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aspire

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platform

speaking from experience

New campaign to defend pensioner benefits



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Baroness May Blood

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Message from the Chair

Happy New Year!

Our front page highlights the new UK wide 'Hands Off' campaign which we are thrilled to be leading in Northern Ireland. Benefits such as the winter fuel payment and bus pass are close to all our hearts, and this campaign will ensure our elected representatives know how much we value them. Sign the e-petition, and encourage others to do the same!



We launched the 2013 Pensioners Parliament report in November, which you can read about on pages 14-15. This year marks the 4th year of the Pensioners Parliament; find more information on the following pages.

Also inside this edition you will find an interview with our new patron Baroness May Blood MBE and an opinion piece on the G8 Dementia Summit from Alzheimer's Society NI. In addition, we have a report from our trip to Westminster in November and a report on some positive discussions on tackling fear of crime.

Last year was a busy one, and I am in no doubt that 2014 will be even more eventful! I hope you enjoy reading this edition!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'F. Hughes'.

Francis Hughes

The Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament is back for 2014 and it's time to register for your local parliament if you want to avoid disappointment! 2014 will mark the fourth year of the process, and we are delighted to announce that we will be visiting two brand new locations – Larne and Magherafelt – as part of the local parliament stage.

The Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament is all about making your voice heard, so even if you are unable to attend your local parliament, completing the parliament questionnaire will ensure your views are included in the Northern Ireland wide survey.

This survey gives us the mandate to speak on behalf of pensioners across Northern Ireland, and influences what campaigns we work on throughout the year.

For hard copies of the questionnaire phone Age Sector Platform on 028 9031 2089 or complete the survey online at www.pensionersparliament.org.



Cover photo:

Platform members launch UK wide 'Hands Off' campaign, defending the need for universal pensioner benefits. More on pages 8-9.

The 2014 local parliaments will take place between February and April 2014 in the following locations:

Belfast	Friday 21 February 2014
Enniskillen	Friday 7 March 2014
Newry	Friday 14 March 2014
Craigavon	Friday 21 March 2014
Larne	Friday 28 March 2014
Magherafelt	Friday 4 April 2014
Omagh	Thursday 10 April 2014

Each event will take place between 10am and 3.30pm, with lunch provided. Delegates from each local parliament will then be selected to attend the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament in Belfast on Thursday 29 and Friday 30 May 2014. This two-day regional Parliament will decide on the priority issues for older people across the province.

If you would like to attend your local parliament, please contact Age Sector Platform by phoning 028 9031 2089 or emailing info@agesectorplatform.org. As spaces are limited, booking in advance is essential!

The deadline for RSVP is two weeks prior to the date of your local parliament. At this stage, you will receive a letter/email to confirm your place and provide details of the venue.



Keep up to date with news from the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament at www.pensionersparliament.org

Our new patron - Baroness May Blood MBE

Baroness May Blood MBE was born and raised in Belfast and during her life has been an active trade unionist, community worker and advocate for women. In 1999 she was raised to the peerage as Baroness Blood, of Blackwatertown in the County of Armagh. She was the first woman in Northern Ireland to be so honoured.

*During 2013, Baroness Blood agreed to become a patron of Age Sector Platform and **aspire** is delighted to publish our first interview with her.*



1. Where does your interest in older people's issues come from?

My interest in older people and their issues comes from a number of things. We are constantly being told by television, radio or the media that we are living longer and that is true. When I was younger when a person reached their late 60s or 70s they were considered to be old, having lived their three score and 10! I can remember my grandmother dying in her mid 50's and at the time I thought she was an old woman, but today late 70s and 80s are considered to be the norm. I suppose my interest comes from a purely selfish one as I am now of this 'new generation' of added years to life and we must work to also add life to those years.

2. What do you feel are the main problems facing older people today?

The fact that we are living longer brings with it new challenges. I suppose loneliness would be top of the list for as older people we now live in a different world to that of our parents, with the advances in technology. We are constantly being told to go on-line (great if you understand it) to apply for benefits or that the information we require can be obtained on such and such web-site! It can be very off putting not to understand how it works and feeling too stupid and afraid to ask.

I remember my own experience of this when I first went to the House of Lords and they said they would give me a laptop so I could get on with my work. This scared me, for at that stage I had no idea how to even plug in a laptop! I was told I would be given lessons which frightened me more for I worried that I would not understand the tutor, but I had to overcome this fear because I had committed myself to work in the House of Lords and it would have been impossible to do without the laptop.

