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aspire



speaking from experience

The Warm Home Discount

Reducing the impact of rising energy prices across the UK*



* excludes Northern Ireland

Also inside this edition...

Last chance to end age discrimination

The Pensioners Parliament ...2015 and beyond

2014 Westminster Lobby

Feeling Safe in Mid & East Antrim

Party Conferences

Message from the Chair

Happy New Year!

Our front page highlights a massive injustice which has consumed our campaigning work over the last few months – Northern Ireland’s exclusion from the Warm Home Discount. Read more on pages 10 - 12.



2015 marks a new chapter for the NI Pensioners Parliament, and on page 13 you can read about our plans for the parliament this year and in the years to come.

Also inside this edition – a report from our Westminster Lobby in November 2014, and a summary of the Pensioners Parliament ‘Question Time’ event held in Stormont in December.

A great deal of work is ongoing as part of the ‘Feel Safe’ project, with exciting work in the Mid & East Antrim area serving as a very valuable pilot project. More information on pages 14 – 15.

We are very concerned about the NI Executive’s failure to proceed with age discrimination legislation despite a decade of campaigning on the issue. It really is the last chance to end age discrimination in this Assembly mandate. Read more on pages 8 – 9.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition!

Francis Hughes

Since the last edition of *aspire*, Age Sector Platform has attended three local party conferences – the UUP conference on Saturday 18 October, the SDLP conference on Saturday 15 November, and the DUP conference on Saturday 22 November.

Age Sector Platform members and staff spoke to over forty MPs/MLAs across the three political parties; and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Theresa Villiers MP, who was in attendance at the UUP Party conference. All political representatives were briefed on the ‘Hands Off’ campaign and Northern Ireland’s exclusion from the Warm Home Discount.

In addition, the party conferences allowed Age Sector Platform to promote the ‘Hands Off’ petition and campaign amongst party members. Hundreds of signatures were collected in support of retaining universal pensioner benefits such as the winter fuel payment and bus pass.

For more photographs from the three party conferences, visit www.agesectorplatform.org.



Cover photo:

Northern Ireland pensioners excluded from valuable UK fuel poverty scheme

Read more on pages 10 - 12.



ASP Vice Chair, Anne Watson, with DRD Minister Danny Kennedy MLA, UUP Leader Mike Nesbitt MLA, and Secretary of State for NI, Theresa Villiers MP



Seamus Lynch, ASP Public Affairs Manager, pictured with Jo-Anne Dobson MLA at the UUP Party Conference



SDLP Leader Alasdair McDonnell MLA pictured with ASP members Caroline McKeown, Patricia Donald and Bill Carson



SDLP Deputy Leader Dolores Kelly MLA pictured with ASP members Caroline McKeown and Nixon Armstrong



ASP member Ivan Baxter briefs First Minister and DUP Leader Peter Robinson MLA on NI's exclusion from the Warm Home Discount



Seamus Lynch, ASP Public Affairs Manager pictured with DSD Minister Mervyn Storey MLA and Sydney Anderson MLA

Pensioners Parliament 'Question Time'

On Tuesday 2 December 2014, Age Sector Platform launched the 2014 Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament Report. The annual report, which outlines the findings of the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament, showed that 'Keeping Warm in Winter' remains the top issue of concern for pensioners across Northern Ireland for a fourth year running. Other top concerns include fear of crime and access to health and social care.

The launch of the report coincided with the Pensioners Parliament 'Question Time' event held in the Senate Chamber in Parliament Buildings. The 'Question Time' event, which was chaired by the Speaker of the NI Assembly, Mitchell McLaughlin MLA, allowed Members of the Pensioners Parliament (MPPs) to quiz NI Executive Ministers on topics including fuel poverty, health and social care and active ageing.



Speaker of the NI Assembly, Mitchell McLaughlin MLA, is presented with the 2014 NI Pensioners Parliament Report. Pictured with Francis Hughes, ASP Chair; Eddie Lynch, ASP Chief Executive; Anne Watson, ASP Vice-Chair and Michael Monaghan, Chair of NI Pensioners Parliament

Three Ministers formally responded to the questions from MPPs – OFMdFM Junior Minister Jennifer McCann, Social Development Minister Mervyn Storey and Health Minister Jim Wells. The 'Question Time' event was recorded by Hansard, which provides an official verbatim record of what was said by MPPs and Ministers.

