



**Blaenau Gwent
Development Plan for the
Strategy for Older People in
Wales**

In January 2003 the Welsh Assembly Government produced '**The Strategy for Older People in Wales**'. There are five key aims of this strategy as follows:

- **Reflecting the United Nations principles for Older People to tackle discrimination against older people wherever it occurs, promote positive images of ageing and give older people a stronger voice in society.**
- **To promote and develop older people's capacity to continue to work and learn for as long as they want, and to make an active contribution once they retire.**
- **To promote and improve the health and well-being of older people through integrated planning and service delivery frameworks and more responsive diagnostic and support services.**
- **To promote the provision of high quality services and support which enable older people to live as independently as possible in a suitable and safe environment and ensure services are organised around and responsive to their needs.**
- **To implement The Strategy for Older People in Wales with support funding to ensure that it is a catalyst for change and innovation across all sectors, improves services for older people and provides the basis for effective planning for an ageing population.**

(W.A.G. Strategy for Older People. Page 9)

The United Nations Principles for Older Persons are:

- 1. INDEPENDENCE.**
- 2. PARTICIPATION.**
- 3. CARE.**
- 4. SELF-FULFILMENT.**
- 5. DIGNITY.**

(IBID. Page 12)

In many countries, age and older people are seen as an asset to society. Too often in our society older people are seen as potential problems or recipients of services rather than as citizens, in spite of the fact that they continue to make a positive contribution to society and to the communities in which they live. Many older people continue to provide significant levels of childcare, are the backbone of the Volunteer Sector, and play an active role in local or national community affairs.

Older people have a right to live independently and with dignity. The aim of the strategy for Older People in Wales is to provide services, opportunities and activities in a timely and appropriate way to promote and ensure their health and well-being, and which enables them to maximise their independence, potential and participation as valued members in society.

BACKGROUND AND PROFILE OF BLAENAU GWENT

Key Facts:

Population 69,305

Area (Hectares) 10,900

Blaenau Gwent has an ageing population profile, with over 33% of total residents being aged over 50 years and 43% of residents aged 15+ are over 50 years.

Some other facts:

45% of land is undeveloped

15% of land is reclaimed

3% of land is recreational

9.5% of residents speak Welsh.

Blaenau Gwent was originally an agrarian (rural and agricultural) area and community until iron and steel manufacture began in the late eighteenth century. The development of the coal and steel industries quickly attracted workers and their families from throughout the United Kingdom, and the population and prosperity of the area increased dramatically during the nineteenth century.

Therefore, the population of Blaenau Gwent grew from the introduction of these major industries where towns such as Ebbw Vale thrived upon the heavy industries of iron and steel production. By 1844, Nantyglo Ironworks had become one of the most important iron-working centres in the World employing 3,000 men and 500 women and children. Tredegar, a former ironworks town later converted to coal mining and Abertillery, another mining town, became a major commercial centre by the end of the nineteenth century.

Social changes began when the first ever Board of Health was established in Brynmawr in 1851. During the great depression of the 1930's the Quakers developed a self-help scheme called the 'Brynmawr Experiment', which enabled people to work and improve the environment.

These ideas were used again in recent years with the closure of most of the heavy industry in the County Borough. Former industrial sites, such as the Festival Park in Ebbw Vale, have become public attractions.

The local economy had undergone significant structural change in recent decades, with a major shift from the traditional coal, iron and steel, and heavy industry in general to manufacturing occupations and service sector employment. This shift was accompanied by a sizeable reduction in the number of jobs available, and a very high level of unemployment with resultant outward migration.

In the Office of National Statistics (ONS) Mid-Year population Estimates of the 2000 the population of Blaenau Gwent stood at 71,200. This showed a slight decrease in population between the years of 1991 to 2000, with a loss of approximately 1,800 people. As can be seen from the above Key Facts that since that time the population has decreased further to 69,305.

This decrease in population shows that Blaenau Gwent County Borough has undergone many changes with the decline of the heavy industries of coal mining and steel manufacturing, which dominated the area. And as stated earlier this has resulted in a high rate of unemployment and low incomes. Although unemployment rates in Blaenau Gwent are now lower than they have been for some considerable time, they are still higher than most other areas in the United Kingdom; and there is a very high level of health related economic inactivity at all ages. Private Sector occupations in the area attract relatively low pay (many paying the minimum wage), and levels of formal qualifications among both school leavers and adults are also low. Literacy levels are thought to be significantly lower than in Wales generally.

People from more affluent and better-educated communities in Wales, with higher levels of economic activity currently have a life expectancy of three to four years longer than people from communities such as Blaenau Gwent.

Residents of Blaenau Gwent are distributed over a number of small towns, the largest being Ebbw Vale in which one third of the population live (approximately 24,000). Other towns include Abertillery (approximately 17,700), Tredegar (approximately 15,600), Nantyglo and Blaina (approximately 9,600) and Brynmawr (approximately 5,000). Traditionally there are close knit relationships within these communities.

The rate of the aforementioned decrease in population has been greatest among young people. Although the age structure of the population shows a slightly younger age profile than Wales as a whole, Blaenau Gwent has an ageing population profile, with over 33% of total residents being aged over 50 years and 43% of residents aged 15+ are over 50 years. The proportion of young people as a percentage of the population is expected to continue to decrease, mainly due to outward migration.

As can be seen Blaenau Gwent has experienced a 3.2% decrease in population since 1991. This is different to Wales overall, where there has been a 2.4% increase in the population over the same period. Both birth and death rates have declined in Blaenau Gwent since 1991, as in the rest of Wales, but in Blaenau Gwent there has been a sharper relative decline in births, and as stated earlier a net migration of working age adults out of the area. In 2000-01, approximately 1,000 people moved into the County Borough, but 1,250 people moved out.

If current trends continue, the Blaenau Gwent population is likely to decline further, with a reduction in the proportion of people aged under 44, and an increase in the proportion of older people. It is difficult to predict what will actually happen – planned developments such as the passenger rail link to Cardiff, coupled with relatively cheap housing and a pleasant rural environment could encourage people to move into the area, reversing the depopulation trend.

Blaenau Gwent faces acute and widespread deprivation. A large proportion of its residents experience multiple and inter-connected disadvantages such as being raised in poverty or council care, poor health, low educational achievement and high levels of unemployment.

Previous widespread employment in manual occupations in heavy industries has left a legacy of health problems including chronic respiratory and musculoskeletal disorders, particularly in older men. Extensive unemployment has also contributed to poor health throughout the population, particularly poor mental health.

In the year 2000, seven of the 100 most deprived wards in Wales were in Blaenau Gwent – Nantyglo, Tredegar central and west, Llanhilleth, Sirhowy, Rassau, Cwmtillery and Blaina. Blaenau Gwent has a total of sixteen wards, which means that 44% fall within the 100 most deprived wards in Wales.

Additionally, all wards fall within the 40% of the most deprived wards in Wales and there are very few areas of affluence.

THE PEOPLE AND ETHNICITY OF BLAENAU GWENT

Blaenau Gwent has a very homogenous, predominantly Welsh, White population – 99.2% of the Blaenau Gwent population were born in the United Kingdom, with 92% being born in Wales, compared to a Welsh average of 97.9%, and an England and Wales average of 91.1%. Non White ethnic groups make up less than 1% of the population of Blaenau Gwent, this numbers just under 600 people, largely Asian or mixed origin, with some Chinese and Black families, compared to a Wales average of over 2%. Almost two thirds of people in Blaenau Gwent state their religion to be Christian, with approximately one third professing no religion, and less than 1% stating any non Christian religion.

Blaenau Gwent is not one of the traditional Welsh speaking areas of Wales, and knowledge of the Welsh language is relatively low. 87% of people aged three and over in Blaenau Gwent have no knowledge of Welsh, compared to 72% across Wales as a whole. There is however a thriving Welsh medium primary school in the County Borough, and a number of Welsh medium playgroups.

At the 2001 census, there were 12,149 people aged over 65 years residing in Blaenau Gwent, which is approximately 17% of the population. Just over 3,000 were aged over 80, which is approximately 5% of the population.

As in most areas in the United Kingdom, older people are living longer, and are making up a larger proportion of the population. The numbers of the oldest old people are increasing particularly rapidly – the number of people over 80 in Blaenau Gwent has increased by 23% over the last ten years, compared to a 3.2% decrease in the population as a whole. In Blaenau Gwent there are 5,080 older people (age 65+) living alone.

LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT OF BLAENAU GWENT

There has been a major transformation of the County Borough, through land reclamation and landscaping over the last twenty years, which has resulted in Blaenau Gwent becoming a very beautiful area. It is heavily wooded in parts, with large areas of open moorland, small rivers and attractive views. Previous industry has left an extensive network of paths, and a number of ponds, with huge potential for active leisure use for both local people and tourists.

The physical geography (three deeply incised parallel valleys, with housing, commercial developments and roads concentrated into relatively small areas along the valley floors) makes travelling from one area of the County Borough to another to access shops or services difficult, particularly for people without access to a vehicle. It also means that there is a general shortage of land for new developments.

Closure of much of the heavy industry over the last thirty years has left the County Borough with a number of sites with contaminated land and derelict buildings. However, external investment has led to much of the industrial land being remediated, thus it is now available for housing, leisure and further industrial uses.

The climate tends to be slightly colder and wetter than surrounding County Borough's, as much of the area is over 250 metres above sea level. Facilities for people to become dry and warm are important to encourage outdoor physical activities, including walking or cycling for short journeys. The climate and steep hills may result in difficulty for some people with health problems to take outdoor exercise or to walk even short distances.

Global climate change is likely to impact on Blaenau Gwent in the future, with a reduction in ill health and indeed deaths due to cold weather, but an increase in ill health and deaths associated with hot weather, and more frequent and severe storms, with consequent risk of flooding and damage to

buildings. As with most health risks, individuals on low incomes and with existing poor health are likely to be worst effected, and this includes many older people.

Water quality in the County Borough is generally good, but the current sewerage system is thought to be inadequate to sustain proposed regeneration developments. Air quality is also good, with low traffic congestion and currently no industrial processes that produce significant environmental pollution.

Recycling of non-hazardous waste product disposal sites situated within the County Borough.

