



Seven Sisters, East Sussex

# Strategy for ensuring older people's involvement in the improvement of public services across East Sussex

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*Older people want to be involved in making decisions about the questions that affect their lives and the communities in which they live. They also want services to be delivered not as isolated elements but as joined-up provision, which recognises the collective impact of public services on their lives.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Older people – independence and well-being. The challenge for public services. Audit Commission and Better Government for Older People p3

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This Strategy is aimed at everyone over 50 in East Sussex and also the carers of older people.
- 1.2 As active participants in their communities, older people can help to improve policies and services in many ways, both as individuals and as members of groups. Older people have interests across a broad range of public services, including education and learning, leisure, safety, transport, health and social care. Many older people like to be informed, be consulted and to be directly involved on issues which concern them. This Strategy has been drawn up to enable these opportunities.
- 1.3 There are many benefits in involving older people in improving services. These include:
  - increasing public understanding and confidence in how decisions are made and carried out;
  - having policies and services shaped by wider public views;
  - making the providers of services more accountable, thereby increasing acceptability, confidence and trust.
- 1.4 The partners in this Strategy will work together to build on existing opportunities and create new ways for older people to be involved in improving all policies and services which are relevant to them.
- 1.5 Each partner in this strategy will draw up an Action Plan and set a timetable for each action.
- 1.6 A working group - involving older people as well as the partners to this strategy and representatives of other voluntary and statutory agencies - will regularly monitor and evaluate this Strategy. It will measure specific changes and will publish its findings.

## **2. Introduction**

- 2.1 Older people should have opportunities to define themselves and articulate their own needs. Older people should be given all relevant opportunities to be active participants in their communities: they have much to contribute and they want to participate in the decisions which affect their lives. Older people have interests and needs across a broad range of public services such as transport, lifelong learning, health and social care, leisure opportunities and community safety and effective links between them.
- 2.2 Older people can be experts, professionals, councillors and members of management committees. If it were not for older people volunteering their time in East Sussex, a huge number of groups across the county would simply not exist.
- 2.3 East Sussex has a significant proportion of older people. Over 25% of East Sussex residents are over 65. In addition, the proportion of people aged 85 and over is almost double the national average.
- 2.4 Many people who are over 50 do not think of themselves as 'older people'. However in planning for the future it is important to consider the views of those who will age in time and give opportunities for them to be involved.
- 2.5 There are statutory imperatives to involve older people and be aware of their needs. Additionally in 2006 discrimination on the basis of age will be made unlawful.
- 2.6 Involvement means a dialogue and a sharing of power, responsibility and information, not least about resources. Formal consultation is one aspect of involvement, it is not the whole.
- 2.7 The partners to this strategy wish to seek the views of and otherwise involve all older people, older carers and carers of older people and also to ensure that those who are at risk of exclusion through background, circumstance or geography have equal opportunity to be involved.
- 2.8 The content of this document was informed by the Involvement Sub Group of the East Sussex Older People's Strategy Group and the All Our Futures Conference, held in September 2004 and was co-written with the Older People's Reference Group. The strategy originated from partnerships within the health and social care sector but has taken on a wider scope as it has developed.

### **3. Partners to this strategy**

- 3.1 This strategy will need a wide range of partner agencies from the statutory and voluntary and community sectors. It also needs the active involvement and support of older people from across East Sussex to ensure its success.
- 3.2 In signing up to this strategy, each partner agency
- agrees to the vision, aims, objectives and principles set out in this document
  - will draw up its own action plan to involve older people, which links to the ESCC action plan in this document
  - will ensure adequate resources to implement their action plan
  - will ensure a named officer is given as a contact
  - will promote this strategy
  - will monitor and evaluate the extent to which this strategy and their own action plan make a difference to the lives of older people and to the quality of their services;
  - will develop this process further.
- 3.3 Where any partner agency has national principles and patterns of work which differ from those of this local Strategy, any necessary exemption from the Strategy will be made clear by the partner agency itself.
- 3.4 At all times, partners to this strategy will aim to comply with the East Sussex Compact and its Codes of Practice, particularly those on Volunteering, Community Groups, Partnerships and Consultation.

