

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Care and Independence Scrutiny Committee

23<sup>rd</sup> January 2014

## Annual Report of the Older People's Champion

**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This is my fourteenth champion's report – following the pattern of previous reports, I am pleased to update Members on work which follows on from last year and introduce you to the new main focus of my work in 2012/13.

- **Engagement** – always at the heart of what I am doing as the Older People's Champion. That is ensuring the voices of older people in North Yorkshire are heard clearly by Government.
- **The Campaign to reduce Loneliness** has climbed higher on everyone's agenda, linking those at risk in our own county and working strategically to:
  - ensure the good practice of identifying those in the community at risk is shared widely across the UK; and
  - through strong communications, raise awareness of the examples of good practice to reduce loneliness amongst those in the community at risk.

**2.0 Older People - The National and Local Scene**

2.1 There has been considerable change resulting from the transfer of responsibility for public health from the NHS to local authorities and I am working with Public Health officers. There is a desire to see some of this funding used for preventive schemes to keep older people independent and active in their own homes in the community and I believe this change has enhanced my role as Older People's Champion.

2.2 One example of working with officers in the Public Health Team and the older people in North Yorkshire involved setting up two Energy Efficiency Workshops. Last year there was only one held in York. These workshops train older people to be Energy Efficiency Champions so that they, in turn, can cascade the information to other older people. You will recall that North Yorkshire had amongst the highest recorded numbers of excess Winter deaths in the country in 2012/13.

2.3 One workshop was held in Scarborough library and was said to be enjoyable, very informative and well presented. Scarborough Voice has over 120 members and is a thriving and expanding forum. I was the speaker at their meeting in April 2013. The second workshop is planned for January in Sutton (South Craven) Community Centre and here the Craven VS, and particularly the members of the Craven Older People's Reference Group, have taken responsibility for organising the venue and the refreshments.

2.4 Funding for the Workshops has come through the Age Action Alliance and the Warmer Homes Working Group. British Gas is the funder and the NEA (National Energy Action) has provided the training. Funding was given to the 9 Regional Forums on Ageing to organise the two training events in each sub area in Yorkshire & the Humber.

### **3.0 Membership of Working Groups and partnerships**

3.1 I reported last year on the Project to develop Community Hubs in Glusburn, Weaverthorpe, Pannal, Husthwaite, Cold Kirby, Dalton and Gayles, and Brompton by Sawden. These Hubs have been developed as part of a Rural Action Yorkshire (RAY) supported project. A whole County event was held in December at Pannal Village Hall, where I was invited to give a brief talk. The funding for the Project Officer is almost at an end, and plans for the sustainability of these community Hubs are being developed. The long term aim is to change these hubs into Village Agents, similar to those in Dorset, Cumbria and Gloucester and rather like the one in Grassington, where the community sought Big Lottery Funding. Through the use of a paid experienced officer, the Hub in Grassington is very successful. I have facilitated meetings between NY officers and The Hub to the benefit of those in the Community.

My support for the successful development of these Community Hubs has been through attending and contributing at their Steering Group meetings led by the project officer, Tess McMahan.

3.2 I attend the quarterly meetings of the **Older People's Partnership Board**. My involvement has included developing a specification for commissioning research from York University. This research is a follow up to the Ripon Voice research. The first phase was to carry out a desk top research on population figures, age profiles, long term conditions etc.

The second phase, recently published, was to gather information regarding the number of forums where the main aims are to encourage social inclusion i.e. reduce loneliness and isolation and help keep older people well informed. The final phase will be to identify the gaps around the County and make recommendations.

3.3 Members of the **North Yorkshire Forum for Older People** have also helped the Department of Transport who requested the collection of data on the purchase, ownership and use of motorised scooters; there have been some very serious accidents and no statutory regulations governing ownership and use. The Norfolk Constabulary of Police has produced a DVD which demonstrates the ill usage of such scooters. NYCC 95 Alive unit have produced some excellent leaflets, videos etc to highlight the risk issues in using motorised scooters and additionally a video to refresh and mitigate the risks for older drivers of cars.

3.4 **Memory Bank** – I remain an adviser to Memory Bank, which has now become a social enterprise. You will recall it is a project developed by York Archives, who have put together 3 minute films in decades, from the archives to work with those suffering from dementia. It helps recall early memories and stimulates discussion amongst those with dementia. It has proved to be very popular with those who work with people with dementia.

