

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Care and Independence Scrutiny Committee****22nd January 2015****Annual Report of the Older People's Champion****1.0 Introduction**

This is my fifteenth Annual Report – I am not following the pattern of previous years, but rather report on the national picture and how this relates to North Yorkshire.

I would like to begin with the latest figures relating to the growth in numbers of older people. By 2030 it is estimated that there will be approximately 1million people over 90 in the UK, approximately 15,000 of whom will be in North Yorkshire. This is a national increase of 109% from 2014, but a 122% increase for North Yorkshire. As a local authority with responsibility for public health, we have a role in ensuring that opportunities for physical, social and educational activities and appropriate transport are available for older people, so that their need for social care is delayed, and social isolation can be prevented.

2.0 Campaign to End Loneliness

The national Campaign to End Loneliness published its intermediate strategy for the next three years. I remain very committed to this campaign. I am actively engaged and lead the Age Action Alliance, Isolation and Loneliness Working Group which meets quarterly in London. I led a pilot scheme in Hampshire in 2014, 'Making Connections' in partnership with Hampshire County Council, Boots Pharmacy and Age Concern Hampshire (ACH); we tested ways to identify those in the community who may be at risk of the effects of loneliness.

Questionnaires were given to those:

- 60 years and over;
- having at least one long term condition; and
- in receipt of repeat prescriptions.

39 people from 115 completed questionnaires were referred to ACH either for a telephone call or a visit, and case studies showed some took up offers of a social activity or information so that they could pursue an activity themselves and manage their lives better.

I am very keen to explore the possibility of building on existing networks and schemes between HAS, the Fire Service and Police to improve the way we identify people in North Yorkshire at risk of the effects of loneliness, and improve their awareness of local activities available. In 2013 the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Services carried out work to identify

vulnerable people, living alone, who may be at risk of dying in a fire in their own home. Quite a number of people were identified and referred to other organisations such as HAS.

In 2013 the former NY Older People's Partnership Board commissioned York University to carry out desk top research, followed by a Survey, to establish how many 50s Forums have as one of their aims reducing loneliness and encouraging social inclusion. A database was produced for each district/borough area. The information in this database has been included in information we already have of organisations and activities, so that it can be used to signpost older people to a social activity if that's what they choose to do.

I presented a report of the project and its conclusions to the Health & Well Being Board early last year. Recommendations included that GPs should consider offering social prescriptions to patients whom they believed could be suffering from the effects of loneliness. A pilot scheme had been carried out in parts of Yorkshire to evaluate the use of social prescriptions.

I have signed up as a Dementia Friend; the Government's aim is to have a million Friends nationally - the figure currently stands at 500,000. I recently had training to be a Dementia Champion.

3. Transport and Concessionary Fares

I was co-opted onto the Task Group which looked into all forms of transport in North Yorkshire. In a county the size of North Yorkshire, it is not sustainable to have a network of public transport, as not enough people use the buses. I learned a lot about concessionary fares during the Task Group's work, such as reimbursement is not 100% for the use of a bus pass, but much less. North Yorkshire reimburses well within the Government guidelines, but with few fare paying passengers, the future looks grim. Community transport can help, but a report published by the Parliamentary Transport Committee concludes that the Voluntary sector cannot be expected to fill the gaps left by the lack of public transport.

Much survey work has been carried out relating to older people and the value of concessionary bus fares to older people. There will be no change to universal benefits (including concessionary fares) before the General Election.

In preparation for a new Government, I am planning to carry out an England-wide survey to gather evidence of the social value of bus passes to older people. I gave a presentation to the September meeting of the UK Advisory Forum on Ageing (UKAFA) informing members of the reason for such a survey at this time. I have the support of The Campaign, Age UK and Hull University who will be co-ordinating the responses and doing the 'number crunching'. Future Years, The Yorkshire and Humber Forum on Ageing, is leading this project which I is called 'Happy and Independent'. The results with the recommendation will be presented to an incoming Government next May. The aim is to seek a review by Government. Meanwhile the Government has given £25m for the Voluntary Sector to bid for funding to buy new minibuses. I am encouraging village Hubs in Craven to apply.