#### 4. Definition of Involvement

- **Information** – informing people. Good quality information is a prerequisite for involving people, but does not constitute involvement in itself.
- **Consultation** – looking to people for information or advice. This allows choice but not an opportunity to take part in implementing plans.
- **Involvement / Engagement** – this is active, ongoing and informed joint working and it means including people in decision making processes and working together to implement change and ongoing service delivery.

*'We need to recognise that there is inevitably an imbalance of power between professionals and service users. Professionals have training, they command resources, and they represent agencies that have statutory powers and duties. Involving service users aims to tip the balance of power further towards the user. Unless they recognise the influences upon them, professionals and organisations can exercise considerable control.'*<sup>2</sup>

#### 5. Vision, Aim and Objectives

**The Partners to this Strategy agree the following:**

**5.1 Vision:** a county where older people are active at all levels of policy- and decision-making, and where quality of life and services are maintained and improved to meet expressed needs.

**5.2 Aim:** the active involvement of older people in the improvement and design of all relevant policies and services.

**5.3 Objectives:**

1. To create opportunities for older people to be involved in improving public services.
2. To ensure effective partnerships exist between older people and statutory and voluntary agencies.

**In pursuit of which,**

3. To ensure that the implementation of this strategy is adequately resourced.
4. To ensure that this strategy is promoted effectively.
5. To evaluate whether this process makes a difference both to the lives of older people and to the quality of their services.
6. To continue to develop this process.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ccnap.org.uk/Guide/part1.htm#publicconsultationanduserinvolvement>

## **6. Principles and Values**

### **6.1 To encourage good practice, the partners to this strategy**

- a) will give clear purpose for older persons' involvement
- b) commit to involving older people in implementing change
- c) will ensure regular and continuous involvement from the statutory sector
- d) commit to equal opportunities
- e) recognise that older people must have opportunities to express their own needs
- f) agree that no one fifty or above should be excluded from this Strategy.

### **6.2 For the involvement process, we will:**

- a) encourage and value a diversity of views, across the full age range of older people
- b) make involvement inclusive and accessible and ensure methods are appropriate to those involved
- c) provide information in accessible formats using Plain English
- d) use a range of techniques, not just email and web-based, and in particular ensure written addresses are available
- e) be transparent about resources and other constraints
- f) solicit views in time for them to be taken into account
- g) give prompt feedback
- h) involve relevant participants in periodic review and evaluation
- i) appropriately co-ordinate with other processes
- j) respect confidentiality
- k) where possible, pay for older people's transport to events and respite for carers so that they can attend meetings.

## 7. Target Group

- 7.1 This strategy is for all people over 50 who live in East Sussex. It is also for older carers and carers of older people.
- 7.2 Better Government for Older People<sup>3</sup> states 50 as the minimum age for “older people”. This obviously covers an age span of at least 40 years with an enormous range of interests, activities and needs and a wide use of public services.
- 7.3 Some older people are already actively involved, some will be through the implementation of this strategy and some will never be, including through choice. It is however important to create mechanisms which mean that all those who want to be involved have the opportunity.
- 7.4 This strategy also aims to ensure that **all** older people have opportunities to be involved.

This includes older people in:

- black and minority ethnic groups including travellers
- faith groups
- rural communities
- the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities
- physically and socially isolating situations (eg housebound)
- residential care or hospital (health and social care settings)

and

- those with limited income
- those with mental health difficulties
- those with physical, learning and/or sensory disabilities.

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<sup>3</sup> Better Government for Older People [BGOP] is a movement of organisations working in partnership to change attitudes and services in order to achieve an improved society for older people across the UK.

## 8. Ways of being involved in East Sussex

*The voice of older people needs to be heard as part of wider consultative processes. They need to be involved – and to involve themselves – in decision-making<sup>4</sup>.*

8.1 Older people can be involved in improving services in a variety of ways, including:

- Planning and purchasing services
- Developing assessments
- Providing services
- Monitoring, reviewing, inspecting and evaluating services
- Staff selection, training and development
- Creating a framework or vision for services
- Identifying and prioritising needs and allocating resources

8.2 It is important to recognise that work in this area is not new. This strategy aims to build on good practice across the county and ensure that existing ways of being involved are used.

