

## The Fuel Poverty Debate Heats Up



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# The Platform's Fifth AGM

## Message from the Chair

Hello and welcome to the ninth edition of *aspire*. I am delighted to have been elected as the new Chair of such a worthwhile organisation.



Having been involved with Age Sector Platform for years I am sure it will continue to go from strength to strength.

As we come into the winter months, all of us are understandably concerned about the price of heating our homes. Recent news about rising gas, electricity and coal prices only add to this worry. Read about our 'Fight the Winter Fuel Cut' campaign on pages 10-11. The support for this campaign continues to grow.

This edition of *aspire* also features a report from our recent AGM and an account of the 2-day Pensioners Parliament held in June.

We also have news on the protection of cheques, a report from the NPC's Pensioners Parliament in Blackpool, and a feature on the Chinese Welfare Association – one of our member groups.

I look forward to working with the staff and Executive Committee of ASP in the months ahead to ensure our campaigns really make a difference. I hope you enjoy this edition!

**Patricia Donald**

Age Sector Platform's (ASP) fifth Annual General Meeting took place on Monday 19 September 2011 at Grosvenor House in Belfast. Around 80 people attended the AGM with feedback following the event being very positive.

During the AGM, three members gave progress reports on a number of areas in which Age Sector Platform has been involved during the last year. Michael Monaghan spoke about the success of the Northern Ireland Pensioners

Parliament and how it will evolve in the coming years. Francis Hughes updated the membership on the 'We agree' campaign for a strong Older People's Commissioner; stating that the Commissioner is expected to be appointed in the very near future. William Devlin, Chair of ASP's Education sub-committee, spoke about the committee's work during the year in the area of lifelong learning.



Michael Monaghan



Francis Hughes



William Devlin

Guest speaker at the event was well known broadcaster, commentator and writer Malachi O'Doherty. Having reached the age of 60 this year, Malachi is very in touch with the opinions of older people and the issues surrounding them. Malachi spoke inspirationally about the current perception of older people in society and argued that "age should not be an indicator of poor health, but instead of a wealth of experience." Malachi called on the older people in the room to "embrace" new technology, claiming that there is no better way of fighting alienation than through keeping people in touch via Facebook and email. He joked that if he was ever admitted to a nursing home, it had better have broadband!



Malachi then moved on to speak about the main problem facing older people today – lack of money. He described the erosion of the pension as “one of the greatest rip-offs of modern times” which was met with a huge round of applause from the audience. Malachi finished by saying: “We have to ask why a government treats pensioners like an easy target?” Following his speech, Eddie Lynch, ASP Chief Executive Officer, made Malachi O’Doherty an honorary member of Age Sector Platform, presenting him with an Age Sector Platform pin badge.



As part of the business section of the AGM three members of the Executive Committee stepped down - Phil Evans, Olaf Hvattam and Indira Laugee. Three new committee members were elected by the membership, namely Patricia Donald (South West Age Partnership), Wilma Taylor (North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum) and John Martin (National Pensioners’ Convention NI).

This year’s AGM also saw three Officer positions vacated within the Executive Committee. Bill Carson was succeeded as Chair by Patricia Donald, Phil Evans’ position as Vice-Chair was taken up by Francis Hughes, whilst Ivan Baxter takes over from Olaf Hvattam as Treasurer. All committee members and officers stepping down have made an invaluable contribution to Age Sector Platform.

Bill Carson, Chair of Age Sector Platform since April 2007, must receive a special mention for all his hard work over the years. Bill will remain on the Executive Committee this year.



Guest speaker Malachi O’Doherty with CEO Eddie Lynch and ASP officers Anne Watson, Patricia Donald and Francis Hughes

### Our New Executive Committee Members



Patricia Donald



Wilma Taylor



John Martin

## Lively Discussion at NI Pensioners Parliament!

Around 180 older people from across the province gathered in Belfast in June 2011 to take part in the NI Pensioners Parliament – the first of its kind here. The two day Parliament was officially launched by OFMdFM Junior Ministers Jonathan Bell MLA and Martina Anderson MLA and involved older people from every county in Northern Ireland deciding on the main issues of concern for them.



