

**CONCISE REPORTING FORMAT FOR SUB GROUPS TO OLDER PEOPLE
PARTNERSHIP BOARD**

- Sub Group:
- Date of OPPB Meeting:
- Reporting Lead:
- Specific Questions Raised by OPPB for SubGroup?

Feedback on Bucks Older People’s Forum Conference

- Specific Questions for OPPB Raised by SubGroup

- Report Update to Strategic Group on Progress of Constituent Group.
To include – progress against milestones – constraints - resource implications:

Speaking out – Making changes the 5th Bucks Older People’s Forum Conference 2007

This is a brief report of the conference proceedings from *Speaking out – Making changes* the 5th Bucks Older People’s Forum Conference 2007. The Bucks Older Peoples Forum (BOPForum) is a Countywide network of Older People’s Action Groups (OPAGs) and they are independent of the service providers although they receive funding and support from the County and District Councils. The Forum wants to strengthen its support within the Community by developing OPAGs around the County, as well as its own Reference Group database. Annually the Forum bring together their members plus others interested in the wellbeing of older people, to discuss varied topics. The theme for the 2007 conference was “Speaking out - making changes” focusing on how we engage and involve older people in decisions that affect them. A specific request from the Forum was that no professionals be invited unless speaking or supporting the conference, as in previous years it was felt that they dominated discussions. This year 100 delegates from all across the County met in Chesham at the Chartridge Conference Centre.

The key note speaker was Matt Briggs from Department of Work and Pensions leading on the government’s new Transformational Government team looking at how services for older people

can be developed and reorganized. Matt said " *it is possible that you will hear terms like co-design, co-production, co-solutioneering, this is not about putting "co" in front of things we have always done. It is actually about a fundamental change in our approach to delivering public services, an approach that truly puts the customer at the heart of what we do, and an approach that I think is vitally important and the direction of travel for the future*".

This theme of user engagement / involvement continued throughout the workshops where 5 speakers started off discussion by outlining how they have engaged and involved older people to date. The topics were:

1. Your Health
2. Your Money
3. Your Community
4. Your Leisure
5. Supported Living

The concepts of co-production and co-design are not embedded in the professional or public psyche and it not therefore a surprise to find that facilitators worked hard to prevent discussion from reverting to problems rather than solutions but many interesting ideas have begun to emerge. Many delegates have now been to several conferences and are becoming accustomed to the concept of workshops and speaking out and that they will be listened to, although feedback always asks for more action less talk! Delegates cannot be expected to take on board the move away from the welfare state model to that of co-production and community involvement in one or two conferences but they are beginning to feel empowered to participate which is more than is happening in other Counties. Matt Briggs commented that BOP Forum (with support from BCC and the districts) is ahead of other Counties in this respect and we should capitalise on this momentum.

Some of the threads emerging through the workshops

General issues:-

Poor transport especially in the evenings, as well as its frequency
Routes do not go to where older people need to access eg GP surgeries, adult education centres
Libraries are a source of information and they are closing, other locations such as GP surgeries should be used
Need to get information into the heart of communities
Want to speak to an individual about their problem not get standard answer that is prepared
To be treated with respect
Taxi v bus pass and bus passes only eligible in your own county
Consistent communication to be agreed between professionals

What problems can you identify in the way people have been consulted / involve in the past:-

People feel that consultation is already decided before it is done, there is too much consultation and no action afterwards
People don't feel they have receive information directly
People don't feel consulted on key issues such as transport

How would you improve community involvement and participation:-

Need real people talking to us in a real way

Use existing channels of communication eg radio, supermarkets

Work on issues in the communities where they live and make it feel more personal

Introduce a buddy system for services users to give confidence

Offer prizes for consultation involvement

What next?

Facilitators are writing up their flipcharts and a report will be presented to the BOPForum AGM in October and a draft report to the Champions Forum /Bucks Older Peoples Partnership Board in September.

Other work in the County looking at improving services through community involvement is evolving though the Transformation Team of BCC and the Milton Keynes Bucks and Berks SHAPE project which will also be informed by this conference.

It is also hoped that the link with Matt Briggs of the Transformational Government team will be developed to move Buckinghamshire forward nationally in improving the lives of older people by innovation and involving them in service design, *co-production and co-solutioneering*.