8.3 Older people can be involved in improving services at a variety of levels as individuals or in groups. There are several places where older people come together on a regular basis. These include:

- Churches
- interest groups
- support groups
- carers forums
- social and recreational clubs
- day Centres.

8.4 Each organisation employs a variety of methods to consult & involve older people and carers.

**8.5 Information** – informing people. Methods include:

- newsletters often in large print, different languages, email or on tape
- websites
- giving information verbally
- mobile libraries

**8.6 Consultation** – looking to people for information or advice. Methods include:

- Surveys or satisfaction questionnaires
- Focus groups
- Events
- East Sussex Citizen's Panel

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<sup>4</sup> Opportunity Age, Meeting the Challenges of ageing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. HM Government 2005 p66

**8.7 Involvement / Engagement.** Methods include:

- Localised older people's forums – eg. Hastings and St Leonards Seniors' Forum, Eastbourne Older People's Forum, Village Elder Councils, Lewes and Wealden Older People's Task Group, Community Networks
- Opening up meetings to older people
- User Groups
- Partnership Boards or Strategy Groups
- Public and Patient Involvement Forums
- Carers Development Groups
- Local Implementation Teams
- Rural Issues Reference Group
- Voluntary and Community Sector representation
- Assessment and care planning
- Using 'expert patients'

8.8 For meetings and forums to be effective, it is crucial that there is continuity in top level representation and regular attendance from the statutory sector.

8.3 Not everyone can attend meetings and it is important that a range of ways of being involved are available. Individuals may need access to translation services, interpreters, lip-readers, hearing loops, transport costs, bilingual support, respite care, information in different formats such as large print, on tape or braille, advocates or paid workers.

## 9. ESCC Action Plan

*It is only by acknowledging the changes in practice which are implied by encouraging greater user involvement that the rhetoric of participation can become an active reality.<sup>5</sup>*

9.1 One way in which the County Council is assessed is through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. One of the key criteria for this is 'What has the council, both corporately and with its partners, done to undertake meaningful engagement with older people and their representative groups on all aspects of the strategic approach to older people and service provision?'

9.2 There will therefore be a cross-council working group for this Strategy as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process. This group will report into the East Sussex Strategic Partnership. This means that council officers from all departments can come together to ensure that the strategy is taken forward.

9.3 This action plan sets out the actions which ESCC has signed up to. It also provides a template for partner agencies to use in determining their own actions.

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<sup>5</sup> Ross K '*Speaking in Tongues: Involving Users in Day Care Services*' British journal of Social Work 1995 2 p791-804

<sup>10</sup> Joint Review p54 Section 4.1

## Action Plan

	Objective	Outcomes	Action	Timescale	ESCC Person / group Responsible	Ideal partner agency
1	<b>To create opportunities for older people to be involved in improving public services.</b>	a. 5 area based forums plus a variety of theme based forums such as the Public and Patient Involvement Forums and the Carers Development Forums exist across the county which encourage dialogue between older people and service providers	i. to ensure that there is relevant statutory and voluntary sector attendance at the existing older people's forums in Eastbourne and Hastings when appropriate	Ongoing	Angie MacDonald AS Barry Atkins AS	
			ii. to work with the community networks in Rother, Wealden and Lewes District to ensure that robust overarching involvement mechanisms exist	April 2006	Vicky Lawrence	CVSs, Age Concern, District Councils and Primary Care Trusts
			iii. To provide funding for 5 local events to be organised which encourage local involvement	May/June 2005	Vicky Lawrence	CVSs, Age Concern, Eastbourne Older Peoples Forum, Hastings and St Leonards Seniors Forum
			iii. That Public and Patient Involvement Forums, Carers Development Forums and Local Implementation Teams LSPs are recognised as part of this strategy	Sept 2005		
		c. Potentially excluded groups have different opportunities to participate	i. That alternatives to meetings are researched and advertised	Sept 2005		All
			ii. Voluntary organisations ensure that their target groups are included. ESCC provides funding to hear the views of potentially excluded groups.	April 2005	Vicky Lawrence	All
			iii. Existing mechanisms such as rural networks and churches are recognised and used for consulting older people	Ongoing	Sue Buxton, Judi Dettmar Vicky Lawrence	
			iv To provide funding for Sompriti to organise an event for black and minority ethnic elders	May 2005	Vicky Lawrence	Sompriti

