

Elders Council of Newcastle



**Annual
Report**

2007-2008

Overview

We have had another successful year.

Membership has increased; the working groups have been active; in July we launched *Everyone's tomorrow*, the City Council strategy for older people (see last year's report for details); in September we attended the first meeting of the City Council's Older People's Strategic Board; and in January the Charity Commission finally granted us charitable status.

Membership

At the end of April 2007, we had 1362 members; at the end of April 2008, that number had increased to 1724 (of whom 122 are members representing an organisation, so we have 1602 individual members).

The rate of increase has slowed down in the last year and the Outreach Group is considering how to get in touch with a wider range of older people in Newcastle in order to ensure that we are truly representative of the general population.

Working groups

The working groups have continued a busy schedule of meetings, consultations and surveys.

Outreach

The Outreach Group has continued with the area meetings that it started last year, thus fulfilling our objective of engaging members in issues concerning their own neighbourhoods.

We continued our talks to older people's groups but we need to ensure that we cover the whole of the city: we attended no events and gave no talks in Blakelaw, Castle, Elswick, Jesmond, Walker, Walkergate, Westgate or

Wingrove. The issues raised by the people that we met (over 1000 in all) included (in order of frequency):

- Transport
- Older Person Friendly Neighbourhoods
- Housing
- Health
- Community Safety
- Learning & Culture

Since the Elders Council receives its funding (indirectly) from the City Council for the older population of Newcastle, we have also been asking our out-of-city members whether they would rather join their own local group, which might be better able to represent their interests.

Transport

Much of our time in the last year has been spent on working with the agencies on the smooth sending out of the new national bus pass. This involved us in discussions with Nexus, government departments, Local Authorities and many others and we are pleased that, overall, this massive process went reasonably smoothly.

We were also involved with Nexus on the cost of the Metro Gold Card and are pleased that it has not been increased this year.

We have been able to develop our excellent relationship with Nexus and, in addition, we now have representatives from two of the bus operators, Stagecoach and Arriva, attending our meetings on a regular basis. On members' behalf, we continue to monitor transport issues such as TaxiLink, LinkUp, Companion Pass, Metro Card, Bridge Card, Community Transport, Hop to the Shops, bus-stops, bus-only lanes and a host of other items which we try to keep members up to date with in our Newsletter.

On a wider basis, we are part of the Tyne and Wear Older Persons' Transport Forum; we work with the planners on local transport initiatives, advise property developers on their proposed plans and with the national government on all older person issues to do with transport.

We have started a survey of bus journeys and hope to be involved with Nexus in a wider survey of transport issues generally.

As shown in the Outreach section above, transport issues are the ones most frequently raised when we meet older people's groups, and we rely on their comments and comments from the wider membership to enable us to make a case to those responsible for the necessary improvements.

Community Safety

The Community Safety Group has had an interesting year finding its way around the legal system with a visit to the law courts and a session with local magistrates.

The Group has also looked at a wide range of community safety issues. This has included members of the group reviewing the portrayal of older people in the media and a report of their findings is currently being drafted. They have visited Safety Works, a purpose-built venue, where community groups can take part in sessions on a range of safety issues from road safety to falls prevention. The group participated in the consultation on Newcastle's waste strategy, taking a particular interest in the help given to older people who have difficulty putting their bins out.

Safe Newcastle has worked with the group and involved members in the development of the new Safe Newcastle Strategy.

Members of the group were also given an opportunity to take part in a Drugs Workshop delivered by Safe Newcastle. This gave the group the opportunity to find out about different types of drugs and how they are used. Members found it very useful in raising their awareness of the range of issues associated with drug use.

Housing

For the Housing Group, the year 2007/8 has seen a very strong focus on developing strategies – national and citywide. We have taken every opportunity to ensure that the evidence we have gathered over many years about the needs and aspirations of older people has been submitted those responsible for developing strategies.

We are represented on the national Housing and Older People Development Group. Their hard work came to fruition with the launch of Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods – A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, which was launched in February 2008. This Strategy reflects many of the issues that we have been raising and provides an excellent platform for the development of Newcastle's Older People's Accommodation Strategy.

We are also very actively represented on the VONNE (Voluntary Organisations North East) Regional Housing Group.

