

December 2011 Bulletin *Policy & Research Update*

Dear Colleague

Age UK has brought together leading experts in the field of ageing to create the authoritative guide to ageing better: *Improving Later Life*. With people living longer than ever and much of the existing advice often confusing or contradictory, the Charity has worked with the experts to bring together their top tips to help us all age better. [The PDF is free.](#)

Highlights in policy for November were the Cold Weather Plan for England; a lot of news in the Housing and homes section; updates on Transport campaigns, and five Consultation Responses.

In research, we have opened the [Research into Ageing Fund call for submissions](#); an Older People's Forum published a study on experiences with cancer care (Health & wellbeing); some interesting pensions reports and studies were released (Money matters), and various energy and fuel statistics and reports (Consumers and lifestyles).

Warm regards
Susan Davidson

This month's Spotlight on:

The lure of dying at home: an impossible dream for the oldest old?
Professor Sheila Payne from Lancaster University has guest-written an article for us about dying at home. She discusses various issues, and further work that needs to be done, including for policy-makers. [Read more...](#)

Click on the topic areas which interest you to jump to the latest information on:

<p><u>Cross-cutting issues</u> Cold weather plan; home care and older people's human rights; report on older people with high support needs; abuse in care homes; grant round call; photo competition; and funding website</p>	<p><u>Health & wellbeing</u> Dying at home and the oldest old; tips for improving later life; older people's experiences of cancer care; interviews on what living with dementia is like; wellbeing research; preventing loneliness and isolation; personal budget updates; dementia early diagnosis; more</p>
<p><u>Communities</u> Localism Act; inquiry into Big Society; rural services hit by cuts</p>	<p><u>Money matters</u> Hill fuel poverty review; gradual retirement and pensions policy; pensions credit study; modernising personal tax; dementia and direct payments; pensions and personal responsibility</p>

<p><u>Equality & human rights</u> International resources on human rights and older people; home care failing to meet older people's human rights</p>	<p><u>Housing & homes</u> Government Housing Strategy; housing support services; low income homeowners; older tenants and savings; equity release; cohousing; supporting people; under-occupation; some useful statistics</p>
<p><u>Consultation responses</u> Strategic Framework for road safety; inquiry into the Big Society; smart meter licence conditions; smart metering code of practice; Health Select Committee: social care inquiry</p>	<p><u>Consumers & lifestyle</u> Energy statistics; Green Deal consultation; Fuel Poverty Advisory Group (for England): 9th annual report; reports on packaged bank accounts, cheque awareness and accessibility, national payment plans, person debts, and a BIS consumer credit review</p>
<p><u>International</u> Violence against older women; EU funding for adult education; UN work stream on ageing; Sustainability and equity: better future for all; resources on human rights of older people</p>	<p><u>Transport</u> Save Our Buses Campaign; Driving in later life: Options for reform report; Select Committee inquiry into strategic framework for road safety</p>

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The Cold Weather Plan for England issued

This is part of the wider suite of measures which the DH and NHS are taking to protect individuals and communities from the effects of severe winter weather. [The Plan](#) provides advice for individuals, communities and agencies on how to prepare for and respond to severe cold weather as part of wider winter planning and announces the 'Warm Homes, Healthy People' fund.

Home care often fails to meet older people's basic rights

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's inquiry into the home care system in England reveals disturbing evidence that the poor treatment of many older people is breaching their human rights and too many are struggling to voice their concerns about their care or be listened to about what kind of support they want.

The final report of the Commission's inquiry, 'Close to home: older people and human rights in home care', says hundreds of thousands of older people lack protection under the Human Rights Act and calls for this legal loophole to be closed. It questions commissioning practices that focus on a rigid list of tasks, rather than what older people actually want, and that give more weight to cost than to an acceptable quality of care.

The report, interviews, FAQs, and more about the inquiry can be found on [the EHRC website](#).

A better life - what older people with high support needs value

What do older people with high physical and mental support needs say they want and value in their lives?

Part of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's 'A Better Life' programme, [this paper](#) explores the views of older people and the factors that help or hinder them and proposes a model which demonstrates how their needs could be met.

Provisional report shows extent of alleged abuse of vulnerable adults in care and domestic homes

This [NHS Information Centre report](#) presents provisional findings from a new data collection on Abuse of Vulnerable Adults; based on submissions to the NHS IC by 151 of the 152 councils in England with

adult social services responsibilities (CASSRs). A final report with more detailed findings will be produced in March 2012.

