

# EngAGE



The Magazine of the Elders Council

Issue 85

May 2019 – July 2019

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Yes, it's 18 years since we became the Elders Council of Newcastle; and we're going to have a birthday party at our **AGM on Tuesday 2 July**. (Your invitation is enclosed in this magazine)

Birthdays celebrations need lots of birthday cards and we want you to send them to us. (Use our free post address). As well as wishing us a happy birthday we really want you to write two things in the card:

- 1) Tell us what YOU value about the Elders Council and what it has done for you or other older people in our city.
- 2) Looking to the future, as all 18 year olds do, we need advice on what YOU think the Elders Council can do to make Newcastle a really great place to grow older.

A birthday card with that inside it would be fantastic we're already looking forward to reading them.

Now we're 18 we know that we have to be more self-reliant and that there's much more to do to make Newcastle a great place in which to grow old.

# Looking to the Future

## Chair of the Elders Council of Newcastle

The Board is very sorry to announce that Steve Whitley stepped down as Chair on 17th April 2019. On behalf of the organisation, the Board wishes to thank Steve for his great commitment to the organisation over many years and, in particular, his work on the Magazine and Radio Group (see more details in the next issue of the Magazine). The Board has nominated Anne Raffle as Acting Chair until the AGM on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, after which the Board will undertake due process to nominate a new Chair.



Throughout the last year the Elders Council Board has been working on a Development Plan to take the organisation forward. We do want to engage more with many more of you to find out your views about ageing in Newcastle. If you belong to any other group, we'd welcome a chance to come and visit and talk to you; send us an invitation so we can hear what your group think. Perhaps you're already working on a project and need a partner, give us a call we just may be able to help each other. If you have a great little idea for a project that you think the Elders Council should be should working on, let us know.

Over the last year we've been trying different ways of keeping you and other older people in touch by way of the Magazine, The EC Fortnightly eBulletin, the Elders Council Facebook page, website and of course the radio programme. We're busy "re-freshing" the look and sound of all our communications so that we can appeal to a wider audience.

There are some things you, our members can do for us: you can pass on your Magazine to a friend or neighbour; you can "like" us or "share" our posts on Facebook or you could forward your copy of the EC Fortnightly Bulletin to a friend. All lovely simple things to do that will help a great deal, so thank you.

Our strap line from the beginning has been "Older people working for older people" and we definitely need more older people to be active working with us, could you be one of those people? There are lots of different opportunities available from being a Trustee; joining an action group; helping develop a new website; staffing a stand at the Grainger Market or supporting the Mile Castle Social get-together. Get in touch if you would like to know more.

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## The Elders Council at work

### New from the Transport Group

**EC Rider The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition** of our popular brochure on summer outings with your concessionary travel pass.

Written by Bill Harbottle and edited by Bill Ions, this year's edition is 50% larger (12 pages), has a coloured front cover designed by Mary Nicholls with photographs from Nick Lambert. It includes three trips with walks and two via a rail link.

A total of 33 suggested trips include information about museums, visitor attractions, toilets (always important) and expected bus times.



You can download your copy from our website [www.elderscouncil.org.uk/information-Leaflets](http://www.elderscouncil.org.uk/information-Leaflets) or ask that we send you a paper copy (but please send us a donation to cover at least the postage and enveloped 88p); just write to us at the address on the back of the Magazine.

Copies will also be available at all Elders Council events, including the Mile Castle and our Grainger Market events (see page 6). If you pick up your paper copy at one of our events, could you please consider making a donation for it? See details on our donations page 23.

As you can imagine, it takes a lot of work to put this brochure together and we would really like to hear about the trips you go on – whether it’s a trip to Durham or some far-flung place like Whitby or Holy Island! Tell us why you chose to go there and who did you go with? What did you do when you arrived? Did you visit a museum or exhibition? We would love to hear your adventures. Send us an email or write us a letter and include a photograph if you can! We will put the names of all contributors into a hat and draw out the winning name on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019.

