



## Executive Summary

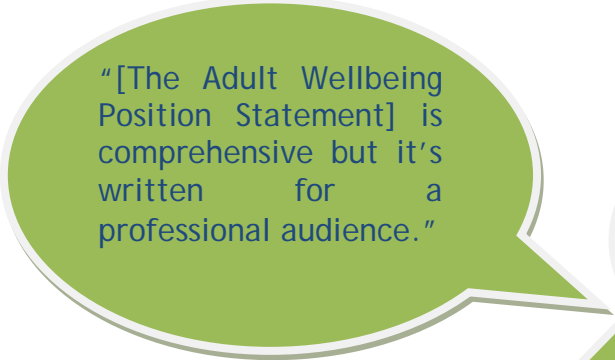
In January 2016, Reading Borough Council published a draft Adult Wellbeing Position Statement. This set out a framework for developing Council services to meet the local authority's wellbeing duties under the Care Act and so prevent, reduce and delay care and support needs across the local population.

The Council was keen to engage with residents and partner agencies about its approach to supporting those residents who have current or emerging care needs, and also its approach supporting the unpaid or family carers who are helping to keep people well and independent. This meant the Adult Wellbeing Position Statement had a particular focus. It included a wide range of Council services but only detailed those likely to be of particular relevance to adults with a care or support need or a clear risk of having these needs in future.

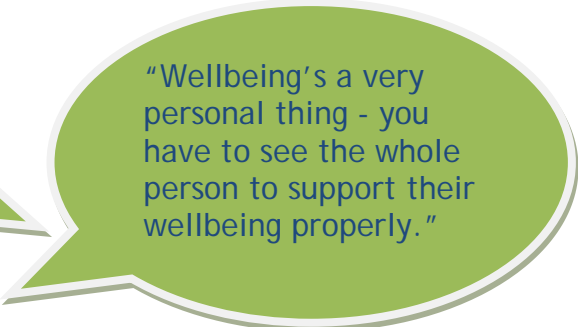
A twelve week public consultation demonstrated that the Council's seven key aims for adult wellbeing were supported by the local population and by partners. However, people wanted to see these same aims applied to children's services too. People welcomed the recognition that supporting wellbeing needs to be based on holistic approaches.

Many people were pleasantly surprised to discover how much the Council already offers to support wellbeing, but under each key aim people identified areas where support could be strengthened or made more widely available. People with care or support needs not access services in the same way as others, and reaching those are at risk of poor health and more likely to require social care must be a priority within programmes that promote people's capacity to maintain an independent lifestyle.

The most common theme running throughout the feedback was that services need to be publicised more effectively - either through broader awareness raising or more targeted approaches to reach people who are less likely to be familiar with what is available.



"[The Adult Wellbeing Position Statement] is comprehensive but it's written for a professional audience."



"Wellbeing's a very personal thing - you have to see the whole person to support their wellbeing properly."

## Background

In common with other local authorities, Reading Borough Council is facing challenging budget pressures, including increased demand across many service areas. The Council recognises the need to achieve a cultural shift so that its investment is increasingly directed at improving the wellbeing of Reading residents - that is, helping people to prevent ill-health and disability that is avoidable - rather than just treating the effects of poor wellbeing.

The wellbeing duty (a new statutory responsibility under the Care Act) sets a framework for how local authorities should meet the needs of those who meet Adult Social Care eligibility criteria. It also directs how the Council should interact with local residents who have lower care or support needs, or who have a risk of developing care and support needs, in order to reduce the likelihood of their developing avoidable illness and disability.

Reading Borough Council set out its proposed aims to meet its wellbeing responsibilities under the Care Act in the form of a draft Adult Wellbeing Position Statement published in January 2016. This was based on a vision to narrow the wellbeing gaps in Reading so that residents affected by care and support needs can access early help and enjoy healthy and fulfilling lives.