In Newcastle we have held two key events this year. We worked with the Planning Department to host a regional workshop on Lifetime Homes. The workshop was very well attended and demonstrated considerable support for making lifetime homes standards a mandatory requirement. We continue to encourage Newcastle City Council to adopt these standards in advance of them becoming mandatory for new-build in 2011 (public housing) and 2013 (all housing).

The purpose of our second event ('Talking about Housing – Options and Choices for Older People') was to give older people the opportunity to set out what they think should be included in Newcastle's Older People's Accommodation Strategy. Our recommendations have already been taken on board in shaping the framework for the strategy and we will be working closely with Newcastle City Council during 2008/9 to ensure that older people are involved at every stage of the process.

We continue to enjoy a good working relationship with Your Homes Newcastle and the group was given the opportunity to view and comment on the conversions in Milecastle House and to receive an update on the range of telecare products which are available now.

We attended the launch of Newcastle's Telecare Strategy, where the highlight of the event was a performance by the Old Spice Drama Group on older people's perceptions of telecare.

For a six-month period, we were fortunate to have the support of Nadine Braesick, a German student who was on placement with Newcastle Healthy City Project. Nadine, with support from her colleague Emilia Reinsch, organised our key events. At the end of their placement, Nadine and Emilia gave us an excellent presentation on key aspects of life for older people in Germany.

Learning and culture

The group has continued to monitor and promote learning and cultural opportunities for the benefit of older people in the belief that they are vital to our “physical, mental and emotional health and well-being” (Aim 3 of *Everyone’s tomorrow*) and we have suggested ideas to Newcastle University for research to confirm this.

Continued concern about the removal of discounts on city-provided courses has involved us in correspondence and discussion with MPs, councillors and officers, as well as many other agencies locally, regionally and nationally. As a result, we are convinced of the need for a wider vision and strategy for older people’s learning that takes account of their particular needs, of which we have become well aware from our consultations with the membership over recent years.

We want more flexible, more affordable arrangements for informal learning which is enjoyable, sociable and rewarding. At present, the funding for such a programme combining the work of interested agencies does not exist; however, there are signs that change may be possible as our most recent task has been to respond to a government consultation on informal adult learning.

More positively, we have continued to build contacts with the cultural organisations in the city – theatres, libraries, arts agencies, etc. – to promote better understanding of how we can help each and encourage participation.

Health and social care (Action for health – senior citizens in Newcastle)

At monthly meetings a wide range of topics has been discussed as health and social care providers have attended to present proposals for their services (e.g., adult nutrition; community care services; mental health services; chiropody services; carers support and a project on early detection of cancer). The group has taken a special interest in long-term care, and because we are a partner in a Joseph Rowntree Foundation project on Caring Choices, a national consultation paying for care. Action for Health – Senior Citizens in Newcastle co-hosted a Listening Event on Rehabilitation and Intermediate Care Services. Comments were forwarded in response to a regional public health strategy consultation on Better Health, Fairer Health, stressing the need for positive policies to promote healthy ageing in joint work across services, including the voluntary sector.

Members of the group are involved in contributing the views of older people at Primary Care Trust Public Engagement events and Community Action on Health network meetings. The Old Spice Drama Group is an off-shoot of Action for Health – Senior Citizens in Newcastle and has used their performances in teaching sessions with nursing and social work students to promote interactive discussion on involving users in the development of services. Old Spice has also prepared a sketch to present older people's views about telecare at the launch of Newcastle's strategy, and has developed a performance on the theme of "The Upside and Downside of Care" as a contribution to an event on Dignity in Care.

Older person friendly city

The group's report on the Older Person Friendly City Centre was launched in April 2007 at the same time as the launch of the strategy for an ageing population. The issues raised by the report have been followed up in involvement with the City Centre Partnership Board; membership of a working group on Old Eldon Square; discussions about older person friendly shopping with John Lewis, and a regular supply of information about 'what's on'. There are several other issues which need to be followed up, in particular, provision of public lavatories, pedestrian-crossing times, and post offices in the city centre. The working group has also taken a lead in involvement in planning issues (e.g., consultation about Science City, East Pilgrim Street Regeneration area, and plans for the Stephenson Quarter).