	c. County-wide involvement mechanisms are investigated	i. a county-wide mechanism which the local forums feed into is investigated	April 2006	Vicky Lawrence	Age Concern Involvement Subgroup
		ii. Members of the Older People's Strategy Reference Group join the Involvement Subgroup	April 2005	Vicky Lawrence	
		iii. A representative pool of older people is established who are invited to work with officers	Sept 2005	Comprehensive Performance Assessment Working Group Jessie McArthur Vicky Lawrence	
		iv. older people are invited to existing meetings in statutory organisations		Comprehensive Performance Assessment Working Group Jessie McArthur	
		v. Fund and organise older people's conference	Dec 05	Vicky Lawrence/ Melanie Clayton	Age Concern
	d. More older people know how to make the most of being involved	i. That older people are given training on how to ensure that their voice is heard.	May/June 2005 and ongoing		Age Concern
		ii. Radio phone-in organised	March 2006		Age Concern
	e. Information on involvement mechanisms is available to all older people including excluded groups	i. Different methods of circulating information are explored, including Your County	Sept 2005	Sue Buxton Judi Dettmar Vicky Lawrence	

			li. An A3 summary of the strategy and contacts is published in Plain English and circulated	June 2005	Vicky Lawrence	
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	Objective	Outcome	Action	Timescale	ESCC person responsible	Ideal partner agency
2	<b>To ensure partnerships exist between older people and different statutory and voluntary agencies.</b>	a. That all relevant agencies are partners to this strategy	i. Draw up list of potential partner agencies to this strategy and promote sign-up.	Dec 05	Vicky Lawrence	Involvement Subgroup
			ii. Engage with other agencies in the longer term such as independent providers and commerce	March 06		Involvement Sub Group
			iii. Commitment to link with other relevant strategies and initiatives, eg. County Carers Strategy	Ongoing	Comprehensive Performance Assessment Working Group	
		b. Improvements to services happen because of the direct involvement of older people	i. Clear mechanisms are created to progress action on issues identified by older people.	Sept 2005	Comprehensive Performance Assessment working group	
			ii. A cross council working group under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment is established, led by Adult Services.	June 2005	Keith Hinkley	
		c. Heightened awareness amongst staff of partner to this strategy organisations of how to involve older people	i. That training courses are set up in partnership with Age Concern	March 2006		Age Concern, partner agencies
			ii. That staff in partner agencies are given training on working with older people and accessibility issues	March 2006		Age Concern
		d. A co-ordinated approach is taken by partner agencies on involving older people	i. Each partner agency draws up action plan which complements this one	Dec 2005		Partner Agencies
			ii. The Involvement subgroup is redefined and membership adjusted accordingly	Sept 2005		Involvement Subgroup
		e. Agencies commit to provide information about proposed new services or changes to services.	i. Regular representation from statutory agencies on forums	ongoing	Vicky Lawrence	Partner agencies

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>ESCC Person / group Responsible</b>	<b>Ideal Partner Agency</b>
3	<b>To ensure that the implementation of this strategy is adequately resourced</b>	a. The local forums are adequately resourced	Each local forum has adequate funding for running costs	Sept 05 and ongoing		PCTs/District and Borough Councils
		b. The overall county mechanism, if established, is adequately resourced	If mechanism established, then funding bids submitted	Dependent on if and when mechanism established	Vicky Lawrence	Age Concern
		c. Excluded groups are involved – translation and involvement costs are met where possible, such as respite care	Funding to support implementation of the strategy is investigated	Dec 05	Keith Hinkley Vicky Lawrence	
		d. Sufficient staff resources for this process are found	ESCC to investigate funding of a dedicated officer	Dec 05	Keith Hinkley Vicky Lawrence	
		e. Age Concern has a dedicated worker to ensure involvement across the county	Age Concern to submit bids	Dec 05	Vicky Lawrence to support	Age Concern
4	<b>To ensure that this strategy is promoted effectively.</b>	a. All older people in East Sussex are aware of this Strategy	i. Create a webpage linked to ESCC and partner websites and newsletter; promote through CVSs, CareLine newsletter, voluntary sector networks, Your County; ESDA's bulletin board	Ongoing – March 2006		Partner agencies
			iii. Create signposting leaflet containing key contacts, website links, partners; link with Better Care Higher Standards	June 2005	Vicky Lawrence	
		b. All partner agencies and their staff are aware of this strategy	i. Promote sign-up to the strategy	Ongoing – March Dec 05	Vicky Lawrence	Involvement Sub Group members
5	<b>To evaluate whether this process makes a difference</b>	a. Clarity for partner agencies and older people on how this strategy is making a difference	i. Partner agencies to undertake audit of their existing involvement methods	<b>On sign-up</b>	Vicky Lawrence	Partner agencies
			ii. Partner agencies to monitor change since audit undertaken	One year later	Vicky Lawrence	Partner agencies