A public consultation on the draft Adult Wellbeing Position Statement was carried out so that:

- stakeholders would have a better appreciation of the range of Council policies and services which promote adult wellbeing, and understand how to influence their further development;
- the Council's approach to adult wellbeing could be developed on the basis of stakeholder feedback; and
- across the Council and partner agencies, Reading could offer a more joined up approach to supporting adult wellbeing.

## What we consulted on

We asked people to give us their views on the seven key aims identified to help us realise our vision for adult wellbeing, and so meet our Care Act responsibilities:

- Embed the wellbeing principle throughout the Council's functions

- Ensure Reading homes support wellbeing
- Harness the assets Reading has to prevent care and support needs from increasing
- Empower people with care needs to self care and to make positive lifestyle choices
- Support people to prevent their care and support needs from increasing
- Promote a re-abling approach across care services
- Ensure people with emerging care needs and unpaid carers can access services that work well together to support people's independence

We wanted to know if people agreed that these were important areas to address in promoting wellbeing, where Reading already had a strong offer in these areas, and where there is a need to improve.

## How we consulted

The consultation ran from 25 January to 15 April 2016 (extended from the initial close date of 18 March 2016 so as to take in feedback from some key forums scheduled for late March and early April).

The consultation was designed to involve:

- local adults with current or emerging care needs (whether or not eligible for social care support)
- Unpaid or family carers who are helping to keep people well and independent
- Organisations and services across all sectors (including voluntary and community groups) that support the prevention/re-ablement agenda.

The emphasis was on taking discussion out to community groups, and bringing people together to debate what wellbeing means to different people, and what role the Council should play in promoting wellbeing.



The Adult Wellbeing consultation was discussed at 7 public, community or interest group meetings, as listed below. It was also raised as an information item at 3 further meetings to encourage individual members to respond.

Table 1: Adult Wellbeing consultation discussions

Meeting	audience	Number of people attending
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Reading Voluntary Action Wellbeing Forum - 28.01.2016	Voluntary & community sector groups	38
Learning Disability Carers Forum - 02.03.2016	Carers of people with a learning disability (all ages)	8
Learning Disability Partnership Board - 08.03.2016	Adults with a learning disability, carers and providers (all sectors)	18
Access & Disabilities Working Group - 10.03.2016	People with long term conditions, carers and VCS groups	16
Care & Support Conference workshop - 07.04.2016	Care and support providers (all sectors)	22
Talkback 'Matters' sessions - April and March 2016	Adults with a learning disability	50
<b>TOTAL CONTRIBUTORS (approx.)</b>		<b>152</b>

The consultation was also promoted at meetings of:

