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# aspire

age  
sector  
platform

speaking from experience

## ‘Silver Saver’ Campaign Takes Off



Also inside this edition...

Compton addresses  
AGM

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Web Watch:  
Rights 4 Seniors

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Age North Down & Ards

## Message from the Chair

Hello and welcome to edition 12 of *aspire*. Following September's AGM, I am pleased to begin my second year as Chair of the Platform, and thank you all for your interest and participation in such a fast moving and influential organisation.

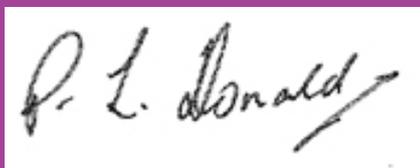


Inside this edition, read all about John Compton's speech to the membership at the AGM on the important issue of health and social care reform. You can also keep up-to-date with our newest campaign – the 'Silver Saver' campaign on pages 8-9. Have you heard about the work of our Campaign Committees? If not, turn to pages 10-11 to learn more on their role.

Finally, we also have news from Action on Hearing Loss and the NI Fire and Rescue Service.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome COAST, NAWAT, Mid & East Antrim AgeWell Partnership and Mid Ulster Seniors Network as new member groups to the Platform. We look forward to working with you in the months and years to come!

I hope you enjoy this edition!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. L. Donald". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Patricia Donald

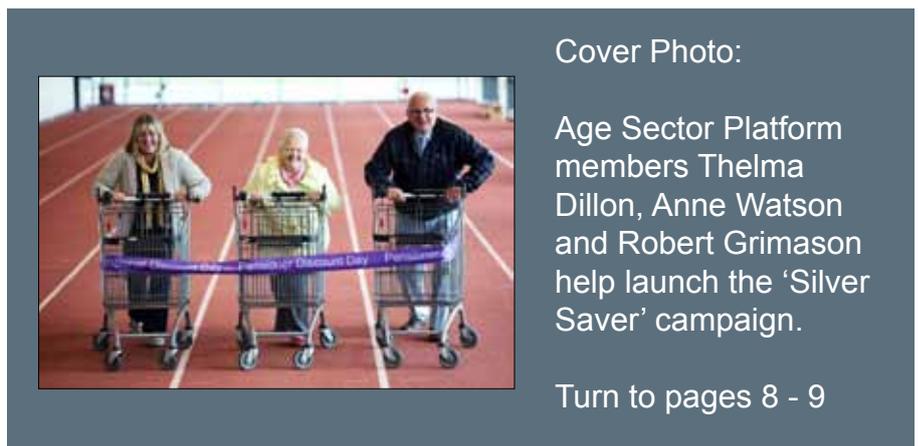
## The Platform's Sixth AGM

Age Sector Platform's sixth Annual General Meeting took place on Monday 17 September 2012 in the Europa Hotel, Belfast. Around 75 people attended the AGM with a wide representation of older people from groups and networks across Northern Ireland.

During the AGM, Chief Executive Eddie Lynch, spoke about the activity the charity has been engaged in during the past year. Eddie spoke about the success of the second Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament which resulted in over 1,200 surveys being completed, seven local parliaments being held, 33 motions being passed and 193 Members of Pensioners Parliament (MPPs) participating in the 2-day parliament in May 2012. Eddie highlighted the successes that have been achieved throughout the year and in particular the £22m fuel payment that was announced in December 2011, which was achieved in part by the campaigning of Age Sector Platform members.

Eddie continued by welcoming new full members that have joined the Platform during the year, including: ABC Seniors Network, Age North Down and Ards Over 50's Forum, COAST (Causeway Older Active Strategic Team), Mid and East Antrim AgeWell Partnership and Mid Ulster Seniors Network.

Seamus Lynch, Public Affairs Officer for Age Sector Platform, spoke to members about the committee structure within Age Sector Platform and the work that these committees will be tasked with in the various campaign areas.



Cover Photo:

Age Sector Platform members Thelma Dillon, Anne Watson and Robert Grimason help launch the 'Silver Saver' campaign.

Turn to pages 8 - 9

Alison McKenna, the Platform’s Communications Manager, updated members on the current ‘Silver Saver’ campaign for which support has been growing. Several members asked questions in relation to the campaign. For more information see pages 8-9.

