

Understanding Gloucestershire 2012

A high level analysis of need in Gloucestershire

Executive Summary

Introduction

This is a high level overview of need in Gloucestershire. It aims to provide a common understanding of the county and its communities, for use by decision makers and commissioners of services, and is structured around the themes of the County Council's outcome framework. It looks at the needs of communities and how we expect them to change in the future. The broad issues are discussed and these will be supported with more detailed analysis in the coming months.

Key demographic issues for Gloucestershire

The demographic demands facing Gloucestershire are significant and changing, affecting all areas of need.

The biggest challenge for future service provision is the acceleration in the growth of the older population. The overall population is anticipated to rise at an annual average rate of 0.5% over the next 25 years, but the number of older people (65+) will be increasing at a much quicker pace, of between 2.3% and 2.6%. In particular, the number of people aged 75 and over, the ages at which adult care and other service support is most likely to be required, is projected to increase each year by an average of 1,500 between 2010 and 2020, and by 2,300 between 2020 and 2035.

At the same time, the future numbers of children, young people and working-age people are subject to some uncertainty, as the pending agreement and delivery of District Councils' Core Strategies could affect the growth trajectory through their impact on inward migration. The uncertainty will affect how the council plans its service provision for these population groups.

The ethnic structure of the population will also change, as the natural growth from within the current minority ethnic population is expected to increase. This will result in increasing proportions of children of early years and school age from minority ethnic groups, and over time an increasing representation of minority ethnic population in the local labour force.

Geographically, the current spatial models of service delivery may need to adapt to increasingly dispersed residential developments. While population growth in the last 10 years has been highly concentrated in urban areas, major housing developments allocated over the next 5 years suggest that population increase, and therefore demand for services, will be more spread out to towns, villages and the rural parts of the county.

There will also be conflicting geographical demands on council services from the spreading of the older population and from younger communities arising from new

housing across the county. The number of council wards containing at least 1,000 older people could increase from the current 41 to 60 by 2015, with implications for locality strategies and any future service change. At the same time, communities emerging from new housing developments are likely to require different types of infrastructure support as they tend to have an above average household size and a higher representation of children.

We will increasingly see more older people living alone. Some of these will be without local family support, increasing the need for care services. By 2015, 25 council wards are forecast to contain at least 500 single-pensioner households. 11 of these wards include neighbourhoods where older people have high levels of income deprivation and where the need for care services is likely to be highest.

There will also be more children living in non traditional married couple families, as the number of families headed by a cohabiting couple or lone parent has increased since 2001. In particular, we may need to address the issue of access to opportunities and services by the increasing number of children and parents from single-parent households, as their income level is only around a third of that of couple families.

Gloucestershire and its communities are attractive places to live, work and invest

Gloucestershire presents a high quality diverse natural and historic environment offering a rural and urban mix that attracts people to the area to both live and work, and for the purposes of leisure and tourism.

A number of issues may influence the high standard of living currently experienced in the county. These include the challenge of an ageing population. This is exacerbated not only by the attraction of a pleasant environment which has encouraged a mature working population that may subsequently retire here but also in the need to recognise the potential for retaining more school leavers in Higher Education or as part of the highly skilled workforce within the County. These factors may ultimately affect the structure of the future workforce.

The ageing population will also influence the Care sector in terms of its ability to meet the needs of an increasing number of elderly residents. Health care issues related to the effects of obesity and alcohol are also beginning to emerge.

Higher numbers of young qualified people could be attracted to or retained within the county if there was more suitable housing and transport available at a price they

could afford. This is accentuated in the rural areas where the number of people of child-bearing age is declining.

To remain competitive the diverse nature of Gloucestershire's industrial activity will need to be maintained, through support for the high-tech manufacturing and knowledge intensive service activities. There are growth sectors in the Creative industries and Environmental technologies which should be developed. The Environmental technologies have impacts on the renewable, waste management and low carbon sectors of the economy which should also be encouraged.

Co-operation between local authorities and developers is vital, to achieve a balance between future housing and employment land requirements with their associated infrastructure developments, and the protection of greenfield and heritage sites within Gloucestershire.

People and communities are active and resilient

An active and resilient community is one where people are empowered to lead self determined, fulfilled lives, and in which everyone, regardless of age, race or social background, has a sense of belonging and a stake in society. A resilient community will be able to detect, prevent and respond to all kinds of emergency.

Community involvement and participation is an area of increasing importance for the Council but where hard data is not widely available. The nature of community involvement, happening in many small projects at a local level means that it is difficult to get the high level picture needed for traditional 'top down' planning. Identifying and quantifying existing and future capacity will need more flexible approaches.

