

# Age UK's July 2011 Policy and Research Bulletin

Dear Reader

Highlights in policy this month include the NHS Future Forum and responses from Government, our own report *The Way We Pay* on banking services, and work around Personal Budgets.

In research, there is good news that the Government will increase funding for dementia research. There are also quite a few new reports on nearly every topic we cover!

Finally, don't miss this instalment of Thomas Pocklington Trust's articles on [Lighting: Bedrooms](#).

If you haven't seen Age UK's new web site for professionals, with useful information and resources, please [visit us!](#)

Warm regards  
Susan Davidson

## **This month's Spotlight on:**

### **A Giant Step for Ageing Research in Europe – “Active and Healthy Ageing Across the Life Course”**

The European Research Area in Ageing (ERA-AGE 2) has launched Europe's first joint research programme in the ageing field by publishing a call for multidisciplinary research applications on “Active and Healthy Ageing Across the Life Course”. There is a call for funding applications on this... [\(read more\)](#)

Below are the topic areas in this issue:

<b>Cross-cutting issues</b> Results of a simulation exercise to better integrate health and social care; ideas and examples from OECD countries on policy and practice around ageing; are grandparents ‘too old to care’?; ONS population stats; call for funding and events.	<b>Health &amp; wellbeing</b> NHS Future Forum and responses; dementia research; end of life care guidelines; ONS figures on surviving to 75; and ‘Our Invisible Addicts’
<b>Social care</b> NHS Future Forum and responses; the human cost of social care; a few items on care homes; caring at a distance; dignity and nutrition in hospitals; telecare; and social care workforce development	<b>Communities</b> A plain English guide to the Localism Bill; the Inspiring Communities programme; what makes a ‘brilliant’ local authority?; and ending loneliness and isolation in pensioners

<p><b>Money matters</b> Women and increases in pension age; banking services and possible payment substitutes for cheques (and their challenges); Personal Budget surveys and research reports; pensioners and Winter Fuel payments; financial regulation</p>	<p><b>Equality &amp; human rights</b> Home care and human rights; report on eliminating discrimination against women; equality legislation; elder abuse; independent living for disabled people</p>
<p><b>Work &amp; learning</b> The Government's Work Programme and implications for older workers; CIPD report on performance management among older workers</p>	<p><b>Housing &amp; homes</b> Retirement housing; extra care housing; planning housing for older people; affordability; sheltered housing; housing advice programme</p>
<p><b>Engagement &amp; volunteering</b> In case you missed it last month: DWP report Aspirations for Later Life, which includes a section on volunteering; plus implications of the NHS reforms for voluntary organisations</p>	<p><b>Consumers &amp; lifestyle</b> The Government has issued a consultation on its plans to reform the structure of consumer protection, advocacy, advice and information.</p>
<p><b>International</b> Age UK launches EU survey and briefing; and international comparisons on health spending</p>	<p><b>Transport</b> Making the case for investing the walking environment; and Public Bodies Bill – Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee</p>

### ***CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES***

#### **Later Life 2011**

[A slide presentation](#) of evidence on older populations in the UK and around the world is now available on our [Knowledge Hub website](#).

#### **Routes for social and health care: A simulation exercise**

The health and social care system is currently tackling three inter-related challenges: coping with rising demand and reduced funding; handling NHS restructuring; and transforming social care.

[Routes](#) was the name given to a simulation-based project designed by Loop2 to explore how the evolution of the adult social care and health care systems could be managed to create real synergies between them.

It allowed senior managers and thought leaders from across the NHS, local government and the third sector to test out a remodelling of the health and social care system in a safe learning environment.

The publication offers some important reflections for policy-makers, commissioner and providers.

#### **Ageing, Health And Innovation**

OECD countries are now addressing the challenges of demographic change in a variety of policy responses. There are two schools of thought regarding demographic

change. The first is to see it as a burden for society or a “silver tsunami”, which will require radical overhaul of health and social care systems.

The second way to look at demographic change is to acknowledge that while it presents many challenges, it can also bring many opportunities. For example, increased longevity and increased healthy life years can enable older people to continue being workers, volunteers and consumers for much longer than in the past.

Alongside traditional policy responses there are also innovative solutions which include new ways addressing ageing that may involve new technology and new processes. [This background paper](#) by ILC examines these issues.