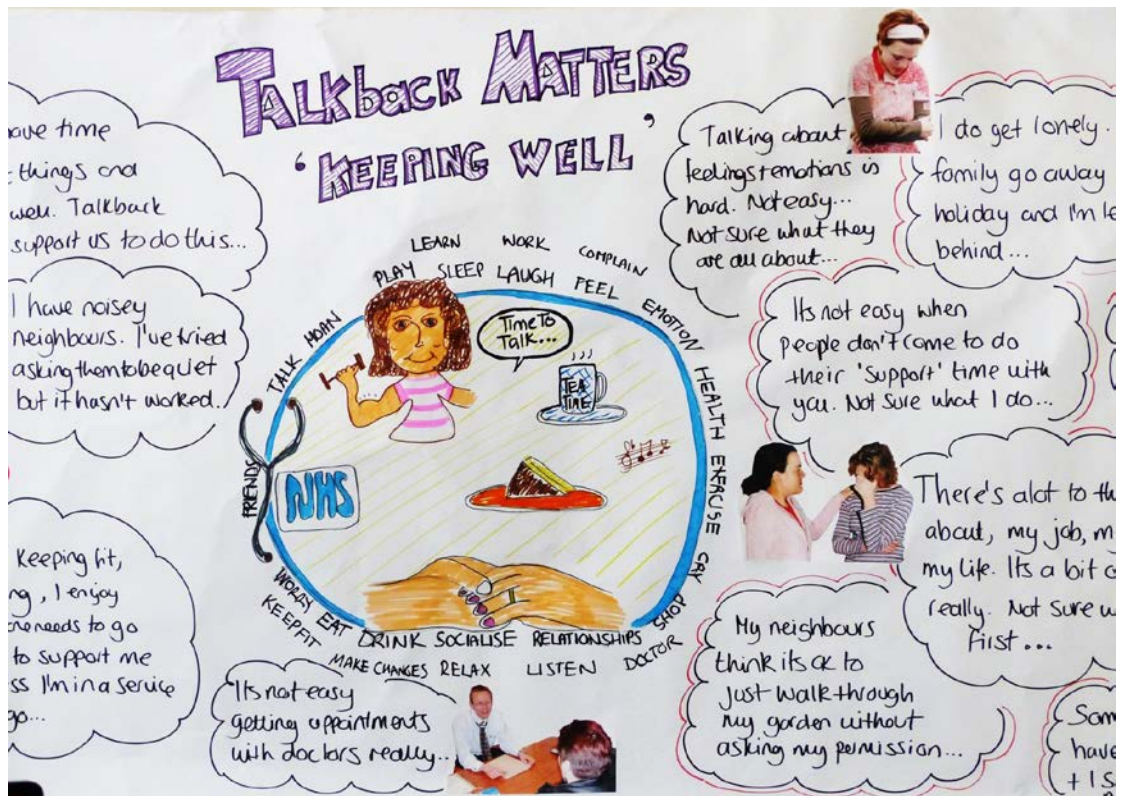
- the Older People's Working Group - 05.02.2016
- the Physical Disability & Sensory Needs Network - 22.02.2016
- the Reading Carers Steering Group - 21.03.2016

### Consultation material

A consultation draft of the Adult Wellbeing Position Statement was published on the Council's website at the start of the consultation alongside a consultation questionnaire which could be completed online or in hard copy. Printed copies of the draft Statement and the questionnaire were available on request, and were offered at all meetings where the Adult Wellbeing consultation was discussed or promoted.

Feedback was welcomed in alternative formats. Talkback, a local self advocacy provider, captured group feedback on a giant paper roll and sent in photographs of that.





## Who responded

By the close of the consultation, feedback had been gathered from approximately 174 contributions. This figure was made up of approximately 152 contributors<sup>1</sup> to consultation discussions plus 22 returned questionnaires (all online - no paper copies were returned).

The makeup of audiences at the various consultation discussions is summarised in Table 1. More detailed demographic information was collated only from people who chose to answer these questions in the consultation survey.

- Around one third of the returned questionnaires were from men, and two thirds from women.
- Almost half of the returned questionnaires (43%) came from people aged 65 or over, and none were returned by anyone aged under 35.
- Exactly half of the questionnaires were completed by someone who considered themselves to have a disability, long term health condition or care and support needs, but only 5% were receiving social care services.
- Two thirds of returned questionnaires came from someone providing unpaid or informal care.

<sup>1</sup> Some people may have attended more than one of these meetings, so total attendance at consultation meetings is only indicative of the number of contributors.

- One third of people who returned questionnaires carry out some form of voluntary work.

## Has the Council chosen the right aims for adult wellbeing?

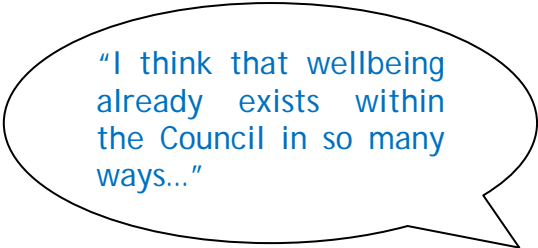
Most people agreed that all of the seven aims for adult wellbeing set out in the draft Position Statement were important. However, a small minority believed the Council should not include museums and libraries in its wellbeing strategy.

