



## Future of an Ageing Population Project: Local Expert Stakeholders' Roundtable – Manchester

17 March 2015

### Context

As part of the evidence gathering for the Foresight Project on the Future of an Ageing Population, Sir Mark Walport and the Lead Expert Group undertook a programme of visits around the United Kingdom. The fifth of these visits was to Manchester on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015. This was held in partnership with the Manchester Institute for Collaborative Research on Ageing (MICRA).

### Meeting

At a roundtable meeting, Professor Sarah Harper, Mrs Mary Sinfield, Professor Alan Walker, Professor James Banks and Professor Rachel Cooper (from the Future of Cities Lead Expert Group) discussed with local leaders and experts the key challenges, opportunities and vision for the future of an ageing population in the context of 'age friendly cities'. An attendee list is attached at Annex A.

Sarah Harper opened the meeting by welcoming the group, outlining her role as Chair of the project's Lead Expert Group (LEG), setting out the roundtable's aims and giving an overview of the Project.

### Discussion: key themes

#### Manchester as an age-friendly city

- Manchester is part of the World Health Organisation's network of age-friendly cities. This has helped create a positive narrative about ageing, give ageing groups a platform, and provided international connectivity and recognition.
- Age-friendly cities are about enabling older people to participate in the decision making processes in the development of the city.
- Devolution in Manchester has created the powers and resources for the city to address issues of ageing itself.

### Technology

- There was a discussion on future technological developments that could affect the experience of ageing – telehealth, telecare, driverless cars, smart homes
- Caution was expressed over the potential for the use of telecare/health to increase social isolation if it completely replaced all *in person* care.
- It was also noted that steps should be taken to ensure that an increasing reliance on technology does not increase inequality in terms of inability to pay for or use technology.

### Inequalities

- Local ageing experiences will be influenced by local economics and culture. Manchester's older population is smaller than in other cities (10%), but has a higher rate of poverty. By the age of 50, almost half of people in Manchester are out of work, creating difficulties in terms of the 'working longer' agenda.



- It is necessary to look at the labour market conditions throughout the career of different cohorts – will some have been disproportionately affected and how will this impact retirement incomes and wellbeing?
- It was suggested that older people may suffer from non-financial forms of inequality, such as levels of social capital. For example, people who have had very mobile careers or work patterns may not have such deep rooted relationships where they live, leading to less support in local life. Having adult children living far away, or spouses or other family members dependent on their help, could have a negative effect on the experience of ageing.

### **Housing and Transport**

- Transport infrastructure is built around the working population – how do you build a system that integrates public transport and the different modes of private transport and includes both older and less able-bodied people who live on the periphery of the city?
  - Transport for Greater Manchester are planning out to 2030, with an emphasis on journeys between home, community services and hospital.
  - Free bus passes were considered to have had a significant impact on the wellbeing of those older people with a limited income.
- The role of ageing housing stock in increasing segregation was discussed. Participants felt that a private housing market focused on developing greenfield sites would not work to encourage older people to stay in the city.
- Choice and location were considered important in housing provision. Participants suggested that older people make up over half of the residents in some estates, many of whom would be living in family-sized units. In contrast, the city centre had lots of smaller flats which might be more appropriately sized, but it is predominantly young people living there.

### **Social cohesion and intergenerational integration**

- There is a need to balance increasing the student and working populations with keeping community and social networks intact. Several attendees expressed the view that older people feel excluded from the city centre in Manchester – although this could be to do with perceptions of the area rather than the suitability of housing.
- Attendees suggested that the general trend is towards greater generational segregation in cities, therefore a greater focus on intergenerational cohesion is needed. For example, free public spaces and cultural provision can bring people together, but only if they are made attractive to people of all ages. Attendees also underlined the two-way benefits to older people volunteering with younger people (e.g. in schools).
- It was noted that segregation typically acts at the micro-level, so may not show up on macro data of the city. This may be a subject for further study.
- Participants expressed a need to challenge conceptions of later life – attitudes, expectations and assumptions, particularly the idea that people become ‘old enough to rest’.
- Society needs to be inclusive of people with dementia, who will often be very isolated. Manchester has focussed on creating for people with dementia to join in with cultural events, and to get away from the narrative of dependency.
- Many police call outs are now about vulnerability, rather than crime. It was suggested that 20% of all call outs involve a mental health issue (including dementia).
- Some success stories from Manchester include Neighbourhood Watch groups, which are expanding their focus from crime to include vulnerability.



- It was suggested that the number of mutually supportive relationships an individual has could be used as an indicator of progress, the suggestion was that having 2-3 strong friendships is key to wellbeing.



**Annex A – Attendee List**

Sarah Harper (chair)	Professor of Gerontology at the University of Oxford, Chair of the Lead Expert Group providing oversight of the Foresight Future of an Ageing Population project and Director of the Oxford Institute of Population Ageing
Mary Sinfield	Former Chair of the New Dynamics of Ageing Older People’s Reference Group and Member of FoAP Project’s Lead Expert Group
Alan Walker	Professor of Social Policy & Social Gerontology, University of Sheffield and Member of FoAP Project’s Lead Expert Group
James Banks	Professor of Economics at the University of Manchester and Deputy Research Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS)
Rachel Cooper	Professor of Design Management at the University of Lancaster, Chair of Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts and Imagination Lancaster
Paul McGarry	Senior Strategy Manager in the Age-friendly Team, Manchester City Council
Chris Phillipson	Professor of Sociology and Social Gerontology at the University of Manchester, director of Manchester Institute for Collaborative Research into Ageing (MICRA).
John Keady	University of Manchester and Greater Manchester West Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
Tine Buffel	Marie Curie Fellow at the University of Manchester and lecturer at the Free University of Brussels
Stefan White	Manchester School of Architecture
Ray Gridley	Chief Executive of Age UK Manchester,
Bernadette Ashcroft	CEO, Age UK Tameside
Rod Fawcett	Transport for Greater Manchester
Esme Ward	Head of Learning and Engagement at the Whitworth and Manchester Museum
Mary Watson	Councillor for Whalley Range, Manchester Council
David Ratcliffe	Deputy Medical Director (Urgent Care+111)
Rebecca Gunn	Paramedic
Karen Mitchell	Southway Housing Trust
Adele Owen	Greater Manchester Police
Alexandra Gardiner	New Economy
Jane Hibberd	Head of Strategy and Policy for People and Neighbourhoods, Sunderland City Council
Simon Wilkinson	Work, Welfare and Wellbeing in Later Life Division Engagement Team, Department for Work and Pensions