### **Latest ONS Population estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland**

[Mid-year population estimates](#) are available at national level by single year of age and sex and subnationally (local authority/health area) by five year age group and sex. These include additional selected age groups and broad components of population change.

### **Families torn apart as older grandparents ‘too old to care’**

A new report, [Too Old to Care?](#), reveals the heartache felt by families as social services make ageist assumptions about grandparents’ ability to raise their young grandchildren. It also reveals the intense fear felt by many older grandparents of their grandchildren being taken away – which prevents them seeking help.

### **A Giant Step for Ageing Research in Europe – “Active and Healthy Ageing Across the Life Course”**

The European Research Area in Ageing (ERA-AGE 2) has launched Europe’s first joint research programme in the ageing field by publishing a call for multidisciplinary research applications on “Active and Healthy Ageing Across the Life Course”.

The call is dedicated to the achievement of enhanced and healthy ageing and, in particular, to address the major priority established by the AHAIP (Active and Healthy Ageing Innovation Partnership) of a 2 year increase in healthy life expectancy in the European Union by 2020.

Full information on the call themes, national funders and an application form is now available from the [ERA-AGE website](#).

Further information on ERA-AGE and this call from Juliet Craig, [j.craig@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:j.craig@sheffield.ac.uk)

### **Improving essential care of older people in hospitals FREE half day event, 20 July, Central London**

While the NHS is achieving excellent results in some areas, in others it is struggling to meet the essential care needs of older people. This event explores what happens when essential care fails, where the consequences can be devastating for everyone involved.

This event will encourage open and honest debate aimed at finding practical solutions

to tackle poor care in hospitals. Key speakers at this event include: Nicky Hayes, Adviser on Older People's Care at the Royal College of Nursing; Sir Keith Pearson, Chairman of NHS confederation; Gaynor Hales, Director of Nursing at the Countess of Chester Hospital; and Claire Forbes, Director of Communications at the Office of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

To book your free place at this event, email [eventsdept@ageuk.org.uk](mailto:eventsdept@ageuk.org.uk) using the subject title 'Improving essential care'.

[More information](#) is available on their website.

## ***HEALTH & WELLBEING***

### **NHS Future Forum**

This month, the Government concluded its Health and Social Care Bill listening exercise. The Bill had been “paused” in April in order to explore concerns raised by the public, health professionals and the voluntary sector.

The NHS Future Forum, a group of senior figures working in or around health and care services, were tasked with producing recommendations on how the reform programme could be changed to address these concerns. [Their report](#) recommended key changes to the Bill, including a wider range of health professionals to sit on GP consortia and, as a result, a change of name to clinical commissioning groups (CCGs); an expectation that a member of the public will sit on CCG management boards; and a far greater commitment to integrate services rather than imposing competition where it is not in the interest of patients.

[The Government responded](#) to this report.

Age UK has [a blog](#) summarising the issues.

The Health and Social Care Bill will now return to the House of Commons for further scrutiny and amendment.

### **More funding for dementia research**

More money and expertise will be ploughed in to dementia research in the hope of moving closer to finding a cure or better treatment for the millions of families affected by this devastating condition, Care Services Minister Paul Burstow announced.

The Minister and a group of 17 experts have launched a ['Route Map for Dementia Research'](#) which:

- . pledges up to £20 million from the Department of Health over five years for four new National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Biomedical Research Units;
- . commits the Medical Research Council to increase funding for neurodegeneration research by ten percent to £150million over the next four years to 2015;
- . boosts the number of experts in the dementia field through new Academic Clinical Fellowships;
- . strengthens links between public and private research sectors to identify new opportunities for partnership; and
- . ensures more patients and carers get involved in research through the NIHR's

Dementia and Neurodegenerative Diseases Research Network which will facilitate research in the NHS and care home sector.

### **NICE consults on new end of life care draft quality standard**

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has launched [a consultation](#) on its draft quality standard for end of life care for adults.

NICE quality standards (QS) are a set of specific, concise statements and measures that act as markers of high-quality, clinical and cost-effective patient care. They are derived from the best available evidence, such as NICE guidance or other sources accredited by NHS Evidence.

Around 500,000 people die in England each year, and for most people at the end of their life, being treated with dignity and respect, dying without pain and perhaps in familiar surroundings in the company of close family and/or friends is very important. The consultation is open until 5.00pm on Friday 22 July.