THE OLDER PEOPLE'S STRATEGY IN BLAENAU GWENT

Blaenau Gwent aims to improve the quality of life for older people by enabling them to participate as active citizens in the society and life of Blaenau Gwent, and, when necessary to receive the right care in the right place at the right time provided in the right way by the right people.

Blaenau Gwent aspires to do this by enabling and empowering older people to be valued and included as active citizens within communities where they will have their voices heard and responded to, and will have choice and control over their own lives, and be enabled to lead healthy, safe and independent lives within their own homes, and to choose the type of home environment best suited to their needs with support and access to high quality services when and where needed. In Blaenau Gwent older people are valued members of the community and life of the County Borough and it is recognised that older people themselves have much to offer the community of Blaenau Gwent. There is a great deal that can be accomplished through the implementation of the Strategy for Older People to ensure the greater social inclusion of older people as full and valued citizens of Blaenau Gwent.

In order to translate this version into reality Blaenau Gwent have appointed an Older People's Strategy Co-ordinator to work in partnership with the Older People's Planning Forum (a multi agency planning group) to progress the Strategy for Older People on a local basis.

This Forum presently consists of:

- Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations
- Age Concern
- Crossroads
- Local Health Board
- Local Health Trust
- Social Services

- Housing Department
- Independent Labour Market
- Department of Works and Pensions
- Community Health Council.

This membership now requires extending to include Leisure and Transport and is in need of greater representation from older people themselves, their carers and families.

A sub-group of this Planning Forum has been constituted to concentrate on issues for older people who have mental health problems. At present this group comprises of:

- Nursing
- Psychology
- Local Health Board
- Social Services
- Crossroads.

As with the Older Peoples Planning Forum this membership will be extended.

A key element in both national and local targets for older people is that Blaenau Gwent needs to address the issues across organisations. In particular this refers to Social Services and Health. Transport, Housing, Leisure, Education, Training, Employment, Independent Sector, Voluntary Sector and the interface between Primary and Secondary Health services working together in order to ensure that the majority of older people are able to live independently in their own homes and as active citizens. The Strategy for Older People is aimed at both supporting older people to remain healthy and actively involved in their community and in supporting, as necessary, those older people who become in need of short and long term services due to illness or frailty. This means ensuring the following:

- **Quality of life and disability free days.** Improving the quality of life and increasing the number of disability free days is not only an end in itself, but it can also do much to prevent unnecessary ill health and dependency.
- **Independence.** Losing independence is a major fear of older people and dependence or reliance on others is a key feature in loss of control and autonomy. A fundamental aim of the Strategy for Older People is therefore the active support and enhancement of independence for older people at all levels.

- **Involvement.** Older people themselves know best what is needed to improve the quality of their own lives. Therefore, older people should be fully involved at all stages in the planning of services and activities that affect them. In order to be involved some older people need practical help.
- **Empowerment.** Some older people need support to exercise choice, control, personal autonomy and self-determination.
- **Values.** Older people should be treated as individuals, with respect and dignity. Ageism should be eliminated. Older people should receive high quality care and treatment, regardless of age or disability. Older people should therefore have equal access to services and receive these services from an equitable basis.

The Blaenau Gwent Older Peoples Planning Forum has also adopted **John O'Brien's Accomplishments**, which are:

1. **Growing in relationships**
2. **Having positive choices**
3. **Having the dignity of valued social roles**
4. **Sharing in ordinary places and activities.**

Although John O'Brien produced these accomplishments for people who have Learning Disabilities, it is felt in Blaenau Gwent that these accomplishments are applicable in the development of the Strategy for Older People as they resonate with the five key aims of that strategy. It is also felt that older people, and indeed, all people should be enabled to enjoy these within their lives. Therefore, they will be incorporated into the strategy in conjunction with the five key aims of the Welsh Assembly's Government's Strategy for Older People in Wales, and the United Nations Principles for Older Persons.

A major aspect of strategy development in Blaenau Gwent is that of social inclusion and citizenship. It has long been acknowledged that older people have faced marginalisation and social exclusion due to the negative aspects of ageism. By social exclusion is meant the multiple deprivations resulting from a lack of personal, social, political or financial opportunities resulting from ageist views held within society. Social exclusion is a multi-dimensional disadvantage which severs individuals and groups from the major social processes and opportunities in society, such as housing, citizenship, employment and adequate living standards, and may be manifest in various forms and at various times.

Exclusion and inclusion operate both at a legal and sociological level through formal and substantive modes of citizenship. The former denotes the legal status of membership of a state or society by possession of a passport; the latter the enjoyment of the rights and obligations associated with membership and sometimes simply legal residence. At both the legal and sociological

level, exclusion and inclusion represent a continuum rather than an absolute dichotomy. Thus, members of a society enjoy different degrees of substantive citizenship. Social inclusion is about tackling the causes and effects of issues such as, comparative poverty or exclusion through location such as rural poverty or isolated estates in urban areas, poverty or exclusion through the circumstances faced by frail older people, discrimination or exclusion through being perceived as part of a stereotyped group on the basis of older age.

The objective of Blaenau Gwent, through the Older Peoples Strategy, is obviously to reduce the social exclusion of older people in Blaenau Gwent. The key principles of social inclusion within the strategy are:

- A focus on people rather than services.
- Targeting resources and services to achieve social inclusion, development, empowerment and enablement of older people to allow them self-determination.
- Demonstrating that all the agencies involved in the strategy in Blaenau Gwent are working together in partnership with older people to achieve social inclusion.

Therefore, Blaenau Gwent will develop a range of initiatives and services, which relate to the promotion of social inclusion, quality of life and citizenship of older people by enhancing their engagement in the community. A positive approach to ageing can make a significant difference to the lives of older people, especially if they are seen as active contributors to society. This requires the recognition and combating of discrimination faced by older people caused by ageist attitudes within society.

In Blaenau Gwent it is recognised that ageism, like racism and sexism, is about prejudice against a section of the population. And prejudice is about ignorance, deprivation of power and stereotyping. Ageism, like the others mentioned, is internalised by the victims who can share the stereotypes. But ageism is curiously unlike the others in that people cannot experience another's race or sex, but all people (or at least most people) will experience old age. The negative stereotype of ageing suggest less competence, both physically and intellectually and espouses that old age is a time of passivity, of less demands for food, for power, for status. Negative feelings are revealed in odd insulting remarks about people being too old for their jobs, for leisure, for education and learning. But these are seldom questioned or the serious evidence regarding competence in old age examined.

Age is a social division; it is a dimension of the social structure on the basis of which power, privilege and opportunity tends to be allocated. Age is not just a simple matter of biological maturation; it is a highly significant social indicator. This is the case whatever a persons age – all ages are imbued with social significance – but old age has special consequences in terms of attachment of meaning to life stages and therefore on the social position of older people. Old age is unfortunately often a time of loss. The potential losses are varied but are often interrelated and the ones that accompany old age are:

- Health due to increasing pathology
- Wealth due to termination of employment
- Companionship secondary to bereavement
- Independence due to acquired disabilities
- Homeostasis due to loss of fine control over internal environment
- Status following retirement and loss of independence.

Older people are seen as marginal to the labour market and are therefore assigned to lower status due to the emphasis on measuring social value in terms of their contribution to the production of wealth and are seen as non-productive and in a period of social redundancy. These changes and losses may expose older people to the following consequences:

- Unhappiness, grief, depression, suicide
- Increased incidence of illness
- Increased risk of accidents
- Poverty
- Dependence and abuse
- Malnutrition and sub nutrition
- Hypothermia.

There can be a loss of wealth in old age; income falls on retiring from paid employment. Pensions are not normally equivalent to wages and on average the pension is approximately 50% of the average working wage for a couple. Increasing frailty may seriously restrict choice of where and how to live. Disabilities themselves may result in additional costs, for example, for help, aids and adaptations.

Older people may need to spend a high percentage of their income on essentials, for example, heating, food, housing and the opportunity to economise is not uncommon. The safety net provided by the social security system is complex and difficult and this alone can act as a deterrent to taking up additional benefits. This system is constantly changing in an attempt to cut costs and accounts for a shrinking proportion of income in older people in the United Kingdom. Occupational pensions and investment income are increasing in importance.

Therefore, it is of utmost importance that Blaenau Gwent develop the Strategy for Older People by ensuring great importance is contained in helping older people face retirement as compulsory retirement has distorted ageing in

Western society. In what is termed underdeveloped countries older people are able to continue with physical labour until at the point where they may be overcome by illness – they do not lose muscle bulk and strength to the same degree as their Western counterparts.

In the West many self-employed people continue to work well beyond the standard age of retirement, for example, Doctors, Lawyers, Actors and Artists. Compulsory retirement is used to control the balance between employment and unemployment rates in industrialised society – but this is not necessarily in the best interests of older people. Retirement is a mixed blessing. Many workers fear retirement but many also look forward to it. The negative aspects of retirement are as follows:

- Loss of income, people can become poorer
- Loss of status associated with work
- Loss of companionship from colleagues
- Loss of health
- Loss of motivation
- Loss of meaning to one's life
- Realisation of mortality.

To counteract the above disadvantages, there are the following positive aspects of retirement:

- It may occupy one third of life
- Many retired people remain fit and healthy for most of the time
- It is an opportunity to redesign lifestyle and to promote good health
- Time is available for new or renewed interest, activities and relationships.

Retirement may bring problems of its own and it is a time when some difficult decisions will have to be made. Dilemmas encountered may include the following:

- Becoming a carer, for example, of parents at the beginning of retirement or spouse or siblings at the end of retirement
- Where to live – probably best to stay in surroundings where comfortable and well known. If a move is contemplated then earlier is better than later as likely to be fitter and a couple.

- What sort of accommodation? Somewhere where independence is possible, even in the case of acquired disabilities
- Driving may need to be given up at some stage, so the person needs to be aware of geographical and social isolation
- Sex is 'allowed' even in very old age so long as it gives pleasure to all concerned
- Boredom affects many retired people and many who although not bored would still prefer to be in employment. People, who are poor, have a disability, have not had the benefit of a good education and people who are isolated are most likely to be dissatisfied with retirement.

Preparation for retirement should be life long, attendance at pre-retirement courses should be encouraged, but they often provide too little too late and tend to only reach the well motivated. Nevertheless, they are useful and provide an opportunity to disseminate positive aspects of retirement. However, the more negative aspects of retirement should not be overlooked although the participants in a course may be reluctant to consider these. In general pre-retirement courses provide an opportunity to give health education and information to a captive audience.

