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aspire

age
sector
platform

speaking from experience

Pensioners hit streets to say 'Hands Off'



Also inside this edition...

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Message from the Chair

This edition of *aspire* is reaching you a little later than usual as we had so much activity on 1st October for Older People's Day, we wanted to ensure we brought it to you as soon as we could!



The 'Hands Off' day of action features on our front page. The Belfast rally proved to be a very successful event with lots of coverage in newspapers and on the radio. Read more on pages 4-5.

Lots of exciting web-related news in this edition, with the recent launch of our Facebook page and the unveiling of a brand new web-portal for older people in NI (see page 18).

We also have an update on the important 'Forgotten 14s' campaign, details of a new report launched by the Commissioner, and a piece by Michael Monaghan about the next chapter of the NI Pensioners Parliament.

In addition, we have a report from our AGM, an update on the 'Feel Safe' project, and some information from the GMC about what patients should expect from their doctor.

I hope you enjoy!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Francis Hughes".

Francis Hughes


The Platform's on Facebook!

Age Sector Platform is now on Facebook; and with over 50,000 people aged 60+ living in Northern Ireland already enjoying the popular social networking site, we're wondering why it took us so long!

Having launched the page on 5th August 2014, we received over 200 page 'likes' in just two days; and at the time of going to print we have received over 750 'likes'. With such a great start to the page, it's exciting

to think about how many new people we will be able to reach with news, campaigns and events relating to older people.

If you haven't already liked the page, you can do so by visiting www.facebook.com/aspni and clicking on the 'like' button. By liking our page, you will see all Age Sector Platform's news and updates on your own News Feed – something you're bound to appreciate!

If you're feeling extra generous, please consider sharing the Age Sector Platform page with your own Facebook friends so they can also choose to follow our news and campaigns. Just find the  button at the top of our page and select 'Share'.

So far, we have received eleven very positive reviews from people who have taken the time to give us feedback on our work over the years; and we're hoping for many more reviews from our members and supporters in the coming weeks and months.

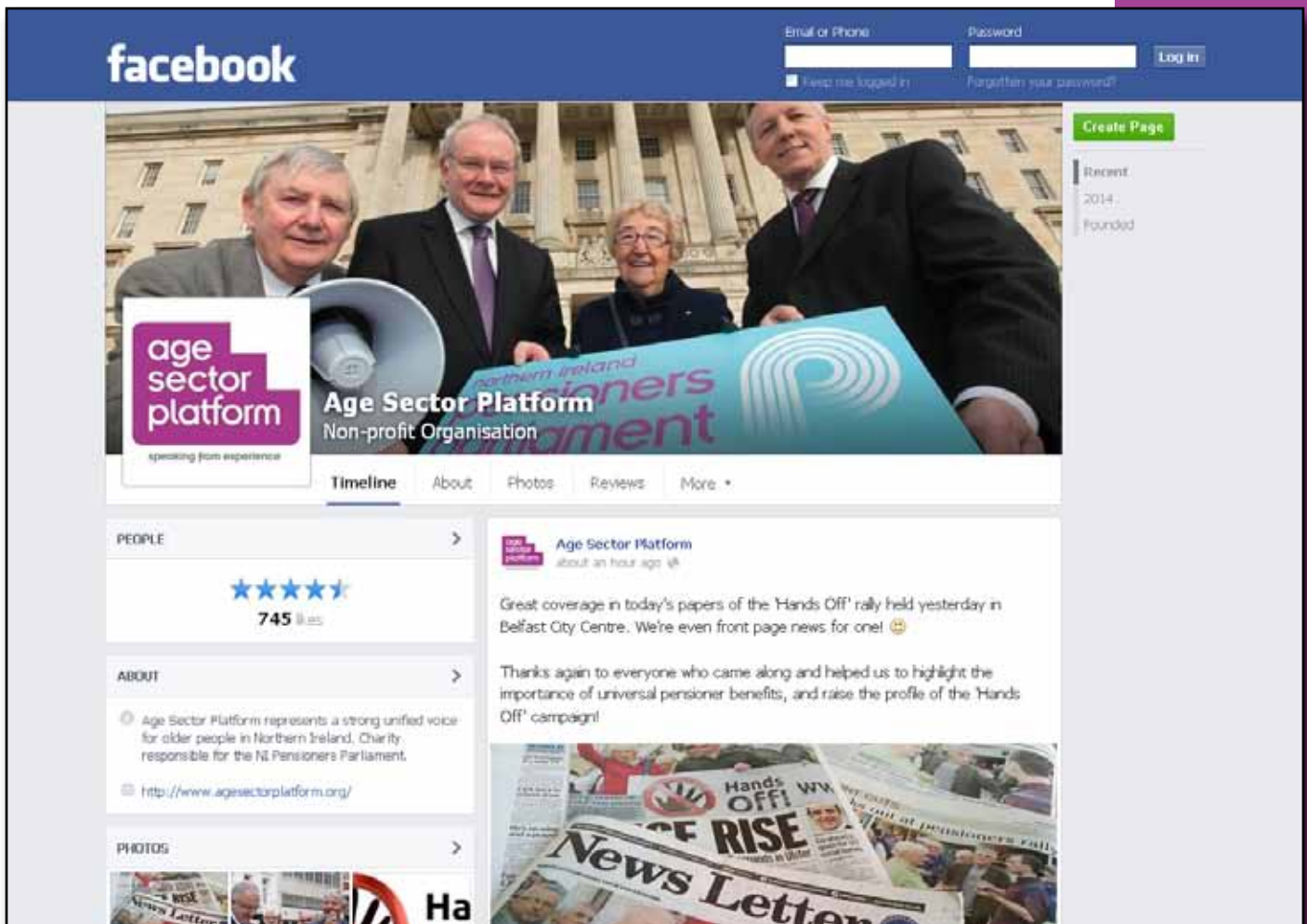
So far our page has featured everything from advice on living a happier and healthy life by listening to One Direction and a