There is an association between people participating in civic engagement activities, volunteering and deprivation. Stroud and Cotswold districts rank high nationally for three variables regarding volunteering, belonging and participation with Cheltenham and Gloucester having the lowest ranks within Gloucestershire. If needed in future, this type of data will have to be collected through local consultations.

Parish plans and local policing team priorities are existing sources of detailed information on community strengths, vulnerabilities and concerns.

Local data like this on the vulnerabilities of geographical communities, coming from a range of sources, could be brought together to provide an assessment of resilience and create a Gloucestershire "stronger communities" score.

The potential capacity of communities and the areas of future involvement need to be identified, fostered and supported. At the same time we need to identify where support for community involvement can provide the most value.

Crime has increased by less than 1% from the previous year and there has been an increase in numbers of young offenders and offences committed by young people over the same time period. Adult offending and reoffending rates have decreased when compared against the previous year's figures. Perceptions of crime in the Forest of Dean and Tewkesbury are much higher than the real crime rate when comparing against other communities in Gloucestershire.

People can access education, training, work and essential services

Gloucestershire is a good place to work with generally low unemployment and a workforce with higher than average skills. To maintain our prosperity and resilience it is important that adults have the right skills to take advantage of employment opportunities.

A majority of people can access education, training and work with few problems, but some groups of people face barriers. These include young people (aged 18-25), people with caring or childcare responsibilities, disabled people and older workers.

As well as the 10,500 people in Gloucestershire claiming Job Seekers Allowance a further 23,200 would like to work if they had the opportunity or if personal circumstances allowed it.

Across all age groups long term unemployment is increasing and now accounts for 42% of all unemployment. Unemployment among people aged 18-25 is rising sharply. The number of young people out of work for six months or more has risen from 255 to 1,090 in the last year.

Once in work people don't always have the skills and experience that their employers require and 13% of staff are reported by employers not to be fully proficient.

Access to essential services including health, education and retail outlets is generally good within larger towns and the network of small and medium towns. It is more challenging in rural areas or where private transport is not available. In some rural areas people also face barriers in access to technology with variable mobile phone and broadband coverage.

Good access is achieved by a combination of services being located within easy reach, availability of transport or by access provided in new ways, for example using

telephone, online or mobile services. Services are increasingly provided on-line and a new digital divide is emerging where the people with poor access are those not on-line. 55% of people with no qualifications have never used the internet and on-line access in lone pensioner households is low.

People live healthy lives as free as possible from disability or limiting long term illness

Generally speaking, Gloucestershire is a healthy place to live relative to England as a whole and we are improving on most measures. However, there are significant health gaps that frequently reflect wider social inequalities between different parts of the county.

Life expectancy in Gloucestershire varies from 84.4 for women in Cotswold District to 78.0 for men in Gloucester City which is the only district below the England average. There is a similar variation in healthy and disability-free life expectancy.

There is no obvious pattern in the district trends of low birth weight, but the rates for the county appear to be decreasing between 2006/7 and 2009/10. In Gloucestershire, there is a clear relationship between deprivation and smoking during pregnancy, with women living in areas of greater deprivation more likely to smoke. The rate of under-18 conceptions has a steady downward trend.

For rates of breastfeeding initiation, the difference between the highest (Cotswold) and lowest district (Gloucester) is large and increasing. Across the county, rates of breastfeeding decrease as deprivation increases. In childhood immunisation, Gloucestershire is performing well in comparison to regional and national figures. There have been increases in uptake proportions, although we are still below the World Health Organisation target of 95%, for some immunisations.

The percentage of overweight or obese children compares favourably with national rates apart from pupils in reception classes. Adults tend to be more obese than the national average. Gloucestershire has made good progress in increasing levels of exercise and participation in sport since 2007/8.

As more vulnerable people live in independent settings, we must develop the ability to map the location and quality of the community assets that will help them thrive. In particular, the number of people aged 85+ living alone is expected to rise by about 25% in the next 10 years.

Gloucestershire has a high estimated level of problem drug users compared with comparator authorities.

Young people are able to live successful lives and contribute to the economy

Educational outcomes in Gloucestershire are good overall, but children and young people who fall behind early in their education are likely to fall further behind as they get older. Early identification and effective support for those in danger of becoming vulnerable, and their families, is important in combating this. Furthermore, with high youth unemployment and significant structural changes in the nature of work, it is even more important for young people to acquire a range of personal skills. These should give them the confidence, flexibility and resilience to respond to changes in their working and personal lives.

The most vulnerable children in education are pupils who are from deprived socio-economic backgrounds, have Special Educational Needs, are Looked After, or are from some minority ethnic groups. The life and interpersonal skills that young people will need can be acquired in a variety of ways. A range of opportunities for them to do so needs to be fostered and participation encouraged.

