



Final Report - Summary Recommendations

Health Impact Assessment – Draft Older People’s Strategy

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On behalf of the London Health Commission
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Acknowledgements

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Summary recommendations

The Mayor's draft strategy on older people has enormous scope for improving the health of the capital's older population.

Outlined, below, are each of the policy areas outlined in the strategy, a brief indication of their 'health impact' and summary recommendations for strengthening the policy proposals. In some instances the recommendations outline additional proposals to be incorporated into the strategy. Others recommendations are concerned with the delivery, rather than content, of the strategy.

All recommendations are intended to maximise the positive health impacts on older people, are based on evidence gathered for the Health Impact Assessment, and are considered in greater detail throughout the body of the report.

Recommendations have also been informed by evidence on the specific needs of different client groups of older people:

- Housebound older Londoners
- Older people from minority ethnic communities and faith groups
- Older refugees and asylum seekers
- Disabled older Londoners
- Older people with mental health problems, including dementia
- Carers
- Older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people

These are considered in greater detail throughout the body of the report, and are summarised in Appendix 4 (workshop notes – prioritised issues by health determinant and client group of older people).

Policy 1: Challenging perceptions and promoting the contribution of older people in London

Policy proposals P1.1, P1.2, P1.3

Challenging negative perceptions of older people is essential in ensuring greater participation. Social engagement is beneficial to health. Both of these also help protect and promote mental health and wellbeing.

Recommendation

1. The Mayor should use his influence to make the case for the introduction of a volunteer tax credit, and more generous carer credits to recognise the un-paid contribution of older people to London's economy.

More detailed analysis, recommendations and supporting evidence is found in chapter 1.

Policy 2: Engaging with older Londoners

Policy proposals P2.1, P2.2, P2.3, P2.4

Evidence shows that social engagement is beneficial to the health, including mental health and wellbeing, of older people. The Mayor's commitment to developing practical measures to enable participation is therefore welcome.

Recommendations

1. The strategy should signal a specific commitment to involving groups of older people who tend to be excluded, for example, those that are housebound.
2. In delivering the strategy, the Mayor should outline specific measures by which to engage older people and 'hard to reach' subgroups.

More detailed analysis, recommendations and supporting evidence is found in chapter 1.

Policy 3: Age equality

Policy proposals P3.1, P3.2

Age equality in the workplace is essential; unemployment is detrimental to health, and age discrimination can act as a significant barrier to older people seeking to access the labour market. The GLA family of organisations has a clear role to play in acting as a beacon of good practice.

Recommendation

1. In signing up to the Age Positive campaign, the GLA family of organisations should help disseminate information about the benefits of a diverse workforce, and good practice guidance.

More detailed analysis, recommendations and supporting evidence is found in chapter 1.

Policy 4: Pensions and income

Policy proposals P4.1, P4.2, P4.3

Poverty and low income have a negative impact on physical and mental health. Income is one of the major determinants of health. The Mayor's commitment to reducing pensioner poverty is therefore crucial.

Recommendations

1. The Mayor should use his influence to make the case for a less complex benefit system.
2. In delivering the strategy and improving benefit take up, the Mayor should work with the voluntary and community sector to target particularly disadvantaged groups.
3. The Mayor should encourage employers to provide 'retirement planning' to encourage saving for retirement.
4. The Mayor should use his influence to secure more subsidies and concessions for pensioners, so that 'healthy' goods are more affordable.
5. The Mayor should use his influence to make the case for a 'London-weighting' for the state pension.

More detailed analysis, recommendations and supporting evidence is found in chapter 4.

Policy 5 - Access to employment

Policy proposals P5.1, P5.2, P5.3

Working in later late has numerous health benefits, but older people face barriers in accessing the labour market. The Mayor's commitment to tackling these barriers, promoting the employment of older people, and ensuring proportionate representation in the workforce is welcome.

Recommendations

1. In delivering the strategy, the Mayor should ensure that initiatives/programmes developed for older people are age-aware rather than age-specific.
2. The Mayor should ensure that adequate resources are allocated for the active measures outlined in the strategy.
3. The Mayor should broaden the proposals to include the training and development for older people.
4. Through the London Development Agency the Mayor should develop a strategy for coordinating employment services for older people in London.
5. The Mayor should use his influence to encourage employers to provide 'pre-retirement planning' to make older people aware of the opportunities available to them in retirement.
6. The Mayor should use his influence to improve access to career advice for older people.
7. To be fully inclusive, the strategy proposals should address issues such as gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, occupation and sector of employment as well as disability.

More detailed analysis, recommendations and supporting evidence is found in chapter 1.

Policy 6: Supporting discretionary services

Policy proposals P6.1, P6.2, P6.3, P6.4, P6.5, P6.6

The Mayor's commitment to ensuring that local community services are supported is welcome. There is strong evidence relating low level support to the health and well-being of older people.

1. The Mayor should openly support and/or initiate actions to promote active ageing, supporting people to live at home and within familiar communities.

More detailed analysis and supporting evidence is found in chapter 2.

Policy 7: Health and social care services

Policy proposals P7.1 – P7.14

The Mayor's commitment to working with partners to secure improvements in the quality and affordability of social care and health services for older Londoners is welcome. Many of the concerns regarding the availability, accessibility and quality of care are addressed in the draft strategy. Working in partnership with other agencies to reduce inequality in access to and provision of care is essential to achieve meaningful improvements in care.