Cover photo:

Some of the action from the 'Hands Off' rally on Wednesday 1 October in Belfast.

More on pages 4-5.



controversial stand-up comedy routine from Jeremy Paxman; to information on an important scheme to tackle bogus callers and some news on the 'Hands Off' campaign defending universal pensioner benefits.

With all of that on offer, there's bound to be something for everyone on the Age Sector Platform Facebook page! We look forward to seeing you there!

Don't forget we're on Twitter too!

You can also keep up-to-date with Age Sector Platform news, campaigns and events via our Twitter page at www.twitter.com/aspni.

Since the Twitter page was launched in 2009, we have gained almost 1,500 followers including many high profile politicians and journalists; and tweeted over 1,600 times!



'Hands Off' Day of Action

Pensioners from across Northern Ireland gathered in Belfast City Centre on 1st October to make their voice heard on the need for universal benefits such as the bus pass and winter fuel payment.

The rally, attended by over 100 people, was organised by Age Sector Platform to coincide with Older People's Day and was part of a UK-wide day of action in support of the 'Hands Off' campaign. With the aim of defending the need for universal pensioner benefits in the lead up to the general election next year, the campaign has already been supported by over 70,000 people across the UK.



Platform Vice Chair, Anne Watson, leads the rally in some chants, whilst journalists from numerous newspapers and radio shows record the action

Michael Monaghan from Age Sector Platform commented: "In recent months, it has been extremely worrying to see Stormont Ministers casually threatening

benefits like the bus pass and free prescriptions, whilst political parties and think tanks in Britain continue to question whether pensioners 'deserve' their winter fuel payment and free TV licence. This rally was our opportunity to show how passionately we feel about the value of these benefits. We must ensure they are protected for pensioners now and in the future."



Over 100 people attended the 'Hands Off' rally in the Cornmarket area of Belfast City Centre

"Providing pensioners with a winter fuel payment and those over 75 with a free TV licence makes up just two per cent of the total benefit expenditure at Westminster; yet these benefits are being used by many to illustrate the supposed greed of pensioners. These accusations do not take into account their value for money in preventing ill-health and isolation, nor do they acknowledge the merit of a system that lacks the cost of means-testing."

“The bus pass is one of the most valued schemes provided to older people in Northern Ireland. It enables older people to do essential shopping, maintain social networks, attend health appointments, and keep physically active. Without it, my generation would simply be unable to remain as healthy and independent. DRD Minister Danny Kennedy’s recent comments about threats to funding for the scheme must be taken seriously, and our politicians must continue to stand united in supporting the need for the scheme.”



