

Equality and Diversity Case Studies

Directorate: Adult Social Care & Health

Service: Joint Strategic Commissioning

Title: Older People - Understanding Demographics

Introduction:

As part of the Council's work together with other partners we developed an **Ageing Well in West Cheshire Strategic framework**. As part of this work research was carried out into local demographics. The purpose of this was to better understand the nature of the community we serve and the changes that surround the older adult target group.

Challenges:

The key challenge was to ensure that there was good evidence to support the assumptions around the growth in older people numbers and consequently to allow this to influence the shape of the strategic framework.

How the challenges were overcome:

Expert colleagues from Research and Intelligence provided data and information which has been a key influence on the outcomes described below.

Outcomes

As a consequence the following information was available to influence our Ageing Well in West Cheshire strategic framework:

Our population is changing: During the twentieth century, life expectancy rose dramatically amongst the world's wealthiest populations from around 50 to over 75 years – and increasing. This increase can be attributed to a number of factors including improvements in public health, nutrition and medicine. Vaccinations and antibiotics greatly reduced deaths in childhood, health and safety in manual workplaces improved and fewer people smoked. As a result of these, and other factors, many major industrial countries are facing an ageing population. Increased life

expectancy is to be celebrated however for too many some of this extended life time period is not a high quality experience.

- In West Cheshire, over the next fifteen years the population of those aged 50 and over will increase by 24% with those aged 85 and over increasing by 74%.
- In terms of relative proportions, those aged 50 and over currently account for some 38% of the total area population and this is projected to rise by 2025 to 44%.
- This is higher than the situation in the whole North West of England where, by 2025, the proportion of the total population who are 50 and over is projected to be 40%

We also know that there are differences in the way that our population will change across our local communities. For example the current proportion of those aged 50 and over of the total population in Chester and Ellesmere Port is 35%. However in the Rural West area, the proportion is significantly higher at 44%.

This highlights the importance of us recognising the need to respond appropriately to the different needs of local communities.

What we could have done better:

N/a

Further information:

During the development of the Ageing Well in West Cheshire Strategic Framework key messages have emerged. These include:

- Whilst the changing demographics in West Cheshire brings some challenges it also presents fantastic opportunities: opportunities to provide services in different and better ways, and opportunities for older adults to influence and contribute, through, for example, improved volunteering chances.
- There was clear commitment from partners to focus on empowering older people to be active in their communities, to share their skills and knowledge, instigating a positive shift in behaviour and attitude towards older residents.

- Partners are excited about the many opportunities for real and collaborative working together that can improve outcomes for older adults and achieve better overall value.