As part of the business section of the AGM, three members of the Executive Committee stepped down – Bill Carson, Margaret Galloway and Paddy Joe McClean. Three new committee members were elected by the membership, namely Anil Gautam (Indian Community Centre), Indira Laugee (Carers NI) and Gretta Reid (Older Women’s Network NI). All committee members stepping down have made an invaluable contribution to Age Sector Platform and we extend our thanks to them for their dedication and hard work.

Guest speaker at the event was John Compton, Chief Executive of the Health and Social Care Board. A report on Mr Compton’s address is contained on the following pages.



Eddie Lynch speaking at the AGM

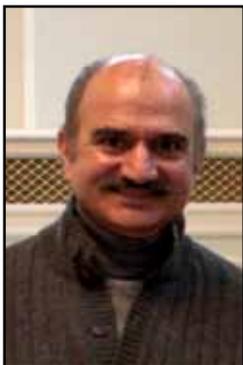


Around 75 people attended the AGM



Seamus Lynch speaking at the AGM

### Our New Executive Committee Members



Anil Gautam



Indira Laugee



Gretta Reid

## Compton addresses AGM

John Compton, Chief Executive of the Health and Social Care Board, was the guest speaker at Age Sector Platform's AGM on Monday 17 September.

Mr Compton provided members with an overview of his work as Chair of the team tasked with reviewing the current provision of health and social care, and outlined the key recommendations being proposed through the 'Transforming Your Care' report.



Mr Compton began by arguing that there was an “irrefutable need for change” within the health and social care system. He cited evidence to support this, including the ageing population in Northern Ireland which he claimed was a cause for celebration. Mr Compton spoke about the opportunities and challenges that were associated with “Northern Ireland being a small place”, highlighting the fact that it struggles to provide all health and social care services internally.

Speaking about the public meetings that took place as part of the review, Mr Compton said around 80% of the debate was surrounding health and social care services for older people; describing it as “the single biggest issue discussed”.

He proceeded to argue that solutions need to “have a sense of being province-wide but also have local solutions to reflect the feeling on the ground”. Mr Compton referred to the current health and social care budget of £4.6 billion and questioned whether “things are being done as efficiently as possible”. He spoke of his experience as a senior health manager during the last ten years, and claimed that there has never been a time when it was felt the budget was enough!

Mr Compton explained the proposal to create seventeen “Integrated Care Partnerships” which will join together the local Health and Social Care services in each area – helping people to receive care at home where possible.

Speaking about social care, Mr Compton proposed the need for care to be personalised, with individuals “given more control over how their care is administered to them”. He claimed flexibility was needed because every patient has different circumstances that determine what care they need. Mr Compton spoke about the decline in demand for Residential Care, and said changes were inevitable in this area.

Mr Compton finished his presentation by informing members that the Health Minister is likely to launch a public consultation on adult social care at some stage in October. He reported that the consultation will probably run until early 2013.

Following Mr Compton's presentation, there were a number of questions from Age Sector Platform members. Several of these questions related to the issue of adequate funding for the new proposals.

Mr Compton responded to these questions by claiming that in order to request additional funding, the health and social care service first needs to be better organised. He argued that additional funding will certainly not be granted if it is not clear that the service is working as efficiently as possible. He claimed that if these changes are not implemented, the situation will be even worse. He maintained that the Health Minister has never, at any stage, asked him to examine ways in which to save money as part of the review; but said that the debate might be whether the current budget of £4.6 billion is enough. He insisted that the challenge was to spend the money available in the best possible way, making the debate for additional funding a more realistic possibility.

One member spoke of the increased role of domiciliary care and the burden which would appear to fall on older spouses/partners/siblings. She asked how carers will get the support they need to provide this care and whether the new system will introduce payment of carers allowance to pensioners.

Mr Compton said he "would not be adverse to giving people direct financial control over the money that we would provide" saying that most people would be likely to spend the money wisely; but highlighted the need to protect vulnerable people who may be in a different situation. He said respite care was hugely important for carers, but that flexibility was very important and a "one size fits all" approach should be avoided. He asserted that changing the current system will take time, but that if changes were not made, carers would be looking at a much more "bleak outcome" for themselves.