The quality of education providers in Gloucestershire is generally good, but we have a higher proportion of early years providers graded as only “satisfactory” than in other parts of the country. More providers need to move up to the “good” or “outstanding” categories. The proportion of “inadequate” secondary and special schools, should be reduced.

When young people leave our schools with no or low level qualifications, they are less likely to improve their qualifications by the age of 19 than those in other parts of the country. This proportion should be increased. The raising of the education and training participation age from 16 to 18 by 2015, presents challenges and opportunities. High quality, relevant education and training opportunities will be needed for those who would have left education at age 16.

To get a mix of education and training that matches young people’s aspirations and meets the needs of the Gloucestershire economy, there is a need to maintain a dialogue between employers, education and skills providers, local government and other partners.

People with a disability or long-term illness live as independently as possible

Independent living is about supporting people with a long term illness or a disability to live their lives as full citizens who have choice and control over the way in which their care is delivered. As the number of older people increases the number of people with a disability or a long term illness will increase.

The total number of people with poor health is on the rise, and this rise may accelerate even further with better methods of diagnosing illnesses. Improved and earlier identification will have an impact on overall numbers of people known to have a disability or limiting long term illness, especially conditions such as dementia.

Due to longer life expectancy of women, they made up 55% of the population who report poor health.

There are also clear differences between social classes in Gloucestershire. People in lower socio-economic groups were not only at a higher risk of being in poor health or having a limiting long-term illness, but were also more likely to suffer from it at a younger age.

Dementia is a common condition. The older you are the more likely you are to suffer from it. Data for Gloucestershire has seen a steady rise over the last few years, which can partly be explained by better diagnostic techniques. The number of people with learning disabilities is expected to continue to rise, especially among ethnic minorities.

Pensioners who live alone (of which there are estimated to be 20,000 in Gloucestershire) are more likely to not have access to their own transport, leaving them isolated in their own homes.

A combination of national and local government policy and individual preferences is leading to vulnerable people living more independent lives in the community away from residential care or highly concentrated services. Helping people to help themselves, by supporting carers, or giving support for people with a disability or long term illness will give them greater choice and control over their lives. Such support is increasingly outside the scope of what the council can deliver directly. Benefit payments for carer's allowance has increased by about 55% since 2003.

Employment Support Allowance which has replaced Incapacity Benefit and Income Support paid on the grounds of incapacity for new claims from October 2008 has gradually been increasing in all Gloucestershire districts since it was introduced. Although there was small rise over 3 years, there has been a sharp decline in the percentage of people with a Learning Disability in employment.

In terms of provision of services in the county, although more are delivered to the deprived areas, they are also delivered to large numbers of people in the more affluent areas and those numbers have grown.

Vulnerable children, young people and adults are safe from harm

Major factors affecting this area of work include an increasing demand and number of referrals coming in to children's social care. An increase in the number of older people in the population also means an increase in demand for services for this group. Population trends show that 'at risk' groups are set to grow, and with them, the demand for safeguarding services.

Social care is changing, with people receiving care being given more direct control over the money that is spent. This will change the demand for services over time, away from more traditional institutions to community based activity.

Early intervention can help to prevent problems escalating. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) assessment is a key tool in the identification of the risk factors that can lead to a child or young person becoming vulnerable, so that action can happen early. Nearly half of CAF assessments are undertaken in areas of greatest deprivation and very few in areas of least deprivation.

Of the seven localities, the Forest of Dean has seen a three-fold increase in children being re-referred to social care since the last reporting year, and Gloucester North has the highest rate of re-referrals. The causes of both need further investigation. The Forest locality has the highest rate of children who are the subject of a Child Protection Plan (CPP). Five of the seven localities saw a reduction in the CPP rate with Stroud and Tewkesbury showing a slight increase. The most common category of registration is: Emotional abuse, followed by Neglect, Physical abuse, and Sexual abuse in order of use. The percentage of CPPs lasting for two years or more increased in 2010/11, although the numbers of children involved remain small.

The number of children becoming the subject of a CPP more than once remains high, with no change from last year. Stroud locality has the highest rate.

Gloucester South has the highest rate of Children Looked After. The percentage of looked-after children with three or more placements during the year 2010/11 remains high compared to the statistical neighbour and national averages.

Allowing for data quality concerns, the first Abuse of Vulnerable Adults return in 2010/11 showed Gloucestershire to be an outlier in a number of areas, when compared with similar authorities. Preliminary analysis of the 2011/12 return shows Gloucestershire's performance to be more comparable to our nearest neighbour

authorities. This will be tested against other authorities' 2011/12 returns later this year.

There are significant gaps in our knowledge about vulnerable people placed in the county by other authorities which research currently underway will begin to address.