

OLDER & SAFER DAY

Tuesday 5 April 2011
Assembly Rooms, Fenkle Street, Newcastle

Introduction

An important feature affecting the quality of life of older people is their feeling of safety both at home and when out and about. This report covers a meeting, arranged by the Elders Council, at which members discussed and identified issues concerning safety. Additionally a number of relevant agencies were invited to provide information stands and this allowed participants to take up individual queries with specialist advisers.

The programme is shown in Appendix A. The event attracted 95 participants. During the discussion session people sat in groups of about six to a table and were arranged so that they sat with others who lived in roughly the same neighbourhood. Every table had a facilitator to help the discussions along and one member of the group acted as 'scribe'. The neighbourhoods covered and the facilitators are shown in Appendix B.

The discussions were structured around the following questions:-

Neighbourhood

- When and where do you feel safe in your neighbourhood?
- When and where do you feel unsafe?
- If there are areas in your neighbourhood where you feel unsafe – what would you like done about it and by whom?

At Home

- When do you feel safe in your home?
- Are there times when you don't feel safe?
- What do you do about it?

Following the discussion session participants had the opportunity of looking at the information stands. The agencies attending are shown in Appendix C.

Summary of the Discussion Session

There were sufficient similarities between the comments recorded by the 19 tables for some general trends to emerge. These are detailed below. Additionally there were some issues specific to one neighbourhood and these are tabulated in Appendix D.1 & D.2.

When and where do you feel safe in your neighbourhood?

During daylight hours and in places which are familiar.

When and where do you feel unsafe in your neighbourhood?

- At night time.
- When travelling on public transport at night and particularly at Metro stations.
- When there is no one about
- Where there is poor street lighting
- In the local park
- Where there are gatherings of young people
- Where the pavement surface is poor or obstructed by cars

What would you like done about it and by whom?

- Control of young people and giving them something to do.
- More police and street wardens
- Strong community via Neighbourhood Watch, residents group and good neighbours.

Two additional points are considered of interest. Firstly that a significant number of participants said that they never felt unsafe when out and about. Secondly that single older people tend to feel unsafe more easily than do older people out and about in couples.

When do you feel safe in your home?

Much reference was made to various devices such as cameras, time switches, the community care alarm system, smoke alarms, spy holes and good quality locks.

The importance of family and neighbours.

Are there times when you don't feel safe?

- Dislike unexpected callers.
- Dislike phone calls from strangers and sales calls
- When young people congregate outside of house

What do you do about it?

Reference to neighbours, Residents Association, community spirit

Reference also to devices

Safety measures such as stopping milk delivery prior to holiday, locking doors, using reliable cab firm.

As in the case of feeling safe when out and about, a significant number of participants said that they never felt unsafe at home.

Summary

A number of strands emerge from the above.

- i) The importance of family, neighbours and the community in general in relation to older people feeling safe both at home and in their neighbourhood
- ii) An intergenerational barrier, with older people feeling uneasy close to groups of young people
- iii) A range of physical obstacles such as uneven pavements, poor lighting and cars parking on pavements detracting from feeling safe when out and about.
- iv) Dislike/ avoidance of going out after dark.
- v) The fact of having devices such as smoke alarms, spy holes and good quality locks making people feel safer in their homes.
- vi) Dislike of unexpected callers and unsolicited phone calls

Finally it seems noteworthy that quite a few of the participants said that they never felt unsafe. It would therefore be interesting to ascertain their motivation for attending an event concerning safety. Although outside the scope of the present report, it seems possible that there might be a connection with problems of social isolation.