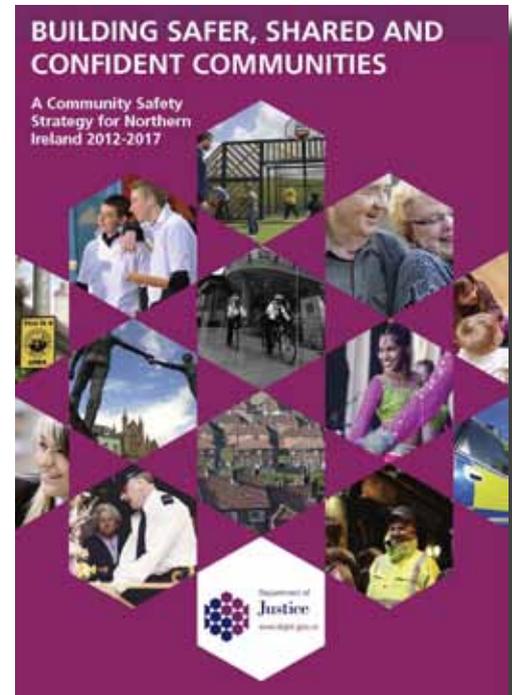
A question was asked in relation to the role of the voluntary/community sector in helping to improve the health of older people, and the current lack of funding for groups working to achieve this.

Mr Compton said he fully recognised the need for community involvement, and said there is nothing to be achieved by imprisoning someone in their front room seven days a week and calling it "care in the community". He stated that care in the community needs to involve social engagement which helps prevent depression and sickness in the long term. Finally, he acknowledged the "money and resource issues" that face the community/voluntary sector but said he had not come across any reluctance from the sector in continuing to work in the same way.

## Platform welcomes community safety strategy

In July 2012, Justice Minister David Ford launched the Executive's £20m Community Safety Strategy – 'Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities'. The strategy will be funded from existing Departmental resources and will be supplemented with monies recovered from criminal assets, which will be invested over the next three years to fund regional projects and support the new Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) to address crime and fear of crime at a local level.

Age Sector Platform welcomed the launch of the new strategy and specifically its commitment to tackling the safety of older people and says that the need to tackle crime and fear of crime amongst older people is an urgent one; with specific actions required in the coming months and years.



Patricia Donald, Chair of Age Sector Platform, commented: "The launch of the strategy is very welcome. Earlier this year, as part of the 2012 Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament, we conducted a survey with over 1,200 older people across the province; and were shocked to find that almost two out of three (65%) older people remain fearful of being a victim of crime. They want to see this strategy making a real difference for them, and the action plan relating to the safety of older people will be key to achieving this."

"We are happy to see that the Department of Justice has acknowledged the need to work in partnership with other departments, statutory bodies and the community/voluntary sector to succeed in making this strategy's aims a reality. We look forward to working with them to ensure the worries of older people remain a priority."

Justice Minister David Ford said: "This is a significant investment by my Department to implement this ambitious strategy and build safer, shared communities across Northern Ireland. That cannot be achieved by the Department of Justice working in isolation."

## Pensioners Parliament to return to Stormont

For the second year running, the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament (NIPP) is holding a special sitting in the Senate Chamber in Parliament Buildings, Stormont in mid November.



This event enables Members of the Pensioners Parliament (MPPs) to deliver presentations on a series of motions passed at the NIPP to Ministers from the NI Executive. This follows on from a similar event held in November 2011 when older people from across Northern Ireland became parliamentarians by tabling motions and debating the issues of concern to them and their peers with Ministers from the NI Executive. That event was chaired by the Speaker of the NI Assembly, William Hay MLA and attended by 70 MPPs.

