



Age-  
friendly  
Belfast

# Baseline Report 2014



**Belfast Strategic  
Partnership**  
supported by  
Belfast Health Development Unit

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This report and associated research was compiled and conducted by Locus on behalf of Belfast Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP)



The Northern Ireland statistics and research agency were commissioned to create Age-friendly Profile on the NISRA/NINIS website

<http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/Home.aspx>



AgeNI were commissioned to carry out focus groups on lesser heard older people

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Consistent with global population trends, the proportion of residents in Belfast aged 60 years and older is increasing and is forecast to increase from 19% in 2014 to 36% by 2050. In order to better plan for and accommodate the needs of older people Belfast joined the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities, a group of municipalities that seek to improve the living experience of its senior residents. The WHO has produced a *Checklist of Essential Features of Age Friendly Cities*. This checklist identifies eight domains: Outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, community and health services.

This report gives us a baseline for the age friendliness of Belfast, it draws upon available quantitative and qualitative data including government statistics, results of a survey with 300 older people, feedback from consultation events with older people, stakeholder feedback and review of relevant studies, strategies and research as provided by members of the partnership. It provides a balanced and realistic baseline for the city: outlining key things that are good, key areas for improvement and gaps that need addressed.

This report also provides older people, older people's advocates, statutory bodies, the voluntary sector and policy makers with sufficient relevant information to allow decision making towards the development of a three year action plan to improve the age-friendliness of Belfast.

In summary, older people have told us "Belfast is already a good place to grow old". However, we must continue to improve our services and structures to meet the needs of an ageing population with a wide range of abilities and needs.

This City relies heavily on the contribution older people make to their families, their communities and the economy.

We have found that older people are a diverse group involved a wide range of activities including; seeking employment, caring for family members, volunteering, taking part in lifelong learning, getting married, participating in local groups and using leisure centres. Belfast City Council employs 177 people aged 60+ which is 6% of the total number of employees and there are currently 10 Belfast City Councillors aged over 60.

Older people reported favourably on transport availability, which enables them to stay in contact with family, to take holidays, to go shopping, to access services and to socialise.

55% of older people rate their homes as good or excellent.

Belfast has a strong community infrastructure, with a healthy and vibrant older people's sector. It is estimated that there are approximately 400 to 500 community groups

providing services and activities across the city. Consultation highlights that there is much good work being done in local communities and that many staff in Belfast are courteous towards older people.

Free public transport, information received through the City Matters Magazine and access to public attractions and are all rated quite highly by older people.

Planned developments through the Streets Ahead project in the city centre, the Belfast on the Move project to increase use of public transport, programmes through the Active Belfast Partnership and planned arts and older people programmes, will all contribute to Belfast becoming a more age-friendly city.

Older people have told us the area they would most like to see improve in Belfast is respect for and inclusion of older people. Older people feel in general they are not valued and customer care needs to improve in some areas. They also identified a need for greater diversity of events for all groups of older people, including those with dementia

It was also acknowledged that there is a need to give priority to the inclusion of isolated older people. If the levels of isolation are similar to studies in England then approximately 10,000 older people could be living in isolation in Belfast.

We have found that older people are concerned about their future housing options and want to be involved in shaping decisions about their future housing needs.

We have found that 53% of older households in Belfast are in fuel poverty, and a quarter of older people in Belfast live in the top 10% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland.

A high number of older people in Belfast have a bus pass, but usage of public transport and specialist transport services needs to improve. Consultation with older people has made reference to the importance of customer care on public transport.

A series of walkability maps have been developed, these maps will be used along with a qualitative assessment tool by Belfast Healthy Cities to analyse the age-friendliness and walkability of local neighbourhoods

Older people would like to see improved provision of public toilets and outdoor seating to increase accessibility. Public areas must also be safe. The NI Crime Survey<sup>1</sup> indicates that in terms of personal safety, older respondents are much more likely to feel very unsafe walking alone after dark, with those aged 75+ over four times as likely to feel very unsafe as people aged under 35.

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<sup>1</sup> DOJ, Perceptions of Crime, Findings from the 2009/10 Northern Ireland Crime Survey

A series of briefings and workshops were held throughout the year involving a wide range of organisations, service providers and older people's representative's. These considered the baseline assessment and developed the vision, key themes/priorities and Age- friendly action plan. Which are set out below:

***Our vision is that Belfast will be a city where older people live life to the full***

### KEY THEMES

- **Age-friendly Image** - creating a positive view of ageing
- **Age-friendly Lives** – reducing life inequalities and isolation
- **Age-friendly Neighbourhoods** - creating friendly places to live in

# 1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This report has been compiled by Locus on behalf of Belfast Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) to help inform the work of the partnership and their objective of joining the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities. Member cities are those that are committed to creating inclusive and accessible urban environments to benefit their ageing populations.

The work towards an Age-friendly city is happening at a time of change in Northern Ireland, with Local Government Reform (LGR) leading to changes within local councils. In 2015 many key functions will be transferring from central to local government as part of the reform programme. This will give Belfast City Council the ability to directly influence the enhancement of Belfast as an Age-friendly City.