4. Village Agents and Stronger Communities

The Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven CCG has funded the appointment for 4 village agents. I chair the Village Agents Steering Group in Craven. A report on the success and value of the project will be written for publication at the financial year end. The County Council has appointed a new Stronger Communities Team to work in communities across the County. I have met with the Manager and the Craven Officer and there is an item on the agenda for the next meeting of NY Older People's Reference Group in February for them to report on the work and any early successes of this initiative. The County Council will also be appointing targeted Prevention Officers working with those people who may be on the cusp of needing care.

5. Digital Connectivity for Older People

I am a member of the Age Action Alliance, Digital Inclusion Working group. The Chair of this Group, Nigel Lewis, and I attended an event in London organised by the DCLG and the Government Office for Science looking into the Digital Connectivity of older people and the best way older people can learn. The Government has a Grey Cells Policy based on their concerns that older people in the future may not have access to information. It is events such as the Digital Connectivity one where I am able to engage fully with Government officials and academics to tell them how it really is for older people. Nigel Lewis and I were the only older people at that event to talk about how older people use and/or learn digital skills. I was recently given the opportunity to see a demonstration of a TV-PC. This enables an older person to use the remote control of a TV to access email and the internet on their own TV. The system is already on sale in Australia. I have asked if this system could be used for older people to talk to their GP instead of having to find transport to attend a surgery. We have telemedicine to link a patient with a hospital consultant.

6. Cold Calling

Members will recall that in previous years I have spent time on ways to prevent cold calling. This year we older people have been inundated with cold calls about free boilers. There are now two methods which can be purchased and guarantees you will not receive any calls from someone you do not know. For more information please follow this link:

<http://www.truecall.co.uk/home.aspx>

This product is supported by Trading Standards Institute and certainly works very well and the cost is not too prohibitive.

7. Big Lottery Funding

The winners of the above were announced in September. At the December meeting of the Regional Forum on Ageing, one of our members, representing the Big Lottery, explained how they want to look at those bids which were not successful so that the work and ideas put into the applications is not wasted. Leeds and Sheffield Councils were each awarded £5.9m of funding for 'Fulfilling Lives'. I asked about Scarborough whose bid was unsuccessful. The BIG

lottery are extremely concerned about the coastal towns of Yorkshire, from Whitby to Hornsea and the fact there are deprived areas and an unknown number of people suffering the health effects of loneliness. Work is needed to identify those who are suffering the effects of loneliness. The Y & Humber Forum on Ageing is looking into ways this piece of work could be carried out. It is interesting to note that the Lottery funding does not recognise administrative boundaries. I am planning to contact East Riding on this issue to seek opportunities for lottery bids.

8. News in Brief

I have run workshops for the Airedale Wharfedale Craven Clinical Commissioning Group on Loneliness and Isolation through the Health Champions Groups, now attached to GP practices in the CCG area and to the NY Forum for Older People and the Selby 50s Forum.

9. Memberships

- North Yorkshire CC, NYFRS, and Future Years are members of the Age Action Alliance
- Future Years, Y & H Forum on Ageing (Chair)
- Member of the Campaign to End Loneliness.
- Lead for the AAA Isolation & Loneliness W/Group.
- Member of the AAA Digital Inclusion Group.
- EFA (English Forums on Ageing (9) Chairs group
- Member of the AAA Partnership Development Group.

No report is complete without thanking the members of North Yorkshire Older People's Forum for their hard work and commitment to ensure the voices of older people are expressed and heard. I could not do my work without them.

Additionally, officers in HAS who are working with me to improve the quality of life for older people in North Yorkshire.

County Councillor, Shelagh Marshall OBE

January 2015