

Consultation Plan for Be Birmingham Wellbeing Strategy for Older Citizens

Background to Strategy

The strategy was written to improve the health and wellbeing of older citizens of Birmingham by providing a link between the thematic groups of Be Birmingham to work together to contribute to the wellbeing of older citizens. The strategy also provides a process of agreeing a strategic direction to improve wellbeing for older citizens. In addition it was a response to the requirements of the Corporate Performance Assessment Framework to have a strategy which looked at the wider detriments of wellbeing for older citizens not just those of health and care services.

The strategy draws on long term involvement and consultation with both Birmingham Advisory Council of Older People (BACOP) and the Older People's Reference Groups in the city who have a number of key priorities, all of which have been included in the strategy. A corporate task group worked together with Primary Care Trust representatives, for over a year and learnt from best practise examples nationally which have also incorporated in the draft version of the strategy.

Reason for Consultation

The consultation process is essential to ensure the strategy is meeting its aims of improving the wellbeing of older citizens. The consultation process aims to obtain from citizens and professional which they think are the most important priorities and to identify any gaps to enable the final version of the strategy to add any identified. By identifying which are the most important of the priorities an implementation plan can be developed to address the most important.

In addition by consulting partner agencies of Be Birmingham on the strategic direction of wellbeing services for older citizens, many of whom have a key role in improving the lives of older citizens in Birmingham, will begin to obtain buy in from partner agencies, and a shared direction of travel to work together on this shared agenda.

Options for Consultation

The draft strategy has 10 themes and a number of priorities attached to each theme. The purpose of the consultation process is to ask citizens and professionals to comment on:

- Are these the priorities needed to improve the wellbeing of older citizens in Birmingham?
- Which do you think are the most important priority?
- Have you identified any gaps in the strategy, if so what are they?
- Can you circulate the strategy to any other organisations or interested individuals who you think would like to comment?

The strategy is in draft form and responses will be taken into consideration and will influence the final version of the strategy.

How People Can Respond

People can respond to the lead on the Be Birmingham Wellbeing Strategy in writing or at the various consultation events as outlined in the plan. The contact details are Heather.holmes@birmingham.gov.uk or by telephone 0121 3038302, or in writing to Heather Holmes at Policy, Strategy and Commissioning, Level 4 Louisa Ryland House, 44 Newhall Street B3 3PL.

Clear Timescales

The consultation period will run from the launch at the Birmingham Advisory Council Annual conference on 27th Nov 2008 until April 6th 2009.

Response to Government Guidelines on Code of Practice on Consultation

Criterion 1 When to Consult

Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

The strategy is in draft form and there is scope for response to influence the policy outcome.

Criteria 2 Duration of consultation exercises

Consultation should normally last for 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

In this instance the consultation period falls over the Christmas period so an additional 2 weeks has been added. In this case a further consultation period of a month has been added by following advice from the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to satisfy the code of practice and to ensure all partners have sufficient time to be fully involved.

Criterion 3 Clarity of scope and impact

Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, which is being proposed, the scope to influence and expected cost and benefits of the proposals.

This document outlines the consultation process and the scope to influence the strategy at this stage. The strategy is a strategic direction and so does not include the costing of each individual proposal.

Criterion 4 Accessibility of consultation exercise

Consultation exercise should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

The consultation plan includes presenting the draft strategy with the questions for consultation at a number of older people's forums and there will be targeted mail shot to those Black and ethnic minority organisation which the city council has worked in partnership to represent the hard to reach groups. In addition there has been media publicity which has been directed at the wider public.

Criterion 5 The burden of consultation

Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained

Many of the agendas to improve the wellbeing of older citizens in Birmingham link together and from the perspective of the older citizens they see them as a single agenda. To ensure the consultation mechanism for these agendas was the most appropriate for the older citizen a single consultation took place looking at the agenda of the Adults and Communities Directorate, the Housing strategy, the Supporting people strategy and the wellbeing strategy at the recent BACOP conference. All responses were collated and feedback to the appropriate organisation responsible for that service, the findings will then be feedback to the 140 participants.

Criterion 6 Responsiveness of consultation exercise

Consultation response should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided following consultation.

Within the consultation plan is the scope for the analysis of the responses and feedback to those who have made responses.

Criterion 7 Capacity to consult

Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learnt from the experience.

The lead for wellbeing strategy has sought guidance from the lead officer for consultation and engagement in the city council and the Overview and Scrutiny Manager for the Heath Overview and Scrutiny Committee in drawing up the consultation plan.