### **ONS figures on the probability of survival to age 75 in England and Wales**

[This ONS bulletin](#) looks at the likelihood that men and women reach age 75 and includes information about areas with the highest and lowest survival rate. For example: for men in 2007–09 the probability of survival to 75 was 78 per South Bucks and 54 per cent in Manchester.

### **The Right Prescription**

The Dementia Action Alliance has launched [a call for action](#) to reduce the use of anti-psychotic drugs for people with dementia. All people with dementia who are receiving anti-psychotic treatment should have a clinical review by the end of March 2012.

### **Our Invisible Addicts**

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has published [a report about substance abuse](#) - alcohol and drugs – among older people. They are calling for this issue to be given a higher public health priority.

### **International comparisons on health spending**

The Commons Library has published a report [Health Expenditure: International Comparisons](#).

In the UK expenditure on health comes largely from public funds, with 82.6% of total expenditure on health coming from public expenditure. This is the fifth highest proportion among OECD countries and is similar to other northern European countries. In the United States less than half of total health expenditure comes from public funds.

## ***SOCIAL CARE***

### **NHS Future Forum**

This month, the Government concluded its Health and Social Care Bill listening exercise. The Bill had been “paused” in April in order to explore concerns raised by the public, health professionals and the voluntary sector.

The NHS Future Forum, a group of senior figures working in or around health and care services, were tasked with producing recommendations on how the reform programme could be changed to address these concerns. [Their report](#) recommended key changes to the Bill, including a wider range of health professionals to sit on GP consortia and, as a result, a change of name to clinical commissioning groups (CCGs); an expectation that a member of the public will sit on CCG management boards; and a far greater commitment to integrate services rather than imposing competition where it is not in the interest of patients.

[Government responded](#) to this report.

Age UK has [a blog](#) summarising the issues.

The Health and Social Care Bill will now return to the House of Commons for further scrutiny and amendment.

### **Care in crisis - the human cost**

Age UK published a report '[Care in Crisis: Causes and Solutions](#)', providing the evidence to prove that care and support for older people in England has reached breaking point.

800,000 people who currently need care receive no formal support from either the state or private sector agencies. That figure may well rise to one million people within four years as a result of estimated cuts to already threadbare social care budgets.

### **Home care and human rights**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published [interim findings](#) on its investigation into domiciliary care and human rights. It has heard evidence of major problems in the social care system which could affect people's human rights, such as:

- Inadequate time to deliver care
- The very brief time allocated to homecare visits
- Lack of control over timing of care visits
- Failure to deliver adequate homecare
- Lack of staff awareness and training
- High staff turnover
- Lack of complaints and low expectations

The full report will be published in November.

### **Care homes choice and welfare**

GHK has published [a working paper](#) that explores choice in the UK care homes market and the implications for consumer policy and welfare.

Drawing on research that GHK recently completed for the Office of Fair Trading, authors Michael Lawrie and Joe Sunderland discuss how older people and their families/friends exercise choice when it comes to a care home and the challenges this raises for Government in determining how best to support older people in making care arrangements.

### **Caring at a distance: Bridging the gap**

[The results](#) of the first ever research survey into the impacts on employers and employees of managing caring at a distance, an issue that affects millions of families, have been published by Carers UK.

Key findings from the survey include:

1. Impact of caring on mental and emotional health - it is not just the physical aspect of caring that is important but also its effect on employees' emotional health:
2. Pressure on the 'sandwich generation' - a clear majority of employees needing support (60%) were age 40-54 and combining care for an older relative with other responsibilities including looking after their own children.
3. Accessing external sources of support - this was the top priority for both employees and employers, including signposting to help at local and national level and practical assistance with caring.
4. Line manager support - while most employers offered support such as flexible working, only 17% provided training or support for line managers to support carers.

### **CQC publishes more reports into dignity and nutrition in NHS hospitals**

The Care Quality Commission has published [the sixth batch of reports](#) from an inspection programme which examines whether older people receive essential standards of care in 100 NHS hospitals throughout England. The programme focuses on whether people are treated with dignity and respect, and whether they get food and drink that meets their needs.

These 12 inspection reports include reports on 1 hospital which was found to be failing to meet essential standards of quality and safety. A further 5 are meeting essential standards, but the CQC recommended that improvements were made. The remaining 6 hospitals were compliant with both of the essential standards reviewed.