3.5 I am a **Dementia Champion**, having signed North Yorkshire's Dementia Declaration. Future Years has signed up as a member of the Alzheimers Alliance. A lead Officer from North Yorkshire's Trading Standards gave an excellent talk at one of the quarterly meetings. There has recently been a successful prosecution of criminals who worked together and noted which occupants of a street would be an 'easy touch' as someone living with dementia. One lady in Embsay had £11,000 taken for unnecessary building and roofing works.

**4.0 Cold Calling** on the telephone remains a problem. The Government exempted itself from cold calling to sell the Green Deal and Eco Deal. The UK Police initiative Set-Up to Help Design out crime has licensed the CPR (Call Prevention Registry) Call Blocker which is the only call blocking solution proven to block 100% of nuisance calls made locally and from overseas, a need not met by the Telephone Preference Service. The CPR Call Blocker costs £39.99 per year and is available from retailers including Argos, Maplins and Staples and on the Ideal World shopping channel and online [www.thinkjessica.com](http://www.thinkjessica.com) People list the telephone numbers which they are willing to receive. The costs will certainly inhibit those with a small income from registering and would not be of any use to a councillor.

#### **5.0 The Age Action Alliance (Appendix 1)**

5.1 North Yorkshire County Council joined the Age Action Alliance, of which all the Fire and Rescue Services in Yorkshire & Humber are members. The Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) has completed the work to help identify those in the community who are at risk of dying in a fire because of the effects of loneliness and isolation. The Strategy to reduce the number of deaths of older people in fires in their own homes was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013. I am in talks with the Chair of the CFOA, Evan Morris, to identify what further work can be carried out to reduce the effects of social isolation in a practical way, now that people have been identified.

#### **6.0 Loneliness and Isolation**

6.1 The work of the Age Action Alliance is carried out through the nine thematic working groups. I lead the Working Group on Loneliness and Isolation. This issue is a priority in North Yorkshire's Wellbeing Strategy, and I attend the Health & Wellbeing Board meetings as an observer. The high numbers of older people in North Yorkshire and the demands on the health services is an issue which I believe can be tackled to reduce demands through addressing the effects of loneliness and isolation. Through my national work I am able to bring to North Yorkshire examples of good practice.

**6.1** The December Campaign letter (Appendix 2) published some details of a new poll of over a thousand practising GPs in which the Campaign asked how many people they saw in the average day whom they thought had come in mainly because they were lonely. The findings were shocking. Over three quarters of the GPs questioned said they were seeing between one and five lonely people a day, one in ten doctors, reported seeing between six and ten lonely patients a day. So what can be done?

**6.2** In Dorset one GP practice targeted those they believed attended the surgery because they were lonely and gave them a questionnaire asking them if they were interested in learning a new skill, offering to teach others a new skill and/or attending a luncheon club. Many took up an offer and were introduced to the relevant organisations. This resulted in far less surgery visits and saved the GP Practice hundreds of pounds.

**6.3** I am working on a pilot with two of Boots pharmacies to identify people at risk of the effects of loneliness. This pilot will be used to spread this trial across the country and the Local Pharmacy Committees (LPCs) are championing a Healthy Living Pharmacy scheme in some areas.

**6.3 Partners** involved in the Pilot project with Boots, a partner in the Age Action Alliance, include The Cabinet Office, DWP, Hampshire County Council, Age Concern Hampshire and York University.

The Loneliness & Isolation working Group is joining with the Digital Skills Working Group to put in a bid for Lottery Funding to bring opportunities to skill more older people in the use of IT.

## **7.0 Embsay with Eastby 50s Forum**

With others in my village we set up this Forum to encourage social inclusion and ensure older people are well informed. In November I applied for a grant from Age UK to bring 'Christmas Cheer' to those who live alone or are mainly housebound. The application was successful and 27 people attended one of the local pubs for a Christmas dinner. It was very successful and before the meal was over, I was asked to organise another next Christmas.

**8.0 Conferences and Events** – I continue to attend appropriate Conferences and Events to improve and increase my knowledge on a continuing basis. Most I attend are free. I recently attended a Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) Event at York Racecourse, 'A Better Life: Valuing our Later Years'. The Workshop on improving the quality of care has proved to me that care of older people can be changed for the better, by changing culture. The DWP sends out new information relating to the Later Life Agenda very regularly.