Several people challenged the focus on adult wellbeing, and were keen to see the Adult Wellbeing Position Statement extended to include children. This was particularly important to adults caring for a disabled child: they pointed out that their own wellbeing (as adults) depends on good whole family approaches.

## Aim (1): Embedding the wellbeing principle throughout the Council's functions

We asked people to comment on our plans to:

- monitor the various Council services which contribute to wellbeing in a more holistic way;
- promote wellbeing through our commissioning activity; and
- work across Council departments and with our partners to make more of a range of contacts with residents as opportunities to promote wellbeing.



"I think that wellbeing already exists within the Council in so many ways..."

People welcomed the prospect of Council departments working together more cohesively, and skilling up staff to be able to tell people about support available to them from other services. They felt the Council had good foundations to work on.

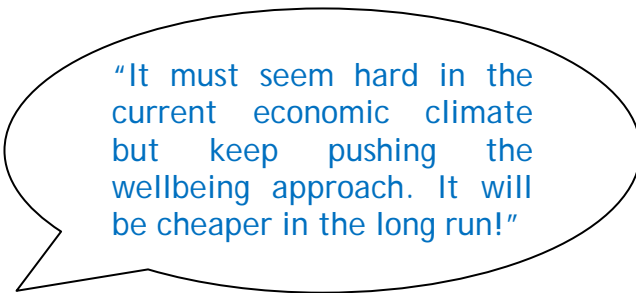
People supported the principles of the 'Making Every Contact Count' (MECC) programme, but wanted the Council to start working with other agencies on this at an early stage and not confine it to Council departments. As far as the Council was concerned, though, people wanted assurance that MECC training would include children's teams and not just be focused on adults.

People expressed the hope that promoting a wellbeing approach would encourage more staff to see the 'whole person' they're working with, and think about what people have to offer as well as what they need help with. Some older people, in particular, felt that they were too often seen as a nuisance by Council staff and their experience went unrecognised.

Providers from the voluntary sector felt that few Council staff understood what they were doing very well, and groups were looking for more opportunities to explain to RBC employees what they can do to support wellbeing. Some suggested the idea of secondments into and from the voluntary sector.

People pointed out that being able to call on a range of services based on individual need does require a particular set of skills. They were keen to see the Council's wellbeing plans supported by a workforce development plan which recognises this. In future, there needs to be more emphasis on networking, with staff supported to understand how to go about this effectively. Individual and team targets need to include meaningful wellbeing outcomes, and people should be encouraged to share stories of what's worked to bring statistics alive and show what's possible.

There was some concern about how staff would manage to take on new wellbeing duties with workloads already heavy, but strong support that this is the right way to go.



"It must seem hard in the current economic climate but keep pushing the wellbeing approach. It will be cheaper in the long run!"

## **Aim (2): Ensure Reading homes support wellbeing**


We asked people to comment on our plans to:

- support elderly or vulnerable people to maintain private sector homes
- support residents with home adaptations and repairs
- tackle fuel poverty
- work in partnership with the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service to offer vulnerable adults a home safety check
- tackle homelessness

Many people commented that the Adult Wellbeing Position Statement showed them there was more support available than they had realised previously to support people to live in safe and secure homes.



Again, people wanted the Council to do more to make this information easier to access, though, including sharing the information across different teams as well as housing staff. Similarly, they would like housing staff to be supported to understand other services so they can signpost people.



"Sheltered housing is great, but do residents get enough information about other [non-housing] services?"

A lot of different agencies talk to people who need help to understand their housing options, and voluntary sector partners would welcome training from the Council in how to manage these queries.

There was a plea for more thought to be given to the fact that adaptations are often needed to a family home and not just the home of a single person - so other family members' needs have to be considered as well. In particular, children's needs change as they grow.