**The winner will receive a £25 shopping voucher!**

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## **Health and Social Care - Interested? Concerned? Read on and come along**

Housing, health and social care (HHSC) are increasingly recognised as being strongly interlinked with our wellbeing. That is why the Elders Council decided to work on these three topics under the umbrella of a single group.

The HHSC group has an open meeting every two months. Currently the group is jointly chaired by Anita Davies and Alan Gowers. As for other Elders Council groups, all members are welcome and encouraged to attend and participate in discussions, research and organisation matters. We also need volunteers for minute/note-taking.

At most meetings, there is at least one informative presentation by practitioners and experts. One recent presentation covered the NHS online portal, whereby patients access their own health records and make appointments; at another, Your Homes Newcastle gave a review of their housing services for older people.

This year, all HHSC meetings are being held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Commercial Union Building on Pilgrim Street in Newcastle.

Dates for the next 2019 meetings (10.30am-12.30am) are:

Day	Date	Topic
Friday	24 May	Pharmacy Services
Friday	26 July	To be confirmed
Friday	27 September	To be confirmed

So if you would like to come along and participate in our meetings and research, please contact Pauline Rutherford on 0191 208 2701 or email [pauline.rutherford@elderscouncil.org.uk](mailto:pauline.rutherford@elderscouncil.org.uk)

Here are some examples of the types of projects that HHSC are working on:

### Free personal care?



advice and support for older age  
**Independent  
Age**

We were approached by Independent Age to support a campaign for free social care

<https://www.independentage.org/lets-get-personal-for-free-personal-care>.

The current system is leaving 1.4 million older people without the support they need for basic everyday tasks. Independent Age is campaigning for free personal care similar to the scheme which is already operating in Scotland.

The Government has promised to publish a Social Care Green Paper 'at the earliest opportunity' in 2019, but there is still no definite news on this.

What do you think? Should the Elders Council support this campaign? Contact us with your views and experiences of the care system to writing in to the Elders Council (address on the back page) or emailing [pauline.rutherford@elderscouncil.org.uk](mailto:pauline.rutherford@elderscouncil.org.uk).

### LifeCurve™ App – Supporting healthy ageing

Professor Peter Gore came to show a mixed group of older people and front line staff the LifeCurve™ App [www.adlsmartcare.com/lifecurveapp](http://www.adlsmartcare.com/lifecurveapp) and how using it can help the majority of us age well.



First of all, chronological age is NOT a good indicator of ageing. The LifeCurve™ App, underpinned by cutting edge research, allows you to quickly discover how you are ageing and how you can maintain or improve your position.

You may not have a smart phone yourself, but a member of your family will probably have one and they could install it on their phone to help you.

Sadly, Peter Gore informed us that the generation down from us is ageing more poorly than we are, so it might be that some of them are already on the life curve and they too would benefit from using the App. You could do some things together.

### **Doorbells: Dreaming for the future**

We are seeking funding to put on more performances and film screenings of 'Doorbells: Dreaming for the future'. Elders Council and Care and Repair England, with support from Northumbria University, commissioned Skimstone Arts to develop this



performance which explores some of the dilemmas we face in finding the right place to live as we grow older.

(Claire Webster Saaremets from Skimstone is shown in the photograph) You can read about the project here

<http://skimstone.org.uk/film/>.

### **Future Homes Alliance**

We are excited to be partners in the Future Homes Alliance (FHA) championing affordable well-designed housing suitable for all age groups. FHA is currently in the process of seeking planning permission to build the homes on Newcastle Helix (once the home of Newcastle Breweries). Construction may then be able to start before the end of 2019.

### **Meet us at the Grainger Market**

We've been fortunate in being asked to partner with Newcastle City Council and others in using one of the units in the Grainger Market. As part of the Dementia Friendly City programme, Newcastle City Council is trialling the use of the market to raise awareness of services and support for older people, people with dementia and their carers. So on the second Wednesday of each month there will be some members of the Elders Council in the Grainger Market. Each month has a different theme so in April we worked to help those people who try to prevent older people from falling. We talked to those with walking sticks and got our professional partners to check out the ferrule on the end of the stick.