### **Unmet need, unacceptable variation and often poor quality**

A new report, [Quest for Quality](#) by the British Geriatrics Society (BGS), highlights the fact that many vulnerable older people resident in care homes are frequently denied access to routine NHS healthcare because of they live in care homes.

The inquiry found many often cannot get access to GPs, therapy services, out of hours services or specialist dementia services such as memory clinics. They make recommendations supported by a broad coalition of organisations.

### **Skills for Care launch workforce development strategy**

Skills for Care has launched a [Workforce Development Strategy](#) to help create a capable, confident and skilled adult social care workforce across England.

The strategy, developed in partnership with employers, key partners and the Department of Health recognises that the 1.6 million people who work in the sector are one of the most valuable assets in social care.

### **Telecare Ready: Creating a universal entitlement to telecare**

How can policymakers maximise the benefits of telecare for society, both now and in

the future?

The UK telecare strategy over the last decade has focussed on encouraging councils to invest in telecare. But is this approach the right one?

The analysis in [this report](#) points to the need for a new strategic framework for telecare policy.

## ***COMMUNITIES***

### **A plain English guide to the Localism Bill - update**

Communities and Local Government has published [this guide](#), describing the main measures of the Localism Bill under four headings:

- new freedoms and flexibilities for local government
- new rights and powers for communities and individuals
- reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective
- reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally

### **Inspiring Communities, Changing Behaviour**

The Inspiring Communities programme, sponsored by the Department for Communities and Local Government, has been designed to raise the expectations and aspirations of young people.

[This guide](#) explains how Inspiring Communities has worked, from initial customer insight research and running behaviour change campaigns to the evaluation of what worked best and how challenges were overcome.

It offers practical tips and materials for anyone interested in running similar campaigns.

### **Brilliant local authorities**

Local government will undergo dramatic change in the next few years, driven by agendas of austerity and localism. The best councils may prove to be very different to the present according to a new report - [The Brilliant Local Authority of the Future](#) - by KPMG and the Centre for Public Service Partnerships.

### **Police key to ending isolation and loneliness of a lost generation of pensioners**

The Centre for Social Justice has published [a report](#) suggesting that specialist local teams should be established immediately in order to fight the epidemic of poverty and isolation in later life.

Expert units made up of local community leaders, police officers, older people's charities and council officers should be set up to find and support the estimated two million pensioners who report feeling lonely or trapped in their homes.

## ***MONEY MATTERS***

**Not enough time – what women think about increases in State Pension age**

[This Age UK report](#) provides information about women's views on changes in State Pension age being introduced in the Pensions Bill. It is based on polling with over 500 women affected by proposed increases and responses from over 2,680 women who completed an Age UK on line survey.

### **The Way We Pay**

On 23 June Age UK launched its new research report [The way we pay: Payment systems and financial inclusion](#). The report was designed to explore the essential payment mechanisms and banking services to which an individual must have access in order to be financially included and to learn how people actually use the payment services currently available to them. The report brings together 5 pieces of research: a UK literature review, an international study, deliberative research with older people and advisers, quantitative research with all age groups, and a study on universal service obligations in other sectors.

### **The future of cheques**

On 15 June the Treasury Select Committee heard evidence from the Payments Council as part of its inquiry into the future of cheques. The Payments Council faced tough questioning and emphasised that no decision to withdraw cheques would be taken until 2016 at the earliest. The Committee also presented a letter they had received from the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Mark Hoban MP, in which he stated that 'the Government is keenly monitoring the progress of the cheque replacement programme and is considering whether it may need to intervene'. [Both the letter and a transcript of the evidence are available](#).

### **ADASS Personal Budgets Survey**

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services [has reported on a survey](#) of 153 local authorities, which shows that councils have achieved the 30% target set for the number of people using a personal budget to manage their care. More than 338,000 people are now managing their support, and half of these are 65 or above. There has been a significant increase in the number of people using a managed personal budget, where their allocation is indicative and they choose what they would like the council to purchase on their behalf. The number of people receiving cash through Direct Payments has not increased significantly.

