

The Ageing Well Initiative: Co-design report

Building a system of care for older people in The Prince Charles Hospital area

In late October 2018 the Health Alliance hosted a convergence event for the Ageing Well Initiative, bringing together more than 80 stakeholders from across the health and aged care sectors to review, validate and consolidate information gathered from the co-design process to-date.

This co-design report outlines the key themes arising from the co-design process and the recent convergence event.

Background

The Ageing Well Initiative aims to co-design a new system of care with the health and aged care sectors and with older people, their families and their carers. A broad range of stakeholders have come together over a number of months to develop a shared view and understanding of the challenges facing older people throughout their health journey.

A new system of care required

While initially looking to facilitate the development of a 'model of care', the co-design process affirmed that transformational change across the health system is required.

The Ageing Well Initiative will assist stakeholders to pursue an improved 'system of care' across the health journey (see Figure 1).

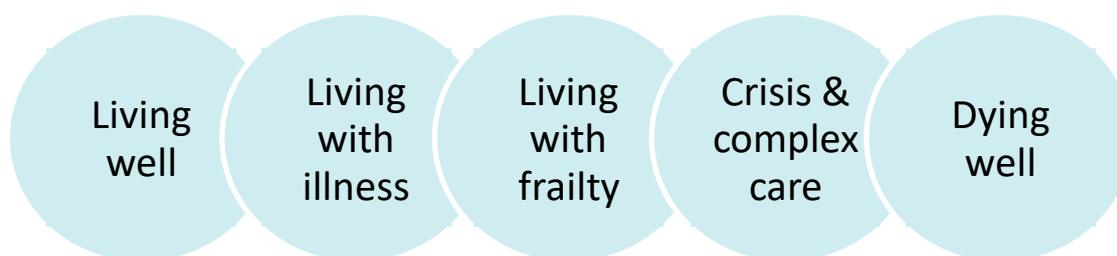


Figure 1. The older person's health journey

This shift recognises that no one service or model on its own is able to produce a system-wide change in care and outcomes. Rather, changes need to occur throughout the health journey facilitated by different relationships between stakeholders, and changes should be considered agile in nature: able to be monitored in real time and modified where necessary to produce the best possible outcomes.

This process will be facilitated by a shared outcomes framework, information systems that are able to share information relevant to the care journey, and changed financial incentives from a focus on volumes of services to a focus on value. The main shift to a focus on value is to align the health system to focus on what matters most to the older person and their family.

The system of care aims to better connect and coordinate care delivered in the hospital, general practice, residential aged care facilities (RACFs) and the community to ensure older people receive the right care, in the right place and at the right time.

Core values underpinning the new system of care

The following core values were gathered from feedback provided by service providers as well as older people, their carers and families. These values will underpin the new system of care:

- services are person centred, focused on what matters most to older people, their families and carers throughout their journey from 'Living Well' to 'Dying Well'
- the health journey is more than just physical health and instead encompasses a holistic view of living including mental, social, emotional and spiritual factors

- older people and the community as a whole are empowered to guide their care with a focus on building capacity and capability of older people and those that care for them in The Prince Charles Hospital area
- agencies, services and programs need to reflect and embrace the diversity of older people in our community, including cultural and linguistic diversity, the LGBTI community, and those older people currently living in poverty
- development of culturally appropriate Indigenous services.

Key themes provide initial focus for the new system of care

The co-design process highlighted four key themes that were agreed as the initial focus for the new system of care. These themes are:

Living Well

The importance of the 'Living Well' phase of the older person's journey has been increasingly recognised as a focus of the Ageing Well Initiative. 'Living Well' is more than just the physical health of the older person and instead encompasses a holistic view of health including mental, social, emotional and spiritual factors and focuses on building capacity and capability for older people in our community to support themselves and their peers.

Care coordination, navigation and awareness

An ongoing challenge for all parts of the health and aged care sectors is care coordination, navigation, access to information and service availability and awareness. The value of current navigation services within the system is well recognised, however there is also recognition that these services operate in isolation at times. The united view of the Ageing Well Initiative is to expand this service navigation network across all sectors of the health system to ensure accessibility, proactive rather than reactive approaches and optimum information sharing at all stages of the health and wellness journey. An initial step will be to map current navigation services within the system.

Continuity of care when transitioning between parts of the health sector

When an older person's care is transferred between different parts of the health system, information or intent can be delayed or lost, ultimately impacting the quality of patient care and outcomes. The Ageing Well Initiative will focus on these transitions and the flow of information across all relevant parts of the health sector to connect services and practitioners to improve patient care, build system efficiencies and minimise service and discipline isolation.

Care at or closer to home

Care at home or closer to home is important to older people, however current funding systems don't encourage care to be delivered in the home environment. Accordingly, the Ageing Well Initiative will work with stakeholders to improve access to safe and effective care at or closer to home, including for older people who reside in residential aged care facilities.

The bigger picture

Consultation has highlighted a number of 'big ideas' that require significant change, not only in health, but in other sectors that impact on the health of older people as well.

Changing the "story" about older people

Older people have diverse, dynamic lives, not restricted to their engagement with the health sector. The health sector currently focuses on "What is the matter?" rather than "What matters" to older people. The Ageing Well Initiative will use a shared outcomes framework and indicators that reflect "What matters" to reorient the system and measure progress at the individual and population level. The Ageing Well Initiative will focus on supporting the role of peers (older people looking after older people) and the needs of carers and families.

Forming care teams around the older person and their family

The challenges of discontinuity of care and poor care coordination can be addressed by the formation of locality-based teams with the older person at the centre of their care. These teams would be multidisciplinary, coordinate existing resources from all parts of the health and aged sector and would be supported to provide person-centred care. They will be enabled by mechanisms across the care continuum including integrated funding mechanisms and information sharing.

Reimagining residential aged care

The Ageing Well Initiative has recognised the need to take a different approach to residential aged care with a focus on re-ablement allowing older people the freedom to move between RACFs and the community seamlessly during their health journey. The Ageing Well Initiative aims to improve continuity and access to specialists and the multidisciplinary team within RACFs, with a particular focus on the after-hours medical response. Staff training, upskilling, support and incentives to facilitate quality multidisciplinary care will be a focus ensuring engagement with older person's family and carers throughout the health journey.

Building the capacity and capability of community-based services

For the vision of care at or closer to home to be realised, the capacity and capability of community-based services will be developed. Existing services, such as those supporting dying well, will need to be expanded if older people's wish to die in their own homes is to be met. Incentives are required to attract and retain a quality workforce to support continuity of care in the community including encouraging home visiting as an integral part of a general practice service. Community service providers will also be better supported to provide the extensive range of services they already offer in the community as well as bridging services while current wait times for Home Care Packages are addressed.

Next steps

The Health Alliance are consolidating the 'do it now' actions prioritised at the convergence event. It is recognised that different groups of participants progressed to different stages of defining the 'do it now' priorities and investigating what the next steps would be to action these chosen initiatives. A deeper dive into the feasibility, viability and desirability of these actions and initiatives will be the focus of the Ageing Well Initiative in the coming months with the guidance of the Health Alliance's core group.

The Health Alliance invites stakeholders passionate, interested and invested in these priorities to be part of implementation groups to continue to progress these actions.

If you are interested in being involved in the further development of these 'do it now' priorities please contact the Health Alliance at contact@healthalliance.org.au.