If it was not road-worthy, then to have a new one put on there and then and that may just have saved one or two from a fall.



A couple of us took part in some exercises, partly to warm up (it's cold just standing). The exercises can be done seated or standing and they help build some strength and some balance both of which you need to stop falling.

We will be in there again on these dates:

	Date	Topic
Wednesday	12 June	Transport and the launch of the summer outings booklet
Wednesday	10 July	Volunteering and Active Voices
Wednesday	14 August	Summer Holiday Fun

If you are in the Granger Market shopping or having a coffee or lunch don't walk past and ignore us come and say hello.

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## Communications

We communicate with you, our members, in several ways that we have developed over the years. As the Magazine became more costly to produce as often as in the past and electronic communication became used by many more people we have had to follow the trend.

The Magazine is able to offer you more detailed information about what we do as well as any letters that you write into the editor, in a hard copy if you ask for it.

Our fortnightly eBulletin has given you 26 opportunities over the year to see what we have been doing as well as a chance to see what else may be on offer for you to do or investigate.

The monthly radio broadcast "Older Voices" has been working hard too to keep up-to-date. The team have been working at producing podcasts. Each of the programmes has a theme and they often have influential people to interview - well worth a listen. Go to 102.5fm from 2pm - 4pm and listen to the podcasts on NE1fm website? Things are changing in the studio so you need to listen in and keep an eye out on Facebook/ebulletin /website for updates.



We've dipped our toes into social media too and have a Facebook page. This keeps us really in touch with you. We can post information on the page and it's with you in seconds. You do need to join Facebook and it isn't as worrying as you may believe, you can keep a very high privacy level. Once you've joined then you can see the EC Page where we post photos and short videos as well as information that's really up to date. Why not book a place to find out how to use social media? There are several available why not look on InformationNow Newcastle website, [www.informationnow.org.uk](http://www.informationnow.org.uk)



Also we have the website and that, as well as having the current work and information, acts as an archive where if you like you can view all the Newsletters and Magazines and be reminded of what was happening 5 or 10 or 15 years ago!

We have been working to improve all of our ways of keeping in touch with you and we do ask for your support in giving us your point of view about proposed changes or changes already made. It makes our life easier when we have replies from you but I have to say we don't often hear from you at all despite our nagging you.

**Finally we do want to say thank you to Arlind Reuter, a PhD student who has given very generously of her time to help with much of the development of the communications of the Elders Council.**

## Mile Castle Social Group



This is a social group and all are welcome, though we know how hard it is to come to an established group on your own. We will make you welcome if you are brave enough to take that step and hope you will find some useful information, some laughter and enjoyment.

In the last three months we've had a volunteer from the British Red Cross, who came along with a model torso to show us a thing or two about how to help in an emergency.

Sandy Irvine came to speak to us in March and gave a wonderful talk relating to his first visit to Newcastle as an 18-year-old coming to be interviewed for a place at Newcastle University. If you missed his talk, you can catch it by going to Sandy's Blog at <https://www.sandyirvineblog.wordpress.com>; the title of the talk is "Changing Newcastle: 1960s to 2010s".

Neil Curry from The Eagles Foundation came along to talk about the new arena on Scotswood Road and the programme being developed for older people; these include indoor activities as well as guided walks. If you haven't been to the arena, it's easy to find and there is a small café.

In May, two of our members, Liz and Ken are bringing along their CD collection of music from the shows. Do you have a favourite? In June we will be hearing from a representative from the recently opened Dementia Hub.

Day	Date	Topic
Wednesday	19 June	Dementia Advice Hub
Wednesday	17 July	To be confirmed
Wednesday	21 August	Open Mic

We post information about the topics for future meetings on the Elders Council Facebook page; go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Nonprofit-Organization/Elders-Council-of-Newcastle-153155382014326/> .