### **Personal Budget user research published**

[A study](#) carried out by the University of Lancaster on behalf of the Think Personal Act Local coalition has shown that social care service users who use a Personal Budget to organise their care achieve better outcomes than those receiving traditional services. It is also found that Personal Budgets work best when people are supported well by the council systems and processes. The research evaluated how users felt about 14 areas of their lives and how they had been affected by use of the Personal Budget. The research has found that some councils appear not to promote Personal Budgets for older people, and that carers of older people reported less positive outcomes as a result of the Personal Budget use.

### **Poor pensioners still cut back on food in cold weather**

Two papers published by the IFS and funded by the Nuffield Foundation show that:

- Households receiving the winter fuel payment are almost 14 times as likely to spend the money on fuel than would have been the case had their incomes

been increased in other ways;

- But in very cold weather it remains the case that the poorest pensioners cut back on spending on food to finance the additional cost of heating their homes.

[Cash by any other name? Evidence on labelling from the UK Winter Fuel Payment](#)

[Is there a "heat or eat" trade-off in the UK?](#)

### **A new approach to financial regulation**

On 16 June 2011 the Government published [a consultation document and white paper](#), including draft legislation. This latest consultation document and white paper sets out the detail of the Government's proposals and how the Government intends to give these proposals legislative effect. The draft Bill will be subject to pre-legislative scrutiny and the consultation will run until 8 September.

### **Old and broke: The long term outlook for the UK's public finances**

The think tank Reform have published [a report](#) into demographic changes and how that impacts upon health, pension and care spending.

This paper presents independent estimates of the future fiscal costs of an ageing population given Coalition policies, and makes recommendations for policy changes.

## ***EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS***

### **Home care and human rights**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published [interim findings](#) on its investigation into domiciliary care and human rights. It has heard evidence of major problems in the social care system which could affect people's human rights, such as:

- Inadequate time to deliver care
- The very brief time allocated to homecare visits
- Lack of control over timing of care visits
- Failure to deliver adequate homecare
- Lack of staff awareness and training
- High staff turnover
- Lack of complaints and low expectations

The full report will be published in November.

### **UK's 7th Periodic Report on CEDAW**

The Government submitted the UK's [7th Periodic Report](#) on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to the UN on 10 June 2011. The UK Government's oral examination by the CEDAW Committee is expected to take place in Geneva during the early part of 2013.

The Report highlights progress over the last four years that the UK has made in areas such as health, employment, education, representation, social and economic benefits, sex role stereotyping, trafficking and marriage and family law.

To make sure that older women's rights are fully considered in the reporting process Age UK is working with a number of other organisations include OWN (Older

Women's Network) Europe to produce a shadow report to submit to the CEDAW Committee outlining where the UK is not meeting its international obligations in relation to older women.

### **Government's 'Red Tape Challenge' focuses spotlight on equality legislation**

From 9-30 June, the Government's Red Tape Challenge had a spotlight on the theme of equalities.

The Red Tape Challenge has been set up by the Cabinet Office with the aim of identifying regulations which should be scrapped. The Government wants to hear from members of the public, businesses and voluntary and community organisations about how the Equality Act is working in practice.

Although Ministers have stated clearly that it is not the Government's intention to abolish the Equality Act, there is concern that the exercise could lead to some individual measures within the Act watered down or not being implemented.

Age UK has [a blog](#) about this.

### **Centre for Ageing Research & Development in Ireland (CARDI): Insights into Elder Abuse**

[This briefing](#) highlights that although elder abuse is not a new phenomenon, the policy and practice responses to the problem are still in the early stages across Ireland – north and south. It discusses how elder abuse is defined, looks at the views on abuse of older people themselves and examines the policy implications of the study.

### **Independent living scrutiny group - second annual report**

ILSG is an independent group of disabled people that offers government its views on progress on delivery of the Independent Living Strategy.

The ILSG publishes a yearly report to keep disabled people informed about progress.

The scrutiny from [the second annual report](#) highlights three key areas that have really impacted on disabled people over the last years: Direct Payments and Personal Budgets, future funding and benefit reform, and Communication. One chapter is specifically about older people.

## ***WORK & LEARNING***

### **Work Programme roll-out begins**

On 10 June the Government launched [the Work Programme](#), and the first Jobseekers Allowance claimants were passed to the Prime Contractors for additional back-to-work support. People who have claimed JSA for 12 months or more will be eligible, although young people aged under 25 and ex-Incapacity Benefit claimants will be offered a fast track approach.

