

issue 3 • october 2009

aspire

age
sector
platform

speaking from experience

It's time to have your say on the Commissioner!



Also inside this edition...

Age Awareness Week 2009

**Web Watch:
NI Direct Website**

**Campaigning Matters:
'We Agree' Campaign &
Social Tariffs Campaign**

**Member Spotlight:
Sperrin Lakeland Senior
Citizens' Consortium**

Message from the Chair

Age Awareness Week

Hello and welcome to the last edition of *aspire* in 2009!



Firstly I would like to acknowledge two new members of the Platform - UNISON Retired members and Greater Shankill Senior Citizens' Forum. I'm sure both groups will have much to contribute in our campaigning during the next few months and years.

This edition of *aspire* has been very timely since the consultation regarding the establishment of an older people's commissioner was launched this month (1 Oct), and will run until January 2010. See pages 8-9 for details of the age sector's campaign - 'We Agree'. I would urge every older person to become involved in this campaign. It's up to us to ensure that our commissioner will have the powers to be effective.

Inside this issue we also have details and photographs from Age Awareness Week 2009, details of an international CAP conference, information on our campaign for the introduction of social tariffs and much more!

I hope you enjoy!

Bill Carson



This year's Age Awareness Week (AAW) took place from Monday 28 September to Saturday 3 October 2009. During the week, a wide range of events throughout Northern Ireland were held to celebrate the diversity of older people and highlight the positive contribution they make to our society.

The theme for the week was 'representation'. This theme aimed to challenge attitudes and practices of how older people are portrayed and represented in society. In fact, research commissioned by the Changing Ageing Partnership (CAP) for Age Awareness Week indicated that 88 per cent of people feel more needs to be done to enhance the positive representation of older people in our society.

Age Awareness Week was launched at the Kings Hall complex on Monday 28 September, where a well attended drive-in movie screening of 'Harold and Maude' kicked off the activities for the week.

Age Sector Platform representatives spoke at and attended a number of events during the week, including an intergenerational community safety event at Queens University,



Cover Photo:

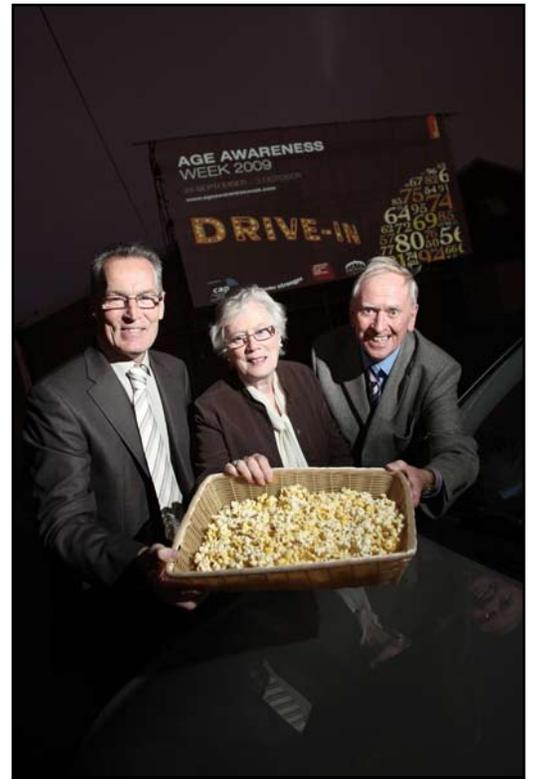
Pictured at the launch of the consultation on the Older People's Commissioner, are L-R: Junior Minister Robin Newton, Anne O'Reilly Chief Executive Age Concern Help the Aged, Dame Joan Harbinson

Older Peoples Advocate, Dr Maurice Hayes Former NI Ombudsman and Junior Minister Gerry Kelly (See pages 8-9)

a Belfast lobbying and campaigning discussion in Grosvenor House; an 'Our Shared History' event in the Indian Community Centre; a political representation event in Banbridge; and much more!

Another key development during the week took place on the United Nations' International Day of Older People (1 October) when Junior Ministers Robin Newton and Gerry Kelly launched the public consultation on the Older People's Commissioner (see pages 8-9).

Age Sector Platform would like to thank all members who took part in Age Awareness Week 2009. Next year's Age Awareness Week will take place from 27 September to 3 October. The theme of Age Awareness Week 2010 will be 'Recognition'.