## Songs, banners and getting our voices heard

During our recent Active Voices course, we came up with the idea of creating songs and a banner in preparation for Older People's Day in



October. We've made a start with writing our own lyrics to a well-known tune and developing some designs for a banner. Can you help us to take this forward? Do you sing in a choir that might be interested in joining us to raise our voices? Would you be interested in helping us to create a banner? No previous experience required, although basic sewing would be helpful. Please get in touch to find out more: [barbara.douglas@elderscouncil.org.uk](mailto:barbara.douglas@elderscouncil.org.uk) or call 0191 208 2701.

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## A House through Time



The programme featured 5 Ravensworth Terrace in Summerhill with the historian David Olusoga presenting. In the final programme, Bill Ions, the Elders Council Transport co-ordinator, featured. Bill, is a member of the Salvation Army and he was invited to talk about the time when the house was used as a Salvation Army base in the 60s and 70s. It was really good to see Bill taking centre stage and speaking so clearly about the role the house played. Congratulations Bill, you presented to camera so well.

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## Members' Journeys

We welcome contributions from members with information or experiences which are of value to others. Here is a recent contribution: **"Cancer is an ageing issue"**

An Elders Council member who has had treatment for her cancer has sent us the following:

I sat up straight when I heard this said recently. Was cancer really an ageing issue? All the recent TV adverts seem to suggest that cancer can affect anyone of any age, any gender, and any background. Unfortunately, the statistics tell another story. Perhaps it's time to share some thoughts with Elders Council members and raise awareness of something that many do not like



CANCER  
RESEARCH  
UK

to think about, let alone, of course, experience first-hand.

Here's what the statistics say: at the present time, 66% of people aged 65+ will

experience cancer at some point in their lives. However, in just over 20 years, that figure will rise to 78% of older people. The good news is that living more healthily can change the odds and that increasingly having cancer can mean living with it, surviving it, or being treated and cured. But let's be careful of too many generalisations. There are over 200 types of cancer and each is diagnosed and treated differently.

Therefore, we should not simplify about what happens and how it might affect someone. Here, I must declare a personal interest: I have been treated for cancer this past year and know only too well that I had to "jump on board the cancer conveyor belt"! A year ago, I was on the Elders Council Board and life was busy and fun. Once the diagnosis came along, everything changed. So many hospital visits, so many doctors and nurses to see, so many treatments to be had. Fortunately, Newcastle is an excellent place to live if you have cancer, so I think I have been very lucky.

This opinion was confirmed recently when I attended a conference about the changing needs of people with cancer. I thought it might be useful to know what's going on elsewhere in the UK and what services might be available now and in the future. I'm glad (and relieved) to know that there is a lot of positive news and developments 'out there'. There's a real determination to try and respond to all the concerns that cancer patients may have. This means not just treating the physical condition, but looking at the person as a whole and what other care or support they might need or want.

## **So what have I learnt so far?**

- There has never been a better time to be diagnosed with cancer – 25 years ago are sometimes talked about as “the dark ages”!
- If you try and live healthily, your chances are much improved if you get cancer.
- There is awareness among health professionals that having cancer should mean not just living longer but living well.
- There is loads of support out there but not everyone is able to access this or knows where to go for help.
- Early diagnosis is really important in terms of treatment and survival.
- Cancer will increasingly be seen as similar to having a long-term condition for many of us.
- You have choices with treatment for cancer but it’s difficult to work out what’s the best thing to do, especially when you are feeling unwell.
- Language is really important: I dislike the term “fighting cancer” as it implies that you are a failure if you don’t succeed.

**And, finally, we may not to talk, even think, about cancer; but if it affects older people in any way, perhaps it’s worth having the conversation.**

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## **And from another member**

I found your article on hospital letters interesting and thought I’d tell you about my experience.

When I was asked by the hospital if I would like a copy of the letter that the hospital would send my doctor, I’m so glad that I said ‘Yes’. Right at the end of it, it was said that I should be given certain iron tablets on a repeat prescription. I waited for my GP to ring me to tell me.

Eventually I rang the surgery and it was obvious it hadn’t been noticed and the letter was filed away. I do not blame the surgery – they are so overworked and understaffed but this, I think, is one reason why patients should know what the hospital thinks.