Grant round call

Age UK are currently calling for PhD Studentship, Research Fellowship and Clinical Fellowship grant applications for research to improve the health and wellbeing of older people. [Find out more](#).

If you are interested, please act quickly as the deadline for submission of Expressions of Interest is Wednesday 21 December 2011 at 5.00pm.

Left to Our Own Devices Photo Competition

This is a national photography competition launched by KT-EQUAL and run in partnership with Age UK.

It sets out to challenge our preconceptions about how older people interact with technology now and in the future. Entries will be judged not only on their photographic merit but also on how they address issues related to the central theme of older people's interactions with technology - perhaps by challenging stereotypes, defying expectations or delivering a powerful message.

The most successful images will be selected from across four categories: Gadgets and Gizmos; In the Home; Out and About; and an open category. One image in each category will receive a cash prize of £250.

Entries need to be submitted by 31st January. [Visit the website](#) for more information.

New website to share information on research funding

The UK Age Research Forum (UKARF) has launched a new [interactive website](#) to encourage sharing of information on the latest funding opportunities for research on ageing.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

The lure of dying at home: an impossible dream for the oldest old?

Professor Sheila Payne from Lancaster University has guest-written [an article](#) for us about dying at home. She discusses various issues, and further work that needs to be done, including for policy-makers.

Improving Later Life – tips from experts

Age UK has brought together leading experts in the field of ageing to create the authoritative guide to ageing better: [Improving Later Life](#). With people living longer than ever and much of the existing advice often confusing or contradictory, the Charity has worked with the experts to bring together their top tips to help us all age better. A free PDF is available, and hard copies can be ordered for £5 each to cover printing and shipping.

Growth negligence: older people's experiences of cancer care

[This study](#) was carried out by Eastleigh Southern Parishes Older People's Forum.

The aim of the research was to gather evidence about older people's experiences of cancer care, as patients and carers, in order to inform policy and improve the experience of care of older people affected by cancer. The research was carried out by older people.

The current age categories for national screening programmes would exclude most of the respondents in this research, because they would be too old to qualify. Yet they are the people most likely to develop cancer.

Recommendations are made to the Department of Health, NHS Commissioners, local government and voluntary sector providers and health and social care professionals with a view to securing higher standards of cancer care and sensitivity to the needs of older people.

The four faces of dementia

Dementia is a devastating condition - 1 in 12 of over 65s in the UK lives with some form of the disease. But what is it actually like to live with and how does it affect those people who encounter dementia on a daily basis?

Liz Vercoe talks to four people for whom dementia is or has been a day-to-day experience. [Read their stories](#) on our website.

Well being and older people – research published

[WRVS has published research](#) which presents key findings about older people's well-being. The charity conducted focus groups and qualitative research in which older people defined their well-being, the factors that shape it, the barriers to well-being and the impact of services on well-being. Issues such as faith, health and personal characteristics feature prominently, and the main factor highlighted is relationships and social contact with families and communities. Many of the barriers raised by older people relate to health and impairment issues.

Preventing loneliness and social isolation: evidence

In October the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) published a research briefing summarising recent evidence about the impact of loneliness and isolation on health and wellbeing, and the effectiveness of interventions designed to tackle the problem.

['Preventing loneliness and social isolation: interventions and outcomes'](#) identifies that "older people are particularly vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness, owing to loss of friends and family, mobility or income". "Social isolation and loneliness impact upon individuals' quality of life and wellbeing, adversely affecting health and increasing their use of health and social care services."

The briefing identifies a number of effective interventions.

Personal health budgets update

The Department of Health has released the latest edition of the [personal health budgets newsletter](#). Headlines include:

- People to have greater choice and control over their care
- The fourth interim evaluation report on the pilot of personal health budgets
- The new blog for people with a personal health budget, on NHS Choices
- Launch of the personal health budgets DVD 'Stories from the pilot programme'
- Programme update

Department of Health national campaign on dementia early diagnosis

A Department of Health [National Campaign on early diagnosis of dementia](#) has been launched. This is rolling out the successful regional pilot. Advertising will take place on TV and other media over the next 6 weeks

Additional details on the campaign, including the link to the TV advert, can be found on the [NHS Choices site](#).

The DH has also commissioned the Kings Fund's [Enhancing the Healing Environment](#) work on dementia.

Economic regulation in health care: What can we learn from other regulators?

Under proposals set out in the Health and Social Care Bill, Monitor will take on a new role as the economic regulator for the health sector. It will be responsible for setting prices for NHS-funded services, tackling anti-competitive behaviour, and maintaining essential services if providers become financially unsustainable, leading it to increase in size to 500 staff and acquire a budget of £82 million a year.