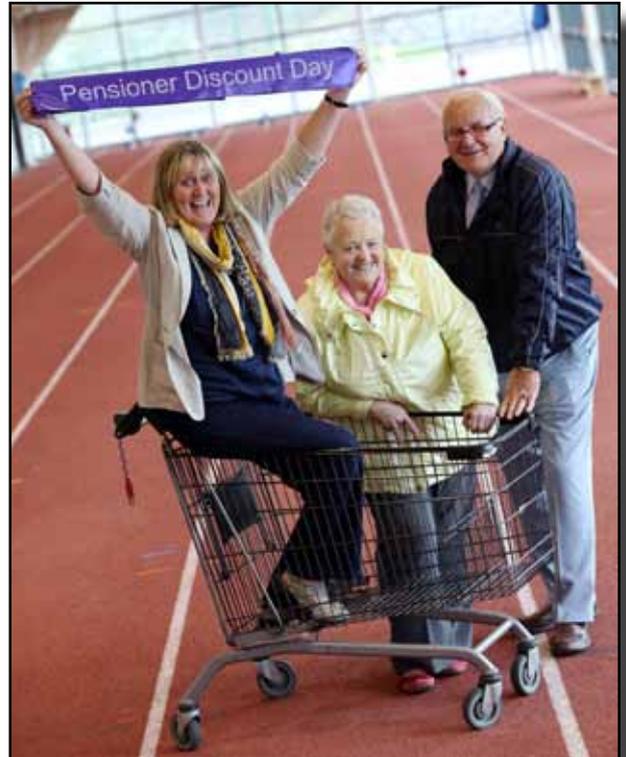
This Stormont debate has become a key part of the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament process as it allows representatives to put the issues raised throughout the year to the key decision makers in Government. It empowers older people to direct their concerns to the appropriate Ministers and provides a platform for Ministers to formally respond to the issues raised. The 2011 'Stormont debate' was also recorded by Hansard, the official edited verbatim report of proceedings in the NI Assembly. A video of the event can be viewed at the video gallery on Age Sector Platform's website - [www.agesectorplatform.org](http://www.agesectorplatform.org).

If you want more information on the Stormont event or the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament you can contact Age Sector Platform's office by phoning 028 9031 2089 or emailing [info@agesectorplatform.org](mailto:info@agesectorplatform.org).

## ‘Silver Saver’ campaign

During September, Age Sector Platform officially launched its groundbreaking campaign calling on food retailers to introduce a pensioner discount day to help older shoppers cope with the rising cost of living. The campaign was prompted by one of the most popular motions passed at the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament earlier this year.

Anne Watson from Age Sector Platform commented: “Having left the starting blocks over the summer, this campaign has already gained the support of over 2,000 people, and we are fully prepared for a marathon of a campaign. Drastic increases in food prices, and the older population’s inability to keep pace, has meant affording the weekly shop is a constant worry for many older people. At present, one in five pensioners in Northern Ireland is living in poverty. Rising food prices will push even more older people towards this hardship line.”



Ms Watson continued: “It has been proven that older people spend a higher proportion of their income on food than any other age group; with someone over 75 spending almost twice as much on food than someone under 30. This means older people are finding it harder to keep up with hikes in food prices, and why we are calling on food retailers to introduce a pensioner discount day to enable older people to maintain a balanced and healthy diet.”

“When asked at the recent Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament, nine out of ten [89%] older people said if a supermarket they didn’t normally shop in introduced a pensioner discount day, they’d be more likely to shop there. It is clear that a scheme like this would benefit both the retailer and its older customers, and examples of similar schemes can be found throughout the world. We believe it is time for companies in Northern Ireland to start thinking about their older customers. With a growing older population, it only makes business sense to do so!”

“We conducted a survey with over 1,200 older people across the province earlier this year as part of the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament, and found that

one in two [53%] older people were concerned about the price of food. This is an issue that does not seem to be going away and we believe a discount day for pensioners is a practical and achievable solution. Already, we have secured a great deal of political support for the campaign from MEPs, MPs, MLAs and Councillors.”

“As part of the campaign, our main task will be to convince food retailers that there is a need for a discount scheme here. We are therefore asking for the support of the public in order to put pressure on companies who may otherwise fail to recognise the concerns that older people have at present.”



Sign the online petition by visiting

[www.silversaver.org.uk](http://www.silversaver.org.uk)

or request a batch of petition postcards

by phoning **028 9031 2089**

## Some comments from the online petition...

*“Great idea. It’s hard to live now and it will only get worse.”*

*“Some big shops like B&Q have a Wednesday discount day for pensioners, so why do other retailers not follow their thoughtful example?”*

*“It’s hard to make ends meet on a pension.”*

*“As we get older, the need to eat a healthy diet is very important. The cost of food has a big impact on how much we spend.”*

*“Many of us pensioners are under a lot of pressure financially.”*

*“Great idea. I back this 100%. Times are hard for everyone but especially the elderly.”*

*“My grandparents struggle with the price of fuel, electric and food. Having a pensioner day with reduced prices at supermarkets would help them and many more like them a great deal.”*

## The Platform's Campaign Committees

Following the 2012 Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament, Age Sector Platform's Campaign Committees have been quickly re-convening to begin working on the issues arising from the Parliament.