If you have not received a copy of the 2014 Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament Report, but would like a hard copy, please phone 028 9031 2089 or email info@agesectorplatform.org. Alternatively, it is available to download from www.pensionersparliament.org.

What the Ministers said...

OFMdfM Junior Minister Jennifer McCann MLA



“We are keen to ensure that the advisory panel, the sector and the Pensioners Parliament are engaged as the [active ageing] strategy and services are delivered.”

“Unfortunately, we have not reached the political agreement necessary to take the [age discrimination] legislation forward. The legislative timetable will not allow for [it] to happen without the agreement.”

Social Development Minister Mervyn Storey MLA



“Since 2001, we have spent over £130 million to improve energy efficiency...We believe that the affordable warmth scheme will make a difference because it will be targeted.”

“I welcome the opportunity to...continue the discussion with my colleague the [DETI] Minister Arlene Foster, because the [Warm Home Discount] scheme is cross-cutting and cannot be implemented by one Department; it involves a number of Departments.”

Health Minister Jim Wells MLA



“When John Compton published his report, ‘Transforming Your Care’, he could not have envisaged the very difficult financial situation that our Executive now faces.”

“I am told that, if it is a 15-minute time slot, that is the assessment. It is not based on budgets or resources. It is what they believe the person needs. If it is half an hour, it is half an hour. If it is an hour, it is an hour. If it is three times a day, it is three times a day.”

2014 Westminster Lobby

By Nixon Armstrong, Chair of ASP Westminster Campaign Committee



As Chair of Age Sector Platform's Westminster Campaign Committee, I am pleased to report on a very successful lobby of parliament on 4th and 5th November 2014.

The first meeting of the trip was that of the Pensioners Parliament Westminster Group (PPWG) on Tuesday 4 November. The PPWG allows us to meet with a cross party group of MPs from Northern Ireland, to provide a briefing on issues emanating from the Pensioners Parliament. The agenda for the meeting was jam-packed with issues including Northern Ireland's exclusion from the Warm Home Discount (WHD), the 'Hands Off' campaign and the 'Forgotten 14s' campaign. The meeting was chaired by Margaret Ritchie MP and Nigel Dodds MP. Also in attendance were Gregory Campbell MP, William McCrea MP, Jeffrey Donaldson MP, Jim Shannon MP and David Simpson MP. We were also very pleased to have an MP from Sinn Féin attend our meeting for the first time – Pat Doherty MP.

In response to the issues raised, there was a great deal of support for the 'Hands Off' campaign, including passionate declarations of support for the bus pass from all parties. Margaret Ritchie MP also updated the group on some of the work ongoing in relation to the 'Forgotten 14s' campaign, with support from all MPs present. Finally, there was a great deal of discussion and tactical planning around the issue of Northern Ireland's exclusion from the Warm Home Discount – with MPs pledging to do all they could to ensure Northern Ireland was included in the future. Parliamentary questions, an Early Day Motion, an adjournment debate and meetings with relevant Ministers / Secretaries of State were all proposed as methods of lobbying the UK Government on the issue.



Delegation briefs Northern Ireland MPs

Thankfully, we were able to meet with some of the MPs unable to make the PPWG meeting individually in the days and weeks that followed – with Mark Durkan MP, Ian Paisley MP, Lady Sylvia Hermon MP and Naomi Long MP all being briefed separately.

On Wednesday 5 November, we started our day by meeting with representatives from the House of Lords. This meeting allowed us to brief Northern Ireland Peers on the same issues, with Lord Empey chairing the meeting. Also in attendance were Lord Browne, Lord Rogan and Lord Alderdice.



Delegation briefs Northern Ireland Peers

Following this, our delegation attended the National Pensioners' Convention (NPC) Lobby of Parliament – which consisted of an outdoor rally and indoor event. This allowed us to join with pensioners from across the UK and promote the 'Hands Off' campaign strongly. There was great support for the retention of universal pensioner benefits, and an understanding that 2015 was the year to make our voice heard prior to the general election in May.



ASP members and staff at NPC Rally

Our final few meetings of the trip allowed us to brief two influential MPs on Northern Ireland's exclusion from the Warm Home Discount - Kelvin Hopkins MP, co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency Group; and Laurence Robertson MP, Chair of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee. Both MPs listened intently to our arguments for Northern Ireland's inclusion in the scheme, and pledged to use their positions to look further into the matter. Laurence Robertson MP suggested that the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee may be able to order a piece of research into the matter.