I understand how in the 'Brave New World' that living longer can be a scary place and can create a fear of the future and create questions like 'Will I be able to cope?'.

3. What attracted you to become a patron of Age Sector Platform and how can you help support older people to make their voice heard?

I was honoured to be asked to become patron of Age Sector Platform. I have been given a very privileged position in life and if I can raise the profile of older people and give them a platform and voice as their patron that is great. I have learned that if older people don't raise the issues which affect them, then no one else will. We must learn that as a body of people we have a powerful position as voters so we must raise our voices to be heard so that those who govern us take heed of our needs and Age Sector Platform is in a position to garner this energy.

4. In your spare time, what are your interests?

I lead a very busy life and I am lucky in that I have reasonably good health. I travel to London 39 weeks in the year and spend two or three days a week there, with the latter part of the week spent doing some work in Northern Ireland. I live in two different worlds! I have an extended family circle and a wide array of friends so I do not get a lot of free time for interests but I enjoy going out for a meal or watching a film on television. If I do get some 'me time' I love doing gardening, for I can get lost in my thoughts and only worry about putting the bulbs/plants in the right way up!



Baroness Blood hosts a meeting of Age Sector Platform members and Northern Ireland Peers recently at Westminster

Westminster Lobby 2013

By Nixon Armstrong, Chair of Westminster Campaign Committee



At the end of November 2013, I travelled to London along with a delegation from Age Sector Platform's Westminster Campaign Committee for our annual lobby of Parliament. The very productive trip involved two full days of meetings at which pensioners' issues took centre stage. This year, it was great to have two new Platform members with us, who made a very valuable contribution.

Eight MPs from Northern Ireland attended our meeting on Tuesday 26 November where we raised a number of issues from the 2013 NI Pensioners Parliament. The main issue raised was the need for urgent action in relation to energy prices in Northern Ireland.

Margaret McGreevy, one of our new committee members, briefed MPs on the issue of the 'Forgotten 14s' – those who paid contributions between the ages of 14 and 16 which did not count towards their pension. We also discussed the value of universal pensioner benefits, the need to reverse the so called 'Granny tax', and highlighted some of our concerns regarding the new Pensions Bill.

The Northern Ireland MPs have now agreed to look at setting up an informal cross-party group to address pensioner issues raised through the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament. The creation of this group would tie together our autumn trip to Westminster, the Westminster session at the two-day Parliament in May and other briefings required in between. This development is a very welcome step in raising pensioners' issues up the political agenda at Westminster.

Following the meeting with Northern Ireland MPs, the group was pleased to meet with the new Shadow Secretary of State for NI, Ivan Lewis MP. Mr Lewis listened intently to the concerns being raised by the group, and committed to raising the issue of energy prices with the NI Executive. We emphasised the



Meeting with cross-party group of Northern Ireland MPs

need for the Labour Party to follow through with their promise to reverse the 'Granny tax' if re-elected to Government. Regarding universal pensioner benefits, Mr Lewis said the only benefit Labour planned to change was the Winter Fuel Payment, which they propose should be taken away from those paying the higher rate of tax. We informed Mr Lewis about the upcoming 'Hands Off' campaign defending the need for all universal pensioner benefits.

We then met with Dame Anne Begg MP, Chair of the Work and Pensions Select Committee. Dame Begg provided the group with a great insight into the work of the DWP committee and discussed her main concerns with the Pensions Bill. She spoke candidly about the fact that there was no 'extra money' for the new pension, and addressed some concerns about women approaching retirement who would lose out as part of the new scheme.

During the second day of our trip, Baroness May Blood MBE, patron of Age Sector Platform, hosted our meeting with a number of Northern Ireland Peers (Members of the House of Lords). The Pensions Bill was progressing through the House of Lords so we took the opportunity to discuss our concerns with the Peers. We also raised the topical issue of energy prices and highlighted the huge worry this causes pensioners in Northern Ireland. The issue of the 'Forgotten 14s' was received very positively by the group of Peers who were eager to examine the anomaly in more detail. Finally, the group briefed the Peers on the upcoming 'Hands Off' campaign and asked for their support.

Our last task of the trip was to join with pensioners from across the UK at the National Pensioners' Convention's annual lobby. At this gathering, I was pleased to be given a speaking role during the event to brief pensioners from across the UK on the upcoming 'Hands Off' campaign. The response was very positive, with many speakers from the floor reinforcing the need to act now to protect these universal pensioner benefits before the next general election (more about campaign on pages 8-9).