## Ageism

Age discrimination is rife in Britain according to a new UCL study\*, which shows that one in four over-50s report being unfairly treated in shops, restaurants and hospitals.

Ageism also appeared to be linked to poorer health among those it affected, with reported victims of age discrimination more likely to suffer health problems or develop them over time.

Do you have experience of what the researchers found? If so, could you please tell us? To help you, here are the kind of the statements that the researchers asked people to respond to:



- I am treated with less respect or courtesy
- I receive poorer service than other people in restaurants and shops
- I receive poorer service or treatment than other people from doctors or hospitals

\*Sarah Jackson et al. (UCL), The Lancet Public Health Journal, 4(4) April 2019

We recently shared information in EC Fortnightly about an Ipsos Mori study showing that Britons are 'overwhelmingly negative' about old age click [here](#) . Thank you to the members who responded to this. We would like to hear from more of you. What do you think?

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## Two legs good; four legs good – get the friendship of a dog

Wag & Company is a friendship organisation that enables assessed volunteers and their special dogs to befriend older people across the North East Region.

The aim is to reduce loneliness in older dog lovers in the region and to ensure that no older person misses the friendship and the company of a dog. The organisation has Visiting Wag Teams which visit people in care and medical facilities and in their own homes; the latter on referral primarily from Northumbria Healthcare Trust,

Adult Social Services, the British Red Cross and Age UK Sunderland and Tees. They also visit people living with dementia in workshops run by Dementia Care, The Essence Service and also, in a small but growing number of cases, on referral in their own homes.



They say that they make a practical difference by reducing loneliness and lifting spirits in older dog lovers by providing a friend and a much missed dog.

David Dawson, Older Persons Specialist at Northumbria Healthcare Trust says: *"My background is secondary care (i.e., tablets, machines, doctors, nurses, treatment plans, and data). All very important to staying well and reducing frailty/vulnerability, but the work that Wag is doing is JUST as*

*important. Because when people are lonely and isolated, it is next to impossible to stay well."*

Wag has large waiting lists right across the region. Can you help? Applying to become a Visiting Wag Team or to ask for visits is really easy: ring 0143 461 1801, email [office@wagandcompany.co.uk](mailto:office@wagandcompany.co.uk) or visit <https://www.wagandcompany.co.uk/wag-teams/>

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## **Are you missing out on what you're entitled to?**

Millions of retired people in the UK are missing out on hundreds of pounds because they haven't checked their eligibility for retirement support.

According to the DWP, the UK currently has 13 million state pension claimants, and latest figures show that at least half of them, namely homeowners, could be losing out on £1,058 a year because they haven't checked their benefit entitlements. Age UK estimates that as much as £3.5 billion worth of support is going unclaimed by older people each year.

If you're over 65 and qualify for the state pension, you could be entitled to hundreds to help beat rising prices and household expenses.

Among those who had never checked their entitlements, seven in 10 homeowners said that they thought their income or savings were

probably too high to qualify, and three in 10 said that they thought that the value of their home probably meant they would not qualify.

You can also get independent advice from the following organisations:

### **Get independent advice in Newcastle**

Welfare Rights	0191 277 2627	<a href="http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfarerights">www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfarerights</a>
West Newcastle (Search)	0191 273 7443	<a href="http://www.searchnewcastle.org.uk">www.searchnewcastle.org.uk</a>
Citizens Advice	0300 330 9055	<a href="http://www.citizensadvice-newcastle.org.uk">www.citizensadvice-newcastle.org.uk</a>
YHN Tenants	0191 277 1190	<a href="http://www.yhn.org.uk">www.yhn.org.uk</a>
Shelter	0344 515 1601	<a href="https://england.shelter.org.uk">https://england.shelter.org.uk</a>

Shy bairns get nowt, so why not just have a quick check? Go to <https://www.informationnow.org.uk> to make sure that you're not missing out on what you're entitled to.