These committees, which have always been part of Age Sector Platform's structure, work behind the scenes planning campaigns, raising awareness of particular issues and lobbying relevant bodies and politicians to ensure that the issues of importance to older people in Northern Ireland are being addressed. Each committee is made up of older people from across Northern Ireland who are members of Age Sector Platform and who have an interest in a particular topic.

In true Assembly style the committees have undergone some 're-shuffling' in 2012, with many new faces coming on board and a few new committees also being created.



Each committee focuses on a specific area, with individual committees tasked with addressing the following areas:

- Food
- Energy
- Community Safety
- OFMdfM issues
- Westminster issues
- Transport
- Health

The role of each committee is primarily to address the relevant motions coming out of the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament, and to develop a strategy to achieve the sought outcomes.

The committees are also tasked with reporting back to the membership of Age Sector Platform at its quarterly plenary meetings, and any progress made will be highlighted to the membership and at the next Pensioners Parliament.

If you are a member of one of Age Sector Platform's member groups (listed on the back page of this magazine) or have become an individual member of the Platform, and are interested in joining an Age Sector Platform committee, please contact Seamus Lynch by phoning 028 9031 2089 or emailing [seamus.lynch@agesectorplatform.org](mailto:seamus.lynch@agesectorplatform.org).

# Member Spotlight

## Age North Down and Ards

AGE North Down & Ards (AGENDA) is based in Bangor, Co. Down. AGENDA's aim is to improve the quality of life for over 50's in the North Down & Ards areas through providing support and activities for anyone aged 50+. There are many popular local services and groups for older people that are delivered by or in conjunction with AGENDA .

There is a small part time staff team led by a Manager; however, volunteers play an essential role in AGENDA with over 90 people volunteering on a regular basis. There are voluntary Directors; volunteers for Good Morning Call, the coffee lounge, tutors and organisers of group activities. The majority of volunteers are older people themselves, making AGENDA user led and representative of the people it works for. Volunteers are also placed by other organisations to help individuals develop skills, gain experience and build confidence.

Key services managed by AGENDA include:

North Down Over 50's Forum and Ards Over 50's Forum run information events for older people and also provide people with a voice locally to lobby on issues important to members. The AGENDA Good Morning Call service is a free friendly telephone support call to those aged 50+ who live on their own. It is available 365 days a year and clients can select days they wish to be contacted, if not daily. Currently the youngest client is 52, the oldest is 99. Some clients have health issues and are housebound, some are isolated, bereaved or lonely. Others may have been a victim of crime or feel anxious and vulnerable. AGENDA's trained volunteers make 30,000+ calls a year to clients; for some the caller will be the only voice they hear all day. A friendly call can help people feel safe, and help support them to remain in their own homes for longer.

AGENDA Safety of Seniors Roadshows are regular free safety and information events organised in conjunction with community groups/ organisations and churches. These are attended by over 500+ people a year and provide information and practical advice about crime prevention and bogus callers.



Members of the AGENDA PLUS group  
with facilitator Greg Martin

# Member Spotlight

AGENDA Intergenerational Programmes involve over 100+ participants per year. AGENDA supports local community groups in delivering initiatives and activities that bring younger and older generations together. These build understanding and respect and can help dispel fears and mistrust between generations, thus helping people feel safer in their communities.



AGE North Down & Ards Floating Support Service

AGENDA Floating Support Service delivers housing related support for socially isolated older people (65+) in

the Ards & Peninsula area. The aim is to support older people to remain living independently. Older people in such rural areas often have to overcome additional difficulties including: lack of transport or convenient public transport, lack of daytime activities, lack of services and amenities, limited access to banks or post offices, lack of safe footpaths or no pedestrian crossings.

The Floating Support Service is often a lifeline for vulnerable clients, who may often not see another person for days, or be able to get out at all. Staff have supported clients in accessing services, building networks in the community, maintaining and securing their home and building confidence in accessing the community again, after falls or hospitalisation.