I hope this update serves to demonstrate the huge amount of work that is on-going at Westminster level. Our campaign committee is central to this work and we are honoured to be representing the views of pensioners in Northern Ireland at such high level meetings.



Meeting with Shadow Secretary of State for NI, Ivan Lewis MP



Meeting with Peers from Northern Ireland

Hands Off Universal Pensioner Benefits

'Hands Off' is the clear message coming from older people in Northern Ireland and across the UK, as a new nation wide campaign was launched recently defending the need for benefits such as the winter fuel payment and bus pass.



Hands Off!

The 'Hands Off' campaign, which has already been backed by some of the most influential older people's organisations in the UK, aims to safeguard benefits such as the winter fuel payment, bus pass, free prescriptions and TV licences after the 2015 general election.

Following comments made by the main political parties at Westminster indicating these benefits may be under threat, the campaign will emphasise their importance in achieving a decent standard of living for millions of pensioners across the UK, whilst also highlighting the costs and barriers associated with means-testing such benefits.

People of all ages are encouraged to sign the online e-petition and to email their local MP via the campaign website at www.handsoff.org.uk.



Members of Age Sector Platform and the National Pensioners' Convention supporting the campaign at Westminster

The 'Hands Off' campaign is being officially backed by Age Sector Platform in Northern Ireland, the National Pensioners' Convention, the Welsh Senate of Older People and the Scottish Seniors Alliance.

Nixon Armstrong from Age Sector Platform commented: "During the last year, pensioners have felt under constant attack. The myth that older people have escaped any austerity measures is totally groundless, and we will fight to ensure there are no further cuts or means testing of vital benefits such as the winter fuel payment, bus pass, free prescriptions or TV licences. We call on every individual, regardless of age, to support us in our campaign to ensure these benefits are maintained for pensioners now and in the years to come."

Dot Gibson from the National Pensioners' Convention said: "The real reason why pensioners need additional benefits such as the winter fuel allowance and the free bus pass is because our state pension is so poor. Yet despite this, every year older people add an extra

£40bn to the economy in taxes, volunteering and unpaid caring. Universal benefits help to keep people active, independent, warm in their homes, healthy and involved in their communities. Removing universal benefits isn't about saving money or about stopping millionaires from getting a free ride on their local bus – it's about undermining the welfare state and the principle that services should be available to everyone in retirement. Universal benefits need to be defended not only for today's pensioners, but for the pensioners of tomorrow as well."

John Vincent from the Welsh Senate of Older People commented: "We are very conscious of the unfair allegations that pensioners are not touched by austerity measures. We obviously are affected in many ways. People who make these allegations seem to conveniently forget that many of today's pensioners experienced real hardship during the war years and all of us can remember the austerity of the post-war period. Pensioners are tired of feeling like a burden on society; we make a huge contribution and that surely should be recognised?"

Agnes McGroarty from the Scottish Seniors Alliance said: "All of the main political parties at Westminster have indicated that universal pensioner benefits may be under threat following the next general election, so we must make our voice heard now. Millionaire pensioners have been used as justification for further cuts or means-testing, but this campaign represents the views of real pensioners who are already struggling to make ends meet."



For more information on the campaign, visit www.handsoff.org.uk.

What you can do to support the campaign...

- Visit the www.handsoff.org.uk website
- Sign the online e-petition (via website)
- Write an e-mail or letter to your local MP (via 'support' section on website)
- Follow the campaign on Twitter (@supporthandsoff)
- Pledge your organisation/group's official support for the campaign by emailing info@handsoff.org.uk or using website contact form
- Promote the campaign amongst your group members, family and friends (anyone of any age can support the campaign!)

Keep Me Posted

Since the last edition of *aspire*, Age Sector Platform has signed up to support the Keep Me Posted campaign.

The Keep Me Posted campaign believes that it is every consumer's right to choose, without disadvantage, how they are contacted by banks and other financial service companies, utility companies, media companies and other service providers.



The response to the campaign has been great. Support from individuals, charities, consumer groups and MPs has increased steadily over the six months since the campaign was launched in July 2013.

How you can help

The problem still remains. Businesses are increasingly restricting access to paper bills and statements and denying their customers an informed choice. We know this is a problem that affects everyone, particularly the most vulnerable in our society.

The Keep Me Posted campaign wants to know how you have been affected.