OFMdFM Junior Ministers Martina Anderson MLA & Jonathan Bell MLA at the NI Pensioners Parliament  
Right - Junior Ministers with Bill Carson, Michael Monaghan and Patricia Donald

Over the two days, the Holiday Inn Hotel in Belfast became a hub for democratic decision making as Members of the Pensioners Parliament (MPPs) asked questions and voted on issues such as energy prices, food, fear of crime, health and social care and pensions. Twenty four motions were passed i.e. they each received more than two thirds support from MPPs.

The first day of the Parliament saw BBC Radio Ulster's Talkback programme broadcast entirely from the Parliament with presenter Wendy Austin chairing a discussion between older and younger people on issues of importance to both groups.

Michael Monaghan from Age Sector Platform commented: "Each stage of the Pensioners Parliament has been fully democratic with every interested older person given an equal voice. The response to the entire process has been fantastic, and we are very excited about how we will be able to use the recommendations from the Parliament to influence our decision makers in the coming year."



Talkback presenter Wendy Austin listens in to proceedings at the Parliament

He continued: “From our extensive survey with over 1,200 older people in Northern Ireland, we broadly identified the main areas of concern for pensioners here. These areas were developed more fully during the local parliaments held in each county; and we have now passed the final stage where motions have been passed by our MPPs on specific issues.”



A number of prominent speakers addressed the Parliament over the two days, including speakers from the Utility Regulator, the PSNI, the Health and Social Care Board and the Older People’s Advocate’s office. Expert panels on each main area of concern were also present to answer questions from the floor.



Mr Monaghan explains: “Following the Parliament, we as older people must ensure that our voice is heard by the new Assembly on these issues. As a large and growing section of the population, our voice is only going to become stronger and more important over the coming years; and older people have much to contribute. Our experience and knowledge can really help assist policy and decision makers in the years to come. The Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament hopes to remain a significant means through which the older voice will be heard!”



The Pensioners Parliament report will be launched in the coming weeks and will be distributed to the NI Assembly, MLAs, MPs, councils, statutory bodies, the private sector and other relevant organisations. Every pensioner who attended one of the local parliaments will also receive a copy.



**Video footage and photos from the 2-day Pensioners Parliament can be viewed online at [www.pensionersparliament.org](http://www.pensionersparliament.org)**



## NPC Pensioners Parliament in Blackpool

Several members of Age Sector Platform travelled to Blackpool in June 2011 for the National Pensioners Convention's 19th annual Pensioners Parliament.

The Parliament, which was held at the Winter Gardens in Blackpool, took place during 14-16 June and saw delegates from across the UK gather to discuss areas such as pensions, health and social care, age equality, and transport.



Some of the delegates from Northern Ireland

The Parliament also welcomed Pensions Minister Steve Webb MP who was questioned on issues such as the cut to the Winter Fuel Payment, the change in pension rating from RPI to CPI, and the current inadequacy of the state pension.



### **What Pensions Minister Steve Webb MP said...**

“The previous government did not budget for an increase in the winter fuel allowance and we felt it would be more cost effective to keep the £25 cold weather payments for the poorest pensioners.”

“Anyone with an occupational pension of less than £1,000 per month will gain more from earnings link than they'll lose through the change to CPI”

“I agree that CPI will be lower than RPI over the long run”

“Whilst the National Insurance fund currently does have a surplus, it may well in the future have a deficit and it would be unacceptable to link increases in the state pension to the balance in the fund”

One of the workshop sessions during the second day of the Parliament saw Bill Carson take part in a discussion entitled “Engaging with Policy Makers across the UK”.