AGENDA also provide popular programmes and facilitate groups from the Hamilton Road premises along with a drop in coffee lounge and signposting service. Programmes and groups include: Basic Computer Courses, REACH Men's Health Group, Hobbies and Craft classes, AGENDA Plus programmes, SHIPSHAPE (Senior Health Improvement Programme) and Outreach clubs.

For further information please visit our website at [www.agenorthdownards.co.uk](http://www.agenorthdownards.co.uk) or contact:

AGE North Down & Ards

24 Hamilton Road, Bangor, BT20 4LE

Tel: 028 9127 1968

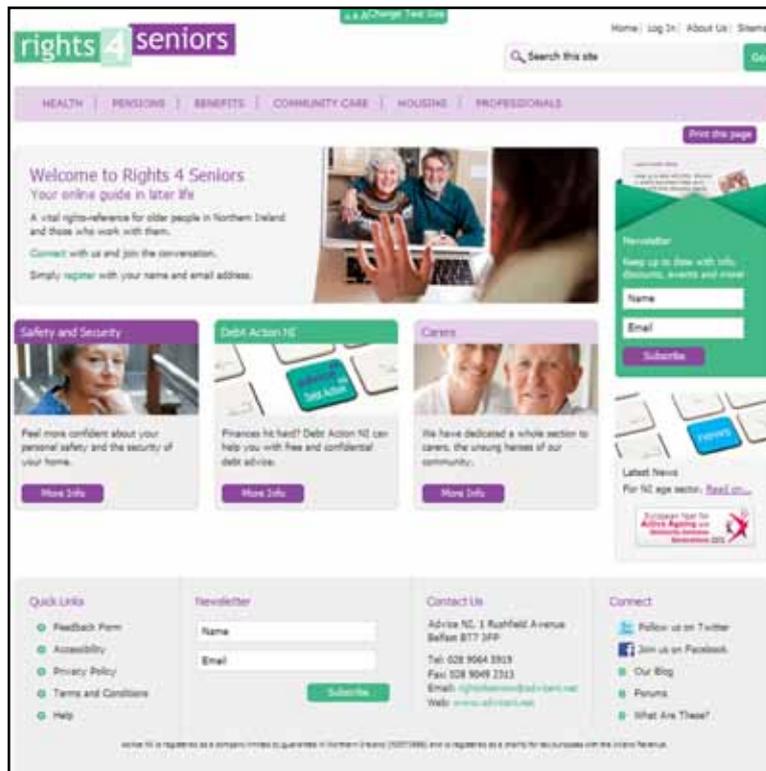
email: [agenda@agenorthdownards.co.uk](mailto:agenda@agenorthdownards.co.uk)

Many thanks to Rachael Frier  
and Lynne Bennett from Age North Down  
& Ards for drafting this article

## Rights 4 Seniors

In 2010 and 2011, Age Sector Platform helped steer an innovative project funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and managed by Advice NI. Its aim was to provide a one-stop-shop online for information regarding older people's rights and entitlements in Northern Ireland.

The social justice website, Rights 4 Seniors ([www.rights4seniors.net](http://www.rights4seniors.net)), went live in April 2011 and has since grown to attract over 900 local visits a month to its information, blogs and forums. It is a dynamic and evolving project and the team continues its research in the field.



With help from management and residents,

Rights 4 Seniors has recently carried out research into internet usage and interest in Fold Housing Association. Rights 4 Seniors travelled across Northern Ireland to analyse internet usage amongst those residents who had experience of the web. They also determined whether those residents who had no experience of the web would have an interest in learning.

Ciarán Arthurs, Web Content Developer for the Rights 4 Seniors' project, said: "Aside from having the opportunity to showcase the Rights 4 Seniors website, visiting Folds across Northern Ireland highlighted that, whilst there are a number of seniors who are well-connected with the latest technologies, there are still a large cohort who are digitally excluded. As well as an obvious need for some older members of our community to get online, there is a great hunger amongst them to participate in classes and learn."

"These classes, though, need to be designed to suit their needs and expectations. They also need equipment and software that is up-to-date so that their first experience of surfing the web hooks them like it has most of us. This is a need that Advice NI and Rights 4 Seniors will hope to target in the future as we all have our part to play in helping our peers get online."

Keep up-to-date with Rights 4 Seniors online or contact the team directly on 028 9064 5919 for further information. They are also available to present their work to groups across Northern Ireland.