Several people remarked that both individuals and families make important community connections, and it can be very harmful to people's wellbeing if these connections are broken when someone needs to move into some form of supported accommodation. People also want to feel safe in the area where they live as well as the actual property, and hate crime is a real worry for some residents with disabilities.

People acknowledged that it's a challenge to achieve this, but felt that Reading needs more permanent housing, including more single storey properties. Having an insecure tenancy can be very stressful, all the more so for someone living with a disability or long term health condition which makes moving harder.

People particularly valued the fire safety checks and the assisted refuse collection, and were keen to see both of these continue as important contributions to residents' wellbeing. However, people felt there was a shortage of practical help services to help people manage in their own homes when their mobility or strength is limited.

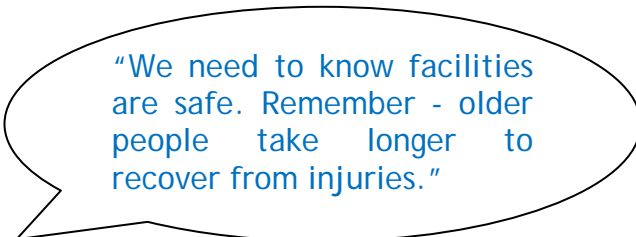
### **Aim (3): Harness the assets Reading has to prevent care and support needs from increasing**

We asked people to comment on the services offered by:

- Reading Sports & Leisure
- Sport in Mind
- Rivermead Leisure Centre

- Reading Museum
- Reading Libraries

People said that Reading needs more sports and leisure facilities for the disabled, and suggestions for additional facilities included clubs for trampolining and adapted games. People also wanted clearer information about the support available to use sports and leisure services. Others asked for more real time information about facilities, so that people can be reassured about safety and don't have wasted journeys if facilities like hoists are temporarily unavailable, for example.



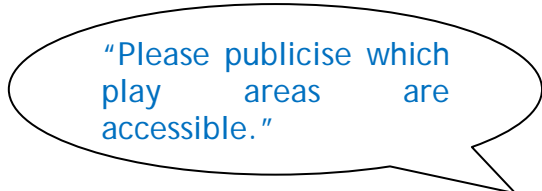
"We need to know facilities are safe. Remember - older people take longer to recover from injuries."

Some people also felt that there was a training need within sports and leisure providers around accessibility.

People liked the 'relaxed' shows at the Hexagon, particularly suited for people with autism, and wanted to see more of these.

People welcomed the plan to move the Council's day centre for older people and people with physical disabilities to the Rivermead site with the possibilities this offers to give people access to a wider range of activities. Several people commented that this was one example of the potential there is for sharing assets across sectors and providers to offer more holistic wellbeing services.

There was a request for more thought to be given to accessibility when designing play areas, as areas surfaced with woodchip or sand can't be accessed in a wheelchair. Reading does have play areas which are accessible, but some families felt they had struggled to get information about these.



"Please publicise which play areas are accessible."

Without knowing things are going to be accessible for disabled children, some families felt they had no option but to leave their disabled child at home while their siblings go out to play.

There was a concern expressed that while Reading has some excellent facilities, many of them are starting to look a bit shabby, so not as welcoming as they could be.

## Aim (4): Empower people with care needs to self care and make positive lifestyle choices

We asked people to comment on Reading's approach to:

- Access to preventative health services
- emotional wellbeing
- Self care and peer support
- Lifelong learning offered by New Directions
- Reducing loneliness
- Transport (including the 'walkability' of Reading)

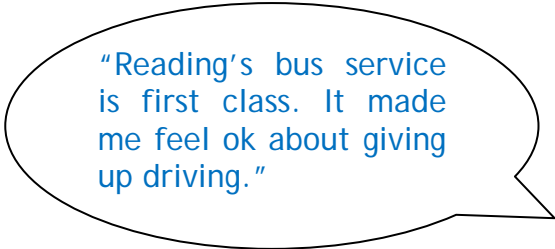
Most comments on this part of the Position Statement were about the importance of personal relationships - the need to support people who have too little contact with others, and the need to understand the range of issues which can lead to vulnerable adults becoming more and more isolated. Some people need support to find community groups while others need help to join them - assistance with transport, someone to go with the first time, or help in developing the skills needed to enjoy relationships.