Junior Minister Gerry Kelly, pictured at the launch of Age Awareness Week 2009

Lelia Jackson from the 'Spring Chickens' group launches the Age Awareness Week guide and website



ASP Vice Chair, Phil Evans, speaking at an intergenerational community safety event in Queens University Belfast



Older volunteer Sean McCaffrey is entertained by Filipino dancers at an 'Our Shared History' event in the Indian Community Centre

Platform campaign wins media award

Media coverage of Age Sector Platform's community safety campaign earlier this year has succeeded in winning first prize at an awards ceremony in London in September 2009. BBC Radio Ulster's coverage of the campaign was given an 'Older People in the Media' award by Counsel & Care, winning first prize in the radio category of the competition.

The accolade was given, based on coverage by 'Good Morning Ulster' and 'Talk Back' during the period February to May 2009, when ASP members Meg Holmes and Michael Monaghan spoke passionately regarding the issues relating to community safety for older people.



Kathleen Carragher from BBC Radio Ulster receiving the 'Older People in the Media' award from Lord Heseltine at an awards ceremony in London



Pictured at BBC Radio Ulster are Alison McElhinney, Communications & Information Officer; ASP members Michael Monaghan & Anne Watson with 'Talk Back' presenter Wendy Austin

Kathleen Carragher, from BBC Radio Ulster, travelled to London to receive the award on Thursday 10 September, with representatives from Age Sector Platform also in attendance. Ms Carragher was presented the award by Lord Heseltine, former deputy Prime Minister.

Consequently, during October 2009, BBC Radio Ulster invited Platform members to visit their studios to meet with current 'Talk Back' presenter, Wendy Austin. Members, Anne Watson and Michael Monaghan, were then given a tour of BBC's Broadcasting House on Ormeau Avenue, and were given the opportunity to speak on 'Talk Back' during its live recording.

International CAP conference

The challenges facing older people in our society were discussed at a major conference at Queen's University during September 2009. The first international Changing Ageing Partnership (CAP) conference, entitled 'Planning Together: Policy and Participation in Ageing Societies', took place on Wednesday 16 and Thursday 17 September. The conference was hosted by Queen's and supported by the Social Policy and Ageing Research Centre (SPARC) at Trinity College Dublin.

Experts from across the UK and Ireland, and as far afield as the USA, shared the latest developments on topics such as the demographics of an ageing population, challenges facing older people who care for adult children, issues affecting older people in transnational communities, and attitudes to older people in Ireland. The conference made a valuable contribution in strengthening the voice of older people in policy-making in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland's Older People's Advocate, Dame Joan Harbison, said: "I was delighted to be involved in this conference and commend CAP for raising the profile of older people in this way. It is another welcome sign of the interest being taken in the issues affecting older people in a wide range of areas."

In addition to the excellent programme of speakers during the two-day conference, workshop sessions also took place on both days, with Age Sector Platform members chairing many of the sessions.



Margaret Galloway chairs the 'Economics and Ageing' workshop during the second day of the CAP conference

ASP member, Margaret Galloway, who chaired a workshop session during the second day of the conference, commented: "This event has helped to highlight many of the issues that we, as older people, need to consider when campaigning and attempting to change Government policy. The presentation given during the conference on our ageing population was both fascinating and frightening. More consideration needs to be given to this demographic shift to ensure that older people now, and in the next few generations, will be provided for adequately."

Platform members say 'Give us a Voice'

A new older people's programme has been launched on Belfast's local TV Channel (NVTV) recently, with two Age Sector Platform members having taken part in contributing to its content. Joan Cosgrove from Newtownabbey Senior Citizens' Forum and Frank Robertson from The Friendship Federation shared their stories and opinions with NVTV volunteer and presenter Jean McIntyre.

The first episode of the programme, which was aired on Monday 14 September 2009, took the form of a wide ranging discussion, exploring many issues of importance to the older population. The two participants spoke openly, and indeed humorously, about their interests, families and jobs. They also discussed how older people are currently treated by the media and Government. Finally, the two participants were asked to provide a name for the older people's programme, coming up with the title of the 'Give us a Voice' programme.