The Strategy for Older People in Blaenau Gwent will ensure that older people are allowed to remain in employment for as long as they want or possibly can. By working with local employers the benefits of including older people in their workforce will be highlighted and greater employment of older people will be encouraged. Older people who wish to start businesses of their own will receive help in this from the Independent Labour Market. Facilities will also be developed to allow older people to access educational and training activities as well as recreational and leisure activities, and to engage in Intergenerational Practice.

The problem of abuse of older people must be high on the agenda of the strategy. This is both difficult to define and detect. It is not restricted simply to physical violence, such as pushing, punching and slapping, but may also take other forms such as those that follow:

- Psychological – shouting and/or emotional blackmail.
- Financial – asset stripping.
- Emotional.
- Neglect – withholding food, drink and warmth.
- Sexual.

The process of abuse is often triggered by the behaviour exhibited by a dependent older person. Excess alcohol consumption by a carer may be another significant factor.

Most instances of abuse are due to a carer being under stress, for example, in the following cases:

- Resentful carer because of marked sudden or unexpected change in lifestyle caused by adoption of the caring role.
- Carer with divided loyalties, for example, to an older parent and to a child (the torn middle generation).
- Carer with health problems of his/her own.
- Role reversal, for example, older, unmarried child caring for an older parent.
- A carer who feels, or is, isolated.

Older people at special risk are those who fall into the following categories:

- The heavily dependent.
- Those with communication difficulties, for example, dementia, hearing impairment, speech impairment or impaired comprehension.
- Those with behavioural anomalies, especially of a repetitive nature.
- Those in cramped and unsatisfactory housing.

Therefore, it is imperative that the development of the Strategy for Older People in Blaenau Gwent incorporates the prevention of abuse and is synergistic with the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Procedures.

As stated earlier, stereotypes of ageism can be internalised by those suffering discrimination. Indeed, it is not surprising that a group of people who are constantly receiving negative messages should perceive themselves in strongly negative terms. This has the effect of lowering morale and destroying confidence. High self-esteem is premised on receiving positive messages, feeling valued and important, but ageism acts as a significant barrier to receiving such positive signals. A major component of successfully achieving high self-esteem is that of maintaining of meaning to one's life, having targets to aim for and goals to achieve.

Closely related to the notion of high self-esteem is that of dignity. Dignity refers to the intrinsic worth of human beings and is therefore an important word in the anti-ageist vocabulary. Ageism has the effect of undermining a sense of dignity and self-esteem, which partly depends on it. Ageism marginalises, excludes and demoralises older people and casts them in secondary roles or presents them as useless and a burden on society. In view of this, it is not surprising that many older people struggle to maintain a thread of meaning or sense of purpose to their lives and thus fall prey to low spirits or depression.

Therefore, Blaenau Gwent has recognised that a key task in the development of the Strategy for Older People is ensuring the development of a programme of anti-ageist practice, which must ensure the promotion of dignity and enhancement of self-esteem as a counterbalance to the prevalence of negative stereotypes. In effect, this is not a single task, but rather an aspect of all the tasks undertaken in the local development of the Strategy for Older People and is an essential dimension or underlying principle of all our dealings with older people.

A key area in the development of the Strategy for Older People in Blaenau Gwent is that of promoting the health of older people within the County Borough. Old age is not an illness, but illnesses are more common in old age. If age alone were the cause of any particular symptom or condition, everybody of that age would suffer from it. In fact there are very few changes found universally in the body with ageing that are of everyday significance in health: the most obvious is thinning of the skin through loss of collagen fibres and elasticity. However, a number of physiological functions, such as that of the kidneys and some aspects of immunity do decline with age and there is less reserve to cope with a variety of stresses and insults. It remains true that it is doing older people a great disservice to say, "it's just your age", even though that is a very common explanation for physical and mental pathology among older people themselves.

As stated above old age is not an illness or a disease process, but it must be recognised that it can be a retrograde biological change, which leads to decreased powers of survival and adjustment. The rate of this process varies from individual to individual, from organ to organ and even from cell type to cell type. Individual differences arise not only from heredity, but also from the environment and the ravages of life both physical and mental. This process occurs in all people after they have reached their peak of growth in their early twenties. From this time on the states of active growth and involution vary, as people grow older. The degenerative processes gradually take over and continue at a faster rate than active growth. Nonetheless, active growth does continue to some degree throughout the life span - injuries heal, blood cells are replaced and the heart hypertrophies in hypertension.

There are several dimensions of enjoying good health for older people and these can be classified as follows:

- **Physical health.** This is, perhaps the most obvious dimension of health, and is concerned with the mechanistic functioning of the body.
- **Mental health.** By mental health, it is meant the ability to think clearly and coherently and to be free from the functional disorders of neurosis and psychosis and the organic disorders of the dementias. This can be distinguished from emotional and social health, although there is a close association between the three.
- **Emotional health.** This means the ability to recognise emotions such as fear, joy, grief and anger to express such emotions appropriately.

Emotional or 'affective' health also means coping with stress, tension, depression and anxiety.

- **Social health.** Social health means the ability to interact and make and maintain relationships with other people.
- **Spiritual health.** This, for some people, is connected with religious beliefs and practices; for other people it is to do with personal creeds, principles of behaviour and ways of achieving peace of mind and being at peace with oneself.
- **Societal health.** The above consider health at the level of the individual, but a person's health is inextricably related to everything surrounding that person. It is impossible to be healthy in a 'sick' society which does not provide resources for basic physical and emotional needs. For example, older people obviously cannot be healthy if they cannot afford the necessities of food, clothing and shelter, nor can they be healthy if their human rights are denied. Older people cannot be healthy when their contribution to society is undervalued, and they cannot be healthy where ageism undermines their human worth, self-esteem and social relationships. Retired or unemployed older people cannot be healthy in a society which only values people in paid employment, and it is very unlikely that older people can be healthy in areas which lack basic services and facilities such as health care, social care, housing, transport, recreation and leisure.

Health promotion via the development of the Strategy for Older People in Blaenau Gwent will be about raising the health status of older people within the community. By health promotion is meant improving the health of older people by advancing, supporting, encouraging and placing it higher on personal and public agendas.

It can be seen that major determinants of health are social, economic and environmental. The most commonly quoted definition of health is that presented by the World Health Organisation: '**health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity**'.

(W.H.O.1946)

Health promotion comprises efforts to enhance positive health and prevent ill health, through overlapping spheres of health education, illness/disease prevention and health protection, aspects, which are often outside individual or even collective control. Therefore, a fundamental aspect of health promotion for older people in Blaenau Gwent is that it aims to empower older people to have more control over aspects of their lives, which affect their health. These twin elements – improving health and having more control over it – are fundamental to the aims and processes of health promotion for older people.

For most people who now retire, there will be at least ten years and for many twenty years of active healthy life for them to enjoy. Health promotion comprises efforts to enhance positive health and prevent ill health through the overlapping areas of health education, health protection, illness prevention and environmental health. The prevention of ill health and disability is important at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. It is essential that older people have equity of access to the full range of health and social care including acute services. Through positive health promotion for older people via the implementation of the Strategy for Older People, Blaenau Gwent's aims are:

- To prolong and facilitate the independent living of older people in the community.
- To enable older people to lead full and active lives.
- To prevent disease, or to detect and treat it early.
- To mitigate suffering due to disability and disease, and to minimise pre-death dependence.
- To provide sympathetic medical and social care and support in the terminal phase of life.
- To keep to a minimum the number and length of episodes of hospital care.
- To provide the most satisfactory achievable quality of life for older people who need continuing care in a nursing or residential home.

Health promotion and prevention of ill health involves a multi-agency approach, which involves:

- General Practitioners
- Practice Nurses
- Community Nurses
- Health Visitors
- Social Workers
- Occupational Therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Health Promotion Professionals
- Local Health Board

- Local Health Trust
- Optometrists
- Podiatrists
- Dentists
- Pharmacists
- Home Carers
- Voluntary Sector
- Private Sector
- Housing Department
- Leisure Department
- And all other agencies involved in work with older people.

This will be achieved in Blaenau Gwent by such agencies and professionals working in partnership with older people, their carers and families to ensure health promotion, health education, use of available social benefits (financial help and services) and early recognition of disease and disability.

Key assumptions about health in old age will be taken note of:

- Old age is not an illness or disease process but a normal stage of life.
- Ageing is associated with less capacity to recover quickly or completely from illness and that this may necessitate help to maintain self care capacity.
- The promotion of health in old age should be directed towards the promotion of good physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual, societal and environmental function, as well as the prevention of disease and disability.
- Functional ability in old age can be strengthened through leisure activities/training/stimulation/education and/or avoiding factors associated with ill health.
- Many measures, which affect the health of older people, lie beyond the formal health sector.

- Primary prevention to improve lifestyle such as stopping smoking, better diet and exercise are valuable for older as well as young people. Measures such as retirement training and bereavement counselling may also be important.

Areas of significant importance in improving the quality of life of older people through health promotion are:

Diet

Malnutrition and sub nutrition in older people in the United Kingdom can be due to poverty, it can be difficult for many older people to obtain and appropriate diet due to limited financial resources. High prices in local shops, price differentials 'healthy foods', for example, making those containing fibre, more expensive. But malnutrition and sub nutrition can also be a likely consequence of eccentricity, illness, limited access to vehicles, personal mobility problems preventing access to hypermarkets situated on the outskirts of urban areas, or isolation and loneliness. Poorly and inappropriately packaged foods can all contribute to making healthy choices particularly difficult for older people.

Over nutrition with excess of carbohydrate, fat and calories is of greater frequency than malnutrition and these excesses are often associated with a deficient amount of dietary fibre. Other important factors related to diet in older people are as follows:

- The incidence of sub nutrition in older people is difficult to determine as dietary assessment by recall (of food eaten) or weighed surveys are unreliable in many older people and particularly the most vulnerable.
- There can be considerable doubt regarding recommended intakes – older people may need more or less than some other groups of people in society.
- Poor diets may be either the result or the cause of declining health.
- The factors of social isolation and bereavement are important.
- Low blood levels of vitamins and minerals are common in older people, but their significance is uncertain.