	<b>both to the lives of older people and to the quality of their services.</b>		iii. Annual evaluation	April 2006	Vicky Lawrence	Involvement Subgroup
			iv. Scrutiny committee to oversee		Judi Dettmar	
6	<b>To continue to develop this process</b>	a. Older people and partner agencies working together to ensure a process which develops	Countywide involvement mechanism and Involvement Group meet at regular intervals	Ongoing	Vicky Lawrence Judi Dettmar Jessie McArthur	Involvement Subgroup

## 9. Evaluation and Monitoring

9.1 This strategy will be evaluated as it unfolds. Evaluation results should be regularly published and acted upon according to an agreed timetable. What we would be measuring is *change*:

- within the older people participating.
- in attitudes and working practices of those working with older people.
- within the nature of the relationships between the participants.
- in effectiveness.

9.2 Active older people often fulfil important roles within the community. Given the incentive and opportunity, they could as lay people assist in the evaluation and improvement of services.

9.3 Each partner agency will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating their own actions.

9.4 A working group - involving older people as well as the partners to this strategy and representatives of other voluntary and statutory agencies - will regularly evaluate this Strategy's effect. It will measure specific changes and will publish its findings. In the first instance this group will be the Involvement Subgroup which has been responsible for drawing up this Strategy.

## Appendices

### 1. Background and Context

1.1 In 1999 ESCC Social Services agreed an initial policy - 'Involving service users, carers and young carers, in planning and providing services'. This policy and the associated public leaflets for users and carers were developed in close collaboration with the voluntary sector and were launched in March 2000. The Joint Review in 2002 identified that although East Sussex has a strategy '*... this is not always implemented successfully..... The Authority needs to ensure that it makes clearer connections between the views expressed and the policy choices made, and feeds back the outcomes from such consultation more effectively.*' A subsequent Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) inspection of older people services in 2003 recommended that '*Social Services should develop work to promote service user and carer empowerment in whole systems planning*'. In response, the multi agency East Sussex Older People's Strategy Group (OPSG) commissioned the development of a user & carer involvement strategy in July 2003.

1.2 Also in July 2003 the ESCC Social Services and Health Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Scrutiny Review to look at progress being made by Social Services in improving the way in which users and carers were being involved in services. Elected members involved in the Scrutiny Review endorsed the development of a wider 'citizenship' approach to the involvement of older people as proposed by BGOP. The Scrutiny Committee has been pleased with the progress made.

1.3 The following ESCC and ESSP statements are useful background:

a) Two of the Cabinet priorities 04-05

- Continue to improve services to older people
- Promote active citizenship

b) Joint Review

*East Sussex recognises that it needs to build partnerships and develop new services that empower users, and is starting to develop proposals and partnerships to that end. There is a recognition of the need to consult better with users and carers in planning new services, with corporate investment in a Citizens Panel and a new user and carer consultation strategy. This has not been wholly effective in improving consultation but there is a clear commitment to consulting that now needs to be supported by better management of the process.*<sup>10</sup>

c) ESCC Council Plan

*5.6 Engage with service users and carers and support staff to improve the quality of services we provide.*

*What we will do: Develop and adopt a strategic approach to engagement which reflects national best practice and is tailored to suit the needs of East Sussex and use the outcomes of this engagement to inform commissioning, contracting and purchasing.*

d) East Sussex Strategic Partnership  
Pride of Place – A Community Strategy for East Sussex