[This King's Fund report](#) analyses the experience of regulators in other sectors, such as telecoms and utilities, asks what has been learned, and suggests how Monitor can avoid possible pitfalls and succeed in its new role.

2010/11 older adult national survey of investment in mental health services

The [older adult mental health \(OPMH\) report](#) provides details of the level of investment in mental health services covering people aged 65 and above, in England for 2010/11 and compares it with the reported results in previous years since 2006/07.

The adult social care outcomes framework: Handbook of definitions

The Department of Health is publishing this [data definitions handbook](#), which sets out the technical detail of each measure in the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework, with worked examples, to promote consistency in reporting and interpretation. This handbook supersedes the July 2011 edition.

COMMUNITIES

Localism Act 2011 gains Royal Assent

The [Localism Act 2011](#) is a wide ranging piece of legislation which, at the same time as giving more freedom to councils, will give communities more ways to be involved in local decision making. This includes new powers for neighbourhood planning and the chance to bid to run local services. Age UK recognises there are both opportunities and risks in this new approach. We believe a localist approach should ensure there are no barriers for people in later life to have a greater say in their neighbourhood and shape the services they need.

Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) Inquiry into the Big Society

Following a call for evidence in February 2011, this autumn PASC asked for further comments on recent developments in the Open Public Services White Paper; reductions in funding for charities and voluntary groups; and the Giving White Paper. In [Age UK's response](#) we highlighted the detrimental effect on services for older people that cuts are having across the country, putting the less affluent and most vulnerable at risk.

Rural services 'worst hit by cuts'

Reductions in local government budgets will leave many rural residents disadvantaged, many of whom are retired says a report. The finding is contained in the [second annual report into the state of rural public services](#) by the Rural Services Network, which represents 93 rural councils and a host of other public rural service providers.

MONEY MATTERS

Hills Fuel Poverty Review

At the Spending Review in October 2010 the Government announced it would commission an independent review to take a fresh look at the fuel poverty target and definition. In March the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Chris Huhne MP, announced that Professor John Hills had been requested to undertake this review. His [interim review](#) is available.

Gradual retirement and pensions policy

It is too often assumed that retirement is a one-off event, rather than a process. Yet there is increasing evidence that we are moving towards a process of 'gradual retirement', a concept associated with a wide range of opportunities that may be available to older workers, including downshifting within their current employment, moving into new forms of flexible and part-time work, and self-employment.

The International Longevity Centre – UK report's key findings, recommendations, and link to the full report, can be found on [the ILC website](#).

Pension Credit payment study

[This DWP study](#) looked at the impact of paying Pension Credit automatically for 12 weeks. Early findings show 9 per cent of trial participants claimed compared to 3 per cent of those not in the trial.

Further evaluation will be published in early 2012.

HMRC discussion paper on modernising the personal tax system

HMRC are [seeking views](#) on how the Government can achieve its vision of a tax system that is more transparent and easier to understand. Comments on this discussion paper should be sent by 24 February 2012.

People with dementia missing out on direct payments

More than three quarters of people with dementia who receive social care support at home are not using direct payments or other personal budgets despite government plans to roll them out to all people using social care services.

As it launches its new report '[Getting personal? Making personal budgets work for people with dementia](#)', the Alzheimer's Society is calling for the personal budget system to be adapted to meet the specific needs of people with dementia.

Pensions experts call for 'a new age of personal responsibility'

Britain's workforce needs "a new age of personal responsibility" to avert the looming pensions crisis, warns the latest Friends Life Visions of Britain 2020 report, entitled "[Pensions: The Root Problem](#)".

Neither workplace savings schemes, nor the Government's auto-enrolment initiative, will do enough to stave off the impending chaos unless individuals become more accountable for saving for their old age, independent experts claim.

EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS

International resources on human rights of older people

A [new on-line resource](#) brings together a comprehensive collection of laws and policy instruments relating to the human rights of older people. The database was put together by The Academy of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, which is part of the Washington College of Law in The American University in Washington D.C. Funded by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), this project has captured and made available international, regional and national policy frameworks and laws that pertain to the rights of older people.

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HOUSING & HOMES

Government Housing Strategy

The Government issued '[Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England](#)' containing a section on older people's housing. This describes existing DCLG initiatives, including ongoing funding for handyperson services, Disabled Facilities Grant and the First Stop housing and care advice service. It emphasizes the importance of Home Improvement Agencies, offering greater housing choice, preventative housing services, the relevance of equity release schemes and the importance of Health and Well Being Boards to local housing services.