UK pensioners gather for NPC event

Our lobby of Westminster is always a busy couple of days, and this trip more so than ever! It's a great opportunity for us to bring issues from the Pensioners Parliament to MPs and Peers who have influence in UK Parliament; and every year the lobby is becoming more and more valuable.



Delegation briefs Laurence Robertson MP

Last chance to end age discrimination

By Eddie Lynch, Chief Executive of Age Sector Platform



It is still legal to discriminate against people in Northern Ireland in relation to the provision of goods, facilities and services on the basis of a person's age. This is not the case in England, Scotland, Wales or the Republic of Ireland but it still is the case here.

What does this mean? Well, an insurance company here can refuse to give you a quote if you are in their eyes 'too old'. Even more seriously, older people can be denied access to life saving medical help, such as cancer treatments, on the basis of their age alone.

This situation is, and always will be, totally unacceptable.

This is why the age sector campaigned for more than a decade for legislation to outlaw age discrimination in relation to the provision of goods, facilities and services. We were delighted when the Northern Ireland Executive agreed to outlaw these situations being allowed to occur when it included the legislation in its Programme for Government in 2011. We were already behind the rest of the UK and Ireland but we thought 'better late than never'.

However, four years on from this we now stand on the brink of this vital protection being lost. There has been little progress made since 2011 due to a disagreement over who the legislation should apply to. The disagreement relates to whether people aged 18 and under should be included in the new law. When Age Sector Platform was campaigning for this law, the issue of age never arose. Our focus then was to ensure that older people got at least the protection that was afforded to their peers living in Britain and the Republic of Ireland.



At the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament 'Question Time' event, Junior Minister Jennifer McCann MLA claimed the timetable would not allow for the legislation to happen without political agreement

When the proposal to extend the legislation to all ages emerged we decided that we needed to ask older people what their view was and so we consulted many people at our local Pensioners Parliaments in 2013. The majority of older people stated that they would support the idea that the legislation could be extended further than what is in place in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, as long as it didn't weaken the legislation or delay it.

Unfortunately, there has been no political agreement to include all ages in the legislation at this stage. The decision has now become a case of (a) bringing in legal protection to protect everyone aged 18 and over, or (b) protecting no-one from this discrimination for the foreseeable future.

The message is loud and clear – older people can't wait any longer to get this vital protection. It can literally be a matter of life and death.

Professor Mark Lawler from Queen's University Belfast gave a presentation at the 2014 Pensioners Parliament which described how many older people were being denied possible life saving and enhancing cancer treatment each year purely on the basis of age.



Professor Mark Lawler speaking about age discrimination in cancer treatment at the 2014 NI Pensioners Parliament

This was a stark reminder to all present just why this legislation is so badly needed.

The NI Executive must now press ahead with legislation that protects the majority of people in our society, including many young people in their late teens and early twenties, who continue to be the victims of discrimination in areas such as car insurance.

The clock is ticking and if there is no agreement in a matter of weeks then this legislation will not be introduced in this Assembly term.

If this was to happen it would be totally unacceptable and older people would rightly feel let down that they will not be afforded this vital protection.

Poorest pensioners left out in the cold

The poorest pensioners here are missing out on much needed help with their energy bills because Northern Ireland was excluded from a valuable fuel poverty scheme set up by UK Government almost four years' ago.

Age Sector Platform's examination of this issue has revealed that Northern Ireland's exclusion from the Warm Home Discount (WHD) means around 100,000 pensioners here are missing out on £140 towards their electricity bill every year, despite pensioners in England, Scotland and Wales receiving the valuable credit. In November 2014, the Department of Energy and Climate Change consulted on a one year extension to the scheme and Age Sector Platform responded calling for the scheme to be extended to include low income households in Northern Ireland.

Since the last edition of *aspire*, Northern Ireland's exclusion from the WHD has consumed Age Sector Platform's campaigning work, with a huge amount of lobbying done on the issue. The Westminster Lobby offered a great opportunity for influencing MPs and Peers in London. Back home, Age Sector Platform has lobbied MLAs and Ministers through written and oral briefings, lobbying at Party Conferences and through the Pensioners Parliament 'Question Time' event in December 2014.



ASP member, Ivan Baxter, briefs the First Minister, Peter Robinson MLA, on the Warm Home Discount at the DUP Conference

As a result of this work, Parliamentary Questions about Northern Ireland's exclusion from the WHD were asked to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (by Jeffrey Donaldson MP and Ian Paisley MP) and to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (by Lady Sylvia Hermon MP).