*The ESSP vision for improving the quality of life for older people involves empowering them to live their lives in the way they choose. East Sussex should be a place where the skills and expertise of older people are recognised and utilised. The ESSP would like to see an East Sussex where care for older people is organised around individuals rather than services.*

*Over the next 3 years we will work to:*

*Empower people and support them to live their lives in the way they choose*

*Value the skills and expertise of older people and their contribution to local communities*

*Ensure that care is organised around people rather than services*

#### **1.4 Statutory Responsibilities: Social Services**

- The Community Care Act 1990 placed a responsibility on local authorities to offer choice and involvement to older people in care planning through wider voluntary sector involvement.
- The Government Modernisation Programme – it is an imperative that people who use public services drive forward the agenda for service delivery.
- The introduction of direct payments in 1996, and further encouragement by the government in 2001 to use these for older people, has enabled councils to give individual older people, subject to an assessment of needs, a budget to buy their assessed services.
- The Carers (Recognition & Services) Act 1995, subsequent legislation, guidance and the Carers' Grant have emphasised the importance of support to informal carers.
- The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) as one of its functions, inspecting the quality of social care services. In undertaking this task Social Services are inspected against 6 standards, 3 of which expect involvement of users & carers.
- The next phase of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), due in 2007/08, will be widened to look at aspects of the authorities relationships with the community and will include an indicator about older people and quality of life. Local Authorities wanting to be seen as high performers will need to take a broad, strategic approach to this issue.

## 1.5 Statutory Responsibilities: Health

- Section 11 of the Health & Social Care Act 2001 places a duty on all NHS organisations to consult and involve the public and patients in the planning and provision of services; developing and considering proposals for changes in the way services are provided and decisions about how services operate. The aim of this is to ensure that patients and the public are involved and consulted not just when major change is proposed but in the ongoing planning of services and to encourage a climate that puts the patient at the heart of the NHS and focuses on patient centred care and improvements to the patient experience.
- The National Health Service (NHS) Plan 2000 encourages the involvement of service users and their carers at all levels in the delivery of care and requires all NHS Trusts to have a consultation strategy in place
- The Commission for Patient and Public Involvement have established a framework for involving patients and the public in the setting of standards and the monitoring and review of these, the establishment of Patient forums, Patient Advice & Liaison Services and the new Independent Complaints Advisory Services.

## 1.6 Statutory Responsibilities: Voluntary Organisations

- Whilst there are no statutory responsibilities for 'service users' to be involved with the planning and delivery of voluntary services, the ethos of voluntary organisations is for them to be fully involved.
- Older people are often members of management committees for voluntary organisations.
- Key countywide and specialist organisations are expected to provide vital links between statutory agencies and the people they serve.

## 2. Overcoming Barriers to Involvement

2.1 It is important to say that there are many positive views and examples of good practice in working with older people. However negative and unhelpful attitudes which exist towards older people in society in general should not be ignored or underestimated. It is important to recognise the effects that these attitudes have had on older people, which may initially affect their willingness to participate in the consultation process.

**2.2 Clear goals** Older people who participate need to know that the process won't simply be a talking shop. They need to know what the process is for in clear, jargon-free terms. Older people have their own ideas of what quality means in both services that are provided as well as in a definition of what constitutes quality of life (for them). They need to know ultimately that standards won't simply be provider led.

**2.3 Scepticism** This is closely allied to the former point. Older people have long experience of having themselves defined by other people (what has been

called “being ordered”). They also have past experience of a lot of consultation being purely for information giving only.

**2.4 Lack of experience** Many older people, especially older women of the present generation, may not have had a great deal of experience of taking part in meetings and public consultations. It is their voices in particular which need to be heard and it is important that they are given every encouragement.

**2.5 Physical accessibility** Basic issues such as ease of transport and physical frailty or disability are often overlooked and can mean that older people cannot participate fully. It is very important that those organising meetings or forums ask for information on and address the physical needs of those involved.

