

## Bristol's Older People. Briefing Paper October 2017

Bristol Older People's Forum (BOPF) promotes social inclusion by working with and for citizens of Bristol who are socially and economically excluded or disadvantaged due to their age. **Our aim is that every older person in the city is an equal, valued, participating member of the community who can influence the decisions which affect their lives.**

Our work is for all older people - based on our experience, networks and volunteer hours spent advocating and representing (c3000 hours a year). Our members are a substantial group, c2800 in number, and we work directly with them to enable and support them in having a voice and participating. We know a lot about them, and we constantly ask and listen to find out more. *We refine and enhance what we ask and what we know through using other sources of data in the city and beyond.* Our survey from earlier in 2017 tells us: (reference/check the manifesto why is this needed too)

- **68% have the amount and type of social contact they want (12% don't)**
- **40% disagree they can influence decisions that affect their local area (32% agree)**
- **38% contribute to their community at least monthly\***

*\*Of those that would like to do more, ill health/mobility/disability barriers mentioned most*

- **55% are online (an increase from 49% in 2015); but 33% are not & no interest in being**
- **Of those that are online, only 25% wish to get their BOPF newsletter by email (*we know that confidence/frequency of online use is an issue for many*)**
- **Nearly 50% of members agree being a BOPF member has made them more confident (only 10% disagree), and a similar number agree BOPF has enabled them to feel more positive and to have their say, be heard**
- **55% agree BOPF has made them feel part of a community (only 10% disagree)**
- **86% of members say they are 'better informed' as a result of BOPF membership**
- **Over 60% have acted on something they have read in newsletter, or responded to a consultation, signed a petition, and/or volunteered for their community – many of them have done several of these**

*"Although I have not been actively involved with the forum I feel connected to the community when I read the newsletter"*

*"I am very worried about the people I meet who say they are very cut off by BCC"*

*"...bringing people together and allowing people to feel a part of something if wish to do so - not so alone and your info is very much appreciated"*

*"I keep the numbers by the phone, and pass newsletter information on to others"*

*"Speakers are informative and interesting, great to ask them direct questions"*

*"Together you feel able to do things and achieve something, alone you are the lone voice in a wilderness of professionals"*

*"...great to meet like minded people not prepared to just fade away"*

*"I have no other source for this type of information"*

*"Older people need help to take part in the community"*

## Who are BOPF members?

- **64% are aged 75+ (only 6% under 65)**
- **More likely to be female than male** (*especially survey respondents*)
- **89% heterosexual**
- **40% identify as disabled**
- **59% experience at least one disability / long term limiting illness condition / sensory or physical impairment** (e.g. 25% hearing impairment)
- **8% BME/mixed heritage/other** (*representative for our age groups in the city*)
- **70% Christian** (*probably representative for age groups – we will be checking against census*)

They live across the city including areas with high indices of deprivation (e.g. 32 in Lawrence Hill, 223 in Knowle & Filwood, 40 in Southmead, 71 in Easton, 109 in Stockwood etc.)

## **Manifesto for Bristol's Older People**

Bristol must recognise diversity and address inequality to become a great place to grow old for everyone regardless of their income, sex, gender identity, race/ethnicity, faith/belief, sexual orientation, disability, physical and mental health - and indeed where they live, their education, digital access, living alone, transport access, family/marital status.

Our members tell us what issues concern them\*, we bring them together with decision makers and enable them to have their say, and to find the information they need to live how they want to. The **Manifesto for Bristol's Older People** sets out themes\* our work for equality falls under: Safety & Crime, Transport, Care (including carers), Health (physical and Mental), Communications, Homes, Participation, and Visibility. Under each theme outcomes are listed, and the service providers/decision makers (full Manifesto available [www.bopf.org.uk](http://www.bopf.org.uk) or by email).

The manifesto also summarises why it is needed – what the issues and inequalities are. We are in a position to bring together our member insight with data and research from national and local bodies including health and care related, JSNA and Quality of Life survey, AgeUK and Independent Age national papers etc.

## **BOPF – the future**

Bristol Older People's Forum is member-led, trustees are older people, and is unique in the city (indeed in the country) in terms of size of membership. Our members are our strength, and an asset to the city. Through 24 years of work is trusted and established in the lives of its members and their immediate networks, and through representation and newsletter work trusted and established in 'stakeholder' networks, partnerships and collaborations. One example achievement in terms of wider influence was ensuring the Council, and local health providers, must offer hard copy consultations (ie. not online only).

BOPF became a charity in 2015 and is continuing a period of change to adapt to the changing funding environment. We will be bidding on Bristol City Council's Voice & Influence commissioned work as a collaboration with other equality groups we already work closely with. We are also applying to carefully selected trusts and foundations, and developing other income streams such as newsletter advertising. Our current funding ends in March 2018 and we are determined to do everything we can to sustain our work beyond that to ensure the fight for equality of older people's equality continues, especially at a time when cuts are being implemented.

**We have just collected stories / 'case studies' from 4 members: Judith, Chris, Gillian and Tony - all of whom are active volunteers for Bristol Older People's Forum. The difference we have made to them as individuals is clear and we know their personal networks will have been impacted too. (These are attached to email sent October 2017– or available on the welcome page of [www.bopf.org.uk](http://www.bopf.org.uk))**