The full list of advice services in Newcastle is in the booklet *Where to Get Benefit and Debt Advice in Newcastle* from [www.newcastle.gov.uk/benefitcontacts](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/benefitcontacts)

If you can't access this booklet online, you can phone the Council for a copy on 0191 277 1707.

## In: cards



Last year, debit cards overtook cash (notes and coins) as the most popular form of payment in the UK. And it's predicted that, in the next 15 years, cash could fall to just 10% of all payments.

But will the over-55s be left behind by this move to cards and online banking? Three-quarters of the over-55s never use online banking apps; nor do 57% of low-income earners and over two million people still use cash for all their day-to-day transactions.

## Out: cash

Oliver Swingler, a member of the Elders Council told us: "Personally, I use cash all the time, tend to pay people via cheques, and tend to use my cards only for ATMs and paying bills and donations to charities etc. I'll probably get a £30 limit card at some point but, although I used to work in the IT industry and spend a lot of time on my computer (especially Twitter), the more automated things become, the more unsafe I feel."



**Do you agree? Or are you quite relaxed about entering a cashless society? Please let us know.**

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## InformationNOW Newcastle

As we get older, we may find that we have difficulty keeping as active as we'd like. InformationNOW is improving its range of information and events to support people with a variety of long-term conditions and disabilities.

To begin with, read and find out what is available in Newcastle to help you. <https://www.informationnow.org.uk/article/self-care-disability/>

There are specialists who can help you such as: <https://www.informationnow.org.uk/organisation/ways-to-wellness/> (though you need a referral) and <https://www.informationnow.org.uk/organisation/healthworks-newcastle/> to which you can self-refer.

You can also find out about activities in your local area. For example, the St Martin's Community Centre in Byker offers different activities every day. On 8 June they are holding a Garden Party – an ideal opportunity to meet new people and find out more.

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## Jesmond Community Festival

The annual festival will be taking place this year between Saturday 11 May and Sunday 2 June. As usual, there will be several events aimed specifically at older people, including:

16<sup>th</sup> May 2pm – 4pm "Put a Song in Your Heart", entertainment and an afternoon tea at the Junior Department of Newcastle High School for Girls;

**Make sure you get to the Elders Council event as below:**  
22<sup>nd</sup> May 2pm – 4pm "Fun and Fitness for the over-50s" in Jesmond Dene. We are delighted that James Cross, CEO of the new Newcastle Parks and Allotments Trust will be joining us. There is also a walk with John Grundy, Rookie Golf, refreshments and much more!

The full programme of the Jesmond Festival also includes a huge variety of concerts, talks, outdoor events, films, an art exhibition and guided tours of the Wylam Brewery, Jesmond Pool, Jesmond Old Cemetery and the People's Theatre.

You can pick up a full festival programme from Jesmond Library, Jesmond Pool and other locations, or consult [www.jesmondfestival.org.uk](http://www.jesmondfestival.org.uk) or [www.facebook.com/jesmondfestival](https://www.facebook.com/jesmondfestival). The principal events aimed at older people will also be listed on Information Now.

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## Dementia Advice Centre

The Dementia Advice centre Newcastle is based at the Outer West Library, West Denton Way and they are open 10am - 4pm weekdays. If you or someone you know has a memory problem then the dementia Advice centre is there to help you

For more information, you can call us on 0191 3233342, email on [advice@dementiaadvicenewcastle.org.uk](mailto:advice@dementiaadvicenewcastle.org.uk) or pop in and see us.

There is a "Cuppa & Catch – up" 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month 1.30pm - 3.30pm This is an informal get together for people with a diagnosis of dementia, their family/friends or carers. Come along for a cuppa and a chat, meet others and the staff at the Dementia Advice Centre

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## Opportunities

### Everything in Place

Around 70% of people want to die at home. Yet more than half of the people who die each year in England do so in hospital. This highlights the fact that it's so important to think about advanced planning and have good conversations between yourself, your family and your carers.

Everything in Place has been designed & developed by St Cuthbert's Hospice, Durham, to support planning ahead for peace of mind.