A new piece of work is the assessment of parks and recreation areas for older person friendliness. The work started with a survey of members' opinions about parks, frequency of visits and likes and dislikes. Members' concerns were used to develop a checklist, which was then used to survey most parks within the city. The findings are being summarised in a report which will be discussed with the management of parks, with groups of Friends, and with other interested groups. The overall aim is to increase the use of parks by older people, and to promote healthy outdoor activities as part of an active ageing programme.

Readers

We have looked at a variety of documents over the year: *Everyone's Tomorrow – a Strategy for Older People and an Ageing Population in Newcastle upon Tyne*; *Pay Less Tax* book (Age Concern England); a series

of podiatry leaflets for diabetes patients: *Diabetes foot assessment*, *Diabetes and general foot care*, *Diabetes and vascular disease*, *Diabetic neuropathy*, *Looking after your diabetic foot ulcer*, *What is a Charcot foot?* (Newcastle Primary Care Trust); *Newcastle City Learning Citywide* (Newcastle City Learning); and the Community Care Alarm Service information pack (Your Homes Newcastle).

The Readers Group was also involved in the 'Monitoring the press' project with the Community Safety Group.

There are two sub-groups of the Readers Group – the Newsletter editorial group and the radio group.

Newsletter: We were receiving so many useful articles for the newsletter that the Board of Trustees decided that we should publish six editions per year rather than the four we published in the past; so the newsletter now comes out in January, March, May, July, September and November, with the deadline for submission of articles being in the middle of the previous month.

We continue to receive appreciative letters from readers.

Everyone's tomorrow – today! is the title of the radio programme broadcast on the first Friday of every month through the community radio station NE1 (102.5fm). The radio team has started by allocating each programme in turn to one of the Elders Council working groups. We are now looking to receive feedback, comment and new ideas from our listeners.

Representing the Elders Council

Members of the Board of Trustees have represented members' views on a wide range of bodies, including:

- The Older People's Strategic Board
- Voluntary Organisations' Network North East (VONNE)
- Older People's Advisory Group (OPAG)
- Years Ahead
- Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

- Tyne and Wear Older People's Transport Forum
- World Health Organisation (WHO) Healthy Cities Project
- Equalities Coalition
- Community Empowerment Network
- Institute for Ageing and Health
- Housing and Older People Development Group (HOPDEV)

Members were also invited by the City Council and by the Opposition to attend consultation meetings on the council budget.

For most of the year, we have had regular meetings with the council's ward co-ordinators in the Older People's Working Group. Unfortunately, however, Ward Co-ordination have received a 34% cut in their budget and it is uncertain whether these meetings can continue.

***Everyone's Tomorrow* and the Older People's Strategic Board**

The Elders Council played a key role in the development of *Everyone's Tomorrow* (Newcastle's Strategy for Older People) to ensure that it reflected the key issues of concern to older people.

We continue to play an important role in the review and implementation of *Everyone's Tomorrow* in a variety of ways:

- Members of the Elders Council sit on the Older People's Strategic Board.
- The Elders Council is taking the lead on the review of Aim 1 of the Strategy – Older People Making a Contribution. In November/December 2007 this took the form of a questionnaire to all our members and an event at the Assembly Rooms in which over 160 members participated.
- Participation by Elders Council members in the review of the other aims of the Strategy.

The Elders Council will continue to strive to engage with a wide range of older people in the city to ensure that we are contributing your ideas and concerns to the review and development of *Everyone's tomorrow*. Through this process, we work closely with agencies to improve the range and quality of services for older people in the city.

Building bridges between the generations

When we consulted on *Everyone's Tomorrow*, we received a very clear message that we needed to develop more opportunities for young and old to come together. We have been trying to identify ways of making this happen, one of which is regular meetings between the Elders Council officers and Newcastle's UK Youth Parliament representatives. We were invited to observe a key event at which the Youth Parliament representatives were asking young people in the city to identify the key issues for them to work on during the coming year. We were not surprised to find that many of the issues (and solutions) which young people came up with are very similar to those raised by older people (e.g., transport; community safety; and suitable community facilities).