## **9.0 A date for your diary**

I have booked Ripon Cathedral for a service on October 1<sup>st</sup> to celebrate the work of older people in North Yorkshire. Older People's Day

Report written by:

Shelagh Marshall  
North Yorkshire's Older People's Champion

# A guide to Age Action Alliance

## Key facts

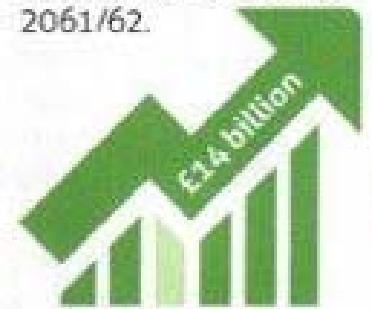
Life expectancy in the UK is ranked **11th** in EU.



Over the last century average life expectancy has increased by **30 years**.



Spending on long-term care could rise by around **£14 billion** by 2061/62.



**x 3.1 million**

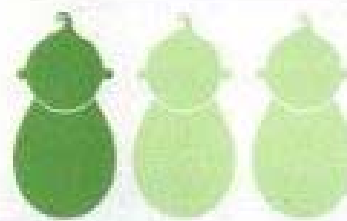


In the UK **3.1 million** people aged over 65 say that they go longer than a week without seeing a family member or friend.

In the UK there are now **more people over State Pension age** than children under 16.



**58%** of people regard age discrimination as widespread.



One third of babies born in 2012 in the UK are expected to celebrate their **100th birthday**.

In June 2013 there were **1 million workers** of the age of 65 in the UK - the highest since records began.

**x 1 million**



All of these facts pose the question: what can be done to improve the lives of older people?  
**Answer: Age Action Alliance**

### Who we are



A network for partnership working and practical action to **improve older people's lives** and promote positive ageing within society.



Independent network founded in 2011 with **104 members** > Now with over **400 member** organisations.



A national initiative that is **free for any organisation to join**.



Supported by **Age UK** and the **Department for Work and Pensions**.

### What we do



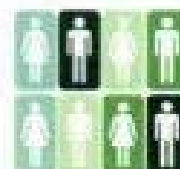
Think of us as a **'dating agency'** for practical action.



Focus on the **socially excluded** and **most vulnerable**.



Put older people at the heart of the Alliance by **encouraging them to actively participate** and get involved in decision-making.



Match members into themed **Working Groups** to encourage the development of solutions to issues faced by older people.

## How we do it



Guided by a **Partnership Development Group (PDG)** with older people making up 50% of members.



Help members **work together** to improve the lives of the most disadvantaged older people and prevent deprivation in later life.



Give members access to our **visual toolkit** to aid their communications and champion the Alliance with others.



Provide **regular updates and bulletins** to our members, encouraging them to take an active role.

## How we can help you



**Age Action Alliance** takes places within Working Groups, which prioritise action in areas important to older people.

These include:

- Age Friendly Environments
- Safe Warm Homes
- Attitudes to Ageing
- Digital Inclusion
- Excluded groups
- Healthy Workplaces
- Loneliness and Isolation
- Public Health and Active Lifestyles
- Finance
- Transport
- Social and Economic Participation of Older People
- European Matters
- Money Matters
- Older People's Day

## What our members say

*"Since its launch, the Age Action Alliance has made great progress in bringing together stakeholders to work together to develop practical solutions on the ageing agenda."*



*"Fantastic! In our outcomes focussed world this is an excellent example of the Alliance facilitating things that may never have happened to help vulnerable older people."*



National Energy Action

*"I joined the Alliance to inform older people and the agencies with whom they work on the solutions to tackling fuel poverty, reducing morbidity and mortality amongst older people as a result of living in a cold home."*



Age Action Alliance

## Get involved...

If you want to improve older people's lives and think the Age Action Alliance could help you or your organisation to do that, join us!

Visit our website at [www.ageactionalliance.org](http://www.ageactionalliance.org) for more information.

Tel: 020 7449 7008

Email: [info@ageactionalliance.org](mailto:info@ageactionalliance.org)

Web: [www.ageactionalliance.org](http://www.ageactionalliance.org)



[twitter.com/ageactalliance](https://twitter.com/ageactalliance)



[facebook.com/ageactionalliance](https://facebook.com/ageactionalliance)

Dear Shelagh,

Christmas will soon be upon us and it seems the festive season has once again drawn the public's attention towards loneliness. There have been a remarkable number of stories in the papers about loneliness over the past month and we would like to welcome those of you who have been moved by one or other of these to become a supporter of the Campaign. We hope you will find this update useful and interesting.

For our long-term supporters, you may be interested in this short leaflet on [what the campaign has achieved in our first three years](#). We could not have done it without you - thank you all so much for your support.

