

Greater Manchester Older Peoples Reference Group (GMOPRG)

Activity Report

Background

The Greater Manchester Older People's Reference Group (GMRG) met in June 2005, with **Jean Tottie, Network Director for Older Peoples Services**, to discuss how best to deliver its aim of providing a Reference group for the Greater Manchester Older Peoples Network. Funding had been secured for GMRG through Jean from the SHA.

The meeting was an opportunity to consider how best to deliver its aim of providing a reference group for the **Greater Manchester Older Peoples Network**, and strengthening the effectiveness of older people as lay representatives, in the implementation of the NSF for older people.

To support the process it was agreed that the **Manchester Alliance for Community Care (MACC)** would facilitate communication between members and manage the funding on behalf of the group. They agreed to produce accounts at the end of the financial year with an activity report for the Association of PCTS in Greater Manchester. **This report has brought together the activities of the Reference Group, from June 2005 until March 2007.**

The Support Agency

The Manchester Alliance for Community Care (MACC) has provided an agreed service for the Reference Group and continues to be strategically placed within National organisations of/for older people, to promote and support the work of the group. (*Better Government, Older Peoples Advocacy Alliance (OPAAL) ACE and Help the Aged*) Members themselves are also strategically placed across the Region within these organisations and other older peoples forums.

MACC has been responsible for ensuring that members are provided with appropriate support to maximise their involvement in implementing the NSF for older people. They have done this through supporting the development of communication through, organising suitable venues for meetings, preparing minutes, briefing papers and information sheets, organising payment of expenses and supporting members attendance at other relevant meetings and conferences locally and nationally. They have ensured appropriate use and

management of the funding and the accounts are audited through MACC's Auditors, at the end of each financial year. The organisation is paid a 10% management fee for the work, which amounts to £600 per year.

The Core Group

Following the support from the Association of PCTs, the Reference group agreed to continue with a Core group of members to plan and direct the work, which aimed to meet every six weeks, though, as work has increased, we have met on a monthly basis. Members have been representatives from each of the LITs or their related Task groups, from across Greater Manchester.

Through directing the work, the Core group have ensured the implementation of a communication strategy for members, which has included organising general meetings when appropriate, and maintaining a mechanism for networking with older peoples' organisations across Greater Manchester. The majority of our Reference group members are involved in a number of other older people's forums, local and national working groups and organisations, which have enabled us to foster those relationships with groups such as Help the Aged, Age Concern and Better Government for Older People.

Through members' contacts and networks, we have also been able to feed our views into a number of structures and use our collective influence to try and improve services and support for older people. The Reference group has been a mechanism for older people to gather views and experiences, to feed into our own local, regional and national NSF implementation structures.

Over the last year, myself and the Deputy Chairs have welcomed the opportunity to attend the Joint meetings with the Older People's Network Steering Group, where we have been able to contribute to the discussions and report back to our members through the Core group.

The Reference Group's Activities

Training needs were identified and prioritised at a meeting early in September 2005. Facilitated by the Big Life Company, members attended a day's training in which participants could identify what they needed to do individually and collectively, to ensure that the group worked effectively. Collectively we elected a Chair for the Reference Group following this session, who was Beryl Murray.

In May we held a general meeting for members to agree revised Terms of Reference that provided us with a clearer framework of accountability. The

meeting also reviewed the volume of the work of the Reference Group, and made recommendations to take the programme of work forward into our next year of funding. These recommendations included the appointment of Deputy Chairs to support the role of the Chair. Sadly, Beryl had to resign from this position due to ill health and I was then elected as Chair, with Leon Rafnson and Stuart Eyres as Deputy Chairs.

Individually, we identified a number of areas that members wanted training in. One of these was **making effective use of the media** and some members managed to secure free places on a course run by the BBC, recommended by Florence Lyons who had attended an earlier course.

We agreed after 12 months that the funding was enabling the group to strengthen their effectiveness as lay representatives on LITs and their related task/sub groups. The involvement of members has been supported and promoted in the following ways:

- The group has provided a focus for sharing information on policy and practice and knowledge of how services are commissioned, reviewed and delivered.
- There has been a plethora of policy documents for members to understand and discuss. MACC has provided briefing papers as directed, in advance of general meetings, and where possible, delivered/provided or secured presentations on a number of different areas.

During this initial period, the work of the Reference group generally covered the NHS modernisation agenda and changes in policy for social care, including the reconfiguration of the PCTs/SHAs and Active Case Management and Living Well in Later Life/ New Ambition for Old Age.

(See appendix 1.)

In February 2006 the Reference group was invited to attend a breakfast meeting with **Liam Byrne**, the then Minister for Social Care, about the future of long-term care in England. Following our discussions with the Minister, We felt very positive about being able to work with him to influence change. All our members who attended said they found him approachable and knowledgeable. Views not heard at the meeting were forwarded to his office

Reference Group members were informed about the **Partnerships for Older Peoples Project's** funding opportunities and discussed the involvement of older people in the writing and subsequent delivery of the programmes of work. Following these discussions, members were asked to consider **POPPS bids**

from the south of the country with the Change Agent Team. The meeting was arranged through the Network Director's office and organised by MACC.