- Have you been moved onto online statements or billing without your knowledge or consent?
- Do you live in an area with limited or no broadband connection?
- Are you paying extra just to receive paper statements in the post?
- Have you had difficulty managing your finances or that of a close family member /friend because of a lack of paper statements?
- Have you been unable to prove your address/identity or apply for services because a self- printed copy of your bill or statement will not be accepted?
- Have you been affected by this issue in any other way?

The campaign is looking for people affected by this issue who are willing to tell their story and talk about their experiences. This might involve talking to journalists about your experience and how it affects your life.

Keep Me Posted is campaigning for everyone's voice to be heard in this debate. Please share your stories and experiences with the Keep Me Posted campaign, you can write to: Keep Me Posted, PO Box 72064, London EC4P 4DZ; or ring the team on 020 7566 9773 or e-mail info@keepmeposteduk.com.

You can also share your story online at www.keepmeposteduk.com.

Positive talks on tackling fear of Crime

By Bill Carson, Chair of Fear of Crime Campaign Committee



Age Sector Platform's Fear of Crime committee has been very busy over the past few months following up on the findings from our Pensioners Parliament research on fear of crime.

Committee members have held a series of constructive meetings with key agencies and decision makers on community safety matters in recent weeks. Platform members attended a consultation event on the NI Policing Plan where we highlighted the need for better police visibility and connections between older people and the police. We have also been invited to sit on a new Strategic Consultation Group and attended the first meeting of this group before Christmas.

Several members of our committee held a meeting in PSNI Headquarters in early December with Assistant Chief Constable Mark Hamilton, where we outlined the main concerns emerging from the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament. It was an honest and constructive meeting and ACC Hamilton has committed to working with our Fear of Crime committee to try to uncover new and innovative ways of reducing the fear of crime among older people. Regular meetings with ACC Hamilton and his staff have already been arranged for 2014.

We have also held positive discussions with representatives from the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) and are putting plans in place to involve them in this year's local parliaments. Finally, there have also been discussions held with Linking Generations NI about some intergenerational work around community safety which could help break down some stereotypes held by young and older people alike which can also contribute to the fear experienced by older people.

We are thankful for the support provided by the Department of Justice to enable us to work on this issue and there is much work to be done in 2014 if we are going to start to help reduce the levels of fear amongst older people. However, we are pleased with initial discussions and believe there is an appetite to work together to make progress on this important matter. In the meantime, there are a couple of useful numbers for you to jot down!

Crimestoppers - 0800 555 111

National charity in the UK which offers a free phone number which you can call anonymously and give information about individuals involved in crime

Quick Check - 0800 013 22 90

This 24-hour service allows householders to make a freephone call to verify the individual identity of anyone calling at their door

Member Spotlight

West Belfast 50+ Forum

The West Belfast 50+ Forum has been in existence for over 12 years and represents over 65 older persons groups in West Belfast. These include groups based around churches, sheltered accommodations, lunch clubs right through to a range of physical activity groups e.g. walking, bowling etc. They all offer opportunities for people aged 50+ to get out on a regular basis, socialise, learn new skills and volunteer. The Forum is supported by Volunteer Now which has worked with the Forum and its member groups over the last 10 years.



Office bearers at work with the West Belfast 50+ Forum
L-R: Rita Murray (Chairperson), Geraldine McKee (Secretary) and Margaret Millen (Vice-Chair)

The Forum has also developed strong links with the Greater Shankill Senior Citizens Forum extending to joint lobbying on issues such as better public transport and undertaking a range of joint social trips and activities. It also sends two representatives to monthly meetings of the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum in Belfast City Council.

Chairperson, Rita Murray, believes that older people should help shape and monitor services that are aimed at them rather than just be consulted to tick a box: “Older people have real power if they come together to influence and change things for the better. In doing so they can make new friends, learn new skills, stay fit and healthy and make a real contribution to their communities”.

The Forum developed a five year strategic plan called “A Better Future” in 2010 with the assistance of both Volunteer Now and WEA. Some of the key objectives in the plan include:

- more suitable housing for older people
- increased home security for older people
- lower crime and anti-social behaviour against older people
- support for good neighbour initiatives
- more accessible and reliable transport services
- more responsive health services especially for older people at home
- greater social opportunities for older people
- better communication with older people about services and opportunities to stay active
- targeted information and advice for older people especially in relation to benefits

Member Spotlight

One of the key issues that the Forum has lobbied on in recent years is poor public transport services. It has dealt with many complaints about buses not being able to lower to let them on and moving off before they are seated. The Forum feels that it is essential to have a safe, comfortable and attractive public transport system if older people are to be encouraged to stay active and engaged in their communities. It also helps to combat the growing problem of social isolation.