## Campaign with us

### How well is your local health and wellbeing board tackling loneliness?

In November we published an [update to our rankings of health and wellbeing boards](#). We are pleased to report that, for the first time ever, over half of the health and wellbeing boards in England now acknowledge loneliness or isolation as a serious issue. You can read more about the report and its [findings here](#).

We encourage you all to take a look at where your local health and wellbeing board ranks and if it is one of those which has not recognised loneliness, why not [send them a letter?](#)

## Campaign News

**New Research Bulletin:** the [eighth edition of our Research Bulletin](#) was released exclusively to supporters of the Campaign this month. The bulletin highlights the latest research into loneliness and isolation across the world: this edition covered new evidence that social relationships promote healthy eating, and how poverty in inner-city London is exacerbating social isolation across age-groups. If you did not receive a copy, make sure you are [signed-up as a supporter](#).

**Understanding Loneliness - who is lonely and when?:** We held the first in a new kind of [workshop for our supporters](#), in partnerships with Professor Christina Victor from Brunel University, to learn about how to identify people who are lonely, and better target services or support. This [short summary film](#) will give you a flavour of the day and discussions. A second film of Christina's presentation and her slides are available on our website.

**Webinar for health and wellbeing boards:** In December we held a one-hour webinar for health and wellbeing boards that have yet to include loneliness in their Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies. The aim was to help them better understand the evidence base for loneliness as a public health issue and support them in gathering evidence on local need. We are keen to do more of these in the future if there is a demand. If you are interested [please let us know](#).

## In the News

**Lonely visits to the GP:** In November the Campaign published a new poll of over a thousand practising GPs in which we asked how many people they saw in the average day who they thought had come in mainly because they were lonely. Our findings were shocking: over three quarters of the GPs we spoke to said they were seeing between one and five lonely people a day. One in ten doctors questioned reported seeing between six and ten lonely patients a day. A small minority (4 per cent) said they saw more than 10 lonely people a day. [Read more about this story here](#).

**The Silver Line:** Late November saw the launch of Esther Rantzen's new project – The Silver Line – a national free phone helpline available 24 hours a day. The Silver Line was established as a response to the issue of loneliness and isolation in later life. It offers a friendly voice at the end of a phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and must be a welcome addition to the network of local services available to lonely individuals. We would welcome [your thoughts](#) on this new service and, if any, the impact it has had on your work.

## Your News

**A carers guide to dual sensory loss:** There are 222,000 people aged over 70 with dual sensory loss in the UK, many of whom are not having their care needs met. Sense has launched new training designed to help support carers of older people with dual sensory loss - including how to reduce isolation. For further information about this, please [contact Nicola Venus](#).

**Don't spend Christmas alone:** Abbeyfield has crafted three pledges to encourage members of the community to support older people in one of three ways over the festive period. To register your support please visit the Abbeyfield [website](#), the pledges form part of the charity's annual [Coping At Christmas campaign](#) which offers free Christmas lunches and overnight stays to older people who are alone or lonely.

Also working to support lonely people this Christmas, the Community Christmas website now has a new postcode search enabling people to find their nearest event. If you know of one that is not listed then please [let them know](#) so they can tell everyone.

**NBFA offering free holidays:** NBFA Assisting the Elderly has a new three-tiered break-away service for isolated older people on low incomes. The free five-day Break-Away coach holiday is preceded by an informal get together to help reduce attendees' anxiety and is followed by a Reunion Trip, where friendships made during the Break-Away can be developed further. For further information visit [their website](#).

**Christmas lunch:** This Christmas, Waitrose is helping to provide nearly 500 Christmas lunches for 40,000 older, homeless and vulnerable people in their local community. The supermarket is looking to extend this support into the New Year so if local groups are organising events in 2014, they should pop into their local Waitrose and pick up a Community Matters nomination form. [Click here for further information](#).

**Winter Friends:** NHS Choices ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)) has launched an appeal for people to look out for older people this winter because thousands of over-75s die every year as a result



of cold weather and thousands more spend much of the winter alone and lonely. The Winter Friends campaign involves signing a pledge to "take time out this winter to look in on an elderly friend or neighbour to make sure they are warm and coping well". You can sign the pledge and show your support by going to [www.nhs.uk/winterfriends](http://www.nhs.uk/winterfriends).

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You are receiving this email because you have chosen to become a supporter of the Campaign to End Loneliness.

**Our mailing address is:**

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