Transport Minister Danny Kennedy supports the retention of the bus pass and other universal pensioner benefits by signing the ‘Hands Off’ petition at the rally

“As we get older, we require more medicines than most to maintain a good quality of life. If prescription charges were introduced, it would undoubtedly result in older people doing without their medication in order to pay for heat and food. In the UK, forty five per cent of prescriptions are dispensed to patients over the age of 65; so it’s clear any charge introduced could have a disproportionate impact on pensioners. Former Health Minister Edwin Poots recently floated the idea of an annual charge for prescriptions, and we must ensure that older people are exempt from any such charge.”

“At the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament earlier this year, two motions were passed calling for the protection of universal pensioner benefits with an overwhelming majority of 99 per cent. This shows how much these benefits are valued by older people in Northern Ireland, and we must ensure they remain for years to come.”



Pensioners say ‘Hands Off’ at rally in Belfast’s Cornmarket

The Platform is leading the ‘Hands Off’ campaign in Northern Ireland, and has already collected over 10,000 signatures through the paper petition. Support the campaign by visiting www.handsoff.org.uk to download the petition, or call 028 9031 2089 to request a batch.

View more photos from the rally visit www.agesectorplatform.org or our Facebook page!

The Platform AGM

Age Sector Platform's eighth Annual General Meeting took place on Wednesday 1 October 2014 in Grosvenor House, Belfast. Around 60 people gathered for the AGM with a wide representation of older people from groups and networks across Northern Ireland.

As part of the business section of the AGM, three new Executive Committee members were elected – Margaret Galloway from ICTU Retired Workers, Charlie Simmons from GMB Retired Members and Hugh Rafferty from National Pensioners' Convention (NI).

During the AGM, Platform CEO Eddie Lynch updated members on the progress made during the last year - providing an overview of the charity's campaign work and highlighting the role of campaign committees and members in supporting the work of the charity. He also outlined the current review of the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament, informing members that the structure of the parliament was likely to change in the coming years. For more information, turn to page 10.

New Executive Committee Members



Margaret Galloway, Charlie Simmons and Hugh Rafferty

Anne Watson, Vice-Chair of Age Sector Platform, chaired the meeting and presented John Martin, Wilma Taylor and Gretta Reid with a gift in appreciation of all their hard work as members of the Executive Committee over the past few years.

Following the meeting, members made their way to the Belfast's Cornmarket area for the 'Hands Off' rally.

For more photos of the AGM, visit the website at www.agesectorplatform.org.



membership

Age Sector Platform has two categories of membership
- group membership and individual membership



Group Membership

For older people's groups that have an interest in becoming part of a strong unified voice for older people in Northern Ireland.

There are three categories of group membership based on size. Members' fees and representation at Age Sector Platform quarterly plenary meetings are determined by the number of members a group represents.

The membership categories are:

1)	Groups with 20-50 members*	One plenary representative	£25 annual fee
2)	Groups with 51- 499 members*	Two plenary representatives	£50 annual fee
3)	Groups with 500+ members*	Three plenary representatives	£100 annual fee

* Individuals who are members of the group. Networks/Forums should include all individuals who are members of their member groups.

Individual Membership

For individuals aged 50+ who would like to become part of a strong and unified voice for older people in Northern Ireland.

Individual members will receive:

- A membership number and card
- Copy of *aspire* magazine (3 times a year)
- Research panel membership
- Invite to NI Pensioners Parliament
- Invites to campaign & consultation events
- Regular e-newsletter
- Pin badge
- Pocket diary

The membership fee is £12 for one year, or £30 for three years.

For more details on membership, visit www.agesectorplatform.org and click on 'membership', phone 028 9031 2089 or email info@agesectorplatform.org.

The 'Forgotten 14s'

At the 2013 Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament, an issue came to light which questioned the fairness of pension provision for some people in Northern Ireland who worked from age fourteen.

A lady attending the Parliament, Mrs Margaret McGreevy, claimed she had paid National Insurance contributions from the age of fourteen (when she began work) but that the contributions paid between fourteen and sixteen were not counted towards her pension.