Recommendations

1. The Mayor should commission further research on the provision of care homes in the capital.
2. The Mayor should use his influence to promote initiatives to increase the up take of Direct Payment schemes.
3. The Mayor should further highlight the importance of user involvement; as fundamental to the effective planning and delivery of services.
4. The Mayor should use his influence to promote the training and development of social care workers at all levels of seniority.
5. The strategy should broaden consideration of discrimination in health and social care to include other equality strands alongside age.
6. The Mayor should use his influence to highlight and prompt action on the apparent gulf between policy and practice in relation to age discrimination in health and social care services.
7. The Mayor should emphasise the urgent need of support for older carers.
8. The Mayor should ensure that a whole systems approach to healthcare throughout all his strategies.
9. The Mayor should enter into dialogue with the emerging pan-London Strategic Health Authority to strengthen partnership working and the delivery of joined-up services.

More detailed analysis, recommendations and supporting evidence is found in chapter 2.

Policy 8: Housing and homelessness

Policy proposals P8.1, P8.2, P8.3

Evidence shows that housing conditions have an enormous impact on the health of older people. The Mayor's commitment to developing a programme of work on housing for older people is therefore welcome.

Recommendations

1. In delivering the strategy, the Mayor should ensure that future initiatives to increase housing supply in London take into account the specific needs of older Londoners.
2. The Mayor should ensure the availability of different types of accommodation to suit the diverse needs of older people.
3. The Mayor should use London Plan to ensure that local planning pays particular attention to the health impact of inadequate access to goods and

- services for older people and ensure that older people are involved in the planning process.
4. The Mayor should address the vital need for affordable warmth in the strategy.

More detailed analysis, recommendations and supporting evidence is found in chapter 3.

Policy 9: e-Government and access to new technologies

Policy proposals P9.1, P9.2, P9.3

New technologies present considerable opportunities for older people but many face accessibility difficulties. The Mayor's commitment to providing support is therefore welcome. However, some older people will continue to use traditional methods of communication and of accessing information.

Recommendation

1. The Mayor should use his influence to ensure that traditional methods of accessing information are kept open (e.g. telephone), and not wholly replaced by online support.

More detailed analysis, recommendations and supporting evidence is found in chapter 5.

Policy 10: Culture

Policy proposals P10.1, P10.2, P10.3

Engaging with cultural, leisure and social activities provides mental and physical stimulation which are vital to health and well-being. The Mayor's commitment to supporting measures to ensure older Londoners can benefit from the capital's cultural and leisure activities and facilities is welcome.

Recommendation

1. The Mayor should emphasise the benefits of 'lifelong learning' and 'active ageing' throughout the strategy. This will be particularly challenging to achieve for the institutionalised and housebound older people.

More detailed analysis, recommendations and supporting evidence is found in chapter 5.

Policy 11: Transport

Policy proposals P11.1, P11.2

The Mayor's commitment to improving the accessibility and sustainability of London's transport system for older people is positive. Well linked, adequate and accessible public transport in London enables older people to access goods and services which are vital to their health.

Recommendations for strengthening the proposals

1. The Mayor should extend the Freedom Pass so that it is valid during peak hours.
2. The Mayor should address health transport in the strategy.
3. The Mayor should make a commitment to improving public toilet provision in stations.
4. The Mayor should ensure that the transport strategy is integrated with other policy intervention areas such as planning, renewal and regeneration.
5. The Mayor should ensure that training for public transport staff includes consideration of the needs of people with reduced mobility and other disabilities.

More detailed analysis, recommendations and supporting evidence is found in chapter 5.

Policy 12: Crime and personal safety

Policy proposals P12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5, 12.6, 12.7

The Mayor's commitment to improving the safety of older Londoners and reducing the fear of crime is welcome. Research shows that for many older Londoners, concerns about safety act as a barrier to social participation. Reducing the fear of crime therefore has the potential to enable older people to fully participate in the local community, reduce social exclusion, and enhance health.

More detailed analysis and supporting evidence is found in chapter 3.

Policy 13: Environment

Evidence shows that environmental conditions can have a strong impact on health. The Mayor's commitment to taking into account the needs of older people when delivering his environmental strategies is therefore welcome.

More detailed analysis and supporting evidence is found in chapter 3.

Additional recommendations

Below are recommendations for policy areas to be addressed more adequately in the strategy.

Access to information

Information empowers people and enables them to make 'healthy' choices on a broad range of issues such as income, housing, retirement and employment.

Recommendation

1. The Mayor should place greater emphasis on the informational support needs of older people in the strategy and highlight the centrality of information, advice and advocacy as vital services enabling older people to know their rights and make appropriate choices.

More detailed analysis, recommendations and supporting evidence is found in chapter 5.

Volunteering

Evidence shows that volunteering can have a positive impact on health. The proposal (P10.3) to improve recruitment strategies for older volunteers is welcome, but the strategy could go further.

Recommendation

1. The Mayor should emphasise the benefits of volunteering in the strategy.
2. The Mayor should encourage employers to provide pre-retirement education, highlighting the benefits of volunteering in retirement.
3. In delivering the strategy, the Mayor should draw on existing good practice guidance to in removing barriers to volunteering.

More detailed analysis, recommendations and supporting evidence is found in chapter 1 of full report.

The full report, including evidence and policy analysis is available from the London Health Commission website:

www.londonhealth.gov.uk/hia.htm/