St Cuthbert's Hospice



It helps people to think about their future and how their preferences and decisions can be documented.

It is a six-session programme covering the following areas:

- 1. Where there's a will there's a way:** the importance of having a will, how to choose an executor and an explanation of some of the laws of inheritance.
- 2. Who would you trust?** Understanding lasting powers of attorney, the types of decision that can be made and the process for getting the documents registered.
- 3. The care conundrum:** anticipating future care needs, available options, where to find information, care plans and making advance decisions to refuse treatment.

- 4. Lifting the lid on funerals:** funeral planning and the importance of making your wishes known. Funeral poverty and how to know that (if you have one) your funeral pre-payment is safe.
- 5. Your heart and soul/memories:** organ donation, considering if you would leave your organs to a stranger or donate your body to medical science; how to keep/share your memories with family and friends.
- 6. Difficult conversations/digital legacy:** how people can be supported to have difficult conversations. Closing social media accounts and storing digital information.

Newcastle City Council in partnership with St Cuthbert's Hospice, invites you to take part in this programme.

Each session will be held on a Tuesday from 10.30am - 12.30pm at George Street Social, 45-51 George Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 7JN on the following dates: 14 May, 28 May, 11 June, 25 June, 9 July and 23 July.

Attendance is free. But the organisers ask is that you live, work or care for someone living in Newcastle; can fully commit to attending all sessions and will provide feedback after each session to enable them to fully evaluate the course.

Places are limited so if you would like to attend, please get in touch as soon as possible. Ring Fiona Richardson on 0191 277 7452 or email her at [Fiona.s.richardson@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:Fiona.s.richardson@newcastle.gov.uk)

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## Glaucoma: the silent stealer of sight

Glaucoma is an eye disease that causes progressive damage to the optic nerve. If left untreated, most types of glaucoma progress (without warning or obvious symptoms to the patient) toward gradually worsening visual damage and possible irreversible blindness. In fact, glaucoma is the leading cause of preventable blindness. However, early diagnosis, careful monitoring and use of treatments help the vast



majority of people with glaucoma to retain useful eyesight for life.

The best way to protect your sight is to attend regular eye tests (at least every two years). Your optometrist will pick up on any potential problems to ensure an early diagnosis. Anyone over the

age of 60 is entitled to a free eye test as is anyone who has a close relative with glaucoma and is over the age of 40.

The International Glaucoma Association (IGA) supports those living with glaucoma through information and advice, a helpline, online forum, newsletters, funding research into treatment and working with your local eye clinics to develop patient support groups.

You can find out more about glaucoma at [www.glaucoma-association.com](http://www.glaucoma-association.com) or come along to the eye department at the RVI hospital in Newcastle on the second Thursday of the month between 9am - 12pm to speak to your regional IGA Manager.

For more information, please ring Hannah Morrow on 0785 482 1911 or email her at [h.morrow@iga.org.uk](mailto:h.morrow@iga.org.uk) .

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## Are you having trouble heating your home?

Are you having trouble or have you had trouble heating your home sufficiently in the last year? If so, would you like to take part in a research project being conducted by Yasmin Darch, who is doing an MSc in Urban Planning at Newcastle University? To take part you must be over 65 and living in Newcastle or North Tyneside. If you take part, Yasmin would like to arrange a 45/60-minute interview in your home (or a suitable venue which suits you), where she will be asking you about how you use space throughout the year in order to keep warm. To find out more, contact [Y.Darch2@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:Y.Darch2@newcastle.ac.uk) or contact [pauline.rutherford@elderscouncil.org.uk](mailto:pauline.rutherford@elderscouncil.org.uk) or call 0191 208 2701 and we will send you more information.



## Obituary

### Beryl Downes

Beryl died in early April after having a stroke followed by some complications in February. She was a long term member of the Elders Council and will be particularly missed by the Radio Group where she often read the news items. Despite many health issues she maintained a busy life. Beryl kept the staff team on their toes, but her great sense of humour and wonderful smile, more than made up for any demands she made. She will be missed by all who were lucky enough to know her.