	<p>Jeffrey M Donaldson (Shadow DUP Spokesperson (Equality); Lagan Valley, DUP)</p> <p>To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, for what reasons Northern Ireland has been excluded from the Warm Home Discount Scheme; and if he will amend this Scheme to extend its remit to Northern Ireland.</p>
	<p>Lady Hermon (North Down, Independent)</p> <p>To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if she will make additional funds available to allow the Northern Ireland Executive to extend the Warm Home Discount Scheme to Northern Ireland; what recent steps she has taken to encourage the setting up of the Warm Home Discount Scheme in Northern Ireland; and if she will make a statement.</p>
	<p>Ian Paisley Jnr (Shadow DUP Spokesperson (Work and Pensions), Shadow DUP Spokesperson (Environment, Food and Rural Affairs); North Antrim, DUP)</p> <p>To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, if he will meet the Northern Ireland Executive to discuss the inclusion of pensioners in Northern Ireland in the Warm Home Discount Scheme.</p>

NI Assembly questions were also posed to DETI and DSD Ministers in September, October, November and December from Peter Weir MLA, Alban Maginness MLA, and Chris Lyttle MLA.

In addition, an Early Day Motion (EDM) was tabled on 25 November 2014 by Jeffrey Donaldson MP, and sponsored by Margaret Ritchie MP, William McCrea MP, Jim Shannon MP, Kelvin Hopkins MP and Nigel Dodds MP. At the time of print, the EDM has been supported by twenty two MPs, with most Northern Ireland MPs having signed it.

The screenshot shows the website www.parliament.uk with a search bar and navigation menu. The breadcrumb trail indicates the path: Parliament home page > Parliamentary business > Publications & records > Business papers > House of Commons business papers > Early Day Motions > Early day motion 547. The main content area displays the title 'Early day motion 547' and 'WARM HOME DISCOUNT SCHEME - EXCLUSION OF NORTHERN IRELAND'. It lists the session as 2014-15, the date tabled as 25.11.2014, the primary sponsor as Jeffrey Donaldson, and other sponsors as Margaret Ritchie, William McCrea, Jim Shannon, Kelvin Hopkins, and Nigel Dodds. The text of the motion states that the House notes with concern the exclusion of pensioners in Northern Ireland from the Warm Home Discount Scheme since its inception in 2011, and calls on DECC Ministers to enter into discussions with the Northern Ireland Executive to agree the extension of this important scheme.

There has also been a great deal of media interest in the issue, with coverage on BBC Radio Ulster (including the Nolan Show and On Your Behalf), Citybeat Radio and U105 Radio.

Michael Monaghan, Chair of NI Pensioners Parliament, explains: “The Warm Home Discount was launched in April 2011, and helps over two million low income and vulnerable households in England, Scotland and Wales with their energy costs each year. The scheme is set out in legislation and requires energy suppliers to provide a rebate to all qualifying customers. Despite the fact that Northern Ireland has the highest levels of fuel poverty in the whole of the UK, we have been excluded. The situation is totally indefensible.”

“For the past four years we have been asking older people what their top concerns are through the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament survey. Every year keeping warm in winter has been the biggest worry for pensioners here; with three out of four older people selecting it as a top concern for them.”

Continued...

Campaigning Matters

“A discount of £140 could make a huge difference to poorer pensioner households across the province, for whom the failure to keep warm can often have life or death consequences. Five hundred older people dying each winter in Northern Ireland due to the cold should be a wake-up call for all those in positions of power. More help is clearly needed; and the Warm Home Discount provides an ideal channel through which this help could be provided to the most vulnerable households in Northern Ireland.”



Next steps for the campaign

Next steps for the campaign will involve more targeted lobbying of Ministers both in Northern Ireland and at Westminster. Promotion of the Early Day Motion with MPs will also be part of our campaign to ensure increased support for the call to include Northern Ireland in the Warm Home Discount. Age Sector Platform has been informed that there may be potential for an adjournment debate in the House of Commons, which would undoubtedly raise awareness of the issue. It is hoped this will be achieved during 2015.

What you can do...

- Raise the matter with your local MP and MLAs to ensure they are doing all they can to press for Northern Ireland pensioners to be included in the Warm Home Discount.
- Request a copy of Age Sector Platform’s briefing paper on the issue by phoning 028 9031 2089 or emailing info@agesectorplatform.org.