Causes of nutritional deficiency in older people can be due to:

- Inability to shop or to prepare foods, for example, in older people who have dementia, depression, poor mobility due to arthritis, neurological disease or visual impairment, or as stated previously isolation loneliness or eccentricity.
- Impaired appetite may be part of a clinical picture of general malaise, may be due to biochemical abnormalities, a consequence of the side

effects of medication, or may indicate underlying gastrointestinal disease.

- Malabsorption due to disorders such as Chron's Disease, adult celiac disease, lymphoma etc.

All need to be taken into account when assessing nutritional adequacy in older people. Therefore, assessment of nutritional status in older people can be a difficult task for health professionals. But what is known that poor nutrition in older people can lead to several deficiencies such as: Vitamin B deficiency, Vitamin C deficiency, Vitamin D deficiency, Folate deficiency and fibre deficiency.

Exercise

The proportion of people taking regular exercise decreases with age, while regular exercise improves strength, stamina, suppleness and well-being. There is an associated decrease in the frequency of osteoporosis in older people who indulge in regular exercise. There is a need for improved access to safe local facilities such as bicycle lanes and supervised sessions in exercise and sport at leisure centres. Other activities such as walking, swimming and dancing should be readily available and easily accessed.

Transport

In order to access the above and indeed, to ensure a good quality of life for older people in Blaenau Gwent older people need accessible, affordable and safe transport in order to reduce dependency, isolation, social exclusion and depression. This will require reliable local buses and assorted transport schemes. The provision of good transport networks is crucial to promoting social inclusion. It enables older people to travel to shops, to visit family and friends, to attend religious events, to use educational and leisure facilities and for easier access to health care. The Strategy for Older People will therefore need to include issues particularly pertinent to transport for older people. It is recognised that older people often have special needs for transport to the facilities described above because the transport available is often inaccessible, insecure or expensive. Thus, developmental work with the transport department and other departments of the local authority and the voluntary sector to offer specialist or adapted transport to specific services such as day centres, or for general social purposes, often using volunteer drivers. Door-to-door services, which older people can book by telephone, and which use vehicles equipped for people with disabilities, will be developed and organised locally by the local authority and voluntary associations such as the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations and Help the Aged.

Housing

Housing for older people is another complex area. An essential part of the Strategy for Older People in Blaenau Gwent is an adequate supply of good quality affordable housing to meet the needs of a range of older people, some of whom will have differing disabilities, either in purpose built accommodation or by adapting their own homes, where feasible. Housing for older people can be owner occupied or normal tenancies, but it is also sheltered accommodation or amenity housing. Amenity flats or houses as they are described in Scotland are those easily accessible to older people because they are on the ground floor or have a lift. They also have whole house heating and safety features to meet the needs of older people. This concept is similar to category one sheltered housing in England and Wales. Sheltered housing is basically the same physically although in older schemes there can be stairs up to the first floor. These flats or houses will be generally linked to a warden by an alarm call system and will have a laundry room and communal lounge areas.

Sheltered housing has been seized on by caring professionals and the relatives of older people as being the answer to all the accommodation needs of older people. Many older people do like this form of accommodation because they see it as an alternative to long-term residential care. But it is suitable only for a proportion of older people who like communal – type living and the institutional qualities that are inevitable when large groups of people are housed with a warden. The large numbers of people on waiting lists are usually escaping from housing problems rather than wanting specialist housing. Other resources ought to be adapted so that older people can be afforded a proper choice of suitable accommodation. Imagination is required in terms of aids and adaptations to existing property, insulation grants, chemical toilets and new types of tenancies. Lists of agencies such as workshops for people with disabilities or school woodwork departments who will install a banister or build a ramp should be readily available.

Chemical toilets can be provided and are accessible when an older person is ill or when it is hazardous to go upstairs to a cold bathroom in the winter. A list of suppliers is needed. Shared tenancies or housing with a special care component do not suit many older people, but for those for whom the alternative is residential care they provide an opportunity to live relatively independently. A list of associations that provide joint or specialist housing should be readily available to older people in Blaenau Gwent.

For many older people living in their own homes, funding for equipment and adaptations can be crucial in determining whether they are able to continue living in this accommodation. Blaenau Gwent will look at funding streams to ensure this is increased.

The following have an important role in enabling older people to remain living in their own homes:

- Care and Repair Schemes
- Improvement Grants

- Supporting People Service
- Garden Aid Schemes
- Intermediate Care Services
- Continuing Care Services.

For housing support, staff back up by community and hospital services are essential in order to provide continuing care for individuals. Discharges from hospital need to be well planned and with a realistic appraisal of housing and living circumstances and the support available at that time from health, social care and housing staff. The Local Authority, Local Health Board and Local Health Trust will work closely on developing these services.

In Blaenau Gwent there is potential for greater use of community facilities in some sheltered and care housing, by the wider community. Initiatives such as luncheon clubs and respite care require progressing and there is scope for far more collaboration on this between agencies and departments.

As can be seen the Strategy for Older People has a wide ranging and holistic remit, addressing all aspects of older people's lives. Therefore, all agencies and older people themselves will need to work in strategic alliances and partnerships to ensure the strategy is progressed successfully in Blaenau Gwent.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

As stated at the beginning of this Development Plan the Welsh Assembly Government has set five aims of its Strategy for Older People in Wales. These five aims have specific headings, as follows:

VALUING OLDER PEOPLE

STRATEGIC AIM

To promote and develop older people's capacity to continue to work and learn for as long as they want, and to make an active contribution once they retire.

LIVING LONGER AND HEALTHIER LIVES

STRATEGIC AIM

To promote and improve the health and well being of older people through integrated planning and service delivery frameworks and more responsive diagnostic services.

COPING WITH INCREASING DEPENDENCY: HOUSING, SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

STRATEGIC AIM

To promote the provision of high quality services and support which enable older people to live as independently as possible in a suitable and safe environment and ensure acute, primary and specialist services are organised around and responsive to their needs.

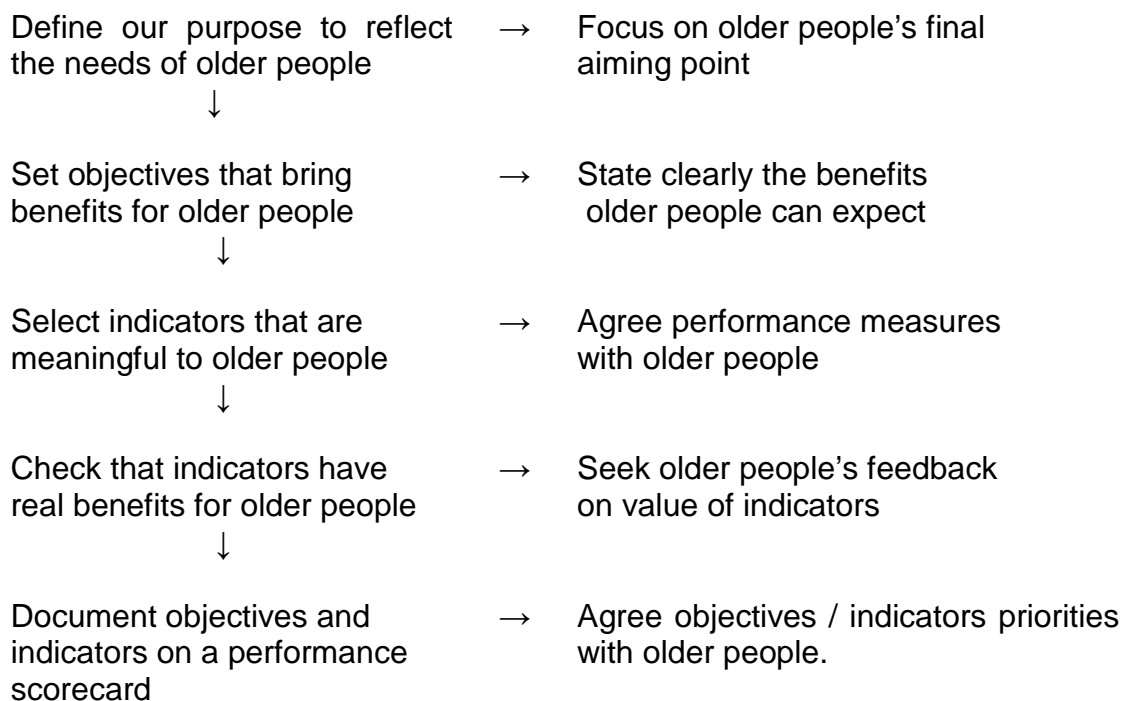
IMPLEMENTATION – MAKING IT HAPPEN

STRATEGIC AIM

To implement the Strategy for Older People in Wales with supporting funding to ensure that it is a catalyst for change and innovation across sectors, improves services for older people and provides the basis for effective planning for an ageing population.

(W.A.G. Strategy for Older People in Wales 2003)

In order to translate this vision into reality the Blaenau Gwent Older Peoples Planning Forum will focus on the strategy and work in partnership with older people to realise the strategic aims of the strategy. This means putting the views of older people first and addressing what they see their needs are and the best ways of meeting these from the strategy. This will be done in the following way:



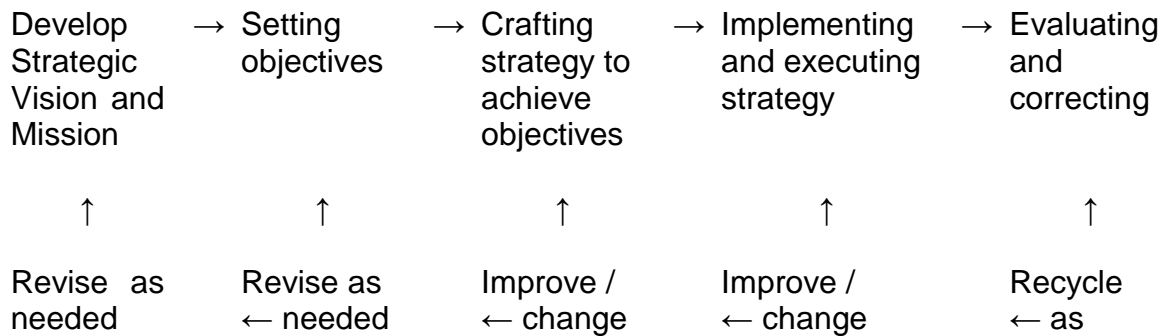
Benefits of the formulation and implementation of the Strategy for Older People in Blaenau Gwent should include:

- A clearly defined purpose of the strategy with the establishment of realistic aims and objectives consistent with the mission in a defined timeframe within Blaenau Gwent's capacity for implementation.
- Communicate those aims and objectives to Blaenau Gwent's constituents.
- Develop a sense of ownership of the strategy.
- Ensure the most effective and efficient use is made of the resources of Blaenau Gwent by focusing these resources on the key priorities.
- Provide a base from which progress can be measured and establish mechanisms for informed change when needed.
- Bringing together of everyone's best and most reasoned efforts have important value in building a consensus about how Blaenau Gwent will achieve its aims and objectives.
- Regularly review the aims and objectives of the strategy.
- Assess performance against these aims and objectives.
- Present consistent instructions to those involved in the strategy implementation in line with the declared aims and objectives.
- Define documents and methods of communication.
- Agree the strategy plan and delegate tasks and duties to those involved.
- Ensure individual actions are accountable.
- Incorporate the strategy plan into the management information systems.
- Set up a reporting system.