The Forum was instrumental in encouraging Belfast City Council to focus on older persons issues through lobbying that it undertook with a range of Councillors in recent years. It received great support from a range of Councillors over the years including Councillor Tim Attwood and MLAs like Paul Maskey.

One of the Forum's key strengths are the committed volunteers who work on the committee. Chairperson, Rita Murray, has worked tirelessly along with her committee to promote the Forum and lobby and campaign on behalf of older people. One of its committee members Malachy Turley was also named older volunteer of the year with Belfast City Council. He runs a day centre for older people in West Belfast.

The Forum meets on the last Friday of the month in Falls Library at 10.30am (the next meeting will be the 31st January 2014). For more information please contact Frank or Deirdre at Volunteer Now on 028 9023 2020.



Chairperson, Rita Murray (centre), receiving her volunteer recognition award certificate from Cllr Bernie Kelly and Lord Mayor Cllr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir



Vice-Chair, Margaret Millen, asking a question at the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament in May 2013

Launch of 2013 Pensioners Parliament Report



The 2013 Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament report was launched in November and highlighted the price of energy and food as the top concerns of pensioners in Northern Ireland; whilst worries about accessing health and social care had risen significantly over the last year.

The report found that four out of five pensioners are worried about the price of energy, whilst two out of three are worried about meeting the cost of food.

Age Sector Platform claims more needs to be done by government and the private sector to ensure those in their later years are not endlessly struggling to make ends meet.

Michael Monaghan, Chair of the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament, said: “Proposals for tackling high energy prices have taken centre stage at Westminster recently, and rightly so. The cost of keeping warm in winter has been the top concern of pensioners since the Pensioners Parliament began three years ago; and it is vital that our NI Executive approaches this problem with as much enthusiasm as their counterparts in the UK Parliament.”

“The big energy companies in Great Britain have been probed about their pricing strategies; is it too much to ask our Executive to scrutinise the energy market here and start asking difficult questions? Without a doubt, pensioners across Northern Ireland are awaiting the answers.”

Mr Monaghan continued: “The price of food has come out as the second biggest concern of pensioners here. Since last year, we have been calling on food retailers to consider the introduction of a pensioner discount day which could help older shoppers cope with the rising cost of living and enable them to maintain a balanced and healthy diet.”

“The majority of older people live alone or as part of small households, meaning that special promotions for bulk buying are of no use to them. We will continue our ‘Silver Saver’ campaign and meet with as many food retailers as we can to ensure the cost of food becomes manageable for our older population.”

[Find out more about the Silver Saver campaign at www.silversaver.org.uk](http://www.silversaver.org.uk)

Access to health and social care saw the biggest growth in concern with almost half of pensioners listing it as a problem; a sixteen per cent increase from 2012. This is the sharpest climb for any issue since the Parliament began in 2011; highlighting the need for better communication with older people about the planned reform of health and social care.

Michael Monaghan, Chair of the NI Pensioners Parliament, commented: “It is clear that the planned health reforms are leading to increased concerns amongst older people about their ability to access health and social care services in the future. Older people have been telling us that they are worried about the impact these changes will have for them as they grow older and remain unconvinced that the resources are in place to achieve what is proposed.”



“Following the strong public reaction to the planned closures of residential care homes last year, our findings have re-emphasised the need for proper consultation and communication with older people regarding any changes to the health and social care service. We are also calling on the Health Minister to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment on the proposals as a matter of urgency to establish their full impact on older people; acting as a safety net for many older people unsure about the consequences for them.”

Request a hard copy of the report by phoning 028 9031 2089 or download the report at www.pensionersparliament.org.

Key Points from 2013 NI Pensioners Parliament Survey (1,112 responses)

- Heating and eating still top concerns
- Fear of crime levels stay consistent
- Health reform raises concerns about health and social care provision
- Incomes remain stretched
- Concern about age discrimination increases
- Elder abuse becomes bigger concern

Reflecting on the G8 dementia summit

By Bernadine McCrory, Director for Alzheimer's Society in Northern Ireland



On Wednesday 11 December 2013 leaders from the G8 nations met to develop a coordinated plan to tackle dementia. Alzheimer's Society has responded to the commitments that have been made. This is the first time the G8 ministers have met to discuss an effective international approach on dementia.

Among the announcements, the G8 has committed to identify a cure and disease-modifying therapy for dementia by 2025 and to increase the amount of funding for dementia research. To ensure delivery, Alzheimer's Society legacy events will be held including an event exploring social impact investment in the UK.