Following this meeting the Department of Health circulated the key points raised by our members and by the Forum of older people in London (who considered the North of England bids) The Reference Group had a follow up meeting to discuss the recommendations around involvement.

During this first 12 months of the Group being funded and supported, members were able to increase their knowledge and understanding of specific areas in health and social care, by attending relevant meetings and conferences. Examples during the first year were the **Northern Lights event on mental health**, the **Connecting for Health** conference at the airport and the conference on **Elder Abuse** in Warwick. These opportunities have been a positive experience for individual members by developing their knowledge base, but also of benefit to the group as a whole. As we continue to work collectively through the Reference group, the opportunities for members to develop their own 'expertise' has been an advantage to the group as a whole. *(See appendix 2)*

Mental Health Priority

The Mental Health and Well-being of older people was identified as a priority area of work for the Reference group for 2006/07 and therefore the general meeting in May focussed on Mental Health. Members watched a training video lent to us by the **Manchester Mental Health Trust**, which then informed the discussion. '**Valuing Experience**' is a video in which a range of older people speak powerfully about the isolation, discrimination and difficulties they faced, experiencing mental ill health. We are slowly building up our own appropriate training resources for older peoples' representatives to use across the LITs, and have added the video to our collection.

The meeting went on to discuss **Mental Health** and older people, which was an agreed area of work for the Reference group for 2006/07. Mary had circulated a briefing paper on '**Everybody's Business**' and agreed to write a short questionnaire for members which would enable them to explore existing services in their areas, with a focus on service user and carer involvement in the planning of those services. A report has been circulated to members but continues to be a work in progress!

The Core group agreed to work towards an event for older people in the Greater Manchester area, to follow on from World Mental Health day in October. Members wanted to provide an opportunity to address the needs of older people living in the community, who experienced mental ill health, such as depression and dementia.

The second year of funding and support

The **Connecting for Health** conference at the Airport was well attended by Reference Group members, who had a significant impact on the meeting. To carry the work forward, members invited David McNally to a general meeting of Reference Group members, to talk about '**The Older Peoples' Expert Reference Group**' and look at how they involve older people in the work. David discussed the development of an interim IT system for Greater Manchester and agreed to provide the Reference Group with a demonstration of the model in September.

The Reference Group has funded members to attend the '**Ageing with Dignity**' Regional Conference, and a national conference on **Elder Abuse**, both in June.

Five members attended a meeting organised by Jean on August 24th, to listen to and discuss reports from the Pennine and Salford Acute Trusts, on their use of DoH funding, to help implement Standard 4 of the NSF for older people.

National Framework for Continuing Care

At the Core Group meeting in May, Jean Tottie came to discuss the consultation process for the new **National Framework for Continuing Care**. The Reference Group agreed to organise a meeting in August, so that Jean could consult with older people. MACC circulated a briefing paper prior to the meeting.

Eventually the meeting was held on 09.08.06 to look at the proposals. Our group was overwhelmed by the interest in the meeting, not just from older people themselves, but also from the media. MACC managed to keep the Press away from the event.

Jean presented the new proposals to the meeting and working groups agreed responses, which were then forwarded to the Department of Health. The responses were circulated to members, who have been kept informed of interim arrangements with NHS North West.

In September, the group had a follow-up discussion on the proposals for a National Framework for Continuing Care. Further responses were sent to the DoH from different areas.

The meeting also reviewed the procedures for the Reference group, because of problems that arose with the consultation on the National Framework. It was confirmed that it remains the Core Group's responsibility to issue invitations to General Meetings, including older people from task groups attached to LITs, where the topic was appropriate. The meeting also reaffirmed the value we attach to briefing papers provided by MACC, but recognising that comments must be clearly owned by the Reference Group or MACC.

Since August 2006 the Core group has met five times and there have been four General meetings. We have continued our focus on Mental Health and Well-being.

In September we carried out an audit of older peoples' involvement in mental health services across Greater Manchester and collected data on existing older age services. *This is still a work in progress!* Prior to the general meetings, MACC circulated this information and the key messages from Everybody's Business, the service development guide from CSIP.

In October we held our first general meeting under the borrowed heading 'Older Minds Matter'. The meeting focused on **depression**; the symptoms, treatment and how older people can help themselves. We had speakers from a Chinese Women's group, a Primary Care Team and the Alzheimer's Society.

This was followed by another General meeting in January, which focussed on older people living with **Dementia**, and their carers. As with the previous meeting, we were fortunate to have interesting and informative speakers covering different aspects of the condition and evidence of good practice in support services, for older people with the condition and their carers. Following a lively debate between speakers and older people at the meeting, members agreed that the issues raised needed to be captured and inform our future programme of work.

