

## **Improving Information and Advice for Adult Social Care**

### **1. Introduction**

This paper sets out the approach to providing information and advice which is being developed in Oxfordshire. It sets out the vision, suggests a model for information and advice and briefly describes three developments currently in train. There are many stakeholders with an interest in this important area and there are opportunities for more joint working that are not yet fully explored.

### **2. The Vision**

The vision in the Joint Older People's Strategy is:

*“To enable people to live independent and successful lives”*

We believe that people themselves, regardless of age or ability, are the best placed to determine what help they need in order to lead successful lives. The provision of good quality information and advice is critical in enabling people to manage their own needs and look after their own health and wellbeing and is identified as a key cross cutting theme within the Joint Strategy.

People need to know where they can access information and advice to help them make good choices about the help they or their family might need. This includes information to enable people to maintain their wellbeing and find alternatives to statutory support when appropriate. The provision of timely information will help avoid unnecessary crisis and early admissions to care homes.

The demand for accessible information to support individual choice is increasing. We know from our consultation that information is consistently raised as a core issue. The 2013 Hearsay event suggested that while there were some notable improvements (e.g. in easy read and information for carers), there were still gaps particularly in joined-up inclusive access to information. Key messages were:

- Promote and develop local mutual support networks
- Use multiple routes and formats – online, hard copy, easy read, face to face (wherever possible one place to go for everything)
- Use local routes better –existing newsletters, GP surgeries, carers groups etc.
- Target information at key times e.g. diagnosis, transition points

### **3. Strategic Priorities for Information and Advice**

The model below describes how information can help people at different stages of a 'care pathway' from looking after their own needs (aligned to Public Health) through to providing feedback on the quality of the care they receive.

**INFORMATION & ADVICE PROVISION:**

	<b>Promoting independence and prevention</b>	<b>Getting help for social care (and health) needs</b>	<b>Making choices</b>
	Keeping well and socially connected. Signposting. Looking after your own health. Welfare rights advice. Housing. Social activities.	Understanding the system. Self-assessment, fast track to personal budgets. Self-service for equipment. Knowing how much you will have to pay	Enabling people to make choices. Good information from providers on care options. Feedback on services will also help to drive up quality and inform other people. 'Trip adviser' model.
<b>CHANNELS For example:</b>	Phone – one number Online – Support Finder Hard copy/easy read/audio etc Friends and family Newspapers/Radio News boards Social media Parish newsletters	Phone – one number Online Hard copy/easy read/audio etc Helplines Family and friends New channels/apps	Face-to-face Phone – easy routing Online Family/friends Brochures Support Finder Media – TV/Radio/Newspapers
<b>METHODS: For example:</b>	The Guide/Support Finder City/District Directories/guides Retirement planning Media Case Studies Health promotion National/vol directories/helplines Intergenerational Time-banking Healthwalks/green gyms/activity	Support Finder The Guide Customer feedback reviews Integrated systems DIY calculator	Specialists Customer ratings/feedback (Support Finder) Guides Leaflets Brochure Advertising
<b>PROVIDERS : For example</b>	Parish/Town/District Councils Churches/mosques/faith gps Local vol orgs/community gps GP's/health surgeries Workplace Neighbours Community Networkers Trading Standards Supermarkets Newspapers/radio Health promotion programmes Libraries Rotary Schools Health Advocates Healthwatch Advocacy WI/Community Assocs Go Active/Generation Games Befriending/Buddies Pharmacies/PO's/ Community police Residents groups Neighbourhood watch Lunch clubs / Day centres Extra Care Homes Carers networks Equipment/telecare/telehealth Citizens Advice Bureaus	OCC Customer Service Centre Our Health (national website) NHS Choices (National website) Independent specialist advice OCC Health VCS provider/s City/District Councils Housing providers National and specialist providers Community Networkers Carers networks Care Association Television/Radio/Newspapers	Oxfordshire Care Association Independent specialist advice Voluntary sector Trading Standards Buy with Confidence Schemes CAB Consumer lead Specialist providers for self-funders

#### 4. Deliverables:

We are focusing on the following specific deliverables which together make up a 'pathway of information and advice, from local and general information, through to specialised support and navigation.

a) *Simplify and improve OCC online information and advice (currently Support Finder)*

Review of Support Finder [www.supportfinder.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.supportfinder.oxfordshire.gov.uk) , looking at the opportunities to develop it further. This is an online support and signposting tool for the public, professionals and providers. It was launched in August 2012 and signposts to a wide range of information and services and providers e.g. housing options, carers support, getting out and about etc.

As part of the review there will be a marketing campaign to raise awareness of the function Support Finder.

We will also exploring a 'trip advisor' approach (feedback on services). Increasingly we have an expectation that there are transparent processes for getting feedback on services. We have mechanisms and surveys which give us feedback, but they are not as accessible, immediate or available as they could be. Social media gives opportunities to develop feedback mechanisms which would improve accountability, performance and outcomes that align more closely with what people want.

There is an opportunity to discuss the current focus of Support Finder for example the option to include NHS related information and how we link to the wide range of information provided by District Councils.

The paper based *Oxfordshire Guide* will be produced for a further year – a booklet with information and advice to support older people in Oxfordshire in making choices about their support and care. This is funded by advertising.

b) *Improved face to face advice: The Oxfordshire Community Network*

We aim to improve the face to face advice by putting in place a new service called the Oxfordshire Community Network, which is currently out for tender. This will be in place from October 2013.

It will initially focus on people who are older, frail and vulnerable and create easy access to a wide range of information and support that already exists. In the future it will give improved information and advice about social care and support our aspiration of enabling people to define their own needs (self-assessment) and purchasing their own services (with personal budgets).

There will be community networkers in each locality that will network extensively with parish councils, police community support officers, social group organisers, church groups and others. They will proactively refer people for support where appropriate by making direct contact with the agencies, statutory or voluntary, with follow-up. As such they will become a community resource.

We want to build on the work that is already happening across the county and strengthen the support available for people within their communities. The service will complement and not duplicate existing services. It will be flexible and tailored to the needs of each locality and will therefore be able to respond and develop new projects, and activities to meet the community's needs.

*c) Commissioning of a specialist Independent Care and Financial Service*

There is currently a gap in information for self-funders. People who fund their own care in Oxfordshire are entering care homes earlier than people funded by the Local Authority and staying longer (76 cases in 2010/11). The average total length of stay for self-funders in nursing care is 233 weeks compared to 127 weeks for Local Authority funded services users. By entering care homes early self-funders are depleting their funds and needing Local Authority funding earlier than is necessary. It is likely that many people who fund their own care and choose to live in a care home could have been supported to live at home for longer.

We are commissioning an independent care and finance information and advice service for older people who are primarily self-funders.

We are looking at a model that will:

- include independent financial and welfare benefits information and advice for people who fund or part fund their own care that supports people to stay at home for as long as possible
- include support that enables and facilitates the person to easily access the independent financial and welfare information and advice service
- ensure awareness locally of the availability of specialist information and advice for all assessors and providers of services

We have received a number of expressions of interest from potential providers.

**5. Recommendations:**

To discuss the opportunities available to join up our information and advice provision

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