"Loneliness is a huge issue."

People felt that the community navigator model was a good one to ensure that people could get one-to-one support to address all the issues relevant to them. People want to take part in social activities which are interesting and meaningful, and the range of courses offered by New Directions is an important part of this.

On the whole, people felt that Reading is well served by transport services - particularly the bus service. However, some people felt that disabled parking facilities were inadequate in some parts of the town, such as by the railway station.



"Reading's bus service is first class. It made me feel ok about giving up driving."

There was a lot of recognition of the health benefits of walking. However, people felt that pavement maintenance needed to be improved, and cycling on pavements tackled more robustly. There were also requests for more pedestrian

crossings in busy areas.

People felt that access to preventative health services, like NHS health checks, was patchy. Some commented that this put positive lifestyle choices are out of reach for some, such as residents with communication needs. Some other respondents pointed out that self care depends on being given

information about your condition, and this isn't always done well or at an early enough stage.

People recognised links between physical and emotional wellbeing from their own experiences, and welcomed the holistic approach the Council was proposing to wellbeing. Waiting times for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) are a worry, and people would like to see more support for young people dealing with anxiety, for example, within schools. People also felt there was a gap in mental health provision between the Talking Therapies service (typically 6 sessions) and crisis management.

## **Aim (5): Support people to prevent their care and support needs from increasing**

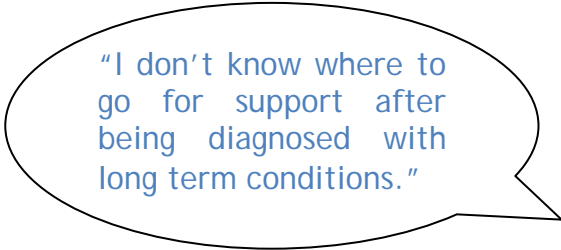
We asked people to comment on the Council's approach to:

- Information and advice services
- Assistive technology
- Supporting carers

People fed back that information and advice for people with care needs is delivered by a very wide range of providers in Reading. The Council's own services are an important but relatively small part of the picture. Rather than necessarily providing more direct services, some people felt a more important role for the Council could be to have an overview and facilitate networking between organisations, especially the smaller ones in the voluntary sector. Information for people with sensory needs was seen as a current gap.

Some people felt the Council should develop its website and use of social media to promote wellbeing, whilst recognising, though, that these channels wouldn't be suitable for everyone. In terms of website offers, people queried why there wasn't more information about Council services on the Reading Services Guide.

The Council commissions information and advice from a number of voluntary sector groups who are particularly well placed to reach into communities less able to make direct use of the Council's information services. These providers include Healthwatch Reading and a number of providers commissioned under the Narrowing the Gap Bidding Framework. Newly commissioned providers from mid 2016 onwards were not named in the Adult Wellbeing Position Statement. People asked that the Council publish this information (again - as successful bidders were announced during the consultation) so as to encourage more people to make use of these services.



"I don't know where to go for support after being diagnosed with long term conditions."

People were generally supportive of assistive technology being part of the Adult Wellbeing Position Statement, and keen to know more but unsure where to go for clear advice.

A large proportion of responses to the consultation came from carers. There was some very positive feedback on how carers assessments can be really valuable in helping people to manage caring. However, it was clear that one area in which the Council needs to improve is in delivering carer assessments when the family is in contact with different parts of the local authority. For example, when a young person is caring for a disabled adult or an adult is caring for a disabled child, there is quite a lot of confusion about routes into the social care system.