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## Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors,

You may recall towards the end of last summer I contacted your organisation to request your help in recruiting participants for my PhD study. I am pleased to now be able to share these results with you.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally extend my thanks for your help in recruiting participants for this study. Recruitment was particularly challenging due to the inclusion criteria I required but by sharing through your networks, providing suggestions of who I could contact, and sharing amongst your attendees, I was able to recruit a sufficient number of older adults for this study. This demonstrates the value of the relationship between this university and organisations like yourselves.

Many thanks once again.

Jake Pywell  
(PhD Researcher, Psychology and Communication Technology Lab,  
Northumbria University)

Editors' note: When the magazine publishes a researcher's request for participants in their study, we ask them to send us their findings. Unfortunately, few do that; so it is particularly pleasing that Jake has remembered to do so. We are grateful. If you took part in Jake's study on mobile-based mental health interventions and want a copy of his findings, please let us know.

## **Donations and Gift Aid**

### **Your generosity can help us make a difference**

Some of you make individual donations to the Elders Council, and even small amounts add up and help the Elders Council to continue to provide the full range of activities which you can read about in the Magazine.

If you would like to donate on a regular basis, how about setting up a standing order? We can help you arrange this through your bank or building society, and where possible can ensure that the benefits of Gift Aid can be taken.

Please get in touch by calling 0191 208 2701.

### **Give as you live**

Please help the Elders Council by logging on to [www.giveasyoulive.com](http://www.giveasyoulive.com) every time you shop online and nominate the Elders Council as your chosen charity.

### **It costs you nothing**

But whenever you shop at one of the many participating stores or websites (for, e.g., hotels or rail tickets or your grocery delivery), the store or website gives a small percentage of the sale to the Elders Council.

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### **Reader's tip**

Help improve your leg strength by sitting on a dining room chair and then standing up and sitting down again repeat 3-4 times.

If you are feeling unsteady have a table in front of you but try not to use it to lever yourself into a stand.

**PLEASE HELP THE ELDERS COUNCIL TO CONTINUE ITS WORK**

I wish to donate

£7.50 [ ] £15 [ ] £30 [ ] Other [£ ]

to the Elders Council of Newcastle  
and enclose a cheque for that amount.

Please send to Elders Council office (address details is on page 28).

<b>Name:</b>
<b>Address:</b>
<b>Postcode:</b>

Please tick if you require a receipt	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If you would like us to claim Gift Aid relief  
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Please complete the relevant boxes below

Charity: **The Elders Council of Newcastle Ltd.**

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax  
at least equal to the Amount of tax that the charity will  
claim on my gifts.

I confirm that this donation and all previous and future  
gifts of money to the Elders Council should be treated as  
Gift Aid donations

<b>Signed</b>	
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Please notify us if you wish to cancel this declaration. Thank you

## Magazine information

### Magazine articles

If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the February-April edition of the Magazine , please ensure that you forward it before

Friday 15 March to [steve.whitley@phonecoop.coop](mailto:steve.whitley@phonecoop.coop)

### Magazine in other formats

We can make our Magazine available in alternative formats (e.g. in larger print or audio tape or an audio CD).

Please just let the office know what format you would like.

### Electronic version of the Magazine

It costs about £1.35 per member to send out this Magazine so would you be willing to have the magazine sent to you electronically?

If you would, it would save a lot of money every year. So please sign up for this service now by emailing

[pauline.rutherford@elderscouncil.org.uk](mailto:pauline.rutherford@elderscouncil.org.uk) please put "E-mail Magazine" in the subject box.

Advantages to signing up for this service include receiving the Magazine at least 14 days sooner than you would normally receive it via the post; getting earlier notice of events happening throughout the city; and seeing the various images in colour.

What are you waiting for?

### Contact details

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Registered Charity No. 1122424

### Office Opening Hours

Our office hours are  
Monday to Friday  
9am to 4.30pm.

We will do our best to respond to your phone messages and e-mails as soon as we can.