Age UK supports the general policy direction, but we are concerned that the programme will not incentivise contractors to place enough emphasis on helping their 50+ clients. This leads to a risk that those in this age group will simply be 'parked' as

it will not be cost-effective for contractors to spend time and money addressing the additional barriers to employment faced by older jobseekers.

### **CIPD publishes report on performance management among older workers**

[This survey](#) finds that fewer than half of workers aged 65+ have received performance management or recent training opportunities, casting a worrying light on general approaches to managing their older workers. In addition, only 24% of workers who felt they needed workplace adjustments as they get older said that their employer had actually made any such changes.

On a more positive note for older workers, the survey also found that workers aged 65+ report much better mental and physical health than their younger colleagues.

## ***HOUSING & HOMES***

### **Retirement housing**

[‘Housing markets and independence in old age: expanding the opportunities’](#) by Professor Michael Ball (University of Reading), is a report sponsored by McCarthy and Stone (housing developers). Recommendations include: better national and local strategic planning guidance on older people’s housing; treating owner occupied retirement housing as affordable housing under planning requirements; and greater flexibility for different types of retirement housing in the building regulations.

### **Human rights and social housing**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission recently published [Human rights at home: Guidance for social housing providers](#). This guidance sets out the obligations of social housing providers under the human rights legislation (there is separate guidance on the Equality Act). A court case (R (Weaver) v London and Quadrant Housing Trust) means that housing associations (with similar circumstances) are likely to come under the legislation as public bodies. The guide provides a number of examples of how the law might apply. For instance, although there is no human right to specific aids and adaptations in the home – if there were a lengthy delay in the delivery of an agreed adaption - it could amount to ‘a failure to accord respect for the tenants home’.

### **Extra care housing**

[Housing an Ageing Population: The Extra Care Solution](#) is a report by Tim Brown (De Monfort University). It argues that current policy reforms around health, welfare and local government could in fact facilitate a more coordinated and integrated approach to extra-care housing. This would make it more relevant to older people in the surrounding community, living outside schemes.

### **Planning and older people’s housing**

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Practitioners Advisory Group have issued [a proposed draft](#) for the National Planning Policy Framework. This is important because it could influence how far local authorities respond to demographic trends in meeting the housing needs of older people. There is a reference to older and disabled people which says that local authorities should

recognise ‘market trends and the needs of different groups in the community’. It says housing should be ‘developed in suitable locations which offer a range of community facilities and good access to key services and infrastructure’.

The draft will be followed by a further consultation paper.

### **Designing living spaces for vulnerable and older people**

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and the BRE launched guidance for architects and other built environment professionals involved in the design and adaptation of residences that meet the needs of the elderly and the chronically ill, to enable them to live active, independent and dignified lives.

The RIBA/BRE report, '[A Guide for Assisted Living](#)', demonstrates how intuitive design and assistive technology can improve the quality of life, wellbeing and autonomy of individuals, and be delivered in effective, scalable and affordable ways.

### **Affordability**

A report [Everyone Needs a Home](#) by the National Housing Forum says that housing associations need to do more to attract older people living on low to moderate incomes who cannot currently access retirement housing.

### **New Affordable Homes: What, for whom and where have Registered Providers been building between 1989 – 2009?**

[This DCLG report](#) confirms, among other things, an ongoing decline in the availability of social housing built for older people.

### **Fit for Living**

Age UK is part of network called '[Fit for Living](#)' which is supported and coordinated by the Housing Association Charitable Trust. It promotes advice and support for low income older homeowners. It has issued a revised series of policy statements which includes encouraging housing providers to play a stronger role to help low income homeowners to adapt and repair their homes.

### **Research into housing with care**

Age UK is giving its support to a Joseph Rowntree Foundation research programme looking at the experience of vulnerable older people living in housing with care. The programme called '[A Better Life](#)' includes strands looking at affordability and service boundaries in the delivery of housing support and care.

### **Sheltered housing and the Localism Bill**

DCLG minister Greg Clark [made a statement](#) that residents of sheltered housing schemes would be able to run their own services under powers provided by the Localism Bill (community right to manage). Age UK argued that the barriers to allowing residents to run services themselves were still too great to make this a viable option.

An [Age UK blog](#) by Gemma Bradshaw describes the process that residents would have to navigate.

