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Eastern Daily Press

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ELDERLY 'AT RISK OF BEING ISOLATED'



By DAN GRIMMER
Public affairs correspondent

Cuts to public funding are threatening community care and increasing the chances of older people in Norfolk becoming isolated, according to research carried out at the University of East Anglia.

A new study has revealed the vital role played by the public sector and volunteers in ensuring older people are able to live in their own homes.

And the study by UEA research fellow Dr Mayumi Hayashi warns that dramatic cuts in public spending – and an assumption that the voluntary sector can pick up the pieces – will come at a time when the service needs to be enhanced, not reduced.

Norfolk County Council, which has identified a need for £155m of savings over three years, is making more than £50m-worth of savings in adult social care over that period.

A massive shake-up in the way the council provides care will see

Study warns over cuts to social care funding

the authority shift away from running day services directly, with elderly people given personal budgets so they can decide what to spend it on.

The aim is that the Big Society model will see voluntary groups and charities offer some of the services older people need.

But Dr Hayashi's study 'The Care of Older People in Norfolk: Experiences of social engagement, informal care and volunteering' found some social programmes survive solely because of public funding and the use of paid staff to compensate for a shortage of volunteers.

Dr Hayashi, a research fellow in the school of history, said: "Most social groups are run by charities and depend heavily upon private resources and volunteers.

"They are seemingly more cost-effective and open and perhaps also more humane and 'relaxed' compared with top-down and more 'exclusive' social services counterparts.

"Yet this study shows that voluntary and community programmes are often actually dependent upon public monies, such as subsidised transport and commissioned day centre programmes for mentally-ill older people."

She added: "The key finding arising from the project is the significant role and contribution made by the voluntary and informal sector, often involving older people themselves, as formal volunteers and/or informally as carers or as friends and neighbours giving

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WAVENEY
Drink-drive case councillor quits ruling Tory group

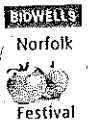
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NORFOLK
Help for people with over-eating disorders

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Guide to the Food Festival starting this weekend
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9/11



10 years on

We look back at September 11, 2001, the day a terrorist attack on the US changed the world forever. Over the course of a week the EDP will be returning to that fateful day, focusing on how the world responded and speaking to people from our region caught up in the aftermath.

STARTS IN YOUR EDP TOMORROW

If you have a story to tell about 9/11 or want to share your views email the newsdesk at newsdesk@archant.co.uk

NORWICH

Ainsley's peas mission to city market stall

People shopping in the historic Norwich Market on Wednesday spotted a popular celebrity chef next to one of the district's more unique stalls.

Ainsley Harriott was in the city visiting Anita Adcock at the Mushy Pea Stall while he was filming for the next series of the BBC's Great British Food Revival, where celebrity chefs and cooks try to popularise traditional British produce.

Mr Harriott was filming for a programme about the traditional British pea. He said there had been a good reaction to what they were doing at Norwich Market and he was full of praise for the stall.

"It is fantastic here. We have been talking about the traditions of this market stall since 1949, and Anita is continuing it. People come from all over the country to the stall", he said.

He was particularly interested in the history of the stall and the process of making mushy peas. "You soak them overnight then boil them up and right at the end



Picture: BILL SMITH

MARKET VISIT: Ainsley Harriott serving on the Norwich market mushy pea stall with Anita Adcock, right, and Georgina Pye.

you add vinegar," he said.

Anita Adcock, from Hellesdon, took over the stall from her father-in-law more than 20 years ago. It has been in the family for 62 years.

"We have been talking about where peas come from", she said. "I suppose they came to me because they had heard about the stall, which is pretty unique, and also about the history."

UEA study warns cuts will isolate the elderly

FROM PAGE ONE

assistance. Without this regular help, many older people could not remain at home and would lose 'social engagement' opportunities."

David Harwood, cabinet member for adult and community services at Norfolk County Council, said: "Funding is an issue, especially in times like these, but if we do it the right way and people are willing to put in a bit of time, then there is a lot that people can do to help themselves."

"We have been very lucky in that there has always been a multitude of volunteers in Norfolk. Some of the new volunteers I've spoken to have said how they get a lot of satisfaction out of it."

"A lot of what is said in this report is true, but from the county council point of view the first consideration has to be the services that we are responsible for."

"We do work in partnership with older people's groups across Norfolk and we support them financially to allow them to operate."

"If the funding is there, we try to support them, but where groups have been close to other groups, we have cut funding and we've been open about that."

"We are keen to work with all the voluntary groups and organisations such as Age UK Norfolk and Age UK Norwich and we realise the importance of what they do."

Phil Wells, chief executive of Age UK Norfolk, said charities had a vital role to play in supporting voluntary groups, ensuring that they were reaching the most isolated people and that activities offered were beneficial.

He said: "We are still waiting to see how social care funding is going to be carried out."

"There is a shift away from the idea of social workers and people like us running services and more towards us supporting the people who run them. That's great, but I still need to pay my team to provide that support. We need to look at how we can



COUNCIL: David Harwood, Norfolk County Council cabinet member for adult and community services.

encourage the county council and the health sector to invest in preventative services.

"By 2013 I think there will be a serious approach to investing in preventative services, but my worry is what will happen between now and then."

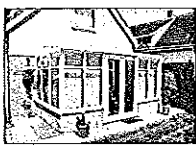
"The reality for most of the voluntary sector is that the cuts have not really hit yet. There have been some painful cuts, but my hunch is that the worst is yet to come."

The findings of the study will be presented during a public event, The Care of Older People in Norfolk, in Norwich later this month.

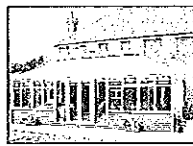
Held at the Assembly House in Norwich on Friday, September 16, the event, which will run from 10am to 2pm, will involve older people, carers, representatives of partner organisations such as Age UK Norfolk and Norwich, Norfolk LINK, Norfolk Older People's Forums and community groups.

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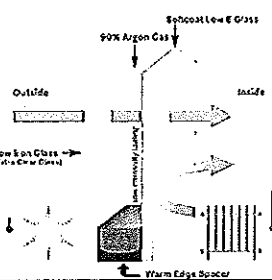
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