Representatives from age organisations across the UK shared their experiences, with Bill Carson speaking about the success of the NI Pensioners Parliament and its effectiveness in engaging decision makers. Bill also highlighted the need for pensioner organisations to work together on Westminster issues.



Bill Carson speaking at the workshop

Ivan Baxter from Age Sector Platform also spoke at the Parliament about the Civil Service Pensioners’ Equal Pay dispute. The National Pensioners’ Convention agreed to support the NI Civil Service Pensioners with further representations to the Finance Minister in Northern Ireland.

## Update on Equal Pay Campaign from Ivan Baxter (CSPA)



A presentation was made on 12 January 2011 to the NI Assembly Committee for the Department of Finance and Personnel which was followed up, at the request of the Committee, with a meeting with Departmental officials on 14 March 2011 when it was made clear that the Minister was not prepared to give way.

Following the May 2011 Assembly Election a new DFP Assembly Committee was appointed. A number of members of this Committee appear very supportive and we are optimistic that they will again raise the issue with the Minister.

As a last resort we are still exploring the possibility of taking the legal route with a small number of sample cases. Our preference, however, is to have the matter settled by agreement with the Minister.

For more info on this campaign, please contact Ivan Baxter by emailing [ivan.baxter@cspa.co.uk](mailto:ivan.baxter@cspa.co.uk) or by phoning 028 9031 2089.

## Protection of Cheques

During July 2011, the Payments Council announced that cheques will continue for as long as customers need them and that the plan to phase out cheques by 2018 has been abandoned. Age Sector Platform welcomed the announcement.

Age Sector Platform, who worked with the Payments Council over the last few years to ensure the opinions of older people were taken into account, described the process as 'authentic and truly consultative'.

Bill Carson, former Chair of Age Sector Platform, commented in July: "We are delighted that the Payments Council has



taken on board the issues of concern raised by older people, and other groups, in relation to the phasing out of cheques. The protection of cheques will be of great relief to many older people, who use them on a regular basis to pay bills by post, pay tradesmen or send gifts to grandchildren."

"Although cheques appear to be staying for the foreseeable future, some shops and businesses currently do not accept them as a method of payment. If this trend continues, the future of cheques and their viability could potentially be questioned again. This is something that we would not like to see happen as for many older people unable to leave their home, cheques remain an essential tool in helping them to pay their bills safely."

Richard North, Chairman of the Payments Council, said: "It's in the DNA of the Payments Council to consult and listen to all those people who actually make payments and use cheques. Listening to over 600 stakeholder groups, working with the banks and following our appearance before the Treasury Select Committee, we have concluded we should reassure customers that the cheque is staying. Over the last two years we have learnt a great deal about what is important to our many stakeholders and we are really grateful to all of those groups and individuals who took the time to talk to us and help us reach this decision. We will use what we've learnt to keep improving existing systems, as well as introducing innovation, so that customers benefit from 21st century ways to pay. Innovation must be at the heart of what we do."



## Community Safety Consultation

On Monday 19 September 2011, following Age Sector Platform's AGM, members took part in consultation run by the NI Policing Board which allowed them to provide their views on policing generally and in their own local areas.

The session was conducted by Eileen Beamish from the Social Research Centre on behalf of the NI Policing Board. Eileen has been consulting with various groups and sectors over the last few months. At the event, members voted using electronic keypads on issues such as perception of crime levels, fear of crime, experience of the police and crime reporting.



The results of the voting will help inform the areas that need specific focus within the Northern Ireland Policing Plan, particularly in relation to older people.

## Consumer Council Car Insurance Petition

Considering Age Sector Platform's work in the area of age discrimination and the over-charging many older people experience when buying insurance, we would like to encourage all our **aspire** readers to sign the Consumer Council's petition to lower the cost of car insurance in Northern Ireland. They will present the petition to the Office of Fair Trading and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Sign up at [www.consumercouncil.org.uk/lower-car-insurance-petition/](http://www.consumercouncil.org.uk/lower-car-insurance-petition/)

Please forward details of the petition to all your friends, family and other contacts. Every signature will make a difference! You can leave comments about your experience of purchasing car insurance, which will be included with the petition.