## Platform members succeed in advocacy training

During September 2012, several Age Sector Platform members received training certificates at a presentation after successfully completing an 'Introduction to Lobbying' course. The course, which was organised by the WEA through their ALfA project, lasted six months with one training session being held each month between January 2012 and June 2012.



Participants with trainer Helen McLaughlin, Alison McKenna from Age Sector Platform and Attracta Mathews from the WEA

Sadie Hamill, Bob Jenkins, Anne Watson, Robert Hasson,

Betty Gillespie and William Hutchinson took part in the training, which covered the following areas:

- Ways of lobbying
- Campaigns and strategies
- Networks, connections and evidence
- Lobbying Councils
- Lobbying Stormont
- Lobbying Westminster

At the presentation of certificates, the six participants provided feedback about the training, with all individuals being extremely positive about their experience. The training was described as 'informal', 'tailored' and 'very useful'. The group also spoke positively about the social interaction offered through the course with friendships being formed as the six months progressed.

If you are part of an Age Sector Platform member group (a list of member groups can be found on the back page of this magazine), and would like to register your interest in taking part in some future ALfA training, please contact Alison McKenna by phoning 028 9031 2089 or emailing [alison.mckenna@agesectorplatform.org](mailto:alison.mckenna@agesectorplatform.org).

## Up for a laugh?

An elderly couple had dinner at another couple's house, and after eating, the wives left the table and went into the kitchen.

The two gentlemen were talking, and one said: "Last night we went out to a new restaurant and it was really great. I would recommend it very highly."

The other man said, "What is the name of the restaurant?"

The first man thought and thought and finally said, "What is the name of that flower you give to someone you love? You know...the one that's red and has thorns."

"Do you mean a rose?"

"Yes, that's the one", replied the man. He then turned towards the kitchen and yelled, "Rose, what's the name of that restaurant we went to last night?"

## Sudoku Puzzle

6			8					
		1	9	2	7			8
	9		3				7	1
9	2			7			3	6
		6			8			
				9			2	5
1								2
2	6	8	5	4				
		5	7	1		6		9

Find the solution at the bottom of page 17

# Bill and Blanche

Bill and his wife Blanche go to the county fair every year and every year Bill would say, “Blanche, I’d like to ride in that helicopter.”



Blanche always replied, “I know Bill, but that helicopter ride is twenty quid and twenty quid is twenty quid!”

One year Bill and Blanche went to the fair, and Bill said, “Blanche, I’m 75 years old. If I don’t ride that helicopter, I might never get another chance.”

To this, Blanche replied, “Bill that helicopter ride is twenty quid, and twenty quid is twenty quid.”

The pilot overheard the couple and said, “Folks I’ll make you a deal. I’ll take the both of you for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and don’t say a word I won’t charge you a penny! But if you say one word it’s twenty quid.”

Bill and Blanche agreed and up they went.

The pilot did all kinds of fancy manoeuvres, but not a word was heard.

He did his daredevil tricks over and over again, but still not a word.

When they landed, the pilot turned to Bill and said, “By golly, I did everything I could to get you to yell out, but you didn’t. I’m impressed!”

Bill replied, “Well, to tell you the truth I almost said something when Blanche fell out. But you know, twenty quid is twenty quid!”

## Want to contribute?

If you have any funny stories, jokes or suggestions for *aspire*’s ‘Fun Stuff’ pages, please email them to [alison.mckenna@agesectorplatform.org](mailto:alison.mckenna@agesectorplatform.org) or post them to the address on the back of this magazine!

9	8	6	2	1	7	5	4	3
3	1	7	4	9	5	8	6	2
1	7	9	6	8	3	8	9	1
7	8	3	4	9	6	1	2	5
5	1	6	2	3	8	9	4	7
9	2	4	1	7	5	8	3	6
8	9	2	3	6	4	5	7	1
4	5	1	9	2	7	3	6	8
6	3	7	8	5	1	2	9	4

Sudoku Solution:

# Fire Service Appeal

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) is renewing its appeal for the public's help in helping them to protect the elderly in our community from the dangers of fire.

Dale Ashford, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Safety Services, Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service said:

“It is an unspeakable tragedy that seven elderly people lost their lives in accidental house fires in the early part of this year. I want to assure the public that we are doing everything we possibly can do out there on the ground to protect elderly people from fire.”