Since then, there has been considerable work on the 'Forgotten 14s' campaign. Some media interest and unanimous support from a cross party group of Northern Ireland MPs helped in elevating the issue to a level which captured the attention of then DSD Minister Nelson McCausland MLA and Pensions Minister Steve Webb MP.



Margaret McGreevy speaking at the 2013 NI Pensioners Parliament

MP for South Down, Margaret Ritchie, has greatly assisted in the lobbying at both Stormont and Westminster. She proposed an Early Day Motion at Westminster in June 2013 calling for the UK Government to look at measures to address the discrepancy.

Early Day Motion

That this House recognises that people working in Northern Ireland at ages 14 and 15 between 1947 and 1957 paid national insurance contributions but that these do not count towards their pension as this is calculated by taking into account contributions made from age 16 only; acknowledges that this impacts Northern Ireland disproportionately as the working age in Great Britain changed from 14 to 15 in 1947, 10 years before it was changed in Northern Ireland; and calls on the Government to look at measures to address this discrepancy.

The Law Centre NI has also provided much needed legal expertise by examining the case of Mrs McGreevy in great depth, and providing a legal opinion on current legislation.

From the Law Centre's in-depth examination of the issue, its legal opinion suggests a solution which requires no need to amend existing legislation, but does require a change in interpretation.

Adopting a new interpretation within the 'Widow's Benefit, Retirement Pensions and Other Benefits (Transitional) Regulations (NI) 1979' would ensure that contributions before the age of 16 could be used towards pension entitlement.

The Law Centre NI has suggested that the individuals most likely to be 'Forgotten 14s' would be:

"People who have worked and paid national insurance contributions before aged 16 and who do not have entitlement to a full pension and cannot avail of pension credit. This is more likely to affect women than men, as women are more likely to have had their working lives interrupted by bringing up families. Moreover, this covers years before the introduction of Home Responsibilities Protection which assisted women in particular between 1978 and 2010."



Platform member Margaret McGreevy with former DSD Minister Nelson McCausland, Margaret Ritchie MP and Les Allamby, former Director of Law Centre NI

During August 2014, a meeting requested by Margaret Ritchie MP allowed Age Sector Platform along with Margaret McGreevy and Les Allamby, (former Director of the Law Centre NI), to meet with then Social Development Minister Nelson McCausland and officials from DSD.

It is hoped that progress will be made on the issue. With the support of the Department of Social Development, a much stronger case could be made to Pensions Minister Steve Webb at Westminster. Age Sector Platform will continue to pursue this matter on behalf of Margaret McGreevy and all the 'Forgotten 14s' in Northern Ireland, particularly with newly appointed DSD Minister Mervyn Storey MLA.

If you believe you are a 'Forgotten 14' please contact Age Sector Platform with your details by phoning 028 9031 2089 or emailing info@agesectorplatform.org.

Pensioners Parliament...the next chapter

By Michael Monaghan, Chair of NI Pensioners Parliament



Since the launch of the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament in 2011, we have come a long way.

In the last four years, almost 5,000 older people have shared their top concerns via the survey. We have held 28 local parliaments and four two-day parliaments, and passed over 90 motions. We have also been privileged to hold three NI Pensioners Parliament events in the

Senate Chamber at Stormont allowing us to question Executive Ministers; and have also brought issues to the attention of MPs and Peers at Westminster through our annual trip to London.

While the parliament, thanks to funding from Comic Relief, has been very successful over the past four years, it's important that we take time to review the Parliament and see how we can make it even better.

During the 2014 Pensioners Parliament, we asked questions at each event to try and get a steer from the people that matter – pensioners – on how the Parliament should go forward. And over the summer, our membership has discussed various options and structures that they believe could improve the Parliament for the future.

Many of you may be thinking “if it's not broken, don't fix it”. Believe me when I say we wouldn't change the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament unless we believe there's an even better way to make our (and your) voice heard.

What we want from a new structure is clear – more time for campaigning on issues, more opportunities for you to have your say, and more detailed discussions on the issues that affect your lives.

Improving older people's lives in Northern Ireland is paramount and any future structure developed for the Pensioners Parliament will be to that end. Once we conclude our review, we will then seek funding to support pensioners in Northern Ireland to continue to be able to make their voice heard.

