially those that had had a difficult journey from Cornwall. He closed the conference by thanking, the speakers. The table leads and the delegates to contributing to a very successful day of which he was very much hoping would be the start of many more to come.

### **Results of the conference evaluation**

27 evaluation forms were returned.

98% of the returns scored the booking process and pre-event organisation as a 4 (Scale is 1 to 4 – 4 being the highest)

97% scored the organisation of the day as a 4

98% scored the catering as a 4

The relevance of the topic areas was a resounding 100% 4

Access to the venue 5% gave a 4 with the remainder scoring a 3

98% gave a scoring of 4 to the chairing of the event

99% gave a scoring of 4 for the speakers and the round table debates

The top answer to “what attracted you to the event?” was relevance.

In reply to” how would you sum up this event?” the majority responded by saying “good balance of speakers and debate” engaging and informative, excellent, let’s keep working together! interactive, refreshing to be engaged with senior management, essential, inspirational.

Some included ideas for subjects for future meetings and these will be followed up for our SW LIN autumn meeting.

98% of attendees scored their overall assessment of the event as a 4

Several responded with comments and suggestions for future venues and again these will be followed up.

Thank you to all those who took the time to fill in the evaluation forms to does help to continually improve the content of our meetings and the relevance of them by our members.

For any further information of this event or the SW Housing LIN please contact Pat Palmer SW Regional Lead for the Housing LIN [ppalmer@palmerhousing.co.uk](mailto:ppalmer@palmerhousing.co.uk)

March 2014