The Pensioners Parliament - 2015 and beyond

By Michael Monaghan, Chair of NI Pensioners Parliament



In the last edition of *aspire*, I outlined our intention to change the structure of the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament to allow 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. Now, I am pleased to announce our plans for 2015 and beyond.

From 2015, the Parliament will be changing. This year, we will embark on a transition year which will allow more time for campaigns and help us to ensure that the future model for the parliament will be the best we can make it. Then, from 2016 we hope to begin a two-year model for the parliament – consisting of local parliaments in each of the new ‘super-council’ areas, and new themed parliaments which will focus on specific issues. Clearly, this is all subject to Age Sector Platform securing the necessary funding.

What we can announce for certain is that in 2015, we will hold two themed parliaments in Belfast – one on Fuel Poverty and one on Health and Social Care. Invitations for these events will be sent to all those who attended a local parliament in 2014, and all Age Sector Platform individual members and plenary representatives. As always, we will have our two-day parliament, and in order to qualify to attend this you must attend one of the themed parliaments. One final change for this year – the 2015 two-day parliament will be held in September / October.

Thank you for your support for the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament; and I hope that you will continue to be involved as we move to our new two-year model. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Age Sector Platform office by phoning 028 9031 2089 or emailing info@agesectorplatform.org.

Feel Safe Project

Feeling Safe in Mid & East Antrim

"I now realise how I can help keep myself safe"

"I didn't realise how much work was going on in the community"

Just some of the many positive comments received by Mid & East Antrim Agewell Partnership (MEAAP) from the 150 older people who attended its Feel Safe & Sound events during September, October and November of 2014.

MEAAP, as the local strategic partnership set up with the aim of improving the lives of older people in the Mid & East Antrim area, felt that following surveys and feedback, the Partnership had to look into how it could help alleviate the fear of crime facing many older people. Hence in June 2014, MEAAP approached key agencies to work with it to complete local research into this issue.



Deirdre McCloskey

MEAAP Feel Safe & Sound Project gained the support of the PSNI, the Carrickfergus, Ballymena & Larne Policing & Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs), as well as additional funding support being provided by the Big Lottery Fund & Public Health Agency in partnership with South Antrim Community Network. This was notably the first time a joint initiative had taken place between the community safety agencies across what is set to become the Mid & East Antrim District Council.

Deirdre McCloskey, MEAAP Project Development Officer, explains: "It is no surprise that older people feel most vulnerable at night; and simple services such as supplying and fitting home security equipment can go a long way to reassure older people that they can feel safe and sound in their own home".

MEAAP has since secured funding from Larne PCSP to launch its first Feel Safe & Sound specific project, namely the Larne Home Security Project, which will allow MEAAP to support up to 50 older people to have home security equipment including door bars, door chain, peephole, personal alarm and ultra violet marker.

Feel Safe Project



Over 50% of those surveyed by MEAAP, identified telephone, postal and internet scams as being the top concern in terms of crime they fear when at home.

Larne PCSP funding has allowed MEAAP to be the first organisation in Northern Ireland to pilot the trueCall technology, designed to block nuisance callers and help protect 20 vulnerable older people from telephone scams.

In line with feedback from the consultation, both the Home Security Equipment and the trueCall Care Unit will be supplied and fitted for free, along with an information leaflet designed specifically with an older person in mind.

Other ongoing MEAAP services include: telephone befriending calls in partnership with Good Morning East Antrim & Good Morning Ballymena; benefits advice with Citizens Advice Bureau; handy person services with Bryson Energy; and various social activities. All of which provide valuable opportunities to support older people living in fear of crime.

As a member organisation of Age Sector Platform, MEAAP is delighted with the opportunity to work in partnership to support and promote the 'Feel Safe' project.

MEAAP is also delighted to be working in partnership with Linking Generations NI to host three focus groups, involving both young and old, to talk about how both generations can support each other to feel safe and sound in their own communities.

For a full copy of the MEAAP Feel Safe & Sound Report or for further information please visit www.meaap.co.uk. Alternatively you can contact MEAAP by phoning on 028 2565 8604 or emailing info@meaap.co.uk.



Up for a laugh?

An elderly lady lost her handbag in the bustle of Christmas shopping. It was found by an honest little boy and returned to her.

Looking in her purse, she commented, "That's funny. When I lost my bag there was a £50 note in it. Now there are ten five pound notes."

The boy quickly replied, "That's right, lady. The last time I found a lady's purse, she didn't have any change for a reward."