Partners in the Quality of Life Partnership

We continue as a full partner in the Quality of Life Partnership (QoLP), maintaining our involvement in the partnership's key areas of work, including:

- Information NOW (the Newcastle Older People's Webite)
- Development of practical activities (e.g., the Trades Register and Hop to the Shops)
- Information, Advice and Advocacy
- Active Ageing Programme

The QoLP team continues to give the Elders Council full and dedicated support, for which we are very grateful. We would like to end this report by thanking each and every one of them:

Barbara Douglas (Co-ordinator)
Fran O'Brien (Operations Manager)
Anne Richardson (Senior Administrator)
Linda Ward (Administrator)
Claire Horton (Information, Advice and Advocacy, including Information NOW)
Michelle Mordue (Public Health Development Worker)
Sarah Cross (Administrator)
Kaye Turner (Information NOW)
Clare Hodgson

We are grateful to Newcastle City Council, the Primary Care Trust and anonymous donors for the financial support that they give to the Elders Council.

Registered Number 6188907
Charity Number 1122424

The Elders Council of Newcastle Limited
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Financial Accounts

For the period 28 March 2007 to 31 March 2008

The Elders Council of Newcastle Limited

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2008

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). The financial statements are required by law to give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the company and of the surplus or deficit of the company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report was approved by the trustees on 23 May 2008 and signed on its behalf, by:

W W Ions
Treasurer

The Elders Council of Newcastle Limited

AUDIT EXEMPTION REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2008

ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS ON THE UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS OF THE ELDERS COUNCIL OF NEWCASTLE LIMITED

I report on the accounts for the period ended 31 March 2008

The trustees, who are also directors of the company for the purposes of the Companies Act, are responsible for the preparation of the accounts, and they consider that the company is exempt from an audit. It is our responsibility to carry out procedures designed to enable me to report my opinion.

BASIS OF OPINION

My work was conducted in accordance with the Statement of Standards for Reporting Accountants, and so my procedures consisted of comparing the accounts with the accounting records kept by the company, and making such limited enquiries of the officers of the company as I considered necessary for the purposes of this report. These procedures provide only the assurances expressed in my opinion.

OPINION

In my opinion:

- a) the accounts are in agreement with the accounting records kept by the company under section 221 of the Companies Act 1985, as amended;
- b) having regard only to, and on the basis of, the information contained in those accounting records:
 - i) the accounts have been drawn up in a manner consistent with the

accounting requirements specified in the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities, and in section 249C(6) of the Act; and

- ii) the company satisfied the conditions for exemption from an audit of the accounts for the year specified in section 249A(4) of the Act and did not, at any time within that year, fall within any of the categories of companies not entitled to the exemption specified in section 249B(1).

David L. Kilner FCA
Chartered Accountant
7 Eldon Square
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 7JG

The Elders Council of Newcastle Limited

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE PERIOD 28 MARCH 2007 TO 31 MARCH 2008

Unrestricted Funds

Incoming Resources

Grants Received			
Quality of Life Partnership	20,000		
Care & Repair England	1,000		21,000
Income from Services			279
Donations			249
Interest Received			1,566
			<u>23,094</u>

Resources Expended

Direct Costs

Development Working Groups	120		
Interpretation	1,973		
Meetings	2,720		
Postage	4,354		
Printing, Stationery, Publicity	9,220		
Project Expenditure	1,000		
Sundries	132		
Training and Conferences	803		
Transport	4,294	24,616	
<u>Administration Costs</u>			
Accountancy	400		
Insurance	878		
Legal Charges	260	1,538	26,154
<u>Deficit for the period</u>			<u>(3,060)</u>

Funds received from predecessor
Organisation (Elders Council on
1 April 2007

27,819

Funds at 31 March 2008

£24,759

The Elders Council of Newcastle Limited

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2008

Current Assets

Cash at Bank 28,323

Creditors

Amounts falling due within one year 3,564

Net Assets

£24,759

Unrestricted Accumulated Funds

£24,759

The trustees consider that the company is entitled to exemption from the requirements to have an audit under the provisions of section 249A(2) of the Companies Act 1985 and members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for this period in accordance with section 249B(2) of the Act. The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with section 221 of the Act and for preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at 31 March 2008 and of its income and expenditure for the period 28 March 2007 to 31 March 2008 in accordance with the requirements of Section 226 of the Act and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 1985 relating to the financial statements so far as applicable to the company.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part VII of the Companies Act 1985 relating to small companies and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective January 2007).

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 23 May 2008 and signed on their behalf by:

W W Ions
Treasurer

A copy of this report can be found at
<http://www.elderscouncil.org.uk/publications>

or ring 0191 233 0200 and ask for a copy to be sent to you.

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Charity Number 1122424