## Fight the Winter Fuel Cut Campaign

Age Sector Platform launched its winter themed campaign entitled 'Fight the Winter Fuel Cut' in June 2011, and since then has witnessed a huge wave of support from individuals and groups across Northern Ireland.

The campaign is in opposition to the cut in the Winter Fuel Payment this year by the Coalition Government. It allows people from across the province to show their support by signing a petition which will be presented to the UK Government at the end of this month (October). At the time of printing over 9,000 signatures have been registered in support of the motion to reverse this decision, and the support shows no sign of slowing with hundreds of petition postcards being requested every day.



Completed postcards stack up in the Age Sector Platform office

This year, the UK Government decided to cut the Winter Fuel Payment by £50 for people aged between 60 and 80, and by £100 for those aged over 80; despite spiralling fuel prices and last December being the coldest in Northern Ireland for over 100 years. During 2009/2010 there were 756 older people (aged 65+) who died of cold related illnesses in Northern Ireland, and Age Sector Platform claims this figure is sure to rise if the Winter Fuel Payment is cut as planned.

Patricia Donald, Chair of Age Sector Platform, commented: "This decision by the UK Government is scandalous, considering the number of older people who die every winter due to cold related illnesses. Government needs to do more to tackle the issue of fuel poverty, not less! We must send a clear message that the decision to reduce the help to older people in heating their homes is wrong and dangerous."

Ms Donald continued: “It will be no time before we are again approaching the winter months and the associated worries that they bring for many older people struggling to make ends meet. We realise that Government budgets are tight, and some difficult decisions need to be made at present, but surely maintaining the health and well-being of our older population during winter must be of paramount importance?”

“Our Northern Ireland MPs must take a stand at Westminster against this decision, and we hope this petition will help demonstrate the strength of feeling about this issue in Northern Ireland to assist them in doing that. In October, we will travel to London and join with the National Pensioners’ Convention which has initiated the same petition in the rest of the UK, to ensure that the voices of older people in Northern Ireland are heard on this issue.”

On Monday 19 September 2011, the Northern Ireland Assembly debated a motion put forward by DUP MLAs David McIlveen and Paul Frew on the back of Age Sector Platform’s ‘Fight the Winter Fuel Cut’ campaign. The motion passed was as follows:

‘That this Assembly recognises the serious problem of fuel poverty, especially amongst older people; acknowledges the adverse impact that rising fuel bills are likely to have on the ability of older people to keep warm and healthy; and calls on the Minister for Social Development to make representations to Her Majesty’s Government to continue to support Age Sector Platform’s call to maintain this year’s winter fuel payment at its current level of £250 for pensioner households where someone is aged between 60 and 79 and £400 where someone is aged 80 and over; and further calls on the Minister to increase funding for the green new deal to provide the energy efficiency measures required to tackle fuel poverty in the long term.’



Age Sector Platform is encouraging all those in support of its campaign to contact them on 028 9031 2089 to request a batch of petition postcards or sign its online petition by visiting [www.fightfuelcut.org](http://www.fightfuelcut.org).



# Member Spotlight

## Chinese Welfare Association - Hoi Sum Elderly Group



Somei Vigo and Stella Tsang represent CWA on Age Sector Platform

The Chinese Older People's Project was established in 1996 by Chinese Welfare Association (CWA) to meet the needs of the Chinese elderly population. The Hoi Sum (meaning 'happy') Elderly group was established with a membership of only 30. From 1998, CWA received funding to support an Older People's Development Officer through a Service Level Agreement with the South and East Belfast Health and Social Services Trust (now known as the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust).

Hoi Sum has gone from strength to strength in the past 15 years and has increased in membership with over 140 members and supported CWA to lobby for the first Chinese Sheltered Accommodation, Hong Ling Gardens with 53 units in Belfast.