The strategic planning steps to be undertaken are:

Mission → Vision → Strategic Objectives → Critical Success Factors → Actions → Measures

Five tasks for ensuring this has been identified:



In progressing the Strategy for Older People in Blaenau Gwent Planning Forum will need to ensure that our planning and implementation systems are robust, with the capacity for timely system change by either anticipating or adapting to environmental change and allowing:

1. Accurate, comprehensive environmental scanning.
2. Accurate articulation of key values, beliefs and assumptions.
3. Freedom to question values, beliefs and assumptions.
4. Creativity to formulate new options.
5. Tolerance of risk involved in courses of planning.

Five questions for the Planning Forum to answer are:

1. Where are we now?
2. Where do we need to be?
3. What do we need to do to get there?
4. What can prevent us getting there?
5. How will we know when we get there?

In addressing the above the planning activities will include:

- Assessing the external environment.
- Assessing internal capacity.
- Developing a vision and mission for the future through the Strategy for Older People.

- Developing aims and objectives for that future.
- Implementing the plan for the strategy.
- Measuring progress and revisiting the plan.

In developing the strategy the Blaenau Gwent Older People's Planning Forum will:

- Adopt a Knowledge Management paradigm.
- Ensure a knowledge value chain as well as an information value chain.
- Ensure Multi-Agency Multi-Disciplinary and older people and carers input.
- Communicate clearly.
- Ensure a clear process of consultation.
- Adhere to Welsh Assembly Government guidance.
- Ensure strategic forward planning.
- Ensure clear vision and mission for the strategy in Blaenau Gwent.
- Build on past achievements and successes.
- Ensure compliance with the strategy.
- Ensure the strategy is an enabling tool for service provision.

In formulating the aims, objectives actions and targets of the strategy a **S.M.A.R.T.E.R.** approach will be adopted:

Specific: Is the activity to which the aims and objectives relate clearly defined? For example, it is difficult for someone to pursue an aim or objective if that aim or objective is ambiguous. Therefore, aims and objectives must be specific and clear.

Measurable: By ensuring the scope of the aims and objectives are clearly defined, will the outcomes sought be visible when the task is completed?

Achievable: By ensuring aims and objectives are set within the correct timescales and there are sufficient resources to meet them, is the entire task, though challenging, possible?

Realistic: By ensuring the aims and objectives are not over-ambitious for the resources available, do we have the necessary resources to bring the strategy to fruition?

Time-Bound: By ensuring realistic target dates are set, the question can be asked are we meeting deadlines set?

Extending: By ensuring the aims and objectives will extend the capabilities of those undertaking them in a developmental manner. And that as a result of the strategy its aims will result in greater cultural appreciation of older people with better services and activities, are the lives of older people enhanced?

Rewarding: How will the strategy benefit older people, their carers, and the community? That in the final analysis the development and implementation of the strategy will be a rewarding experience for those involved and will result in a better society for older people and their families and carers.

In Blaenau Gwent, in addition to the S.M.A.R.T.E.R. Acronym, a further **A** will be added, that of:

Acceptable: Is the strategy being formulated and implemented in Blaenau Gwent acceptable to older people in that it meets their needs in a manner of partnership, empowerment and enablement, and addresses their wishes and aspirations, do older people agree with the strategy in Blaenau Gwent?

The process of the development of the strategy will involve the Older People's Planning Forum in undertaking tasks to meet the agreed aims and objectives. This forum will continually review the targets set and how many have been achieved and indeed, with the knowledge gained are they achievable, and if the strategy development plans needs revising by questioning:

- What is going well in the developmental / planning process?
- What is not going well in the developmental / planning process?
- What is missing, or has been missed but not foreseen?
- What do we need to change in the developmental / planning process?

A technique for doing this will be the **TRAFFIC LIGHT TECHNIQUE**;

	RED – What should we stop doing?
	AMBER – What do we need to consider continuing with or stopping?
	GREEN – What are we doing well that should be imparted to others?

The Traffic Light Technique will be used in conjunction with a **CONTROL POINT IDENTIFICATION CHART**:

Control element	What is likely to go wrong?	How and when will we know?	What will we do about it?	How will it affect strategy implementation?
Quality				
Finance				
Time				
Quantity				
Effectiveness				
Efficiency				

By adopting these questions and techniques the monitoring and reviewing process of the development of the strategy can gradually build up a picture of what aims, objectives. Actions and targets have been met, and the efficacy of the process of planning for them. This will include a process of Logical Incrementalism where strategic management is the process of developing strategy by small, incremental steps rather than by macroscopic grand plans. The **McKinsey 7 S Model** will be employed here which is:

Strategy: The vision and plan – is there a new direction and a need to re-plan?

Systems: Computer and manual processes – are we more efficient; where can we improve?

Staff: The affected parties – are they familiar with the changes and have they accepted them?

Skills: Future knowledge and skills needed – what are the training or recruitment issues?

Style: Methods of communication – are there fewer misunderstandings?

Shared Values: Cultures and ethos – are we contradicting or losing sight of who we are?

Structure: Reporting lines and framework – is decision-making enhanced and duplication of effort avoided.

By using the McKinsey 7 S Model we can address not only the outcomes of the strategy, but also the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning and developmental process, and ascertain whether the aims and objectives originally set were correct, as the aims describe the ultimate goal, the purpose of the strategy, while the objectives describe the steps that are necessary to achieve that goal.

Other methods to be adopted in the development of the Strategy for Older People in Blaenau Gwent will be:

- **S.W.O.T Analysis:** Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.
- **P.E.S.T.L.E. Analysis:** Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental, factors to be analysed.
- **CRITICAL PATH Analysis.**
- **GANTT CHARTS.**

The implementation of the Strategy for Older People needs to be in the form of a clear and well-structured process as follows:

Set quality and objectives → Plan and schedule time and cost → Implement the plan → Evaluate results of the plan

In order to undertake this, the process of **S.Q.I.D.** as a basis of information gathering will be adopted.

S = Speed of response of strategy to older people and carers enquires and requirements.

How quickly do we need the strategy? How will it improve lives of older people.

Q = Quality of process and advice.

Why do we want the strategy? What must it enable us to do? What must it be compatible with?

I = Information must be able to be fed into the strategy and should cross-traditional agency functions without difficulty.

Will we be able to use the strategy the moment it is in place? What are the consequences of mistakes being made during the changeover? How are the desired outcomes expressed to those involved?

D = Delivery time to older people, carers and families must be the shortest necessary to complete the task.

Is there a learning cycle to experience and, if so for how long?

A **BALANCED SCORECARD** will be build into the process. This approach provides a way of translating strategic objectives into those performance measures, which are really critical. Defined as strategic management and measurement, that measures performance and links strategic objectives to comprehensive indicators, the Balanced Scorecard is a powerful framework for aligning strategic objectives, management systems and corporate performance. The key to the success of the system is that it must comprise an unified, integrated set of indicators that measure key activities and processes at the core of the operating environment. The Balanced Scorecard concentrates measures on four key strategic areas known as perspectives, these are:

- Financial Perspective
- Customer Perspective
- Internal Business Process Perspective
- Innovation and Learning Perspective

The Balanced Scorecard approach will be adapted to meet the developmental and planning process of the implementation of the Strategy for Older People in Blaenau Gwent.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

In Blaenau Gwent six broad categories of Performance Indicators will be adopted for the strategy:

- **QUANTITATIVE.** Based on numbers and amounts of input and output.
- **FINANCIAL.** Based on cost.
- **QUALITATIVE.** Based on how good the activities of the strategy are.
- **PROCESS.** Based on how decisions are made and how people are involved in the activity.
- **OUTCOMES.** Based on what happens as a result of the activity.
- **COMPARATIVE.** Based on comparing what Blaenau Gwent does with what other County Boroughs do.

Performance relates to what Blaenau Gwent does in implementing the Strategy for Older People, the services it will provide and the activities it will organise. The above Performance Indicators are ways to measure or assess specific aspects of the strategies implementation.

Performance Expectation or **Performance Standards** will be used to define an agreed minimum level of performance.

Performance Targets will be used as commitments to improve the standard of performance within a certain period. Targets can only be used if expectations or standards are clear.

As stated Blaenau Gwent will adopt the above six categories of Performance Indicators and they will be utilised as follows:

QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS

Indicators based on quantity are the easiest to measure. Numbers or statistics will be collected and collated which will then be assessed against any targets, which have been set. Quantitative indicators will be used as performance measures, because they will measure what is going into and coming out of the strategy.

FINANCIAL INDICATORS

For financial assessment Blaenau Gwent must be aware of the total cost of implementing the Strategy for Older People and of the services and activities it will provide, not just direct costs but also indirect costs and unit cost.

QUALITATIVE INDICATORS

Qualitative indicators will be used to assess not how much is provided by the strategy or how much it costs, but how well it is functioning and how good it is in Blaenau Gwent.

Qualitative indicators will be divided into those which are considered objective (for example, assessment against externally agreed standards, or by an external assessor) and those, which are considered to be subjective (for example, user satisfaction, or self assessment). But it is recognised that even objective indicators are based on subjective assumptions about what does and does not constitute a good strategy.