In the meantime, keep supporting our campaigns and keep reading ***aspire*** for updates on the future structure of the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament.

'Feel Safe' Project Update

By Bill Carson, Chair of Fear of Crime Campaign Committee



I am delighted to announce that our 'Fear of Crime' project now has a name - 'Feel Safe' - and it aims to do exactly what it says on the tin – make you feel safer!

Since my last update Platform members have been working on a range of initiatives. Older people told us that a booklet providing information on staying safe and secure, including useful contact numbers for organisations that can provide support, would be useful. We are currently developing this booklet and it will be available soon.

Our Committee also held positive talks with the PSNI to see how we can improve the support older people receive from police when they have been a victim of crime or when they are feeling fearful of becoming a victim. I am pleased to report that the PSNI has agreed to introduce a new training element for new police recruits highlighting the specific needs of older people and how crime and the fear of crime can impact on their health. This is a welcome development and we will be working in partnership with the PSNI to develop this resource in the coming months.

Following our Pensioners Parliament events this year we committed to establishing a 'pilot' project in an area where we could explore the possibility of local solutions to tackling fear of crime. We are delighted to have linked up with our member organisation Mid and East Antrim AgeWell Partnership (MEAAP) to explore how we can reduce fear in the new council area that will comprise of the existing Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne council areas. Events are being held in all three areas before the end of the year and keep tuned into *aspire* for further updates on this work.

There is no doubt that fear of crime is a complex issue which will take time to address. However, this project which has been funded by the Department of Justice is starting to help us identify practical steps that can have impact on the emotional wellbeing of older people across Northern Ireland and we hope to continue to make progress.



Call for NI Executive to deliver on age discrimination

Representatives from Age Sector Platform and Age NI met with Junior Ministers Jonathan Bell and Jennifer McCann at the end of July to stress the importance of legislation to outlaw age discrimination in areas like healthcare, financial services and retail.



Age Sector Platform and Age NI representatives present Junior Ministers Jonathan Bell and Jennifer McCann with the joint position paper in relation to age discrimination

Age Sector Platform and Age NI are calling on the Northern Ireland Executive to progress with the legislation urgently to ensure older people are provided with the same protection as their counterparts in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. As the charities launched their position paper *Stop Age Discrimination*, they stressed that action on this outstanding Programme for Government commitment is long overdue.

Francis Hughes, Chair of Age Sector Platform, commented, “As an older person, it is difficult to accept that it is perfectly legal to deny me and my peers access to services or treatment simply because of our age, but at the moment that is the case here. The Northern Ireland Executive has pledged to introduce legislation to make these sorts of practices illegal, but unfortunately there has been a delay in bringing this important law forward. At the recent Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament, we heard shocking evidence from Professor Mark Lawler in relation to age discrimination in cancer treatment. It is clear that the introduction of this legislation could prove to have life or death consequences for older people in Northern Ireland, and we need action now.”

“At this stage, it is worrying that the time available for proper engagement and participation of older people will be limited. Progress needs to be made soon so that we may have a say on something which will undoubtedly have huge impact on our lives. Older people have campaigned for this legislation for over ten years. We deserve to live in a place where it is unlawful to be discriminated against because of our age.”

To access the joint position paper visit www.agesectorplatform.org, or share your experiences on Twitter @everydayageism. Alternatively, you can ring 028 9031 2089 to request a copy.

Appreciating Age

By Claire Keatinge, Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is an ageing society, and this is something worth celebrating. Older people work, volunteer, provide care and participate widely in community and family life. And many families, organisations and communities depend on older people for their skills, knowledge and experience; older people provide invaluable care and support to thousands of others who benefit from their assistance; they pay tax and have contributed throughout their lives to their 'old age pension.'

Yet, too often we hear pessimistic voices saying that increased longevity is a burden on society, creating unaffordable costs. Rather than celebrating older people as an asset to our society, this point of view unfairly and wrongly portrays older people as a drain on economic and social resources.

My report, *Appreciating Age* considers the economic value of the contributions made by older people in our society, including taxes paid, volunteering time and informal caring that older people provide and assesses expected costs of health and welfare that older people will receive. It reveals that contributions far outweigh the cost of age-related spending, to the tune of an astonishing £24.7 billion over the next fifty years.