Appendix A

Programme

- 1.30 Reception, registration and tea
- 2.00 Welcome and introduction
by Mary Nicholls (Chair of the Elders Council)
- 2.05 Performance by Old Spice Drama Group
- 2.15 Group Discussions
- 3.15 Opportunity to visit Information Stalls
- 3.15 Old Spice Drama Group will present
and two performances each lasting
3.35 15 minutes in a separate room.
- Prize Draw, Close & Departure

Appendix B

Information Stalls

- Age UK Newcastle
- Community Care Alarm
- Elders Council
- Gas Safe
- HealthWORKS
- Mears Home Improvement
- Northumbria Police
- Safe Newcastle
- Safeguarding Adults Unit
- Safetyworks
- Trading Standards
- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Appendix C

Table Arrangement

Ward Represented on Table	Facilitator
Benwell/Scotswood	Colin Ash (Safe Newcastle)
Blakelaw	Claire Fairbank, (Safeguarding Adults Unit)
Blakelaw/ Lemington	Jacqui Donnell (Safetyworks)
Byker/North Heaton	Betty Parvin (Elders Council)
Dene	Elsie Richardson (Elders Council)
East Gosforth	Shiela Manley (Elders Council)
Elswick	John Smart (Elders Council)
Fawdon	Clare Matthews, (Mears Home Improvement)
Fawdon/Wingrove/Westgate	Mary Dodds (Elders Council)
Kenton	Lorraine Hurst, (Safetyworks)
Mixed table	Steve Whitley (Elders Council)
Newburn	James Steward (Safeguarding Adults Unit)
North Jesmond	Bob Weiner (Elders Council)
Parklands	Anita Davies (Elders Council)
South Jesmond	Doris Enfield (Elders Council)
Walker/Walkergate	Andrew Lloyd (Community Care Alarm Service)
West Gosforth	Bill Ions (Elders Council)
Westerhope	Dorothy Ternent (Elders Council)
Woolsington	Jo Flitcroft, (Safe Newcastle)

Appendix D.1

Specific Issues (Positive)

Ward	Issue
Benwell/Scotswood	
Blakelaw	
Blakelaw/ Lemington	Safe in library or shops though the day
Byker/North Heaton	
Dene	Safety improvements to pavements
East Gosforth	
Elswick	Condercum Estate & Grainger Park Estate general feeling is that people feel safe
Fawdon	Feel safe in the library or public places
Fawdon/Wingrove/Westgate	
Kenton	Much better since wardens started patrolling Even public houses tend not to have bother
Mixed table	Feel safe in Wingrove Road. Feel safe in Nunsmoor Park during the day
Newburn	
North Jesmond	
Parklands	
South Jesmond	Safe in Eldon Square during the day
Walker/Walkegate	Walkerville/Walker Fossway feels safe most of the time
West Gosforth	
Westerhope	
Woolsington	Safe in clubs, library, shops parks Better since renew lighting

Appendix D.2

Specific Issues (Negative)

Ward	Issue
Benwell/Scotswood	Embassy Bingo – derelict land, young people smoking, drinking & drugs.
Blakelaw	Unsafe in the park, young people drinking Blakelaw Park, big table removed
Blakelaw/ Lemington	
Byker/North Heaton	
Dene	
East Gosforth	
Elswick	Unsafe going down towards Elswick Road
Fawdon	Unsafe in park in Fawdon Trinity Square in front of Trinity Church unsafe due to traffic. Footpath needs to be clearly marked for pedestrians
Fawdon/Wingrove/Westgate	Unsafe where the brewery was. Going through Leazes Park – youths hanging about.
Kenton	Unsafe in Kenton Dene evenings -- many people cross roads to avoid gangs of youths
Mixed table	
Newburn	RVI poorly lit ---nobody to help Sainsbury's – talk to youths who hang around door
North Jesmond	Towers Avenue known as rogue alley (one member burgled 5 times)
Parklands	
South Jesmond	Feel very unsafe in town centre at night Need to know more about emergency numbers to contact when there is harassment
Walker/Walkegate	If it's going to happen Walker Fossway Concerns on Welbeck Road about residents not feeling safe to take money out or do shopping there.
West Gosforth	Unsafe in Old Eldon Square When pub closes on High Street
Westerhope	Groups of young people at shopping centres
Woolsington	Unsafe on Friday or Saturday in City Centre Open Walbottle Primary School playing fields for young people to use at weekends



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