"I am very reluctant to be pigeon-holed as an 'older person'. I'm older, but my needs are no different to the people around me." (Joan Cosgrove)

"I think the Northern Ireland Assembly constantly need to be pushed." (Frank Robertson)

"Politicians are very good at listening, but they don't hear us." (Joan Cosgrove)

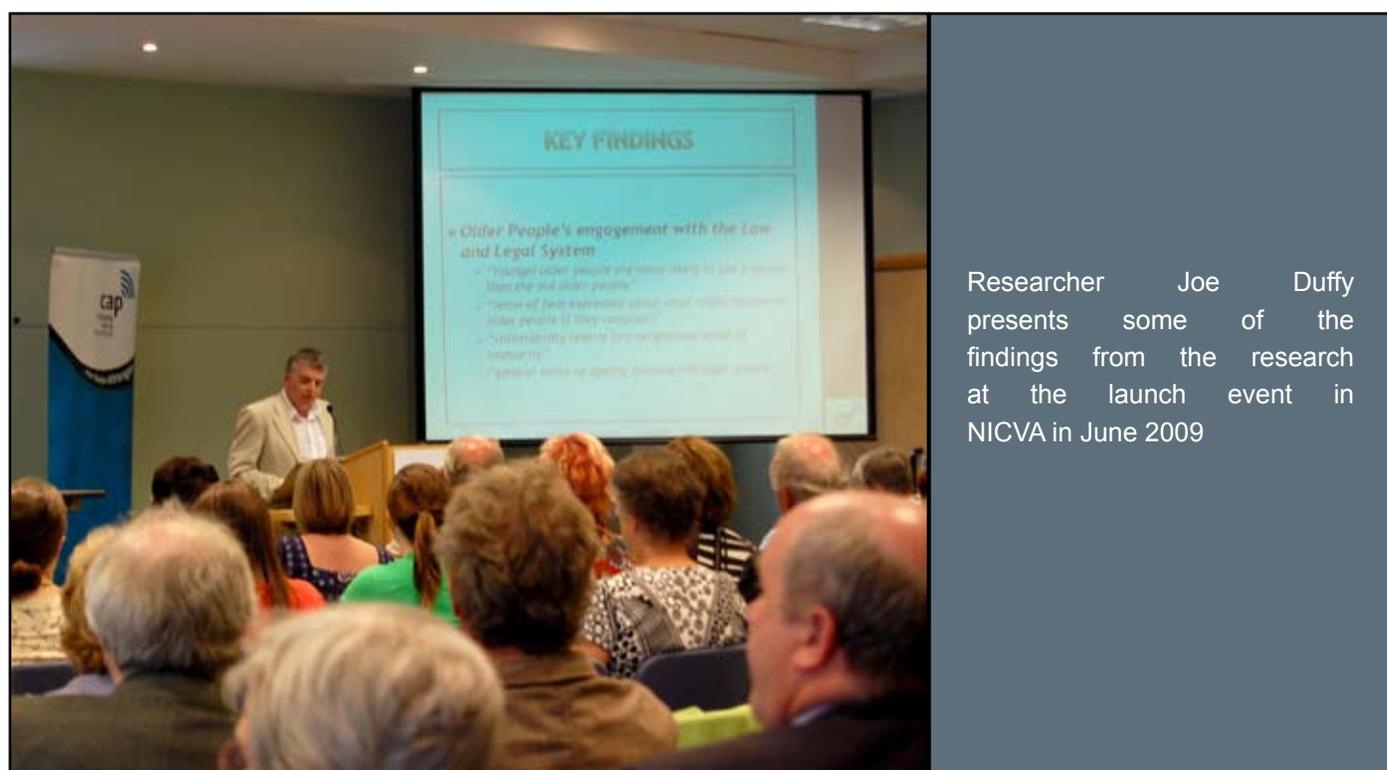
NVTV have informed Age Sector Platform that it is hoping to continue with a series of 'Give us a Voice' programmes in the coming months. If you are an older person and are interested in forming a small 'Give us a Voice' planning group or are interested in taking part in future recordings of the programme, please contact Alison McElhinney on 028 9031 2089, or email info@agesectorplatform.org to register your interest.



Joan Cosgrove and Frank Robertson taking part in the recording of the 'Give us a Voice' programme with NVTV volunteer Jean McIntyre. To watch the programme, visit www.vimeo.com/6812459

Better legal advice needed for older people

Research from the Changing Ageing Partnership (CAP) has found that older people in Northern Ireland have limited access to information about legal services. The research, which was launched in June 2009 at an event in NICVA, was carried out by Subhajit Basu, Joe Duffy and Helen Davey from Queens University Belfast.