This clearly shows that Northern Ireland is better off because of our ageing population. And so it is time for us all to value and respect older age, and set the record straight; let's appreciate age!

The full report of *Appreciating Age* is available for download at www.copni.org.



Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland, Claire Keatinge, pictured with some of the participants at the launch of the *Appreciating Age* report

Member Spotlight

Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum

Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum has been representing older people's groups in the area since 1997. The Forum helps older people lead healthy, happy lives and contribute actively to community life.

Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum is supported by Engage with Age, who provide development support. Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum welcomes all older people's groups or individuals in Castlereagh to become members.

Members of the Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum are represented on the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum (G6) which is made up of representatives from all 6 forums throughout the Greater Belfast area. The G6 meet monthly in Belfast City Council to lobby and be an advocate for older people. Members of the Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum are represented on various other relevant bodies including Age Sector Platform, Engage with Age Board, Age Partnership Belfast and Community Safety Partnerships.



Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum members enjoy a boat trip around Lough Erne

The main aims of the Forum are to connect older people and encourage mutual support; provide a source of energy, motivation and support for group leaders and activists; facilitate sharing of fresh ideas and information for groups; and to enable joint activities and programmes – including cross community and intergenerational opportunities. The Forum also provides a place to see the bigger picture and to appreciate the diversity of older people in the area.

Influencing decision makers to meet the needs of older people

Forum meetings focus on creating change and representing the views of local groups – they are a place to bring issues from local groups. It is also a source of up-to-date information on current affairs and a challenging environment to express ideas and opinions. Forum members learn about lobbying from experienced activists and from learning programmes.

The Forum is represented on a number of influential public bodies, advises decision makers on the needs and interests of older people and contributes to consultations about services. It provides leadership on older people's issues and a basis for representation and lobbying work. It also provides opportunities to participate in lobbying work locally and regionally.

Member Spotlight

Spreading information about opportunities, services and activities

The Forum is a source of local information for older people, which helps them to access services and entitlements. It enables their needs to be identified and publicises new services, ensuring that they are used by older people. Forum members get access to people, ideas and regular up-to-date information. Membership of the Forum improves the quality of local groups and enables them to reach out to older people in their communities. It ensures that older people find out about and make use of new opportunities and activities, including training courses and health programmes. Forum meetings also provide information about grants and resources for local groups.

Amongst various other activities and events throughout the year the Forum will develop links and better working relationships with their counterparts in Lisburn in preparation for the changing Council boundaries and ensuring that the voice of older people is heard in the future, particularly with regard to community planning. Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum will also complete training on using I pads and composing text messages, both providing an opportunity to combat social isolation, improve communication and promote information accessibility for older people.



Chairperson of Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum, Indra Laugee, meets Her Majesty The Queen

“The Lifestyle Forum is a great ‘get together’ group which promotes the life of elderly people in many manners with the provision of recreational and leisure facilities. I have been involved with this Forum for nearly 8 years which has given me opportunities to take up lots of educational courses, training, projects and it has broadened my horizon in many ways to live a fulfilled life. This Forum has enabled me to do lots of activities, given me lots of opportunities to increase my knowledge in so many ways and has made me lots of good friends. I wish this organisation to go forward in providing a network for older people and creating connections between them and encouraging mutual support”

Dolly Misra, Secretary of Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum

The Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum meets monthly in the Enler Centre, Ballybeen, and there are currently 44 members. If you would like more information please contact:

**Cathy Clarke, Engage With Age, 028 9073 5698, cathy.clarke@engagewithage.org.uk
www.engagewithage.org.uk**

Up for a laugh?

A man goes to see his doctor.

“Doc, I can’t stop singing the ‘Green Green Grass of Home.’”

He said: “That sounds like Tom Jones syndrome.”

“Is it common?” I asked.

“It’s not unusual” he replied.

A man walks into a bar with a roll of tarmac under his arm and says:

“A pint please, and one for the road.”

I went to the Chinese restaurant and this duck came up to me with a red rose and says “Your eyes sparkle like diamonds”.

I said, “Waiter, I asked for a-ROMATIC duck”.