Qualitative indicators will not only include the activities of the strategy itself, but the way and how well it is managed.

Quality Assurance measures will be used as they refer to the process of agreeing quality standards and targets, implementing procedures to reach the targets and regularly monitoring the results against the standards and targets.

It is important to guard against setting standards defined solely by professionals and agencies or others who are not actually the recipients of the activities or services provided by the strategy. The process of setting quality standards may involve long and at times complex processes of determining, through consultation with older people, what they consider to be high quality activities and services.

PROCESS INDICATORS

Process indicators will be used to focus on assessing the ways in which decisions are made regarding the strategy and its activities. For the Strategy for Older People in Wales to succeed in Blaenau Gwent the involvement of older people in its formulation and implementation is seen as being far more important than quantities or costs. But it may prove very difficult to assess levels of involvement of older people in policy issues and other broad decisions being made in Blaenau Gwent. Despite these difficulties Blaenau Gwent will develop ways to assess both quantity and quality of involvement of older people in policy decisions emanating from the Strategy for Older People.

OUTCOMES INDICATORS

Outcomes indicators are what happen as a result of the work undertaken through the strategy. They can only be assessed if there is some way to test or follow up what has happened after an activity has been undertaken or a service provided. To assess some outcomes it will be necessary to have information about what the situation was before the strategy was implemented. Therefore, Blaenau Gwent will need to be clear about what it is assessing and will need to ensure it has procedures in place for collecting the information, it is usually not difficult to assess at least some immediate or short-term results. In the longer term, Blaenau Gwent will want to assess the impact of the strategy on the lives of older people. This may require fairly sophisticated monitoring and review procedures.

COMPARATIVE INDICATORS

Blaenau Gwent will compare itself with other County Boroughs in its methodology of implementing the Strategy for Older People. This involves comparing numbers, costs, quantity, quality and outcomes to those of other County Boroughs. A method to be employed in doing this is that of **Benchmarking**.

Benchmarking will involve comparing Blaenau Gwent with other County Boroughs who are considered to be operating at a very high standard. Benchmarking is a management tool that will help Blaenau Gwent improve its performance in the implementation of the Strategy for Older People. It will involve comparing aspects of performance in Blaenau Gwent with those of other County Boroughs. The purpose will be to identify the best achievements, for example, in terms of delivery and reliability. Blaenau

Gwent will then change some or all of its practices in order to try and match the best County Boroughs. Benchmarking is the process of identifying, sharing, using knowledge and best practices. It focuses on how to improve any given process by exploiting 'best in class' approaches, rather than merely measuring best performance. Finding, studying and implementing best practices will provide the greatest opportunity for gaining a strategic, operational and financial advantage. By benchmarking against the County Boroughs who are 'best in class' and who are meeting their Performance Indicators, Blaenau Gwent will discover how to improve its performance towards the implementation of the Strategy for Older People.

Benchmarking will allow Blaenau Gwent to discover which County Boroughs with whom are best to model their processes and progress. Using information collected from benchmarking, Blaenau Gwent will gain data to determine 'best in class' performance and to see where those Authorities fits within its own practice and processes, as well as dissimilar practices and processes. Blaenau Gwent will then also have the ability to quickly identify best practices. Then by collating this knowledge effectively set improvement targets and goals. Blaenau Gwent may discover that a process they thought was substandard may actually be above standards of others and has no need to benchmark against it, as there is nothing worse than benchmarking the wrong process.

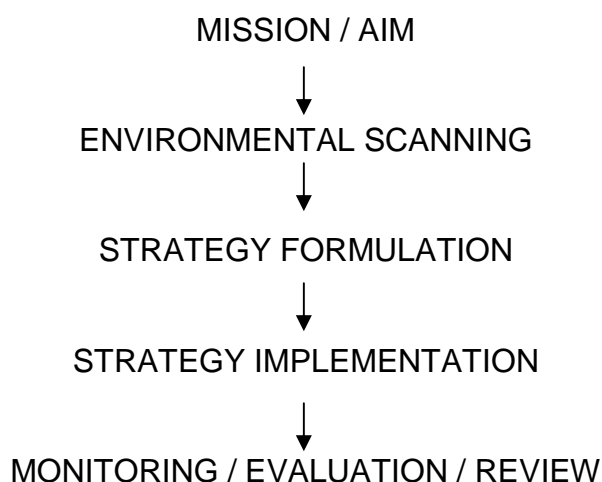
IMPLICATIONS OF THE ABOVE PROCESSES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN WALES IN BLAENAU GWENT

By adopting the above forms of Performance Indicators and benchmarking systems Blaenau Gwent will be able to clarify:

- What it is trying to do and achieve through its strategy implementation
- What it defines as a good strategy for older people in Blaenau Gwent
- How it might prove it is providing good activities and services through the strategy
- How these indicators can be incorporated into contracts and service level agreements for services for older people.

STEPS TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

In developing the Strategy for Older People in Wales, Blaenau Gwent will undertake the following process:



Blaenau Gwent has been working to develop the following strategic objectives for the implementation of the Strategy for Older People in Wales:

- Help older people and their carers to maximise their income and claim available benefits and entitlements, to enable personal choice, which will help them to enjoy better health quality of life.
- Expand opportunities for older people and their carers to participate in, and contribute to, community life and provide help to prevent social isolation and social exclusion, including improved access to advice and information.
- Ensure that older people and their carers have a safe and secure environment to live in, to reduce fear of crime and promote their personal safety and well-being.
- Ensure that older people and their carers are enabled to live in houses of their choice, which best meets, their needs and promote their independence with funding for support.
- Help older people and their carers to stay well by ways of preventing ill health and accidents amongst older people through health promotion, health education and health protection. But that if succumbing to illness or accidents that they receive the right services in the right place at the right time and delivered to the right personnel.
- Help older people and their carers to highlight and identify in confidence and without fear of repercussions, tackle discrimination on the grounds of ageism wherever it occurs, particularly in living and working environments and with regard to services to ensure that older people are informed and not discriminated against on the grounds of their age, thus ensuring equitable provision.

- Ensure older people and their carers can go where they want to safely, conveniently and affordably in transport that meets their needs.
- Ensure that easier access and opportunities to participate in leisure, recreation, culture and sharing of skills are available to all older people and their carers.
- Work towards effective, integrated working and information sharing across all agencies to maximise the use of all available resources for the benefit of older people and their carers.
- Ensure that by working in partnership with older people and their carers that there is opportunity for real involvement of older people and their carers in planning and delivery of services to meet their needs and that they have a stronger voice in policy information.
- Ensure that older people are afforded the opportunity to take part in intergenerational practice.
- Work with employers to enable older people to remain in employment for as long as they want.
- Work with older people who wish to set up businesses of their own.
- Ensure older people are able to access education, training and life long learning.
- Ensure older people are empowered and enabled to continue to develop and realise their own self-determination.

The Strategy for Older People in Blaenau Gwent will aspire to promote and encourage the active participation of older people in all aspects of life of society to the level which older people themselves wish. Blaenau Gwent will also recognise that when older people need services they have the right to the same high standards of service as any other member of the community, provided by agencies who work in partnership together to ensure that older people receive the right services in the right place at the right time delivered by the right personnel. In order to achieve this older people have to be involved in the development and reshaping of these services.

Not all older people are the same or have the same needs: older people are not a homogeneous group but are heterogeneous and should be viewed as such. Even apart from cultural, religious and other differences, people of the same age often have very different requirements for services or desires for involvement in community life. These differences must be respected when seeking to engage with older people or to develop services and activities. Ways will be found of engaging older people at the level they desire.

To deliver the vision, mission and aims of the Strategy for Older People, Blaenau Gwent will harness the skills of, all sections of the community – individuals and their families, community groups, politicians, voluntary, statutory and private agencies.

PLANNING PROCESSES

In Blaenau Gwent it is recognised that there are several different planning processes that will require adoption for the implementation of the Strategy for Older People the planning process will be divided in several ways:

- **Strategic Planning.** Long-term, with a broad overview of the strategy, current and new activities.
- **Tactical or Action Planning.** Steps to implement the strategic plan and reach long-term goals.
- **Recurrent or Cyclical Planning.** For events or activities, which occur regularly, for example, reports to the Welsh Assembly Government.
- **Project Planning.** For specific, time-limited pieces of work regarding the strategy.
- **Operational Planning.** To ensure the implementation team is functioning smoothly and able to carry out the work it needs to do.
- **Day-to-Day Planning.** Specific actions that will need to be done immediately.
- **Contingency Planning.** Allowing for unforeseen circumstances and problematic areas.

One of the methods that will be employed by Blaenau Gwent in the development of the planned strategy is that of the **Action Spiral**. This starts with the pressure to bring about the changes envisaged by the Strategy for Older People and includes:

- Clarifying or confirming Blaenau Gwent's core purpose and broad objectives.
- An assessment of needs, pressures, demands and the context in which development will take place.
- Collecting information.
- Setting objectives.
- Planning.

- Implementing.
- Monitoring achievements against short-term and longer-term objectives.
- Reviewing.
- Evaluation, which becomes part of the assessment of needs, pressures and demands for future developments.

The Action Spiral is appropriate regardless of whether development is based on **expansion** – deliberately taking on new activities or expanding existing ones – or **evolution** – letting new activities emerge from existing ones. It is also extremely useful for involving older people in decision-making, strategy formulation and strategy implementation.

An Action Spiral is a method of Management by Objectives (MBO). MBO rigidly applied can restrict rather than enhance development programmes. But sensibly used it can provide a clear and shared framework for setting priorities, focusing people's energies, focusing resources and achieving real identifiable results.

As can be seen strategy as a plan is concerned with a comprehensive, rational and linear approach to objective setting, implementation and appraisal, proceeding in a logical manner. Therefore, Blaenau Gwent the above methods of planning and implementation will be incorporated with a classical strategic planning method known as the **Argenti Model**, as follows:

ARGENTI MODEL OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

1. Target Setting

- Clarify Blaenau Gwent objectives
- Set target levels of objectives.

2. Gap Analysis

- Forecast future performance on current strategy.
- Identify gaps between forecasts and targets.

3. Strategic Appraisal

- External (environmental) appraisal.
- Internal appraisal.
- Identify competitive advantage.