Researcher Joe Duffy presents some of the findings from the research at the launch event in NICVA in June 2009

Ms Phil Evans, Vice-Chair of Age Sector Platform, commented: “It is unfortunate that many older people are reluctant to seek legal advice due to the unreasonable cost, unnecessary use of complicated language or a general distrust of the legal system. Older people are often in real need of legal advice when making the most important decisions of their life like drafting a will, organising care arrangements and making health related decisions. These can be unfamiliar and confusing times for older people and the more support and guidance they receive, the better they will cope.”

Ms Evans continued: “We are pleased to see that this research, has recommended improved communication between health and social care professionals and the legal profession; whilst also recommending that jargon free language should be used in all communication with older people.”

“Of course, action is needed to ensure that the findings from this research are used to good effect. Age Sector Platform looks forward to examining ways in which the recommendations which have been made by the researchers can be progressed. Older people deserve better from the legal system.”

we agree

Northern Ireland needs a powerful Older People's Commissioner

Something big is happening and we want you to get involved! From now until January next year, the legislation that will define the powers and duties of the forthcoming Older People's Commissioner for Northern Ireland is open for public consultation.

This is a crucial stage in the development of an Older People's Commissioner for Northern Ireland and a valuable opportunity to influence the decision making process that will determine what the Commissioner should be responsible for and what powers they should have to take action.

The 'We Agree' campaign is a partnership between Age Sector Platform and Age Concern Help the Aged NI. The main aim of the campaign is to influence the decision making process to ensure that ultimately the role and responsibilities of the Older People's Commissioner for Northern Ireland will be robust, effective and serve the needs and best interests of older people. We are now calling on all individuals and groups to join us and help present a united voice.

Older people and the wider general public need to send out a very clear message to our politicians at this time - we need an independent Commissioner for Northern Ireland with sufficient powers to protect the interests of older people, uphold their rights and act with urgency in cases of need.

In order to encourage informed responses to the consultation the 'We Agree' campaign aims to build widespread awareness and support groups and individuals to get involved. In the coming months the 'We Agree' campaign will have a distinct focus on extending the reach of campaigning activity to older people and the wider general public by making participation accessible. The campaign has produced an informative magazine and DVD to help people respond to the consultation in a meaningful way.

To get more information about how to respond to the consultation or to get involved with the 'We Agree' campaign visit the campaign's website: <http://olderpeoplescommissioner.ning.com> or contact Michele Smyth, Campaign Project Leader, on 028 90 230666 or e-mail: michelle.smyth@ageconcernhelptheagedni.org

We agree that the Older People’s Commissioner for Northern Ireland must;

- Be empowered to act independently from all other government and public authorities.
- Be endowed with the capacity to undertake casework and initiate litigation in strategic cases.
- Have the power to mediate on issues of contention between service providers and older people.
- Have an arbitration function exercisable where time is a critical factor.
- Be empowered to conduct formal investigations, issue directives, conduct audits of compliance and reviews of performance.
- Be endowed with “victim” status to enable cases to be taken without the requirement to name an individual.
- Have the power to commission and publish research on issues affecting older people, provide information and stimulate debate on issues and models of good practice.
- Have a duty to communicate widely, seek the opinions of older people and take their views into account.

OFMDFM Consultation Events

The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) has organised several consultation events for members of the public to have their say on the role and powers of the Older People’s Commissioner. The dates, venues and times of these events are detailed below:

- Monday 16 November - Guildhall/ Arts Centre, Derry/ Londonderry 11am-13.00pm
- Tuesday 17 November - Gortalowry House, Cookstown 11am-13.00pm
- Wednesday 18 November - Old Town Hall, Ballymena 11am-13.00pm
- Wednesday 18 November - Grosvenor House, Belfast 19.00pm-21.00pm
- Thursday 19 November - Ardhowen Theatre. Enniskillen 11am-13.00pm
- Friday 20 November - Millennium Centre. Craigavon 13.00pm-15.00pm
- Monday 23 November - Grosvenor House, Belfast 11am-13.00pm
- Monday 23 November - Newtownards (TBC) 19.00pm-21.00pm
- Tuesday 24 November - Ballybot House, Newry 13.00pm-15.00pm

Social tariffs & tackling fuel poverty

Age Sector Platform recognises that energy issues are high on the agenda for older people in Northern Ireland. The age sector's 'Can't Heat or Eat' campaign, which was developed on the back of the 2008 unprecedented energy price increases, has been successful in drawing attention to the difficulties felt most acutely by older people in Northern Ireland. As part of the campaign we called for social tariffs to be introduced for older people and that an emergency trust fund should be established. Although the recent decreases in energy prices, some to 2006 levels, are welcome we must remember that more than half (56%) of households headed by an older person (75 plus) were in fuel poverty in 2006, with more than three fifths (62%) of lone older households considered fuel poor. We cannot rest on our laurels; fuel poverty is still a major problem facing Northern Ireland citizens.