**2.6 Support and sensitivity** We all hope that the East Sussex initiative will be a success. However, it must be recognised that the first generation of older people who step forward will still need encouragement and recognition. Society at large will not change overnight. However successfully ESCC and its partners might relate to its older population in the future, the older people involved will still meet negative and inappropriate images of themselves on an almost daily basis in the press and from the commercial sector.

**2.7 Fear of Ageing** Many pre-retirement professionals in the service sector often express very negative views about retirement and/or the ageing process and often very openly. It is understandable but certainly problematic. Part of the consultation process might perhaps involve working professionals having a chance to ask older people what they feel is positive about their stage in life.

**2.8 The “unreported” generation** Much of what older people do with their lives is hidden from view. It is rarely reported in the press. But there are many informal community support systems in operation which never find themselves listed anywhere. It might be difficult initially to gain access to all the people who would have something to offer to the consultation process.

**2.9 Unconscious attitudes** It may be difficult for ESCC and its partner agencies to have a comprehensive overview of the attitudes of all the care-workers and professionals in their service who have direct contact with older people. However, if the initiative is to be successful and sustainable it may be helpful for some kind of positive promotion process to take place.

**2.10 Making assumptions** Often professionals are committed people who really want to champion older people’s issues on behalf of the people they serve but potentially not realise that older, even frail people can be advocates for themselves if they are given the opportunity.

None of the possible barriers listed above are insurmountable. With good will on both sides and clarity there is no reason why East Sussex should not also achieve what other parts of the country have already proved is possible.

### 3. Some Definitions of Older People

3.1 **Third Agers:** Those between the age of 50 and retirement are often referred to as 'third agers', as defined by the UN. This age group expects and is expected to be in employment, earning a living, though many may not be due to age discrimination still widely practised by employers.

3.2 Third Agers may be in full or part-time Class 1 employment or running their own businesses. They may have been made redundant and looking for employment or threatened with early retirement.

**3.3 Retired, pensioners:** Over 25% of East Sussex residents are over 65. In addition, the proportion of people aged 85 and over is almost double the national average. People over 65 are currently classified as 'retired' or pensioners. This may change in the future with the advent of age discrimination legislation, the likely inadequacy of state and private pension provision, and the prospect of people living longer.

*'People think that retirement constitutes a change from an active and independent life to one of passivity and dependency ... it can lead to a life of activity, discovery and usefulness',<sup>11</sup>*

3.4 General references to older people appear to mean anyone who draws a state pension but when specifics are mentioned they often only relate to the 15% who are in need of some kind of public service/care.

3.5 People over 60 are simply people over the age of 60 – classifying them as "pensioners" "the retired" "older people" implies that they somehow change from being outward going, intelligent, lively, interactive, responsible, working and participating citizens

*'Public services still, by and large, focus on the most vulnerable older people at times of crisis (some 15% of the older population) rather than having an approach that enables the wider older population (the other 85%) to remain independent for as long as possible and live their lives to the full'.<sup>12</sup>*

3.6 There is a welcome trend to establish a more integrated approach to the provision and development of services to the 15% vulnerable and frail population of older people, especially in health and care provision.

3.7 It is important to remember that, under CSCI regulations, people under 65 cannot access services specifically provided for older people without a variation order. However people of all ages could potentially be involved in improvements to services for those over 65 years old.

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<sup>11</sup> Peter and Barbara Spiers, Camden Council of Social Services.

<sup>12</sup> Quality of Life for Older People, From Welfare to Well-being. A summary of a discussion paper from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

#### **4. Demographic Information**

5.1 East Sussex has a significantly higher than average population of older people, currently with 27% of pensionable age - almost double the national average and projected to be close to 40% by 2027

5.2 Eastbourne and Rother have a particularly high proportion of residents over pensionable age, especially Rother at 31%, which is the third highest in any District in England. All five localities in East Sussex rank amongst the top thirty of all English Districts with the highest proportion of residents over the age of 85 years. 44% of all households have at least one person of pensionable age living there, whilst 35% have only pensioners and 20% are pensioners living alone.