Although Hoi Sum is part of the CWA's Chinese Older People's Project, it has its own committee. Members of the committee have meetings to discuss the needs and issues that are raised by Hoi Sum members. This helps to improve the services provided by the Chinese Welfare Association to meet the needs of the Chinese elderly.

Most members of Hoi Sum are from the rural areas of Hong Kong. They are from the first generation of Chinese people in Northern Ireland. They came in the early 1960's with the first Chinese restaurant opening in Belfast in 1962. In recent years, there are new members who come from Malaysia, Singapore and mainland China.

The main language spoken by the group is Hakka; a dialect that is widely spoken in rural areas of Hong Kong. Some can also speak Cantonese whilst some newer Chinese immigrants speak Mandarin. Only a small number of Chinese elderly can speak English due to the fact that they spent all their youth working in the catering business and never had the chance to be educated properly.



# Member Spotlight

The language barrier, lack of information in accessible formats, cultural differences and isolation make the Chinese elderly very vulnerable. Therefore, the Chinese Older People's Project and Hoi Sum group play a very important role in their life.

The aims and objectives of the project are:

- To promote health and well-being of older Chinese people through programmes aimed at addressing isolation and loneliness
- To provide support in accessing health and social services and welfare benefits
- To provide information and guidance to service providers on the provision of culturally appropriate services to meet the needs of Chinese older people.



The Chinese Welfare Association joined as a member of Age Sector Platform in 2009

Currently, there is a luncheon club which runs every Tuesday in the newly built Chinese Resource Centre, the head office of Chinese Welfare Association. There is also a Tai Chi class on every Tuesday. This class is free to people over the age of 60 and is open to all communities to encourage people to socialise and mix.

Chinese Welfare Association also seeks funding to organise social, health and well-being events and activities for the elderly. These events help the Chinese Elderly to interact and meet others and recently Hoi Sum is working in partnership with the Palm Tree Project, Belfast Islamic Centre.

Many thanks to Somei Vigo from Chinese Welfare Association for writing this article

# Web Watch

## BBC First Click

BBC First Click is encouraging and supporting the estimated 9.2 million people in the UK who have never used the internet to take the first steps to get online.

On the last weekend in October; when the clocks go back, and we 'gain an hour' the BBC together with partners Race Online and UK Online Centres, will be asking people to give their extra hour to help someone they know to use the internet for the first time. It might be a parent, grandparent, neighbour or friend.

Give an Hour is part of the BBC First Click campaign. The key message to people will be to visit [www.bbc.co.uk/giveanhour](http://www.bbc.co.uk/giveanhour) and pledge to help get someone online.



Throughout Northern Ireland, local libraries, community centres and colleges are running First Click Beginners' Computer Courses to help people understand the internet and enjoy its benefits. If you're interested in signing up for a course, all you have to do is ring the free BBC First Click advice line on 08000 150 950. It is open 8am to 10pm, 7 days a week.

The BBC First Click team is producing new inspiring resources to show those offline how the internet can help them explore hobbies and interests – from family history to sport, health and wellbeing to saving money and planning for the future.

To find out more about First Click visit [www.bbc.co.uk/firstclick](http://www.bbc.co.uk/firstclick)



## Signing Your Life Away?

Ever wondered what information you are giving away when agreeing to the terms and conditions of an online website? Or what that company intends to do with your information once you have passed it over?

The CONSENT programme wants to get your views on this to see if legislation is necessary to protect internet users from being conned. The programme wants to hear the views of older people so do your part today by filling in the short online survey which can be found at

[www.bit.ly/Survey-CONSENT](http://www.bit.ly/Survey-CONSENT). Age Sector Platform will receive a donation for every survey completed so not only are you having your say but you are helping to support our work as well.

Once you have finished the survey please email us at [info@agesectorplatform.org](mailto:info@agesectorplatform.org) to let us know so that we can thank you and add your details to our research panel. As a member of our research panel, you build up credits for every survey you take part in and then receive vouchers at the end of each year. So why wait, make your voice heard today!