“We do however need the community's help in helping us to protect this very vulnerable demographic. Check that they have a smoke alarm, test and ensure it is working. Check their home for fire safety hazards, take time to explain the importance of a bed time fire safety routine, a fire escape plan and make sure they know who to contact in an emergency.”

“I would urge everyone to avail of our free Home Fire Safety Checks. Local Firefighters will visit your home and check for people at risk, appliances that could cause fire, help with any actions to avoid fire and most importantly check that a smoke alarm is working. If necessary they will fit a free smoke alarm.”



Firefighters carry out a free Home Fire Safety Check

You can phone for a free Home Fire Safety Check on **028 9260 0477**,  
Text phone/Minicom **028 9262 8800** or  
go to **[www.nifrs.org](http://www.nifrs.org)** for  
further information



**Northern Ireland  
Fire & Rescue Service**

## Action on Hearing Loss

Do you miss out on conversation round the dinner table? Do you have to keep turning the TV up? Are you unsure of what your doctor or pharmacist has said to you?

One in six people in Northern Ireland has a hearing loss – that's approximately 300,000 people. Among the over 50s, 40% of people have a hearing loss – this rises to more than 70% of people over 70.



The graphic features the 'ACTION ON HEARING LOSS' logo in the top right corner. Below the logo are two framed photographs: the left one shows a family of four (a man, a woman, and two children) sitting together outdoors, and the right one shows two elderly women sitting on a lawn. At the bottom left, the text reads 'Is hearing loss affecting your family?'. At the bottom right, it says 'We can help. 0808 808 0123 hearingcheck.org.uk'.

It takes, on average, 10 years for people to get their hearing checked and unaddressed hearing loss can lead to social isolation. Because of this, Action on Hearing Loss ran an 'Isolation' campaign over the summer months, encouraging people to get their hearing checked. Launched by the Health Minister, Edwin Poots, the campaign asked people to take a simple hearing check over the telephone, by calling 0808 808 0123 (freephone), or online at [www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk).

If you already wear hearing aids but are unsure of how to maintain them, we run a series of 'hearing aid clinics' in local areas, including a monthly clinic in our head office in Belfast.

Our newly-launched 'In Touch' project will provide a one-to-one befriending service across Northern Ireland to older deaf and hard of hearing people, both at home and in residential care, in order to reduce isolation, loneliness and risk. Volunteers will support each individual, identifying their communication needs, breaking down barriers and improving their quality of life.

Volunteer-led social groups will also work in community and in residential settings, providing opportunities for social interaction between older deaf and hard of hearing people, helping them to share personal experiences and encourage peer support.

To find out more about our projects or to volunteer with us,  
contact us by telephone on 028 9023 9619, textphone 028 9024 9462  
or email [information.nireland@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:information.nireland@hearingloss.org.uk).

# Age Sector Platform Members

ABC Seniors Network  
Age NI  
Age North Down and Ards Over 50s Forum  
ALLY Foyle  
Amicus Retired Members  
AT&GWU Retired Members Association  
Belfast East Seniors Forum  
Carers NI  
Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum  
Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance (CSPA)  
COAST (Causeway Older Active Strategic Team)  
Communications Workers Union (NI Regional Retired Members)  
Engage with Age  
Friendship Federation  
GMB Retired Members  
Greater Shankill Senior Citizens' Forum  
Hoi Sum Chinese Elderly Group  
ICTU Retired Workers Committee (NI)  
Indian Community Centre 50+ Club  
Mid and East Antrim AgeWell Partnership  
Mid Ulster Seniors Network  
NASUWT Retired Members Association  
National Federation of Occupational Pensioners  
National Pensioners Convention (NI)  
Newry and Mourne Senior Citizens' Consortium  
Newtownabbey Senior Citizens' Forum  
NIPSA Retired Members Association  
North Belfast Senior Citizens' Forum  
North West Ageing Well Together (NNAWT)  
Older Women's Network NI  
Public Commercial Services Union (Associate and Retired Members)  
South Belfast Lifestyle Forum  
South West Age Partnership  
UNISON Retired Members  
West Belfast 50+ Forum

If you have any feedback or would like to request additional copies of this newsletter, please get in touch.



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