#### **5. Recent Involvement and Consultation**

5.1 Age Concern Older Peoples Fora - In autumn 2003 Age Concern held a series of three Older People's Forums across the County. Health & Social Services staff were invited to speak to the forums and participate in discussions with the older people present. One of the topics discussed was how participants want to be involved in the planning of services. Report on the Information and Consultation mornings held in Bexhill, Heathfield and Lewes for Older People, Nov 2003

5.2 Going round the moon to meet the sun. Views from older people on the Joint Investment Plan. Sept 1999, Age Concern East Sussex

5.3 BGOP – Group discussions in Ringmer 1999

5.4 Care for the Carers Forum summer 2003

5.5 'All Our Futures' Conference, September 2004.

5.6 In addition, there can be one-off exercises about specific issues using

- questionnaires
- telephone interviews
- focus groups
- 'events' such as Carers Question Time.

## 6. Useful sources of information

- Involving Service Users, Carers and Young Carers in Planning and Providing Services; 'Listening to you and responding'
- Opportunity Age, Meeting the challenges of ageing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. HM Government March 2005
- User Involvement in Community Care Planning. People with physical disabilities and sensory impairments. Produced by East Sussex Disability Association.
- ESCC Social Services – Involving Users and Carers IL19
- Strategy for Involving Mental Health Service Users and Carers in the Design and Delivery of Mental Health Services in East Sussex. ESCC & East Sussex County Healthcare NHS Trust
- Older People – Independence and Well-being. The Challenge for Public Services. Audit Commission & BGOP
- The NHS Improvement Plan
- The Social Inclusion Agenda
- The Carers Strategy
- Commitment to Customer Care
- Better Care Higher Standards
- Pride of Place – A Community Strategy for East Sussex, East Sussex Strategic Partnership
- 'User involvement in Community Care Planning: People with physical disabilities and sensory impairments' by East Sussex Disability Association
- 'Going round the moon to meet the sun: views from older people on the Joint Investment Plan' by Penny Kocher, September 1999
- 'All our Tomorrows: a joint discussion document on the future of services for older people' by the Local Government Association & the Association of Directors of Social Services, October 2003
- 'Older People – independence and well-being' by the Audit Commission and Better Government for Older People, February 2004
- 'Interim Commissioning Strategy for Older People's Services 2003/04 to 2004/05' by East Sussex Social Services November 2003
- 'Scrutiny Review of Older People Services: User and Carer Involvement in Services'
- <http://www.ccnap.org.uk/Guide/part1.htm#publicconsultationanduserinvolvement> – Many thanks to the authors of this site for their insights which have informed the writing of this document.

## 7. Voluntary Organisations

Statutory agencies usually work with voluntary organisations, which have large databases of individual members and organisations & groups, to contact older people. Some of these are:

- Action in Rural Sussex
- Age Concern, countywide and local branches,
- Alzheimer's Disease Society

- Care for the Carers
- Churches
- Citizens Advice Bureaus
- Councils for Voluntary Service
- East Sussex Association for the Blind
- East Sussex Community Information Service (ESCIS)
- East Sussex Disability Association
- East Sussex Vision Care
- MIND
- VOICES
- University of the Third Age
- Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS)

## 8. Definitions

**Statutory Sector** means providers of public services required by law, such as East Sussex County Council, Borough and District Councils, the emergency services and health organisations eg. Primary Care Trusts.

**Voluntary organisations** are non-profit driven, non-statutory, autonomous and run by individuals who do not get paid for running the organisation. Some voluntary organisations are recognised as Charities.

**Community organisations** are active on a local or community level, usually small, modestly funded and largely dependent on voluntary, rather than paid, effort. Can be seen as distinct from the larger, professionally staffed voluntary agencies.

**Volunteering** is "any activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives, or to benefit the environment'. [*The Institute of Volunteering Research*].

## 9. Thanks

Many thanks to the Older People's Reference Group members who co-drafted this document:

- John Appleyard, Chair Hastings and St Leonards Seniors' Forum,
- Katherine Blake, Chair Lewes U3A
- Arnold Goldman, Eastbourne Seniors Club, EAVS Older People's Forum
- Edith Hall, Vice Chair Lewes U3A
- Don Hart, previously Chair of Care for the Carers – Eastbourne, Seaford and Wealden Development Group
- Andrea Talbot, Age Concern East Sussex, Rother District Co-ordinator
- Elaine Williams, Hastings U3A

- Edna Wright, Sussex U3A, National executive committee U3A