

Modernisation of older people's services in Birmingham

Management and Leadership

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Why was the project developed?

- Commitment by City Council to modernise older people's services for a new generation of older people and for the C21st
- New 'special care centres', extra care housing and independent sector care homes
- Closure of existing Council day centres and care homes
- Independent evaluation commissioned to understand impact and share lessons with others
- ? Biggest home closure programme in UK (or in Europe?)

Main features of the example (description)

- Formal public consultation/public decision by elected local councillors
- Commitment to regular and honest communication
- Dedicated assessment team on site
- Working at the pace of the individual
- Visits to potential new services as often as people wanted
- Helping residents and key members of care staff to stay together
- Independent advocacy
- Staying in touch with people after the move
- Independent evaluation/sharing lessons

Main features of the example (management and leadership)

- Importance of strategic vision/clear rationale
- Recognition that this is difficult/painful – but needed doing anyway
- Commitment to person-centred approaches and to learning from what works/doesn't work
- Practical support to assessment team
- Prioritising communication and engagement
- Working with key stakeholders internally and externally

What are/were the effects?

- Older people and their families felt unsettled and distressed during the closures
- **But** outcome data after 12 months suggests positive results
- Majority felt valued and happy with the control they had over their life at all stages of the study
- 42% said life had got better, 35% said it had stayed the same (even though they were a year older and frailer)
- Of the 19% who suggested life had got worse following changes, around half of these respondents said this was due to declining health not the closures

(Tentative) conclusions

- Importance of:
 - Strategy and preparation
 - Involvement and engagement
 - Implementation
 - Working with care staff
- Contrary to received wisdom, care home closures (if done well) can be achieved without making things much worse for people. In some circumstances it may even be possible for outcomes to improve