- Redefine targets in light of stage 3.
- Information for service plans.

4. Strategy Formulation

- Generate strategic options.
- Evaluate strategic options (against targets and internal / external appraisals).

5. Strategy Implementation

- Draw up action plans and budgets.
- Monitor and control.

Although the above processes for development, planning and implementation of the Strategy for Older People in Wales has been adopted by Blaenau Gwent they are not set in stone and will be modified if, and when, necessary and other techniques will be adopted if, and when needed.

It is envisaged that the strategy will aid Blaenau Gwent to meet the key issues for developing the role of older people in shaping their own lives and that of the community as well as improving the services provided by:

- Listening to the views of older people through consultation.
- Engaging with older people in the development of the local decision making process.
- Meeting the needs of older people more fully through improved information.
- Meeting the needs of older people more fully through better delivery of services and delivering these services in different ways.
- Result in a better understanding of older people's needs for assistance rather than just care.
- Result in better housing design and repair services to help older people remain in their homes.
- Enable older people to influence transport provision for shopping, leisure and learning.
- Ensure older people and agencies work together to improve community safety.

- Maximising the contribution of older people in education, training, employment and volunteering.
- Tackling ageism and discrimination and promoting positive images of older people by holding local older peoples events to promote positive images.
- Show that older people are well able to contribute as active participants in their communities.
- Build partnerships with the local press to challenge negative media stereotyping of older people.
- Introduce age diversity policies for employment practices.
- Prevent isolation and loneliness.
- Ensure older people do not suffer social exclusion and are valued as full citizens of Blaenau Gwent through social inclusion practices.
- That older people can readily access advice and guidance that will empower and enable them to self-determination through making their own decisions and being in control of their own lives.
- If problems arise, that older people can readily access co-ordinated assessment and services at a level appropriate to the scale of the problem and prevent deterioration.
- That older people are actively supported in their independence.
- That the building of a public environment in which older people feel safe to go our and enjoy.
- Reduce accidents and falls within the public environment through strategies to prevent this.
- That the carers and families of older people are actively supported.

One of the main challenges for the Strategy for Older People in Wales is to ensure that older people have a stronger voice that will continue to be heard within society and the implementation of this strategy by Blaenau Gwent will endeavour to ensure this.

During development of the strategy in Blaenau Gwent it will be ensured that the guidance of the **Better Government for Older People (BGOP) in Wales** initiative will be adhered to and implemented.

It is of utmost importance that the Strategy for Older People is incorporated as an integral component of all other strategies, plans and policies produced by Blaenau Gwent, for example, the Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategy, the Community Plan, the Housing Support and Operational Plan, the Supporting People Plan and all other such documents, as well as the departmental Business Plans that are produced.

Blaenau Gwent now needs to appoint a Cabinet Member to the position of **Older People's Champion**. This will be undertaken in July 2004 after the Local Elections have taken place.

Action Plan

VALUING OLDER PEOPLE

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
1a	That older people are treated with respect and dignity and are afforded a life of high self-esteem.	By working with the community and older people themselves to increase the recognition and therefore values of the contribution older people make to society.	Older People's Planning Forum to discover most efficacious methodologies for this by benchmarking against best in class authorities and by statutory and voluntary sectors setting up older peoples forums. To promote older peoples image through the media and other advertising mechanisms.	October 2004 and continuous.
1b	That positive images of older people are realised and negative stereotypes are eradicated.	By working with the community and older people themselves to increase the awareness of the skills, experience and knowledge older people posses that will enhance, strengthen and develop the community.	To commence working with communities to promote positive images of older people and thus negate negative stereotypes.	October 2004 and continuous.
1c	That discrimination towards older people through ageist attitudes in eliminated.	Through consultation and partnership working with older people identify the ways in which older people are discriminated against and develop methods to counteract this by giving older people a higher profile and a stronger voice in the community of Blaenau Gwent.	Identify where, how, what and when discrimination takes place and give older people a stronger voice and profile in the community to counter this.	Continuous.

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
1d	Older people are empowered and enabled to make positive choices in their lives.	By communicating with older people and working in partnership with them to develop strategies, policies and plans that affect them and the community as a whole.	Have a greater representation from older people on planning and policy making forum.	September 2004.
1e	Older people are enabled to make positive contributions to and have the dignity of valued social roles in the society of Blaenau Gwent.	By ensuring older people have a stronger more prominent voice in society by using the experience and knowledge of national developments such as the Better Government for Older People in Wales Projects and developing advocacy services.	Promote the inclusion of older people in all aspects of society and including them in projects such as Better Government for Older People in Wales.	Continuous.
1f	That social exclusion is eliminated and older people are afforded full citizenship.	By developing opportunities for older people to remain in employment, access education and training, undertake volunteering, the development of suitable transport, decreasing fears of crime and maximising income so that older people are not a marginalised group on the edge of society.	Multi-agency working groups in partnership with older people to recognise ways of realising this. Encouraging inclusion of older people in all aspects of the community therefore counteracting their marginalisation.	August 2004.

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
1g	Older people are enabled to grow in relationships.	By ensuring older people can indulge in all the activities of the community and are engaged in intergenerational practice to establish good relationships with people of all ages.	Set up intergenerational practice and work with all agencies towards the inclusion of older people in all activities within the community.	November 2004 and continuous.
1h	Older people are enabled to share in ordinary places and activities.	By ensuring older people can take a full part in the community by ensuring good quality affordable transport and proper access to all buildings and facilities.	Working parties to discover best methods of improving access to community facilities and improving amenities. This work to include older people.	December 2004 and continuous.

CHANGING SOCIETY

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
2a	Older people to be afforded the opportunity to engage in life long learning.	By engaging with the older people, the Education Department and other training agencies and vehicles to develop educational and training opportunities for older people to enjoy lifelong learning and development by the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.	Ensure Education Department have representative on Older People's Planning Forum and work with older people to realise this aim.	July 2004.
2b	Older people to be able to remain in active employment for as long as they wish or are able.	By engaging with local employers, employment agencies, the Independent Labour Market and older people recognise the experience, skills and knowledge older people can bring to the job market.	Work with employers, employment agencies and Independent Labour Market to progress this aim.	January 2005 and continuous.
2c	Older people to be enabled to acquire new skills in developing areas of Information Technology.	By ensuring older people can access course within the locality to acquire the training needed for skills in Information Technology by working with colleges and other agencies that provide this.	Work with schools, colleges and other establishments to set up training courses and/or improve access to I.T. courses for older people.	January 2005 and continuous.

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
2d	Older people to be enabled to engage in entrepreneurship and start up business enterprises.	By working with older people and the Independent Labour Market to enable older people to access relevant funding opportunities and the advice needed to undertake business start up and entrepreneurship.	Independent Labour Market working with older people to give advice and information on best methods of undertaking this aim and ensuring information regarding business start up is available to older people.	February 2005.
2e	That U.K. legislation on the grounds of employment discrimination is implemented in Blaenau Gwent.	By ensuring that when legislation is developed and statute that it is implemented in Blaenau Gwent and that the relevant Legal Departments are fully engaged in this.	Enact legislation as soon as available as statute.	

LIVING LONGER AND HEALTHIER LIVES

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
3a	Older people will enjoy good physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual and societal health and well-being.	By undertaking active Health Promotion, Health Education and Health Protection measures raising the health status of older people within the community.	All agencies to focus on the health promotion, health education and health protection of older people.	July 2004 and continuous.
3b	That the social, economic and environmental determinants of good health in older people are fully established in Blaenau Gwent.	By ensuring the Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategy fully address's the determinants of good health and illness and disease prevention in older people in Blaenau Gwent.	Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategy being compiled.	August 2004.
3c	That the independent living of older people in the community is facilitated and prolonged.	By ensuring that Health Services, Social Care Services, Housing Services and Transport Service, work together to ensure this and that the interface between primary and secondary health care work together in a manner of partnership to ensure the highest quality services are provided to older people.	By Older People's Planning Forum formulating tactical, operational and strategic plans to work towards meeting this aim.	December 2004.

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
3d	To enable older people to lead full and active lives.	By ensuring close strategic alliances and partnerships between older people and Health Services, Social care Services, Leisure Services, Housing Services and Recreational Services work together to ensure this aspect of older people's lives are fully addressed.	Ensure greater representation of older people on planning forum to work with agencies to progress this aim.	August 2004 and continuous.
3f	To prevent disease, or to detect and treat it early.	By ensuring high quality Primary and Secondary Health Care Services are developed and that there is close working between them and Social Care agencies with a fully developed Unified Assessment Process.	Local Health Board, Local Health Trust, Local Authority to develop these services.	September 2004.
3g	To mitigate suffering due to disability and disease and to minimise dependence.	By early diagnosis and treatment intervention services to ensure older people receive the correct health and social care services in order to ensure they are enabled to enjoy independence for as long as possible and to live their lives in a pain free manner.	Local Health Board, Local Health Trust, Local Authority to develop these services.	September 2004.

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
3h	To provide sympathetic medical and social care in the terminal phase of life.	By developing comprehensive continuing care services and high quality palliative care provision.	Local Health Board, Local Health Trust, Local Authority to develop these services.	Continuous
3i	To keep to a minimum the number and length of episodes of hospital care.	By developing continuing care services and other health and social care services including intermediate care to meet the needs of older people if and when they become ill to remain at home and receive the care they need within the environment of their own homes.	Local Health Board, Local Health Trust, Local Authority to develop these services.	December 2004.
3j	To provide the most satisfactory achievable quality of life for older people who need continuing care in a nursing or residential home.	By ensuring a thriving independent and statutory sector provision of residential and nursing care that meets the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000 and also meets the needs of older people who need these services in a high quality manner. And that all staff involved in the care of older people are adequately trained and have the correct skills.	Local Health Board, Local Health Trust, Local Authority and independent sector to develop these services.	January 2005

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
3j	To provide high quality health promotion, health education and health protection services and measures.	By working with older people and Health Promotion agencies to improve the health of older people by advancing, supporting, encouraging and placing it higher on personal and public agendas.	All agencies to consult with older people to discover best methods of undertaking and meeting this aim. Benchmark against authorities who are best in class.	November 2004 and continuous.