## Age Sector Platform Research Panel

Age Sector Platform's new research panel gives you the chance to voice your opinion whilst assisting the Platform at the same time. The panel also offers a valuable rewards scheme with incentives for completing surveys or attending focus groups.

This new opportunity offers you a great way to spend a small amount of your free time and be rewarded for it. So why not sign up now?



For more information contact the Age Sector Platform office on **028 9031 2089** or email [info@agesectorplatform.org](mailto:info@agesectorplatform.org).

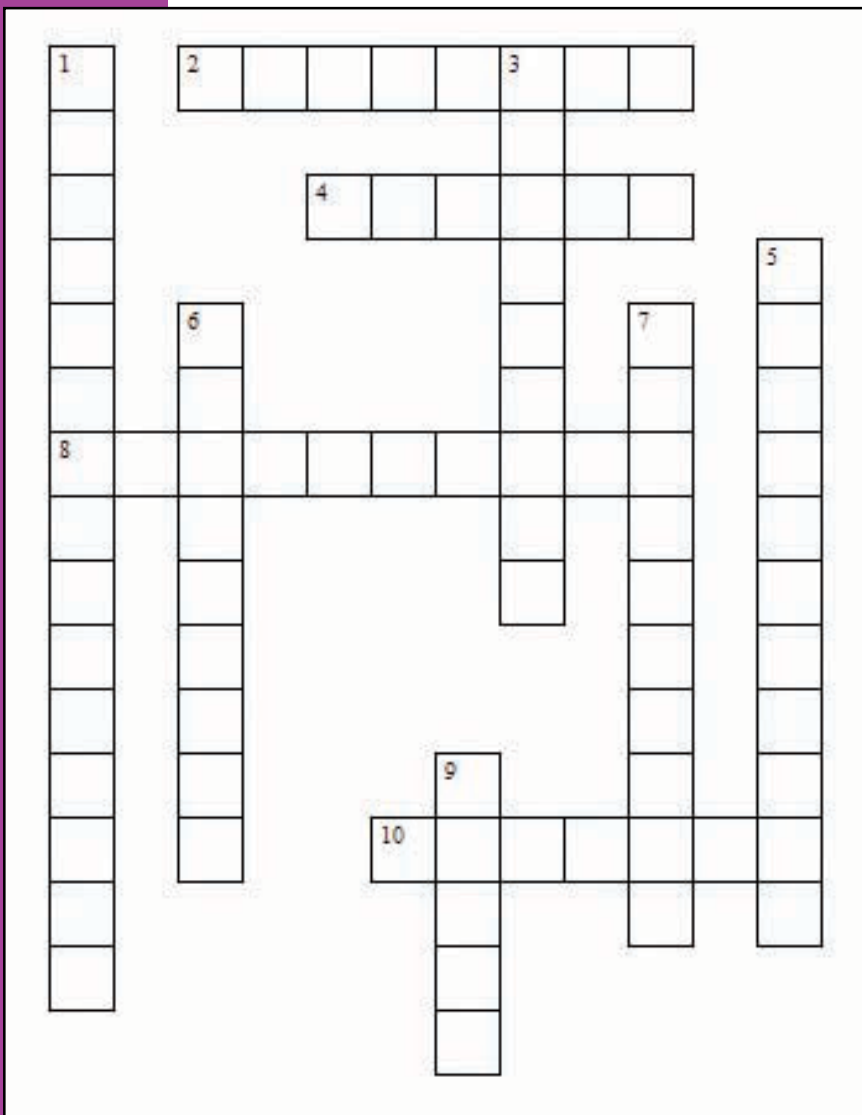
# Recipe for Pumpkin Soup

Ingredients - 4 tbsp olive oil , 2 onions (finely chopped), 1kg pumpkins or squash (peeled, deseeded and chopped into chunks), 700ml vegetable stock or chicken stock 142ml pot double cream. (Serves 6)

1. Heat half the olive oil in a large saucepan, cook the onions for 5 mins until soft . Add the pumpkin or squash to the pan, then carry on cooking for 8-10 mins, stirring occasionally until it starts to soften and turn golden.