Sudoku

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

Desert Island Discs

with Seamus Lynch, Public Affairs Manager

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

Our latest castaway is Public Affairs Manager of Age Sector Platform, Seamus Lynch. We asked Seamus 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) **Here Comes the Night - Van Morrison**

This record was and still is a big favourite of mine as it was played in the dance halls I frequented in the mid-sixties.

2) **Roisin Dubh**

A beautiful traditional slow air which is a Lynch Family favourite going back to my late Mother and Father and played extremely well on the tin whistle by my youngest brother Brian.

3) **Runaround Sue – Dion**

Dion recorded this song in 1961 and it reminds me of the great fun my mates and I had in the Plaza Ballroom every Friday lunch-time between 1.00 – 2.30pm with DJ Brian Rossi (RIP) playing records.

4) **Raglan Road – Luke Kelly**

This would be my favourite Irish Traditional ballad which has given me great pleasure listening to it over many years.

5) **Songbird - Eva Cassidy**

This song reminds me of my grandchildren and the pleasure they have given me in recent years.

6) **Bandiera Rossa / Avanti Popola**

A political song that means a lot to me as it was sang by the Italian members of the International Brigade in the fight against fascism during the Spanish Civil War.

Luxury Item

My Apple Mac with a power point on the nearest tree!

Book

The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists by Robert Tressell

I first read this classic forty years ago and it helped formulate my political thinking and the type of society I envisage for the wellbeing of the many.

POP NI – Community Guide for Seniors Online

A new web resource for older people in Northern Ireland and those who work with them has been released and it is free to use for all.

POP NI (www.popni.net) is a web portal which offers easy links to information for older people across Northern Ireland, their families and people who work with them.

Funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and managed by Advice NI, POP NI draws its support from the leading charitable organisations such as Age Sector Platform, Age NI and Engage With Age.

The office of the Commissioner for Older People and the Digital Inclusion Unit of the Department of Finance and Personnel have also helped guide the project.

Project Manager of POP NI, Ciarán Arthurs says: “POP NI has been designed specifically with older people in mind and older people helped test it at every stage. It is easy to navigate and offers visitors a wealth of information at their fingertips. As well as links to how older people can make their money stretch further and maximise their income, POP NI signposts visitors to organisations that can offer free and independent support such as Age Sector Platform.”

“What makes POP NI so innovative and useful, though, is that you can make POP NI work for you and claim it as your own. Organisations big and small, from the leading charities to the local knit-and-natter group can upload their information and have a web presence free of charge. This means that you can upload relevant information such as group meetings, events and news, and older people can find that information with ease.”

Ciarán and the team are available to meet older people’s groups and age sector organisations throughout Northern Ireland to show them how they can use POP NI for their own benefit.

If you would like further information, visit POP NI (www.popni.net) or contact Ciarán directly at Advice NI – Tel: 028 9064 5919

18 Email: ciaran@adviceni.net.



Better care for older people – new support for doctors from the GMC

All patients should receive good care from their doctor regardless of their age. Patients must feel that their needs are being met and that their age does not change the treatment or care they receive.

To support doctors caring for older people, the GMC has produced a new online resource. It gives doctors practical advice showing how existing GMC guidance can be used to support doctors. It also includes interactive case studies, articles and tips to prepare doctors for caring for the growing numbers of older patients.

The resource features videos with older patients who are interviewed about their views and experiences. Patients talk about the need to feel they are being treated as individuals and that they are being listened to by their doctor. People from the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament feature in the videos and their experiences are a strong reminder of the importance of putting patients at the centre of their care.



Patients may also find it helpful to read the GMC's patients guide which talks about what they can expect from their doctor. It explains how patients can create a partnership with their doctor and make the most of the time they have with them. Copies of the GMC's patients guide are available at www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/patients.asp or by contacting the GMC NI office on 028 9031 9945.

Niall Dickson, Chief Executive of the General Medical Council, said: "We know that care of older people in this country is too often not good enough - doctors have a key role in devising and providing treatment, co-ordinating care and in overseeing the whole process - we hope these learning materials will stimulate discussion and help to support doctors working with older people."

The online resource for doctors caring for older people can be accessed at www.gmc-uk.org/oldercare.

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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