



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

26th February 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 fourth of these visits was to Leicester on the 26th February 2015. This roundtable meeting was held in Leicester and organised in partnership with the University of Leicester.

Meeting

At a roundtable meeting, Sir Mark Walport, Mrs Mary Sinfield, Professor Alan Walker and Professor Paul Boyle discussed with local leaders and experts the key challenges, opportunities and vision for the future of an ageing population in the context of ethnicity in Leicester. A list of attendees is attached at Annex A.

Discussion: key themes

The issues and themes discussed by attendees are summarised below.

Immigration and feeling of identity

- One third of Leicester's population was born outside of the UK. Their ethnicity data is available but an individual's feeling of identity is more complex. For example, someone who ticks the 'Indian' box on a form may really have a Punjabi, Gujarati or East African identity.
- Immigrants have their early cultural view shaped in one country and play them out in another. Like everyone, their experiences through the life course will shape their ageing experience. Specific events may disproportionately affect different groups. For example, the shutting of the foundries was considered to have had a great impact on Sikh men and the loss of hosiery industry an impact on Sikh and Gujarati women.
- People's aspirations do not vary so much. Most people want decent housing, transport, sociable and meaningful activity, good access to healthcare. However, how these need to be delivered to different communities can be very different. *See section below on culturally competent policies.*

Generational differences

- The children and grand-children of immigrants may have multiple identities, and potentially differing views of identity and culture (for example, South Asian family traditions alongside a 'Western' childhood experience). Understanding the health and social care implications for this type of combination of cultures is important.
- Experiences and aspirations can change across generations. First generation immigrants may be able to access very different education opportunities, and have different attitudes towards issues such as savings, what constitutes a successful career or their entitlement to services, than later generations.
- Younger generations may feel less attachment to their parents' community, with implications for traditional social structures and support networks.



Culture and the ageing experience

- Culture and religion play an important role in the ageing process. Changing attitudes to multigenerational living will impact the ageing experience. Policies need to be sensitive to such issues.
- As examples: where there is a tradition for children to provide unpaid care for parents in later life, this may become more difficult as younger generations experience different economics, which require more members of a family to work. Parents, whose peers might expect their children to be caring for them, may avoid seeking help if that's not happening. There is some evidence that carers are more impoverished and less healthy in later life. Relying on unpaid care therefore risks perpetuating inequalities.
- These kinds of cultural shifts could exacerbate issues to do with ageing and were considered to already be issues in Leicester. Local policy needs to address inequality and be aware where this intersects with culture.
- It was widely agreed that services should not necessarily be framed around ethnicity, nor reserved for one group, but should allow people a choice and be culturally competent and adaptable. For example, Asian women do not make up the majority of users of a women-only swimming class originally designed for them.
- Service providers should collect and analyse best practice to demonstrate that services can be developed with specific communities' needs in mind, but also be used more widely.
- Simple ideas could alleviate the pressures of working and providing care through more day-care availability and lunch clubs. In the past, this has been the responsibility of the voluntary sector but there is a question around securing funding and resources in future.

Culturally competent policies, empowering communities

- It is important to reflect ethnicity in a city's ageing strategy, particularly as different groups experience rapid changes in cultural values and socioeconomic positions at different times.
- There was a perception that some care homes in Leicester were not culturally competent and may lack a focus on culturally appropriate assessment of health and needs.
- BME communities may need specific services, such as language support, and there are questions around the communities' and voluntary sector's ability to meet increasing demands for their services in an increasingly tight fiscal climate.
- Community groups and activities can provide a vital mechanism of support, there is a challenge to engage more young people in these to ensure they survive in the future.
- Religious groups can be a source of support but it's important not to assume all BME people and communities are strongly religious and can access those support structures.
- There is a need to support communities to come together to service their own needs by understanding the social science behind the forces that holds together people. Once this is known, groups need support to encourage greater participation.

City vision

- National policies are not always able to take account of local issues; one size does not fit all.
- Recognition that projections for the city need to be local but a suggestion that leaving it to a local area to work out risks missing out important issues. To illustrate that point, it was



suggested that, in 2008m, 28% of local authorities sampled did not have a dedicated older peoples' strategy¹.

- There was a widely held desire to learn lessons from policy experiments such as the devolution of power to the Greater Manchester Authority to organise NHS social care funding.
- Internal migration patterns for ethnic groups are not the same as the general patterns across the UK. For instance, it was suggested BME communities are less likely to migrate to the coast in later life; however this may change as the economics of different groups change.
- Capturing this data, understanding how internal migration patterns will change in future, will be important to help cities prepare. For instance, will people move to the suburbs as they become more affluent, leaving a poorer population in the centre? Is this a desirable outcome in terms of efficient provision of services for older people?
- Local authorities are in a better position to make decisions and alter these patterns favourably but need the resources and powers to do so. For instance by encouraging people to stay in the city after university, support more cohesive communities.
- Desire in the room for Leicester to develop into an Age friendly city but this requires a vision.

¹ http://www.cpa.org.uk/cpa-lga-evidence/Summary_Report/CPA-LGA_follow_up_analysis.pdf



Annex A – Attendee List

Sir Mark Walport (chair)	Government Chief Scientific Adviser, Government Office for Science
Paul Boyle	President & Vice-Chancellor, Leicester University and Member of FoAP Project's Lead Expert Group
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
Nilufar Ahmed	Research Fellow, University of Swansea
Paul Bott	Chief Executive, VISTA
David Clayton	Research Student, University of Sheffield
Vinod Kotecha	Senior Co-ordinator, South Asian Stroke Prevention Project, Confederation of Indian Organisations
Nat Lievesley	Senior Analyst, Centre for Policy on Ageing
Mustafa Malik	Chief Executive, Pakistan Youth and Community Association
Rohan Morgan	Charity Trustee, West Indian Senior Citizens Project
Paul Norman	Lecturer in Human Geography Applied Spatial Analysis & Policy, University of Leeds
Jay Patel	Head of Sports, Arts and Children and Young People Services, Highfields Community Centre
Phil Rees	Emeritus Professor of Population Geography, University of Leeds
Karamjit Singh	Chairman, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust