

**Elders Council of Newcastle**



# Annual Report

2008-2009

# Overview

We have had another successful year.

Membership has increased; the working groups have been active; members have attended national, regional and local events; and we have contributed to national and local consultations.

## Membership

At the end of April 2008, we had 1724 members; at the end of April 2009, that number had increased to 2041 (of whom 136 are members representing an organisation, so we have 1905 individual members).

We are still not satisfied that our membership properly represents the full diversity of Newcastle's older population and the Outreach Group is implementing plans to get in touch with so-called "hard-to-reach" older people (see the Outreach report below).

## Working groups

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

## Housing

The Housing Group has undertaken a wide variety of activity during the year.

Developing the Older People's Accommodation Strategy: Members of the Housing Group have contributed in various ways to the development of Newcastle's Older People's Accommodation Strategy. The Strategy is now in final draft and has been very clearly influenced by the voices of older people.

Participating in research: The Housing Group has supported the involvement of Elders Council members and other older people in a range of research projects, which include:

- Age Friendly Communities in the North (Northern Housing Consortium).

- Housing Needs and Supply for an Ageing Society (Centre for Housing Policy, York University).
- The Experiences of Older People Living in the Private Rented Sector (Centre for Housing Policy, York University).

How is the city of Newcastle meeting the housing needs and preferences of older people? (Undergraduate student research – University of Newcastle (School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape)).

Working together with the Older Person Friendly City Group and the Older People's Working Group: The Housing Group has jointly sponsored the involvement of post-graduate students from the University of Newcastle in engaging older people in Cowgate and Jesmond in considering what would make their neighbourhood older person friendly. This work has involved a series of workshops with older people to find out about people's concerns and to work with them and local agencies to find solutions. Reports on this work will be available in June 2009. In Cowgate, this work has already resulted in the introduction of a 'Hop to the Shops' service and the development of a joint activity programme in two sheltered housing complexes.

We hope we can learn from this project about how to engage older people in contributing to their Neighbourhood Charters.

Making the national strategy work for us locally: The Housing Group is indebted to Vera Bolter for her consistently hard work in keeping up with housing issues at national and regional level. Vera brings the group a wealth of information which has been invaluable in the development of Newcastle's Older People's Accommodation Strategy.

In July 2008, together with the Older Person Friendly City Group, we hosted a visit from Baroness Andrews (Parliamentary Under-Secretary for State with responsibility for strategy for an ageing society).

Keeping up to date: During the year, the group has received presentations from Anchor Staying Put and from Adult Services on equipment and adaptations.

Future Plans: Together with the Older Person Friendly City Group, the group is in discussion with Planning Aid with a view to organising workshops in 2009 which enable older people to have a greater understanding of and influence on the planning system.

## Health and Social Care

Action for Health – Senior Citizens in Newcastle (AFH-SCIN) – has been funded as a consultation group on health and social care issues until March 2009. Members from older people’s groups meet together regularly to discuss and to respond to national, regional and local consultations, plans and policies. Over the year, the group responded to national plans for an NHS constitution, and to the national Dementia Care Strategy. As plans at national level provide the framework for local developments, it is important to comment from a local perspective. Closer to home was the consultation about NHS North of Tyne Strategy proposing to give priority to preventive services. Although welcoming this change, the group pointed out that the promotion of healthy lifestyles for older people may require help tailored to their needs. Very close to home were the consultations by the Primary Care Trust about ‘Improving Access to GP and Community Health Services’, and about ‘Urgent Health Care Centres’. For older people, easy access to basic services is a paramount consideration. A cautious welcome was therefore given to proposals for ‘Walk-In’ urgent care facilities, as well as a new Health Centre, and improvements in GP services.

As well as responding to formal consultation documents, meetings have provided opportunities for discussions with the relevant officers of plans for palliative care; rehabilitation and intermediate care services; optometry services; dental care; and elder abuse. Members appreciate early discussions about developments and changes in services and find that their participation is well received.

It is important for the group to be in contact with a wide range of opinion. The Elders Council Newsletter provides a channel of communication, as each issue includes an update on current discussions and for readers to respond with their views. The Old Spice Drama Group, an off-shoot of AFH-SCIN, also reaches out to older people’s groups through performances on health and safety issues. Performance has also been a useful tool over the past year in expressing older people’s views in an alternative way, e.g., in new sketches written for the launch of the Telecare Strategy and for a Dignity in Care event.

On behalf of the Elders Council, a new performance *Mind the Gaps* was presented to promote discussion about current proposals for the transformation of social care.

## Older Person Friendly City

Parks and recreation areas have been a focus of attention over the past year, resulting in the publication of the working group's findings from surveys of 18 parks in Newcastle for 'older person friendliness'. The overall aim is to increase the use of parks for healthy outdoor activities by older people, by identifying the features which enhance – or prevent – enjoyment. These include issues such as access and signage, location of seats, ease of circulation, safety and security, and desirable amenities; all of these features are under discussion with parks management. The group is also supporting the provision of outdoor exercise equipment for adults, and has collected information about the type of equipment available in other parts of the country.

City Centre: Work has continued on the issues raised in the working group's previous report about the city centre. In particular, the group is strongly urging the City Council to adopt a Community Toilets Strategy, as it is now seen as the way forward to increase provision by working in partnership with local businesses to open up their customer facilities to public.

Development in the City Centre: Members have followed with interest the re-development of Old Eldon Square. Initially, there were misgivings about the proposed changes, but it is now felt that the progress of consultation with the young people, who have used the square as a meeting place, has been well managed so that different generations were satisfied with the outcome. Interest has continued in the development of the Stephenson Quarter and the working group has made comments to the developer and to the City Council in response to consultation documents. The major planning consultation during the year has been over the East Pilgrim Street Regeneration area. Special meetings have been held jointly with the Transport Group, resulting in contributions about access, public transport facilities, ease of circulation in pleasant pedestrian areas, siting of the proposed new department store, and the importance of a 'cultural hub' of buildings and spaces around the rebuilt City Library and the Laing Art Gallery.

Older Person Friendly Shopping is the next piece of work for the group, following a visit by a member during the year to a Kaiser supermarket in Berlin, which has pioneered facilities to make shopping easier and more enjoyable for older people.

## Learning and Culture

The Learning and Culture Group has continued to monitor and promote relevant activities in the city. On balance, we have been more successful in making contacts and initiating action in the music, arts and crafts, theatre and cinema areas, which have been advertised in the newsletter, than in formal learning programmes, which suffered from the removal of age-related concessions, only partly restored this academic year to 25% rather than the 50% that we were allowed previously.

Having contributed to the government's consultation on the provision of 'informal learning' last year, we have only recently been able to see the resulting white paper, *The Learning Revolution*, which deals with adult learning as lifelong learning as we think of it rather than work-related training. We welcome the acknowledgement of the efforts of community groups and homegrown learning interests, and plan to examine the implications of the report for older people when we meet shortly after the AGM. We are still waiting to see what recommendations and resources may be forthcoming.

In the interim, the group has diversified by splitting into sub-groups looking for opportunities to facilitate older learners' interests; we have supported the Active Ageing extended programme now taking place, visited the new City Library to assess its potential, developed links with the Arts Council, theatres, museums and galleries along with Age Concern, and encouraged members to take part in arts, musical drama events (not least through our recent Older and Wiser Day) and, after a delay in arranging a suitable area for display, our Gadgies' Gallery will go ahead soon in the Quality of Life Office at MEA House featuring the work of older practitioners.

## Outreach

The Outreach Group has continued to pursue an active programme of two-way communications with Elders Council members as well as more widely with Newcastle's older residents. Our activities have included:

- Providing speakers or looking after an information stand at 18 community events. This gave us an opportunity to speak to more than 900 people.

- Arranging two area events for members, one on Westgate Road and the other in Denton. These were intended to provide updates on Elders Council activities and to ask those attending what they liked and what they disliked about their neighbourhood. The results have been fed back to the City Council.
- Arranging three Older & Wiser (Information) Days. The issues covered were *Lasting powers of attorney*, *Keeping warm in your home* and *Getting the most from the arts*. This last event looked at drama, visual art and music. All three events were very well attended.
- With much appreciated help from the Library Service, 600 housebound readers and sheltered accommodations were sent the April newsletter and an invitation to join the Elders Council.

## Transport and Highways

Transport is still a major concern of older people and, during the year, we have been extremely active on your behalf.

We have continued to build our excellent links with Nexus, the three major bus operators (Stagecoach, Arriva and Go North-East) and the City Council, who all attend our meetings from time to time. We have worked closely with various authorities on items such as the Government Transport Bill, Nexus Bus Strategy and major developments such as the Stephenson Quarter, East Pilgrim Street Regeneration project, Eldon Bus Station redevelopment, Haymarket Bus Station refurbishment and the Old Eldon Square renovation. We carried out our own bus survey and have published articles on *Making the most of your bus pass* and *Making a comment to bus operators*, and we are currently preparing an article on *Summer Outings with your Bus Pass*. We have actively encouraged the use of the Bridge Card and been involved in projects such as the Stagecoach Services 33 and No 1.

Our current work includes surveying the Metro Travel Centres and also looking at parking problems in the City. In addition, we will continue our routine monitoring of Concessionary Passes, Metro Gold Card, TaxiCard, LinkUp, Taxi Bus, the Companion Card, Community Transport and the Hop to the Shops service.

We are always delighted to receive your many comments and, with a very busy year ahead, we look forward to hearing from you in the future.

## Readers

The Readers Group continues to monitor official leaflets, pamphlets, brochures and other written publications in Newcastle. During the last year, we have looked at the following documents:

- NHS North East Age Fact File: Older People
- Mobile Hairdressing Service leaflets (for Age Concern Newcastle)
- Active Ageing Tutor Databank documents
- Citylife

Members also participated in a consultation for Newcastle City Council's *Information for All* policy and a review session for Age Concern Newcastle's website.

The Readers Group has two sub-groups: the Newsletter Editorial Group and the Radio Group. We produced five editions of the newsletter during the year; it has proved so popular that we decided to increase the number of issues from four to six per year. The Radio Group (*Everyone's tomorrow – today!*) continued to broadcast its monthly programmes on a range of diverse topics. Both groups would welcome new members and urge you to contact the office if you would like to join us.

## 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
- Equalities Coalition
- Community Empowerment Network (now disbanded)
- Institute for Ageing and Health
- Housing and Older People Development Group (HOPDEV)
- Older People's Working Group

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

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

The Elders Council continues to play a key role in the development of *Everyone's Tomorrow* (Newcastle's Strategy for Older People) to ensure that it reflects the key issues of concern to older people. Our representatives sit on the Newcastle Partnership's Older People's Strategic Board, which over the past year has considered the remaining four aims of the strategy (Accessing information, advice and advocacy; Physical, mental and emotional health and well-being; Enjoying older person friendly environments; and Financial and material security).

We are currently reviewing the outcomes in order to ensure that the strategy can be properly implemented and fully monitored.

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

We continue to meet with the representatives elected to Newcastle's Youth Parliament; indeed, we attended the event at St James' Park at which the current young representatives were installed. Last year's reps joined with the radio group to produce a special programme joining together issues raised by Newcastle's younger and older generations.

## Quality of Life Partnership

We continue as a full partner (alongside Newcastle Healthy City, Age Concern Newcastle and the City Council) 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 Website)
- 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 (Strategic Director)

Fran O'Brien (Project Manager)

Anne Richardson (Strategic Support and Administration Manager)

Linda Ward (Office Support Administrator)

Claire Horton (Information, advice and advocacy, including Information NOW)

Michelle Mordue (Active Ageing Development Worker)

Kaye Turner (Information NOW)

and two members of staff who have recently joined:

Sandra Hillyard (Joining the Dots Project Manager)

Matthew Phillips (Funding Administrator)

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.

Contact details:

e-mail: [elderscouncil@qualityoflife.org.uk](mailto:elderscouncil@qualityoflife.org.uk)

Telephone: 0191 273 4727

Website: [www.elderscouncil.org.uk](http://www.elderscouncil.org.uk)

Post: MEA House, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8XS

Registered charity no. 1122424 Company Limited by Guarantee no.:  
6188907

## APPENDIX 1

### 1. Board of Trustees

|                            |                        |                            |
|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Vera Bolter                | Susan Chan             | Bill Ions (Treasurer)      |
| Marguerite Maxwell         | Mary Nicholls          | John O'Shea                |
| John Reid                  | Elsie Richardson       | John Smart                 |
| Pat Stephenson             | Peter Stone (co-opted) | Dorothy Ternent (Vice Ch.) |
| June Thexton               | Bob Weiner (Secretary) | Steve Whitley (Chair)      |
| Judith Williams (co-opted) | Mick Williams          |                            |

One third of the Board of Trustees retires every year; those who retire may stand again. The Annual General Meeting appoints trustees, after an election if more members wish to stand for the Board than there are places available. Only members of the Elders Council may be appointed.

The officers are appointed by and from the Board of Trustees, after an election if more than one trustee wishes to stand for the vacant post. The term of office of an officer is three years; they may not serve in the same post for more than six consecutive years.

New trustees are given a brief induction to the Elders Council and the duties and responsibilities of trusteeship.

Normally, the Board meets monthly.

### 2. Governance

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the policy and management of the Elders Council. It is guided in its decisions by the work of the working groups (see above, pages 1-7).

### 3. Objects

The objects of the Elders Council are:

- (1) to provide the infrastructure to enable the over-50s residing or active in the city of Newcastle upon Tyne to contribute as a resource to the community;
- (2) to educate, develop, improve, encourage and promote awareness of the over-50s and their capabilities and needs whilst residing or active in the city of Newcastle upon Tyne;
- (3) to provide general financial assistance for over-50s residing or active in the city of Newcastle upon Tyne;
- (4) to provide for and assist in the provision of exhibitions, lectures, classes and demonstrations for members of the general public to further and increase their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of all matters and awareness of the over-50s in Newcastle upon Tyne;
- (5) to promote the welfare of the over-50s in any manner which now is or hereafter may be deemed by law to be charitable;
- (6) to provide relief to over-50s residing or active in the city in Newcastle upon Tyne who are in need of services or facilities calculated to relieve the needs of such persons;
- (7) to provide information for the relief of financial hardship, sickness and poor health amongst the over-50s.

#### **4. Public benefit**

As will be seen from the body of the report, the Elders Council trustees have, in the exercise of their duties, fully complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission.

Registered Number 6188907  
Charity Number 1122424

THE ELDERS COUNCIL OF NEWCASTLE LIMITED  
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2009

THE ELDERS COUNCIL OF NEWCASTLE LIMITED

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2009

|  | <u>2008/09</u>  | <u>28/3/07 to 31/3/08</u> |                         |
|--|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <u>UNRESTRICTED FUNDS</u>                          |                 |                           |                         |
| <u>INCOME RESOURCES (Note 1)</u>                   |                 |                           |                         |
| Grants Received                                    |                 |                           |                         |
| Quality of Life Partnership                        | 24,010          |                           | 20,000                  |
| Healthy City Project                               | 3,666           |                           | --                      |
| Others   | <u>150</u>      | 27,826                    | <u>1,000</u> 21,000     |
| Income from Services                               |                 | 1,543                     | 279                     |
| Donations  |                 | 535                       | 249                     |
| Interest Received                                  |                 | <u>1,312</u>              | <u>1,566</u>            |
|  |                 | <u>31,216</u>             | <u>23,094</u>           |
| <u>RESOURCES EXPENDED</u>                          |                 |                           |                         |
| <u>DIRECT COSTS (Note 1)</u>                       |                 |                           |                         |
| Development Working Groups                         | 1,286           |                           | 120                     |
| Information Days                                   | 1,102           |                           | --                      |
| Interpretation                                     | 408             |                           | 1,973                   |
| Meetings   | 1,512           |                           | 2,720                   |
| Postage  | 6,901           |                           | 4,354                   |
| Printing, Stationery,<br>Publicity                 | 12,340          |                           | 9,220                   |
| Project Expenditure                                | --              |                           | 1,000                   |
| Sundries   | 154             |                           | 132                     |
| Training & Conferences                             | 446             |                           | 803                     |
| Transport  | <u>3,985</u>    | 28,134                    | <u>4,294</u> 24,616     |
| <u>ADMINISTRATION COSTS (Note 1)</u>               |                 |                           |                         |
| Accountancy  | 464             |                           | 400                     |
| Insurance  | 498             |                           | 878                     |
| Legal  | <u>15</u>       | <u>977</u>                | <u>260</u> <u>1,538</u> |
| <u>EXCESS (DEFICIT) OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE</u> | <u>2,105</u>    |                           | <u>(3,060)</u>          |
| <u>UNRESTRICTED FUND AT 31 MARCH 2008</u>          | <u>24,759</u>   |                           | <u>27,819</u>           |
| <u>UNRESTRICTED FUND AT 31 MARCH 2009</u>          | <u>£ 26,864</u> |                           | <u>£ 24,759</u>         |

Note 1

In addition to the above costs, co-ordination, clerical and support services were provided to the company during the year by the Quality of Life Partnership at an estimated value of £110,000.

THE ELDERS COUNCIL OF NEWCASTLE LIMITED

BALANCE SHEET

31 MARCH 2009

CURRENT ASSETS

|              |               |               |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Debtors      | 4,173         | --            |
| Cash at Bank | <u>26,091</u> | <u>28,323</u> |
|              | 30,264        | 28,323        |

CREDITORS

|                                     |              |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Amounts falling due within one year | <u>3,400</u> | <u>3,564</u> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|

NET ASSETS £ 26,864 £ 24,759

UNRESTRICTED ACCUMULATED FUNDS £ 26,864 £ 24,759

The trustees consider that the company is entitled to exemption from the requirements to have an audit under the provision 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 year 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 2009 and of its income and expenditure for the year ended on that date 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 19 May 2009 and signed on their behalf by:

W W Ions  
Treasurer



The Elders Council of Newcastle Limited

**TRUSTEES' REPORT**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2009**

**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 19 May 2009 and signed on its behalf by:

W W Ions  
Treasurer