COPING WITH INCREASING DEPENDENCY: HOUSING, SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
4a	To ensure an adequate supply of good quality affordable housing is available that meets the needs of a range of older people, some of whom will have differing disabilities.	By the Housing Department supported by a multi-agency working party to undertake a Gap analysis of current housing stock and develop accommodation that meets the needs of the wide range of older people.	Set up working party to progress this.	September 2004.
4b	To increase the availability of purpose built accommodation.	By working with Housing Department and other Housing Agencies to develop and increase the range of purpose built housing and accommodation.	Set up working party to progress this.	May 2006.
4c	To ensure a programme of adaptation is developed to allow older people to remain living in their own homes where, and for as long as is feasible.	By ensuring that the Gap analysis highlights homes that can be adapted to meet the needs of older people to enable them to live within their own home environment.	Housing Department with support from other agencies to commence this.	September 2004.

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
4d	To ensure high quality care and repair schemes function in Blaenau Gwent.	By ensuring Care and Repair schemes focus on the needs of older people and ensure their access to these schemes.	Working party to be set up to analyse and progress this.	November 2004.
4e	Improvement grants are readily available and accessible to older people.	By ensuring older people are enabled to access these grants in an uncomplicated manner with limited bureaucracy.	Department of Works and Pensions to progress this through the Older People's Planning Forum.	January 2005 and continuous.
4f	To ensure the Supporting People service offers high quality support to older people.	By ensuring the Supporting People service is adequately resourced and focused to meet the needs of older people.	Work with Supporting People service to ensure older people are a high priority.	September 2004 and continuous.
4g	That garden aid schemes are fully operational.	By working with agencies that provide such support to increase their level and for older people to be able to access these.	Discover what agencies are available to do this work in Blaenau Gwent.	October 2004.

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
4h	That intermediate care services are available and to the highest quality.	By undertaking multi-agency working to develop intermediate care services.	Multi-agency working party to progress this.	November 2004.
4i	Continuing care services are established.	By undertaking Gap analysis on continuing care services and undertaking further developmental work.	Multi-agency working party to progress this.	November 2004.
4j	That support and back-up for housing support staff by community and hospital services are readily available.	By ensuring that health and social care services have systems and protocols in place to ensure rapid response and support to housing support staff as and when needed.	Multi-agency working party to progress this and development of Unified Assessment Process.	December 2004.
4k	That greater use is made of community facilities in sheltered and care housing by the wider community by initiatives of luncheon clubs and respite care.	By developing luncheon clubs and respite care facilities in sheltered accommodation and residential establishments.	Social Services and Housing Department to undertake work in progressing this.	November 2005.

IMPLEMENTATION – MAKING IT HAPPEN

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
5a	To appoint an Older People’s Champion .	To ensure a cabinet member with sufficient status and who is empathic and committed to older peoples issues is appointed to the position of Older People’s Champion to progress the older peoples strategy at cabinet level.	After the local elections have taken place the Chief Executive of Blaenau Gwent to consult with council members who would be the most appropriate cabinet member to undertake the role of Older People’s Champion .	July 2004.
5b	To ensure Performance Indicators described in this plan are fully developed.	By fully adopting the six levels of Performance Indicators i.e. Quantitative, Financial, Qualitative, Process, Outcomes and Comparative.	All those involved in the strategy to ensure Performance Indicators are established and adhered to and to develop Performance Management and Measurement processes.	October 2004.
5c	To ensure a clearly defined purpose of the Strategy for Older People, with the establishment of realistic aims and objectives consistent with the vision and mission of the Welsh Assembly Government in the development of	By modifying and adapting this development plan whenever changes are required and recognising when the plan deviates from the main vision and mission. But also recognising that the environment is constantly changing and that we operate in a V.U.C.A. environment which is an acronym for Volatile, Uncertain, Complex Ambiguous.	Traffic light and Control Point Identification Charts to be developed and incorporated in all developmental work towards the strategy.	October 2004.

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
5c	the Strategy for Older People in Wales is accomplished in a defined timeframe within Blaenau Gwent's capacity for implementation.			
5d	To have in place clear systems of communication to communicate those aims and objectives to the constituents of Blaenau Gwent.	By using all available communication channels including public areas and the media as well as the communication systems of agencies to provide regular updates on development and ensuring the aims and objectives are understood by everyone.	Advertising campaign to be undertaken and all agencies to ensure communication channels are fully equipped to provide clear communication and information sharing.	October 2004.
5e	To develop a sense of ownership of the strategy.	By not only consulting with older people their carers and families but by building strategic alliances and partnerships to involve them in the policy process and with greater importance being given to the local needs and aspirations of older people their carers and families in Blaenau Gwent to ensure the strategy is developed and implemented on a local basis.	Recognition that this strategy is to be implemented on a local basis and therefore is the strategy for Blaenau Gwent. Older People to be fully involved and the policy process and consultation takes place on all aspects to ensure that this is their local strategy.	December 2004.

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
5f	Ensure the most effective and efficient use is made of the resources of Blaenau Gwent by focusing these resources on the key priorities.	By ensuring duplication is avoided and that the most urgent areas of the strategy are prioritised to be implemented before further work is undertaken on the other aims and objectives.	Prioritise highest areas of importance and ensure they are communicated clearly with allocation of tasks and specific projects to agencies and individuals.	October 2004.
5g	To provide a base from which progress can be measured and establish mechanisms for informed change when needed.	By utilising the Performance Indicators that will effect good performance management and measurement.	Utilise Performance Indicators and monitor, evaluate and review progress continually in an iterative manner.	October 2004 and continuous.
5h	Bring together everyone's best and most reasoned efforts to have important value in building a consensus about how Blaenau Gwent will achieve its aims and objectives.	By adopting a Knowledge Management paradigm in the Older People's Planning Forum and making use of the knowledge of older people their carers and families as well as all agencies in Blaenau Gwent.	Ensure Knowledge Value Chain as well as an Information Value Chain is incorporated in the development process.	Continuous.

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
5i	Have in place a system of assessment against the aims and objectives.	By continually monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of the developmental process in the implementation of the strategy and that it is meeting the needs and aspirations of older people and through making changes and adaptations to this process as and when necessary.	Incorporate Quality Assurance processes and methodologies to developmental processes and monitor, evaluate and review continually and iteratively.	October 2004 and continuous.
5j	Present consistent instructions to those involved in the strategy implementation in line with the declared aims and objectives.	By ensuring that all those involved in the strategy development are fully informed and given clear guidelines that are not ambiguous and do not involve unnecessary changes by adhering to the vision and mission.	Give clear and consistent instruction and information through a process of transparency ensuring that opaque elements are eliminated.	Continuous.
5k	Define documents for recording and methods of communication.	By compiling clear, concise and specific methods of recording developmental activities and communicating these to all involved via the Older People's Planning Forum.	Develop a clear method of recording and documenting the development process that its transparent and opaque elements are eliminated.	December 2004.
5l	Ensure individual actions are accountable	By agreeing the strategy plan and delegating tasks and duties to all those involved via the Older People's Planning Forum.	Allocate tasks and specific projects and tactical planning to individuals to involve in the strategy for them to lead on these.	Continuous.

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
5m	Incorporate the strategy plan into the management information systems.	By ensuring that the Information Technology systems of the statutory agencies are fully utilised and that intranet systems incorporate information regarding the Strategy for Older People.	Ensure Older People's Strategy incorporated on internet systems.	December 2004.
5n	Ensure all other plans and policies incorporate the Strategy for Older People as an integral component of all policy formulation.	Through the Older People's Champion and strategy co-ordinator ensure that all other planning for policy formulation divisions incorporate fully the Strategy for Older People within any policies or plans they are developing.	Promote work of Older People's Champion . Strategy co-ordinator and Chief Executive to work with Policy Division on policy formulation and implementation.	Continuous.
5o	Older people their carers and families to be fully involved in strategy and policy formulation.	By ensuring that older people their cares and families have representation at the Older People's Planning Forum and that regular older people's forums are held throughout Blaenau Gwent.	With G.A.V.O. identify older people and carers and families to be representatives on Older People's Planning Forum.	October 2004.
5p	Have in place a clear system of consultation with older people their carers and families.	By ensuring they are part of the policy process and using local communication channels such as libraries, Doctors surgeries and the media and developing Older People's Forums for consultation and communication.	With G.A.V.O. set up older people's forum within the community, and undertake advertising campaign.	November 2004.

	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Target Dates
5q	Have a fully developed system of regular monitoring. Evaluation and review of the strategy implementation and its effectiveness and efficiency in meeting the needs of older people, their families and carers.	By utilising the Traffic Light Technique Control Point Identification charts and Gantt charts into the performance management and measurement of the meeting of Performance Indicators and timescales, and that outcomes are clearly recognised in meetings the needs of older people, their carers and families.	Ensure Traffic Light Technique, Control Point Identification charts and Gantt charts are fully utilised in the developmental process of the strategy.	Continuous.

As can be seen from the above Action Plan, in Blaenau Gwent the **S.M.A.R.T.E.R.** approach, described earlier in this Development Plan, is being undertaken in the development and implementation of the **Strategy for Older People in Wales**. What must be made full consideration of is the fact that Aims are the ultimate goals of the strategy, what is envisaged will be in place at the completion of the strategy, and how Blaenau Gwent will differ in its belief systems, values, attitudes, norms and mores towards older people. Objectives are the steps that will be taken to meet and realise those Aims, Actions are the methodologies that will be employed to work through the Objectives and target dates are the timeframes for when it is hoped the development and implementation of the Aims, Objectives and indeed the strategy as a whole will be completed and fully realised.

These Aims, Objectives, Actions and target dates are not concrete and will be continually monitored evaluated and reviewed in order to assess not only whether they are being met but that they are realistic and achievable as well as if they can be extended to include more. This will be undertaken with a continual overview of what the resources of Blaenau Gwent will enable us to achieve and what extra resources will be required.

Therefore, the development of the strategy in Blaenau Gwent will not be static, but a fluid process capable of adaptation and change whenever circumstances arise that necessitate this.

What must also be realised is that although the Strategy for Older People in Wales is an ambitious undertaking, it is a ten-year strategy. Therefore, with diligence, commitment of all those involved and, with the continual support of the Welsh Assembly Government, the vision and mission of this strategy can be realised within Blaenau Gwent County Borough.