Social tariffs, as a means to helping the most vulnerable members of our society, have been debated in Northern Ireland for several years. Indeed, a debate on the issue took place in the NI Assembly as recently as the end of September, with MLAs differing in their levels of support for such schemes.

The Fuel Poverty Advisory Group, set up in 2005, describes social tariffs as the lowest possible tariffs offered by suppliers to vulnerable or low-income consumers regardless of the payment method. The Advisory Group states that these tariffs can be an effective tool for suppliers to provide lower cost energy to low income households; those most likely to be in or at risk of fuel poverty.

Research conducted by the Consumer Council and the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation in 2008 shows strong support for the concept of social tariffs among Northern Ireland consumers. Based on a large scale survey of 1,012 adults living in Northern Ireland, it indicated that 64% of Northern Ireland consumers believed that a reduced tariff based on personal circumstances (social tariff), should be available to those having difficulty paying their energy bills. Only 2% felt that no financial help should be available. Nearly everyone surveyed (97%) agreed that both the elderly and the disabled or chronically sick should receive help from their gas and electricity suppliers if they are having difficulty paying their bills.

In comparison to energy customers in Great Britain, Northern Ireland consumers are left out in the cold. Households in the rest of the UK have benefitted from competition since the 1990s. In addition, energy companies have also been providing social tariffs for the most vulnerable customers since 2004. In fact, in the 2008 Budget, the Chancellor instructed energy suppliers to increase their collective expenditure on social programmes to at least £150m a year by 2011.

The above financial target has resulted in a doubling of the number of customer accounts in receipt of social tariffs. At the end of March 2009, one million customer accounts were benefiting from social tariffs.



Age Sector Platform understands that an outcome of the Ministerial Fuel Poverty Task Force was to investigate the potential to introduce a social tariff for vulnerable consumers in Northern Ireland. We eagerly await the Utility Regulator's report which we hope will give Northern Ireland energy consumers the benefits of social tariffs that both Government and Regulators in GB have worked so hard to achieve.

What do you think?

The Utility Regulator is expected to consult shortly on the issue of social tariffs, and we want your views and experiences!

- Are you finding it difficult to pay your electricity/gas bills?
- What kind of discount scheme would help make it easier?
- Do you think current energy care/discount schemes are adequate?

Please tell us what **you** think by writing to Age Sector Platform, 58 Howard Street, Belfast, BT1 6PJ or email info@agesectorplatform.org.

ASP also plans to hold a workshop with members before Christmas to discuss the issue of social tariffs. If you are interested in attending, please register your interest by phoning 028 9031 2089 or email info@agesectorplatform.org.

Member Spotlight

Sperrin Lakeland Senior Citizens' Consortium

Membership of Sperrin Lakeland Senior Citizens' Consortium is open to anyone aged 50+ living in the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council areas and the Castlederg/Newtownstewart area. The Consortium currently has 76 older people's groups as members. Membership is also open to individuals.

Regardless of the type of membership, each member becomes a member of their local cluster. Currently the Consortium has 7 cluster areas - Omagh & Carrickmore; Enniskillen; South & East Fermanagh; North Fermanagh; North Tyrone; West Tyrone and West Fermanagh.

The Consortium aims:

- to promote the health and wellbeing of older people to improve the quality of life of older people and delay reliance on statutory health services
- To empower older people and facilitate their decision-making in various aspects of their lives
- To represent the views, concerns and interests of older people.



Patricia Donald, Sperrin Lakeland Senior Citizens' Consortium member, questions DUP MLAs Jeffrey Donaldson, Peter Robinson and Nigel Dodds at the Consortium's AGM in June 2009

Member Spotlight



Members of Sperrin Lakeland Senior Citizens' Consortium at the organisation's AGM in June 2009

The Consortium identifies the issues and priorities of its members through discussions at cluster meetings and workshops at Annual Conferences. Issues of concern include transport in rural areas, loss of funding for clubs; insurance costs for groups, water charges, new rates system, podiatry and domiciliary care.