The UK has demonstrated global leadership on tackling dementia. Considering Northern Ireland leads the field with diagnosis rates, I believe we have a significant impact on that lead role. There has been a commitment to a global plan, better support for people with dementia through research and it has been agreed to narrow the funding gap between dementia and cancer research - something we have long campaigned for. Charities will play an important role in making this happen and Alzheimer's Society has pledged a minimum of £100m over the next decade to dementia research.

Dementia has come out of the shadows and is centre stage - but we must ensure G8 has a lasting legacy. The governments have all committed to updating progress on research biannually, but every month counts for the millions of people living with dementia worldwide.

At Alzheimer's Society we are asking ourselves several questions, how are we going to ensure that we are at the vanguard of the unprecedented interest and commitment to fighting the causes of dementia generated by the G8 summit?

The answer is, it's bottom-up as well as top-down. Everyone in the Society has a part to play ensuring we are seen as driving the agenda on dementia. That means there are conversations we will have with health and social care providers, people affected by dementia and families and friends. At the same time, we will be making sure at a national level the governments across our nations involve Alzheimer's Society in every part of taking up the opportunities the G8 has provided.

How are we going to ensure that the resources to support individuals with dementia are put in place to make a real difference?

This is going to be a difficult task and we must not allow the excitement around G8 to distract us from the chronic underfunding of social care support for people affected by dementia. Every manager has a key role engaging with health and social care providers and commissioners to push for more resources. At the same time continued integrated health and social care must become a key issue at the general election.

It is significant that the Director General of the World Health Organization said that dementia was a top health challenge in the world today.

Yet with the declaration there was a disappointment in that there was no direct financial commitment, although this is not unusual. However, the ambition to find a cure or a disease modifying therapy by 2025 is a huge step forward.

Creating a Dementia Innovation Envoy will facilitate an international sharing of ideas and learning across countries that has been difficult to do before now.

This Summit was also not just a one-off. There will be three follow ups in 12-18 months.

It has been nine years since the UK last led the G8, and then Tony Blair called for action to be taken on HIV Aids, and look how far the world has come in response to that disease. In this we must take encouragement from the progress since then.



As a result of media coverage of the Summit, Alzheimer's Society helpline received a 40% increase in calls, and any opportunity to provide additional information and support is always to be welcomed. We have only a few years window of opportunity to make a difference so it is imperative that all of us to try to make a difference, whether that is in creating Dementia Friendly Communities, creating Dementia Friends, trying to influence government, contributing to research for a cure or supporting those already advanced on the journey of Dementia. Now is our time!

Further information can be sought from Alzheimer's Society national helpline 0300 222 1122 or at www.alzheimers.org.uk

Up for a laugh?

A man was telling his neighbour, "I just bought a new hearing aid. It cost me £4,000, but it's state of the art. It's perfect."

"Really," answered the neighbour. "What kind is it?"

"Quarter to five"

A girl walks into a supermarket and asks the clerk: "Can I have a turkey for my grandmother?"

The clerk responded: "Sorry. We don't do exchanges."

Sudoku

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

Desert Island Discs

with Anne Watson, Vice-Chair of Age Sector Platform

Welcome to *aspire*'s running feature based loosely on the BBC Radio 4 *Desert Island Discs* programme!

Our fourth castaway is Vice-Chair of Age Sector Platform, Anne Watson. We asked Anne to select six pieces of music, a luxury item and a book that he could not live without if stranded on a Desert Island.



Music

1) Greensleeves

I had to learn this in school and didn't like it or understand it then, but appreciate it more now.

2) The Young Ones by Cliff Richard

As a teenager I danced at the Orpheus Ballroom in Belfast where I met most of my friends. This song reminds me of this time.

3) Summer Holiday by Cliff Richard

This song reminds me of the summertime, my friends and the time of year.

4) White Christmas by Bing Crosby

One of my favourite Christmas songs! It reminds me of my children when they were young at Christmas.

5) Country Roads by John Denver

As a family we went to Canada to live for a while. This song was played a lot during that time, and brings back memories - good and bad!

6) Danny Boy

To remind me of where I come from.

Luxury Item

A bed and all the necessary thing to make it super comfortable! I don't mind roughing it during the day, but I like a good bed!

Book

The Bible, as I might find the time to read it right through from start to finish.

Age Sector Platform Members

ABC Seniors Network
Age NI
Age North Down and Ards Over 50s Forum
ALLY Foyle
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
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
Unite 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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