A young boy was out trick-or-treating on Halloween dressed as a pirate. He rang a house's doorbell and the door was opened by a lady.

"Oh, how cute! A little pirate! And where are your buccaneers?" she asked.

The boy replied, "Under my buckin' hat."

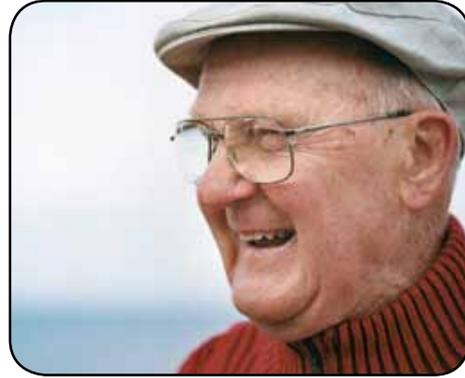
Sudoku

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The Juggler

A driver was pulled over by a police officer for speeding. As the officer was writing the ticket, he noticed several machetes in the car.

“What are those for?” he asked suspiciously. “I’m a juggler,” the man replied. “I use those in my act.” “Well, show me,” the officer demanded, still a little unsure.



So he got out the machetes and started juggling them, first three, then more, finally seven at one time, overhand, underhand, behind the back, putting on a dazzling show and amazing the officer.

Just then another car passed by. The driver did a double take, and said, “That’s it Maude. I’ve got to give up the drink! Just look at the sobriety test they’re giving now!”

The Missionary

A missionary recruit goes to Venezuela for the first time, struggling with the language. He visits one of the local churches and sits in the front row.

So as not to make a fool of himself, he decides to pick someone out of the crowd to imitate. He decides to follow the man sitting next to him in the front pew. As they sing, the man claps his hands, so the missionary recruit claps, too. When the man stands up to pray, the missionary recruit stands up, too. When the man sits down, the missionary sits down.

Later in the service, the man next to him stands up again, so the missionary stands up, too.

Suddenly a hush falls over the entire congregation. A few people gasp. The missionary looks around and sees that no one else is standing. So he sits down.

After the service ends, the missionary recruit greets the preacher. “I take it you don’t speak Spanish,” the preacher says.

The missionary replies, “No, I don’t. It’s that obvious?”

“Well yes,” the preacher says. “I announced that the Acosta family had a new-born baby boy, and I asked the proud father to please stand up.”

Fundraise for the Pensioners Trust!

Do you feel strongly about tackling the problems facing older people in Northern Ireland? Do you believe Age Sector Platform and the work it does is making a difference? If so, why not help fundraise for the Pensioners Trust and ensure our work continues.

If you are a member of a group or club and would like to help fundraise for the Pensioners Trust, there are a number of fundraising events to consider:



Ivan Baxter presents Age Sector Platform patron Malachi O'Doherty with £400 for the Pensioners Trust raised by the NI Civil Service Ramblers' charity night

Quiz

Everyone enjoys an opportunity to flex their grey matter every once in a while! Why not organise a fun quiz night?

Bake Sale

Give your friends/family or group members a chance to dust off those recipes and start baking!

Raffle

Contact some local businesses and see if they would be generous enough to donate raffle prizes. Set your raffle ticket prices, and then see who's in luck!

If none of the above tickle your fancy; feel free to think of your own fundraising event! What about a tea dance, karaoke night or book club? All ideas are welcome!

The Pensioners Trust was set up by Age Sector Platform to improve the lives of older people in Northern Ireland by:

- **Engaging with older people to identify the areas of concern to them; and**
- **Supporting projects which will tackle these concerns for older people.**

Tribute to William Devlin



It is with great sadness that we report the death of William Devlin who sat on Age Sector Platform's Executive Committee during 2011-12. William represented the University of the Third Age (U3A) in Northern Ireland.

In 2009, William founded Downe U3A which has now grown to over 200 members. William was a passionate believer in lifelong learning and chaired Age Sector Platform's Education sub-committee.

As part of the work of the Education sub-committee, William was at the forefront of the charity's lobbying in relation to the disappearance of concessionary fees in Further Education / Higher Education Colleges and the closure of libraries across Northern Ireland.

At Downe U3A's November monthly meeting, an open letter from William was read out in which he said:

"It gives me great pleasure to know that I have started something that makes people less isolated and able to be more involved in their local community. This is sufficient recompense for me."

We send our deepest condolences to his family and friends.

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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