Cluster meetings, which take place twice a year, remain part of the Consortium's infrastructure. These cluster meetings give the Consortium Board and staff a chance to meet with its members and hear about local issues affecting older people. It also provides external agencies the opportunity to attend and meet with older people and share any relevant information. The Consortium Board is comprised of representatives from the clusters and several other individual members.

This year has brought a big change to funding for member groups. The long standing local awards provided to most of the Consortium's member groups has ceased. This presents member clubs and the Consortium with the huge task of sourcing funding for the everyday running of the clubs. The Consortium continues to offer funding advice and is available to assist with funding applications.

Throughout 2008/09 the Consortium has been able to support interested member groups in Active Living programmes. This has been possible through funding made available from the Health & Social Care Board (previously WHSSB). Groups have been able to organise programmes for their members which have encouraged participation and brought new members in. This has been called the 'Active Living' programme.

The Consortium is currently undergoing a strategic review and hopes to launch its 5 year plan in early 2010.

Many thanks to Allison Forbes, Project Manager for Sperrin Lakeland Senior Citizens' Consortium, for writing this article

Web Watch

NI Direct website - www.nidirect.gov.uk

www.nidirect.gov.uk continues to attract a growing audience since its launch earlier this year.

It is different from other government websites, as it is written in language that the ordinary person can understand. In fact, Age Sector Platform members were involved in testing its usability! NI Direct brings together information from all government departments and agencies, organised under easily recognisable themes. This means that you don't need to

know, nor should you have to know, how government works to find the information you need.

Making it easy to access and to do business with government at any time is a key element of improving public services. So, nidirect features a range of online transactions that can be done at a time that suits you. For example, you can book your car in for its MOT, apply for or replace your passport or find health service in your area.

One of the themes within nidirect is 'Pensions and retirement planning'. It covers a wide range of issues that are relevant to the older citizen, including:

- State Pension
- What to expect when you retire
- Benefits in retirement
- Medical checks and support
- Driving and mobility
- Leisure
- Working to suit you
- Supported housing and care homes
- Adult education
- Beginners guide to pensions
- Opportunities in retirement
- Benefits when caring for someone
- Health and fitness
- Travelling at home and abroad
- Looking for work
- Staying in your own home
- Carers
- Learning for fun



Consultation Zone

Have your say! – campaigns review event

It's hard to believe that the 10th November will mark the first anniversary of Age Sector Platform's official launch at Stormont. Since then, our members have shown great commitment and enthusiasm to campaign on the issues highlighted during last year's member consultation.



Some of our campaigns have been very public and achieved some degree of success, such as the 'Can't Heat or Eat' campaign, the Pensions Rally at City Hall and a breakthrough towards getting a dedicated Community Safety Strategy for older people. But there has also been much work behind the scenes with our issues being raised regularly with political representatives, government and other organisations. As promised, we plan to review our campaigns to make sure that the issues we are campaigning on are still those most important to older people in Northern Ireland.

Therefore, we are holding 'Have your Say!' - an event to discuss the issues that we have been working on, analyse how much progress has been made and decide on what we need to do next. This is an opportunity for you and others from your group or forum to have your say on what we should be focusing our effort on over the next year or so.

The event will take place on **Wednesday 11 November in Grosvenor House**, Glengall Street, Belfast, **starting at 10.30am** and **finishing at 3pm** with lunch provided.

As spaces are limited and we want to allow all our members to have their say at the event we are asking you to bring along 5 members of the organisation or forum you represent. We will also have a reserve list for groups wishing to send more representatives.

Please let us know how many will be attending from your group by Friday 30 October, and provide us with the names of delegates along with any special access or dietary requirements. You can phone 028 9031 2089 or email info@agesectorplatform.org.