Housing support services

The LGIU report '[Promoting Independence: the future of housing related support](#)' argues for the importance of preventive housing support and brings together evidence on the cost effectiveness of these services. It recommends greater efficiency in delivery, including the use of telecare. Local authorities should continue to collect information about the delivery of these services to make better commissioning decisions in the future.

Low income homeowners

The Housing Association Charitable Trust (HACT) Fit for Living initiative has issued a briefing paper '[Pathways to Prevention](#)' looking at support for low income home owners and the role of health and social care services.

Older tenants and savings

[Research](#) for the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) found that 2.2% of tenants had savings over £16,000 and many of these are older tenants.

Equity release

[An article by Mario Ambrosi](#) (Anchor) recommending equity release for low income older households.

Cohousing

An [Independent article](#) exploring cooperative and cohousing.

Supporting People

The Guardian's [older people's housing hub](#) discusses Supporting People services.

Under-Occupation

A report by the Intergenerational Foundation '[Hoarding of Housing: The intergenerational crisis in the housing market](#)' claims that older homeowners in larger family housing are unfairly holding on to housing wealth. It suggests tax incentives to persuade older owners to move on.

The Guardian [housing network blog](#) examines the debate around under-occupation.

Housing Learning and Information Network (LIN) – planning and early intervention

The Housing LIN have issued two new viewpoint publications looking at the implications of planning regulations on extra care housing and evidence around early intervention.

[Planning Use Classes and Extra Care Housing](#)

[Housing, prevention and early intervention at work: a summary of the evidence base](#)

Useful statistics

Department for Communities and Local Government now provide a [breakdown of older household projections by district](#).

It also has [figures on client group](#) helped under the Supporting People programme.

AGE UK CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Select Committee inquiry into Strategic Framework for Road Safety

In May 2011 the government published their Strategic Framework for Road Safety, which sets out the vision for road safety and focuses on decentralisation and empowerment, alongside a work plan for action for all government, service providers and citizens. [Age UK's response](#) says while the government recognises the connection between the importance of car travel and independent living. This needs to be clearly stated as a foundation for road safety interventions that affect people in later life.

Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) Inquiry into the Big Society

Following a call for evidence in February 2011, this autumn PASC asked for further comments on recent developments in the Open Public Services White Paper; reductions in funding for charities and voluntary groups; and the Giving White Paper. In [Age UK's response](#) we highlighted detrimental effect on services for older people cuts are having across the country, putting the less affluent and most vulnerable at risk.

Smart meter licence conditions

[Age UK's response](#) to this consultation from the Department of Energy and Climate Change proposes what licence conditions for energy suppliers should be introduced to cover their behaviour when installing smart electricity and gas meters. This will provide the regulatory framework which will be

supported by a more detailed code of practice currently being drawn up by the Energy Retail Association (ERA). Age UK is responding separately to the concurrent ERA consultation on this detailed code of practice (below).

Smart metering code of practice

[Our response](#) to this consultation from the Energy Retail Association gives specific details about the proposed Code of Practice that all energy suppliers will have to comply with for the national roll out of smart meters. This will implement the licence conditions for the smart meter roll out currently being consulted on by the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC). Age UK has responded separately to the DECC consultation (above).

Health Select Committee: Social care inquiry

In October Age UK responded to the Health Select Committee Inquiry on social care. The Committee is gathering evidence about how reform to social care should be implemented.

[Age UK's response](#) highlighted the urgent need for social care reform and reiterated our support for a package of reform which includes the full proposals of both the Law Commission and the Dilnot Commission.

CONSUMER & LIFESTYLE

Energy statistics

As part of the Government's commitment to be open and accountable to the public and to support local authorities and other users in understanding and comparing data, the Department of Energy and Climate Change has just released:

- * a series of [interactive maps](#) that show trends in local authority data including a [map of fuel poverty](#)

- * [sub-regional fuel poverty report](#) for England in 2009 plus sub-regional Fuel Poverty [data](#)

This release, combined with the launch on Thursday 27 October 2011 of a sub-national [energy consumption analytical tool](#), aims to aid users in comparing energy data between areas and over time.

Green Deal consultation

The Government has just published the proposed details of its flagship energy efficiency scheme, [the Green Deal](#), and the new energy efficiency energy company obligations for consultation.

Fuel Poverty Advisory Group (for England): 9th annual report

The Government's Fuel Poverty Advisory Group [9th Annual Report](#) has launched and proposes a series of recommendations which must be acted on to halt the misery of living in fuel poverty.