2. Pour the stock into the pan, then season with salt and pepper. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 10 mins until the squash is very soft. Pour the cream into the pan, bring back to the boil, then purée with a hand blender. The soup can now be frozen for up to 2 months.

## Crossword



### ACROSS

- 2. Month in 2010 which was coldest in 100 years
- 4. Surname of ASP's new Chair
- 8. No. of motions passed at NI Pensioners Parliament
- 10. First name of guest speaker at AGM

### DOWN

- 1. Body responsible for UK Payments Strategy
- 3. City that NPC Pensioners Parliament is held
- 5. Talkback presenter
- 6. Pensions Minister
- 7. Name of BBC's Internet Campaign
- 9. Meaning of 'Hoi Sum' Elderly Group

ANSWERS  
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# Desert Island Discs

with Patricia Donald, new Chair of Age Sector Platform

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

Our second castaway is the new Chair of Age Sector Platform, Patricia Donald. We asked Patricia to select six pieces of music, a luxury item and a book that she could not live without if stranded on a Desert Island.



## Music

- 1) **Messiah by Handel**  
I love Christmas, and this song captures the season perfectly!
- 2) **Symphony No. 6 by Beethoven**  
Living in County Fermanagh I have a great love for the countryside just like Beethoven!
- 3) **The Black Hills of Dakota from 'Calamity Jane'**  
It reminds me of the student nurses' dances in Bostock house when I was a student nurse.
- 4) **I will take you home again Kathleen by Thomas P. Westendorf**  
I play this song and hope it will happen!
- 5) **The spinning wheel by John Francis Waller**  
I love Irish music!
- 6) **Danny Boy by Frederic Weatherly**  
I simply love the music and the words.

## Luxury Item

A red flag (big) so that I can attract passing ships!

## Book

Palgrave's Golden Treasury - It was my poetry book at secondary school and I read it often.

Crossword Answers:  
ACROSS: 2. December 4. Donald 8. TwentyFour 10. Malachi  
DOWN: 1. PaymentsCouncil 3. Blackpool 5. WendyAustin 6. SteveWebb 7. FirstClick  
9. Happy



# Do you have a dream to improve your community?

*Do you have an idea that could tackle a problem or issue in your community?  
UnLtd – The Foundation for Social Entrepreneurs wants to hear from you!*

UnLtd are seeking applications from people who are 50+, live in Northern Ireland and have an idea for a project that could have a real social impact in their community. The Ignite Awards aim to support older people who have the drive, passion and commitment to bring their idea to reality. We will provide funding up to £5,000 to get your idea off the ground. One successful applicant said the Ignite Awards were just like the TV programme 'The Secret Millionaire' – if you have the commitment to take forward your project we will support you to achieve your goal!



## Cooking up a Storm!

Derek McClure who founded Daisies Cafe in Newtownards was the first recipient of an Ignite Development Award of £15,000. Daisies Cafes in Newtownards and Downpatrick provide training and work opportunities to young people with learning difficulties and mental health issues.

More details on level 2 Ignite Development awards can be found at [www.unltd.org.uk/level2](http://www.unltd.org.uk/level2)

In the past year we have supported people from a diverse range of backgrounds and skills across Northern Ireland. Mary has written a book 'Where 2 Turn' to support carers, Eugene is rolling out reading classes for people with a disability in the Newry area, Joan and Tina are developing a care farm for people with mental health issues in North Down and Stephen is organising DJ workshops for young people in Armagh.

We will cover the practical costs to get you started such as venue hire, equipment, marketing and insurance costs. We do not fund constituted groups or existing projects.

