

## The Charity Act's reference to 'need because of age' is patronising and should be removed—new report

(Embargoed 0001 19 March 2015)

*Removing the reference would help charities lead banishing age stereotypes and prepare for our ageing population, argues the final report from the Commission on Voluntary Sector & Sector.*

*Decision Time*, published today by the Commission, suggests this change as one way to make sure voluntary organisations are geared-up to combat ageism and avoid alienating older staff, volunteers and donors.

New analysis in the report estimates that volunteering and donations from people over 65 could grow by over £6bn in the next two decades, but warns that charities will miss out on this money without reforming the way it works with older supporters.

*Decision time* makes a range of suggestions aimed at the voluntary sector, funders and government, to help civil society negotiate the opportunities and pitfalls posed by the UK's ageing population. These include:

- Charities must adapt how they work with older volunteers and donors. Today's retirees are more discerning and discriminating than ever before about giving time and money, and charities should maintain more interactive, reciprocal relationship with the people who support them.
- The voluntary sector should market itself as the 'sector of choice' for people shifting jobs in the last year before they retire. Charities could lead retraining for teachers, care-workers and other under-staffed professions.
- Government can support the efforts of charities by considering incentives to volunteer. This may include piloting tax breaks for volunteers or carer credits.
- Funders should pilot more early intervention projects, to identify the most effective work and prevent future problems before they emerge.

Exclusive analysis for the Commission estimates that, compared to 2013:

- the value of charity volunteering by over 65s will be £15.72bn by 2033, an increase of £5.32bn
- the value of charity donations by over 65s will be £3.49bn by 2033, an increase of £1.18bn

Professor Lynne Berry, Chair of the Commission, said:

*'By 2033, 1 in 4 of us will be over 65 years old. The voluntary sector achieves amazing things every day, but in the course of the last 18 months the Commission has found that there is lots to do if the sector is to cope with, and make the most of, our ageing population. It needs to act quickly.'*

*'Charities can start by looking at their own day-to-day practices: are older people just there to be helped, or do they play their part working with charities as well? Does the charity resemble the community it serves? And they can think about the current batch of older supporters and ask whether they are doing enough to maintain them as volunteers and donors for the future.'*

*'Most public discussion of the ageing population sees it as a problem, but it could be a brilliant opportunity for the voluntary sector to focus on the future and the impact it wants to have. Hopefully the ideas in our report will help kick-start those conversations'*

**[Ends]**

[Notes to editors]

1. The Commission on the Voluntary Sector & Ageing was set up by New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) in partnership with the International Longevity Centre-UK (ILC-UK). NPC and ILC-UK provide secretariat support to the Commission. The Commission has been funded in its first year by the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund, and by Prudential
2. The Commission website is at <http://voluntarysectorageing.org/> It is chaired by Professor Lynne Berry OBE. The Commissioners are: Stephen Burke (United for All Ages), Ken Burnett (Fundraising consultant), James Cochrane CBE (Raleigh International), Dan Corry (NPC), Kristina Glenn MBE (Cripplegate Foundation), Javed Khan (Barnardo's), Baronness Sally Greengrass OBE, Keji Okeowo (NCVYS), Prof. Paul Palmer ( and Sonia Sodha (formerly at Which?)
3. The Commission's new report, *Decision time: will the voluntary sector embrace the age of opportunity*, is published on March 19 2014. It can be downloaded from [https://cvsanpc.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/decision-time\\_final-report-of-cvsa\\_mar15.pdf](https://cvsanpc.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/decision-time_final-report-of-cvsa_mar15.pdf), along with briefing papers on the potential donations and voluntary hours of older supporters. The Commission's previous papers include its introduction to the [Age of opportunity](#) and research into the future of [volunteering](#) and [fundraising](#)
4. For more information, or to arrange an interview with Lynne Berry, contact Russell Hargrave, Media Manager at NPC, on 07770 729 557 or [russell.hargrave@thinknpc.org](mailto:russell.hargrave@thinknpc.org)
5. NPC is a charity think tank and consultancy which occupies a unique position at the nexus between charities and funders, helping them achieve the greatest impact. It is driven by the values and mission of the charity sector, to which it brings the rigour, clarity and analysis needed to better achieve the outcomes we all seek. It also shares the motivations and passion of funders, to which it brings its expertise, experience and track record of success. [www.thinkNPC.org](http://www.thinkNPC.org)

The International Longevity Centre-UK (ILC-UK) is the leading think tank on longevity and demographic change. It is an independent, non-partisan think tank dedicated to addressing issues of longevity, ageing and population change. We develop ideas, undertake research and create a forum for debate. [www.ilcuk.org.uk](http://www.ilcuk.org.uk)