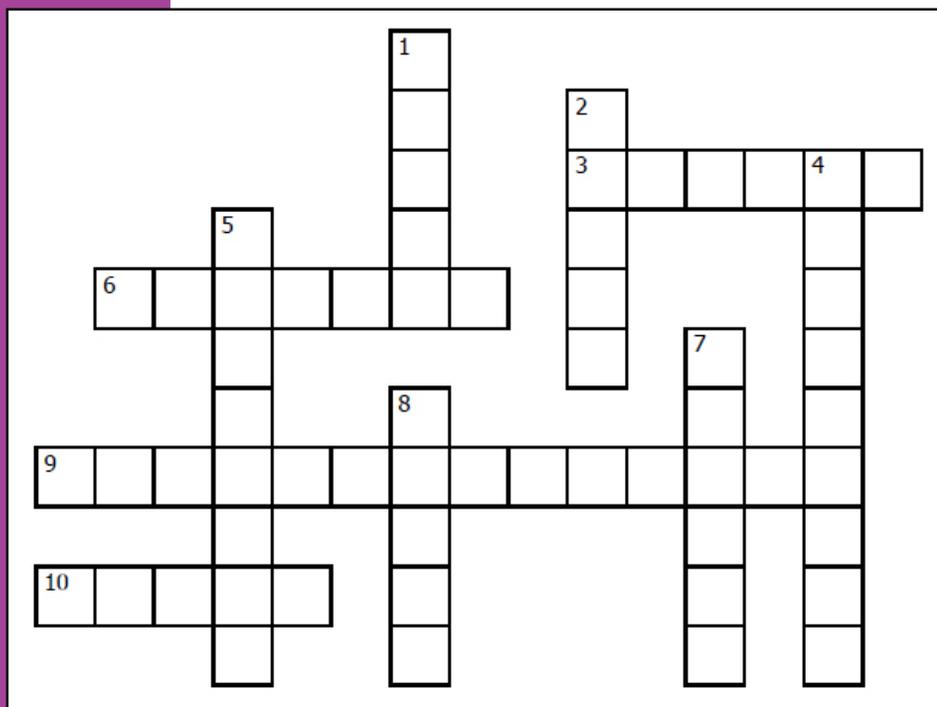
Great truths about getting old

- 1) Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.
- 2) Forget the health food, I need all the preservatives I can get.
- 3) When you fall down, you wonder what else you can do whilst you're down there.
- 4) It's frustrating when you know all the answers, but nobody bothers to ask you the questions.
- 5) Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician.
- 6) Wisdom comes with age, but sometimes age comes alone.

The four stages of life

- 1) You believe in Santa Claus
- 2) You don't believe in Santa Claus
- 3) You are Santa Claus
- 4) You look like Santa Claus

Crossword



ACROSS

- 3 The government department responsible for appointing the older people's commissioner
- 6 The social networking and micro-blogging website that ASP has joined
- 9 The theme for Age Awareness Week 2009
- 10 The new older people's programme on NVTV is called 'Give us a ?'

DOWN

- 1 The Age Awareness Week launch involved a drive-in screening of 'Harold & ?'
- 2 In June 2009, a new Junior Minister was announced. His name is ? Newton
- 4 Sperrin Lakeland Senior Citizens' Consortium represents older people in the counties of Tyrone & ?
- 5 Government website designed for NI citizens
- 7 ASP's new members groups include Greater Shankill S.C Forum & ? Retired Members
- 8 BBC Radio Ulster's new 'Talk Back' presenter - ? Austin

ANSWERS AT BOTTOM OF PAGE 17

Did I read that sign right?

In a department store

'BARGAIN BASEMENT UPSTAIRS'

In a Launderette:

'AUTOMATIC WASHING MACHINES: PLEASE REMOVE ALL YOUR CLOTHES WHEN THE LIGHT GOES OUT'

In an office

'WOULD THE PERSON WHO TOOK THE STEP LADDER YESTERDAY PLEASE BRING IT BACK OR FURTHER STEPS WILL BE TAKEN'

Notice in health food shop window

'CLOSED DUE TO ILLNESS'

Seen during a conference

'FOR ANYONE WHO HAS CHILDREN AND DOESN'T KNOW IT, THERE IS A DAY CARE ON THE 1ST FLOOR'

In an office:

'AFTER COFFEE BREAK STAFF SHOULD EMPTY THE COFFEE POT AND STAND UPSIDE DOWN ON THE DRAINING BOARD'

Spotted in a safari park:

'ELEPHANTS PLEASE STAY IN YOUR CAR'

Notice in a farmer's field

'THE FARMER ALLOWS WALKERS TO CROSS THE FIELD FOR FREE, BUT THE BULL CHARGES'

Message on a leaflet

'IF YOU CANNOT READ, THIS LEAFLET WILL TELL YOU HOW TO GET LESSONS'

On a repair shop door:

'WE CAN REPAIR ANYTHING. (PLEASE KNOCK HARD ON THE DOOR - THE BELL DOESN'T WORK)'

Crossword answers:
 DOWN: 1. Maude 2. Robin 4. Fermanagh 5. NIDirect
 7. UNISON 8. Wendy
 ACROSS: 3. OFMDFM 6. Twitter 9. Representation
 10. Voice

Get Involved

Website taster sessions

Are you a member of Age Sector Platform? Would your group like to attend a practical web training session where they will be shown how to use the Age Sector Platform website? During the last few months, several member groups have done just that!