### **Housing advice programme**

DCLG have allocated £1.5 million over 2 years for the [First Stop housing advice programme](#). The service offers free independent advice for older people and their families.

## ***ENGAGEMENT & VOLUNTEERING***

### **Aspirations for later life**

[This research report](#) commissioned by the DWP presents new survey findings on people's aspirations for later life in Great Britain (later life being defined as 60 or over). It found the majority (65 per cent) of those questioned held hopes or ambitions for their later life with about a third of these having some ideas but not having thought about it that much. However, the remaining 35 per cent stated they had not thought about it at all.

### **Implications of the NHS reforms for voluntary organisations**

A new report, [The Voluntary and Community Sector in Health](#), explores what the government's NHS reforms could mean for voluntary organisations providing health services.

The report, produced jointly with the Kings Fund, suggests that the proposed reforms present a mixture of challenges and opportunities for the sector over the coming years. It raises particular concerns that larger providers could end up dominating the market, and stresses that the sector needs support in the transition to the new arrangements.

## ***CONSUMER & LIFESTYLE***

### **Consumer protection regime**

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has issued [a consultation](#) on its plans to reform the structure of consumer protection, advocacy, advice and information. It proposes to abolish Consumer Focus, transfer most of the consumer law enforcement functions of the Office of Fair Trading to local Trading Standards, and transfer almost all central government funding for consumer information, advice, advocacy and education to the Citizens Advice service. The consultation closes on 27 September 2011.

## ***INTERNATIONAL***

### **Age UK launches EU survey and briefing**

Stepping up our EU influencing work, Age UK hosted a successful [lunch briefing](#) at the European Parliament on Tuesday 14 June. We used the event to launch Age UK's new pan-European survey of ageism, commissioned from the European Research Group on Attitudes to Age (EURAGE) at the University of Kent, on the basis of data from the European Social Survey.

A select group of MEPs, European Commission officials, NGOs, industry, think tanks and media attended the lunch briefing in Brussels. 27 participants from 10 different countries took part in an interactive presentation, by Professor Dominic Abrams from

EURAGE, using voting buttons to compare their own attitudes to age with the 55,000 Europeans who took part in the survey.

Key findings from [the full report](#) include:

- 44 % of Europeans perceive age discrimination as quite serious or very serious
- 35 % report unfair treatment on grounds of age (more than on grounds of gender or race)
- 29 % across all age groups have been insulted, abused or denied services on grounds of age
- 51 % are worried that employers prefer people in their 20s
- 57 % believe that people over 70 contribute little to the economy
- 53 % of respondents have no friends over 70.

The lunch at the European Parliament was hosted by Claude Moraes MEP, co-chair of the European Parliament's Intergroup on Ageing, and organized by Age UK's European Political Adviser, Nicola Robinson. Age UK Head of International Affairs, Hilary Evans, presented 20 EU policy recommendations in reaction to the survey findings.

Key policy recommendations to the EU include:

- Expediting broad new EU equal treatment law to combat age discrimination in goods and services.
- Disaggregating the EU's 2020 target for 75% employment by age – only 46% of 50-64 year old Europeans are currently in work
- Using the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing to showcase the huge economic and social contribution of older Europeans, in employment, volunteering and caring
- Using the EU Digital Agenda to promote digital inclusion and social networking, sharing skills between generations

Age UK will now campaign for EU action on our recommendations, in the context of the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.

### **International comparisons on health spending**

The Commons Library has published a report [Health expenditure: International comparisons](#).

In the UK expenditure on health comes largely from public funds, with 82.6% of total expenditure on health coming from public expenditure. This is the fifth highest proportion among OECD countries and is similar to other northern European countries. In the United States less than half of total health expenditure comes from public funds.

## ***TRANSPORT***

### **Making the case for investing the walking environment**

Living Streets has published [a report](#) showing that investment in a good walking environment is good value for money. The report brings together and evaluates the multiple health, economic, social, and environmental benefits of investment in walking friendly public spaces. They also found that older people who are often more reliant on their local neighbourhoods can gain significant health benefits and

independence through walking.

**Public Bodies Bill – Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)**

The [Public Bodies Bill](#) currently before parliament contains powers for the government to abolish the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee. The primary function of DPTAC is to provide independent advice to the Government on the impact of transport policy on travellers with disabilities.

In [this consultation](#) the government is seeking views on potential successor arrangements for DPTAC.