Carers also felt that more needs to be done to ensure their role is considered by all services, although some are very good at involving carers.



"Support carers - work with us."

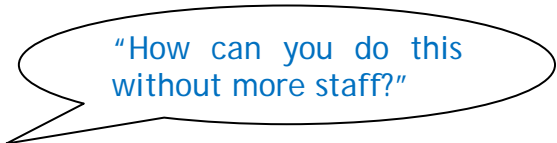
Carers also asked for a broader range of training to be made available to help them manage caring.

## **Aim (6): Promote a re-abling approach across care services**

We asked people about:

- Our new approach to social care - the Right 4 You pilot schemes
- Re-ablement
- Home from hospital services
- End of life care

There was very positive feedback about the focus on the individual in the Council's proposals in this section. People felt it was right to invest time in getting to really understand a person's situation, but felt that this wasn't always happening at the moment. They were generally surprised to learn how many people had been spoken to

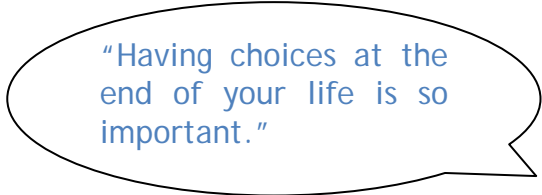


"How can you do this without more staff?"



and how quickly by the Right 4 You teams. There were concerns about whether the Council could afford enough staff to take this approach across all teams.

People who had used re-ablement services were very positive about them, and people who hadn't had generally heard good things about the service. Some wondered whether 6 weeks was enough, and whether everyone who could get something out of a re-ablement service was being offered it at the moment. Several people thought that more could be done to link people up with voluntary sector support when they come out of hospital. Some people also thought there needed to be more focus on people's emotional wellbeing at this time as 'getting back on your feet' is about more than practical support sometimes.



"Having choices at the end of your life is so important."

A lot of people were particularly pleased to see end of life care included in the Position Statement. Some people commented that this seems to be the area where there's

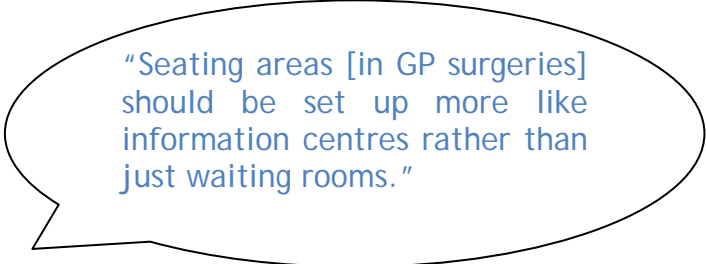
the biggest breakdown in communication between agencies at the moment.

Many of the people who contributed to the consultation through Talkback's 'Matters' sessions said it was a relief to be able to talk about dying. These were adults with a learning disability, often with elderly parents. They had often tried to ask questions about what would happen when their parents died but felt they'd been 'fobbed off'. Of course, some people do find talking about death difficult and people at the 'Matters' group were able to leave the room if they didn't want to take part in this bit of the conversation.

## **Aim (7): Ensure people with care needs and unpaid carers can access services that work well together to support people's independence**

We asked people about the principles behind our plans for health and social care integration. The Adult Wellbeing Position Statement set out the schemes which made up Reading's first (2014) Better Care Fund plan. However, the second phase of the Better Care Fund plan was in development at the time of the consultation on the Position Statement, so people weren't asked to comment on particular integration schemes.

Most comments on this area were about how people working in some services don't seem to now very much about other services available locally, although there



"Seating areas [in GP surgeries] should be set up more like information centres rather than just waiting rooms."

were exceptions to this.

When asked about what improvements people hoped to see from better integrated services, most people were hoping that they would get to see a health or social care worker more quickly when they needed help. Carers wanted to see a care system which took them into account at every stage.