We therefore asked MACC to write a report from the meeting and then we met with one of our speakers (an expert on Dementia training) to draft a statement for circulation. This statement will be circulated through the 'surviving' LITs and we have delivered it to Ivan Lewis MP, at the Regional launch of the **Dignity in Care** campaign in Leeds.

One of our members from Salford, went to the Alzheimer's Society's conference in London and he will be reporting back to the Core group in March. The conference launched the research report from Dementia UK.

The general meeting in February discussed **Connecting for Health**, including electronic care records, electronic prescribing and electronic image sharing for x-rays and scans. Members heard presentations from NHS North West and from Connecting for Health itself.

Though people welcomed the initiatives, they raised concerns about confidentiality, the amount of investment required and how the project will develop full integration of health and social care systems.

With an underspend this financial year, due to the good housekeeping of MACC, we have been able to secure the work of two consultants to help us with **an evaluation of our involvement** in the implementation of the NSF for older people. We are delighted to secure the services of **Dr Michelle Cornes** and Pauline Weinstein. Michelle was involved in the start-up of the Older Peoples Reference Group North West and author of our own report 'Genuine Partners or Token Reps.'

The work will not be a formal piece of research, but the beginnings of an evaluation of the effectiveness of older people's involvement and engagement in the implementation of the NSF for Older People. We aim to have the report from the work, finished in May. This will inform future support and mechanisms needed, for lay representatives to have an effective impact on the planning and delivery of health and social care services.

Finally, it was with regret that Stuart and I had to inform members of Jean Tottie's retirement after March, and we would all extend our thanks to her for supporting the work of the Reference Group.

Pat Leahy

Chair of the Greater Manchester Older Peoples Reference Group

Appendix 1

The following reports and briefing papers were requested by the core group and other members and circulated :

- Commissioning a Patient-led NHS
- Our Health, Our Care, Our Say
- Independence, Well-being and Choice
- Reconfiguration of the PCTs
- Active Case Management
- The Expert Patient Programme
- A Sure Start In Later Life
- Partnerships for Older People
- Choose and Book
- Paying for Long Term Care (JRF Report)
- Future Funding for Social Care in England (Wanless)
- Real Voices, Real Choices (CSCI)
- Free Travel Policy briefings
- Everybody's Business, a Summary
- Living Well in Later Life/ New Ambition for Old Age (Ian Philips)
- A Recipe for Care (Ian Philips)
- Older Minds Matter- reports from the General meetings on Dementia and Depression.
- Audit of Involvement (Mental Health Trusts GM)
- The Mental Capacity Act and IMCAs,
- Connecting for Health,
- The Dignity in Care Campaign.

Reference Group General Meetings have covered the following topics:

Our Health, Our Care, Our Say
Effective Involvement
Reconfiguration of the PCTs/SHAs
Active Case Management/ Expert Patient Programme
Choose and Book
Review of the NSF for Older People
Continuing Care
Older People and Depression/Dementia
Connecting for Health
Sure Start in Later Life

Appendix 2

The following events and conferences were attended by members and supported by the Reference Group.

- The Northern Lights Event on Mental Health 26.09.05
- Connecting for Health 31.03.06
- Aging in the Workplace
- General Medical Council; meeting on the NHS and Ethics.
- Elder Abuse- a hidden problem 02.04.06
- A New Direction for Community Services 08.05.06
- General Hospital Care
- The Pensioner's Parliament
- The Telecare/Telehealth event
- The Celebration of the Continuing Care Leadership development programme
- Dignity in Care Launch
- Intermediate Care-Next Step Developments
- Mental Health and Well-being Conference (now postponed to May 21)
- Dignity in Care; Regional Launch.
- Alzheimer's Society Conference
- Intermediate Care Events
- Older People's Advocacy Alliance

Appendix 3 Members of the Reference Group

Jane Harrison, Zonya Marsh, Kathy Denton	BOLTON
Florence Lyons, Sheila Kirkham	BURY
Pat Leahy, Beryl Clarke, Dorothy Baker, Elaine Unegbu Margeret Molloy	MANCHESTER
David Williams, Mary Shaw	Manchester Carer's Forum
Jim Trottman	Manchester PPI North
Margaret Parkes	Manchester Valuing Older People
Stan Skinkis	OLDHAM
Vera Hirst	ROCHDALE
Beryl Murray, Harold Kershner, Daisy Shortman	SALFORD
Sheelagh Peel, Frank Light, Derek Whitehead	STOCKPORT
Leon Rafnson, Stuart Eyres, Robert Heald MN Ahmed, Taramati Sharma	TAMESIDE
Joan Hibberd, Barbara Bleaker, Polly Williams	TRAFFORD
Edna Ashcroft, Betty Scott	WIGAN

These members have recently joined us from TRAFFORD:

Tony Moore, JOAN Simpson, Ismail Lambat, and Kris Clancy