The Age Sector Platform website is a fountain of information for members. Regularly updated, the website allows you to keep up-to-date with campaigns, whilst the exclusive members' only section is interactive and allows members to discuss issues online. Signing up for the members' section is a simple process, which can be completed during the web training session, with help from your tutor.

If you would like to set up a website training session for your group, please contact Alison McElhinney by phoning 028 9031 2089 or emailing info@agesectorplatform.org.

If you feel confident enough to navigate the website on your own, please visit www.agesectorplatform.org and click on 'membership', then 'member registration' to sign up for the members' section today!

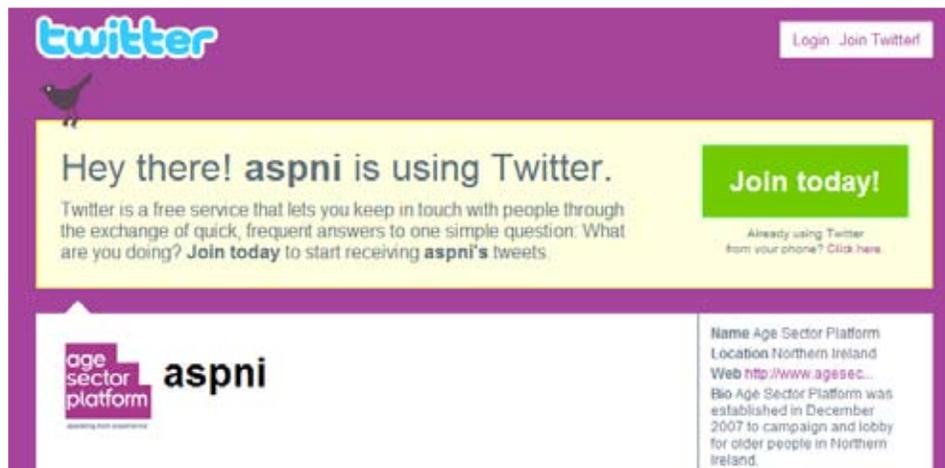


Members of Sperrin Lakeland Senior Citizens' Consortium explore the Age Sector Platform website in Irvinestown library, during their web training session



Members of Newtownabbey Senior Citizens' Forum, following their web training session in Glengormley Library

Age Sector Platform is on Twitter!



Age Sector Platform has joined Twitter, a free social networking and micro-blogging service. We hope this will help us to keep members, politicians and other interested bodies/individuals informed of our work on a day-to-day basis. So far we have over 40 'followers' - which is great!

If you would like to follow us on Twitter, please visit www.twitter.com/aspni

Some funding news

If you are interested in developing your skills in applying for funding, why not sign up for "Making a better application to charitable trusts" taking place on Monday 4th November 2009. For further information, contact Neil Irwin or James Lavery on 028 9087 7777 or visit www.nicva.org.

Comic Relief Funding

One thousand grants of £1,000 throughout the UK are expected to open in November/December 2009. It is hoped that there will be a quick decision on successful applications, with an expected turnaround period of approximately six weeks. Further details can be obtained from the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland on 028 9024 5927.

The Comic Relief Older People's Programme is not expected to be available until 2010. For further information visit www.comicrelief.com.

Age Sector Platform Members

Age Concern Help the Aged NI
Amicus Retired Members
AT&GWU Retired Members Association
Carers NI
Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum
Chinese Welfare Association
Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance (CSPA)
Communications Workers Union (NI Regional Retired Members)
East Belfast Seniors Forum
Engage with Age
Friendship Federation
GMB Retired Members
Greater Shankill Senior Citizens' Forum
Indian Community Centre 50+ Club
National Federation of Post Offices & BT Pensioners
National Pensioners Convention (NI)
Newry and Mourne Senior Citizens' Consortium
Newtownabbey Senior Citizens' Forum
NIC ICTU Retired Workers Committee
North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) Retired Members Association
Older Women's Network NI
Pensioners Actively Lobbying Services (PALS)
Public Commercial Services Union (Associate and Retired Members)
Sperrin and Lakeland Senior Citizens' Consortium
UNISON Retired Members
University of the Third Age
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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