Packaged bank accounts consultation

FSA published a [consultation on packaged bank accounts](#), closing date for responses is 27 January 2012.

Payments Council report on cheque awareness and accessibility

[Awareness and Acceptability of Alternatives to Cheques](#), which contains the findings from the consumer and business research conducted last year, was published by Payments Council.

This research was conducted as part of the Payments Council's work towards a target for possible closure of the cheque clearing in 2018. Although work towards the target has been cancelled, the Payments Council still published the findings because the results remain relevant to ongoing work.

The research looks at who has a cheque book and at where people and businesses use cheques to make and receive payments. It also measures to what extent people and businesses are aware of alternative ways of paying, and whether they find them acceptable.

Payments Council National Payments Plan Published

This month the Payments Council published the updated [National Payments Plan](#) containing actions from 2011 – 2014.

Financial Planning Through Retirement Benchmarking Study 2011

[This report](#) identifies that with the rise of the “DIY Decumulators” and the oncoming ‘grey rush’ it is vital the profession and Government work together to address the issues we face. The continuing and unprecedented financial turmoil only heightens the need to ensure that consumers receive the advice they need at key points throughout their life. The decisions made “at retirement” can have a profound impact not only on the individual’s future but on society as a whole.

CCCS report

The Consumer Credit Counselling Service published [the second in its series of reports](#) looking at personal debt both now and how it might change over the next few years. This report focused on debt and the generations.

BIS response to consumer credit review

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and HM Treasury have published [their response](#) to the consumer credit elements of the Government’s Review of Consumer Credit and Personal Insolvency.

The response builds on a number of Coalition commitments to increase transparency and help consumers make better financial decisions when borrowing money and deals specifically with:

- unarranged overdraft charges;
- introductory discounts when taking out a store card;
- interest rate caps on credit and store cards;
- and other consumer credit issues, including high cost credit.

INTERNATIONAL

Violence against older women

Older women in developing countries are sometimes blamed for ills that befall their family or community – accused of being witches and punished for their alleged crimes. To find out what our sister organisation, HelpAge International, is doing please see [our blog](#).

EU funding for adult education

The European Commission has just published [new proposals](#) for EU education funding from 2014-2020. Age UK welcomes the proposal to increase EU funding for adult learning by 80%, from €60 to €110m annually, which is a positive response to our recommendations in our recent EU briefing, Grey Matters.

UN work stream on ageing

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe has a [work stream on ageing](#), and member states have committed to the Regional Implementation Strategy of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). Member countries are starting to submit monitoring reports in advance of next year’s MIPAA +10 Ministerial Conference in Vienna.

Human Development Report 2011: Sustainability and equity: better future for all

Among other things, [this report](#) argues that urgent global challenges of sustainability and equity must be addressed together to prevent the intensification of trends in environmental deterioration and social inequality.

International resources on human rights of older people

A new [on-line resource](#) brings together a comprehensive collection of laws and policy instruments relating to the human rights of older people. The database was put together by The Academy of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, which is part of the Washington College of Law in The American University in Washington D.C. Funded by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), this project has captured and made available international, regional and national policy frameworks and laws that pertain to the rights of older people.

TRANSPORT

Campaign for Better Transport – Save Our Buses Campaign

[New figures](#) obtained by Campaign for Better Transport show council spending cuts have led to 1 in 5 supported bus services being cut with more yet to come. Age UK is concerned cutting bus routes could lead to people losing their only independent access to transport and cause social isolation.

Driving in later life: Options for reform

Almost one in four (24%) people in Britain - equivalent to 11.9 million consumers - think that drivers should hang up their keys at age 75, 70 or even younger than 70, despite there being no evidence to suggest older drivers up to the age of 80 years old are less safe behind the wheel than younger drivers.

The '[Driving in later life: options for reform](#)' report from the International Longevity Centre (ILC-UK) and over 50s motor insurance provider RIAS, launched at an round table event at the House of Lords, reveals that older drivers could face losing vital years of independence - potentially up to 10 years - before they may need to. Consumers seem to fear that older drivers may not be safe or confident on the roads after the age of 70.

Select Committee inquiry into Strategic Framework for Road Safety

In May 2011 the government published their [Strategic Framework for Road Safety](#), which sets out the vision for road safety and focuses on decentralisation and empowerment, alongside a work plan for action for all government, service providers and citizens. The government recognises the connection between the importance of car travel and independent living. This needs to be clearly stated as a foundation for road safety interventions that affect people in later life.

Age UK is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England (registered charity number 1128267 and registered company number 6825798).