If you have the idea for a project and want to make a difference, we want to hear from you now! For more details on the UnLtd Engage Ignite Awards, contact Lesley Johnston on 028 9024 4007 or email [lesleyjohnston@unltd.org.uk](mailto:lesleyjohnston@unltd.org.uk), or visit our website at [www.unltd.org.uk](http://www.unltd.org.uk).

# Disability Rights: Bookings, Airports and Flights

If you have a disability, are less mobile or have a condition which makes air travel difficult - even if it is temporary - European law gives you the right to assistance when booking flights, arriving at the airport, checking in and getting on and off the aircraft. The Consumer Council provides advice and guidance and can investigate complaints from passengers flying to or from Northern Ireland.

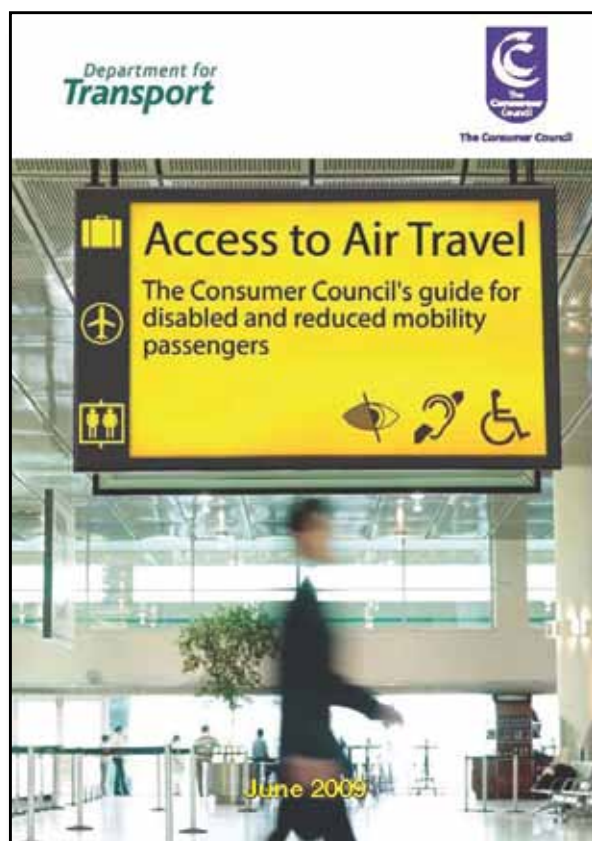
An older passenger contacted the Consumer Council following a distressing travel experience. Despite having informed his airline that he required special assistance when booking the flight, no help was provided.

The passenger was upset at the treatment he received when he asked a member of airport staff for assistance because the lift to access his departure gate was broken. The passenger explained: “The staff member forcibly pushed my wheelchair onto a moving walkway despite my protests that it was unsuitable and, as I had suspected would happen, I fell. This episode could well have ended in serious injury or worse.”

Consumer Council staff investigated the complaint and as a result the airport apologised and offered the passenger a goodwill gesture.

The passenger went on to explain: “It is important to know your rights when travelling as this definitely gives you confidence to speak up if things go wrong.”

The Consumer Council’s Access to Air Travel guide provides information on the rights of people with disabilities and less mobile passengers when travelling by air. The guide is available from [www.consumercouncil.org](http://www.consumercouncil.org) or by telephoning 0800 121 6022.



**The Consumer Council has the power to investigate complaints on your behalf.  
If you have experienced poor service when travelling by air  
contact the Consumer Council on 0800 121 6022.**

# Age Sector Platform Members

ABC Seniors Network  
Age NI  
ALLY Foyle  
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  
ICTU Retired Workers Committee (NI)  
Indian Community Centre 50+ Club  
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  
Older Women's Network NI  
Public Commercial Services Union (Associate and Retired Members)  
South Belfast Lifestyle Forum  
South West Age Partnership  
UNISON Retired Members  
University of the Third Age (NI)  
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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