Also the city of Belfast has undergone a process of transformation following years of conflict; the diversity of the city's population continues to increase, however, segregation remains high. Many of the initiatives within this plan will make a positive contribution to how we tackle these challenges and address respect, social inclusion and civic participation to develop the opportunities which an Age-friendly city brings.

The focus of the desk based research was to baseline the age friendliness of Belfast, drawing upon available quantitative and qualitative data including government statistics, results of a survey with 300 older people, feedback from consultation events with older people, stakeholder feedback and review of relevant studies, strategies and research as provided by members of the partnership.

## 1.1 WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities

The World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC) was established to foster the exchange of experience and mutual learning between cities and communities worldwide.

***An Age-friendly City is defined as an inclusive and accessible urban environment that promotes active ageing.<sup>2</sup>***

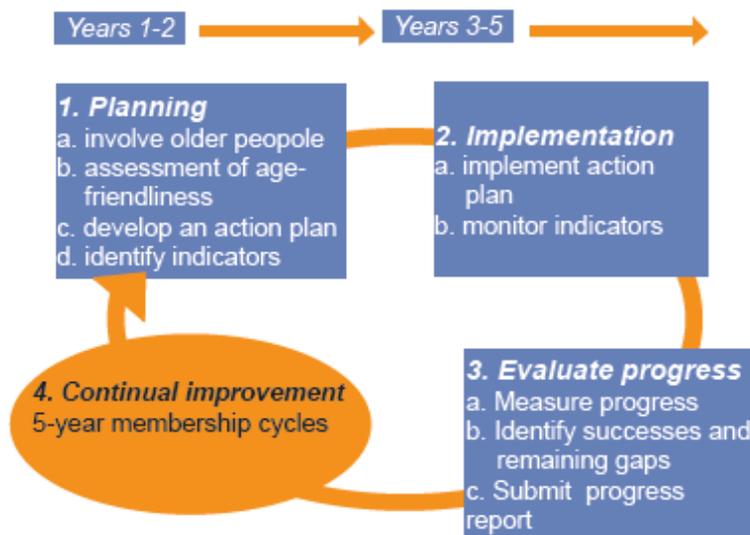
An age-friendly city must:

1. Establish mechanisms to involve older people throughout the Age-friendly process
2. Develop a baseline assessment of the age-friendliness of the city under eight domains;
  - outdoor spaces and buildings,
  - transportation,
  - housing,
  - social participation,
  - respect and social inclusion,
  - civic participation and employment,
  - communication and information, and
  - community support and health services.
3. Develop a 3-year city-wide action plan
4. Identify measurements to monitor progress against this plan

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<sup>2</sup> The National Conference on Aging, March 21 & 22, 2011, Bermuda

**Cycle of WHO Global Network  
of Age-friendly Cities©**



5. Establish mechanisms to involve older people throughout the Age-friendly Cities and Communities cycle, including partnerships with government and civil society (including NGOs and academic institutions).
6. Develop a baseline assessment of the age-friendliness of the city which, as a minimum, needs to consider each of the eight domains identified in the WHO Age-friendly Cities Guide, namely;
  - outdoor spaces and buildings,
  - transportation,
  - housing,
  - social participation,
  - respect and social inclusion,
  - civic participation and employment,
  - communication and information, and
  - community support and health services.
3. Develop a 3-year city-wide action plan based on the findings of this assessment.
4. Identify indicators to monitor progress against this plan.

## 1.2 The Development of Age-friendly Belfast

Belfast City Council's All Party Reference Group on Older People is made up of elected members from each political party and its aim is to lead on the Council's approach to tackling the issues affecting older people in the City. The political input provided by the reference group is at the heart of the Council's approach to improving the quality of life of older people in Belfast. Councillor Bernie Kelly the chair of the All Party Reference group on Older People became interested in the Age-friendly approach and liked the structure of the process and its potential to engage partners and the whole City in improvements for older people.

In May 2012, Belfast's Lord Mayor, Councillor Niall Ó Donnghaile signed the Dublin Declaration at the senior citizens convention. This then committed Belfast to joining the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly cities and was reinforced by the succeeding Lord Mayor, Alderman Gavin Robinson, in December 2012.

The challenge of working towards an age-friendly city requires a wide partnership approach and therefore work on Age-friendly Belfast is being led by the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership on behalf of the Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP). BSP supported Belfast's application to join the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities by providing a letter to endorse Belfast's application from the chief executives of Belfast City Council, BHSCT and the Public Health Agency.

Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) is a collaborative multi-sectoral partnership which aims to champion and lead the case for tackling life inequalities across all communities in Belfast. There is a long-term commitment from senior decision makers and influencers in the city to challenge the barriers to reducing inequalities. BSP has developed a Framework for Action with the following priorities:

- Mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Life-long learning
- Alcohol and drug misuse
- Early years and early interventions
- Regeneration of living spaces and healthy places
- Active Belfast - Creating opportunities for physical activity
- Healthy Ageing

Healthy ageing links to many of the BSP priority areas and these links will support the development of Age-friendly Belfast.

The Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) has co-ordinated a joined up approach to working with older people in Belfast since 2008, resulting from recommendations in the Belfast Healthy Cities Healthy Ageing: Inter Action Plan 2006-2009. Current HASP members include both statutory and non statutory organisations, namely:

- Age NI
- Alzheimer's Society
- Belfast City Council
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- Belfast Healthy Cities
- The Department of Regional Development
- Engage with Age
- Greater Belfast Seniors Forum
- HSCB/Belfast Local Commissioning Group
- North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- The Public Health Agency
- Volunteer Now

HASP works closely with Greater Belfast Seniors Forum, a representative group of older people who aim to make life better for older people in Belfast. The establishment of this Forum has been an important development in Belfast and will play an important role in involving older people throughout the Age-friendly Cities and Communities in Belfast.

### **1.3 Strategic Context**

The work towards an Age-friendly city is happening at a time of change in Northern Ireland, with Local Government Reform leading to changes within local councils. In 2015 many key functions will be transferring from central to local government as part of the reform programme. This will give Belfast City Council the ability to directly influence the enhancement of Belfast as an Age-friendly City. The work will be further supported by Government policy, which have a focus upon Age-friendly objectives;

- NI Programme for Government
- Office of the First and Deputy First Ministers Active Ageing Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014-2020
- Lifetime Opportunities: Anti Poverty & Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland
- Facing the Future: Housing Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017
- Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017
- Transforming Your Care
- Improving Dementia Services in Northern Ireland – A Regional Strategy
- Join In, Get Involved: Build a Better Future - A Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan for Northern Ireland 2012
- Warmer Healthier Homes: A New Fuel Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland
- Maximising Incomes and Outcomes - a 3 Year Plan for Improving the Uptake of Benefits
- Sport Matters
- Accessible Transport Strategy Action Plan 2012-2015
- Public Health Strategy 2013 – 2023
- Building Emotional Resilience Strategy 2014-17

## 1.4 Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative research has been completed / begun by HASP and its partners. LOCUS was commissioned to analyse available research information and produce a baseline report, outlining Age-friendly strengths, key areas for improvement and gaps that need addressed. Research findings that have informed the development of this baseline assessment include;

- a) Survey findings completed by 300 older people at a variety of events across the City
- b) Findings from a consultation event held in March 2012 which was attended by 103 older people representing the six Seniors Forums throughout the city of Belfast:
  - West Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
  - Greater Shankill Senior Citizens Forum
  - North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
  - South Belfast Lifestyle Forum
  - Belfast East Seniors Forum
  - Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum
- c) Summary report of 5 focus groups with socially excluded groups of older people representing older men, older people with a disability, LGBT older people, ethnic minority older people and older people living in sheltered accommodation. A total of 48 people engaged in these focus groups (see appendix 3)
- d) Findings from consultation at an Age-friendly Belfast Christmas Event in December 2012 at Titanic Belfast which was attended by over 200 older people. Drama and volunteer older actors were used to gather very valuable information on four of the WHO Age-friendly domains that had not received as much feedback, namely;
  - Social participation
  - Respect and social inclusion
  - Civic participation and employment
  - Communication and information
- e) Findings from the City Matters survey which was included in an edition of the Council's household magazine, distributed to 130,000 households and received 30 returns

- f) Consultation findings from the 2011 and 2012 annual Senior Citizens Conventions, each of which was attended by approximately 200 older people from across Belfast
- g) Consultation findings from Belfast Healthy Cities consultation on outdoor spaces, in which 50 older people participated
- h) Findings from intergenerational discussions between Belfast City Council Youth Forum and the Greater Belfast Senior Citizens Forum, involving 20 older and younger people
- i) Report of the Engage with Age, Moving Experiences – How Public Transport Serves Older People conference in February 2011, attended by approximately 100 older people
- j) Preview of Engage With Age’s DVD – Travelling On in respect to the issues being presented by older people
- k) Analysis of information provided by NISRA through their NI Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) and Belfast City Council’s City Stats team. Information has been presented at a ward or Local Authority level where possible. In some instances NI wide data has been used in the absence of local data.
- l) Analysis of 20 stakeholder responses following an Age-friendly stakeholder workshop. Responses were received from;
  - ArtsCare
  - Volunteer Now
  - South Belfast Partnership Board
  - Belfast Healthy Cities
  - Business in the Community
  - Belfast City Council Equality & Diversity officer
  - West Belfast 50+ Forum
  - Red Cross
  - Active Belfast
  - City Centre Management
  - DRD
  - DSD
  - Engage With Age
  - NIHE
  - Age NI
  - Belfast Central Mission
  - Linking Generations NI
  - Oasis
  - Sandy Row Community Forum

Specific areas of work referenced by stakeholders, that have an influence on the Age-friendliness of Belfast, have been included to illustrate work that is happening to address issues / challenges identified.

m) Review of additional supporting information provided by stakeholders

This report represents the findings of a desk based research exercise, commissioned by Belfast Strategic Partnership, to baseline the age friendliness of Belfast. The methodology has been informed by the terms of reference for the study which were;

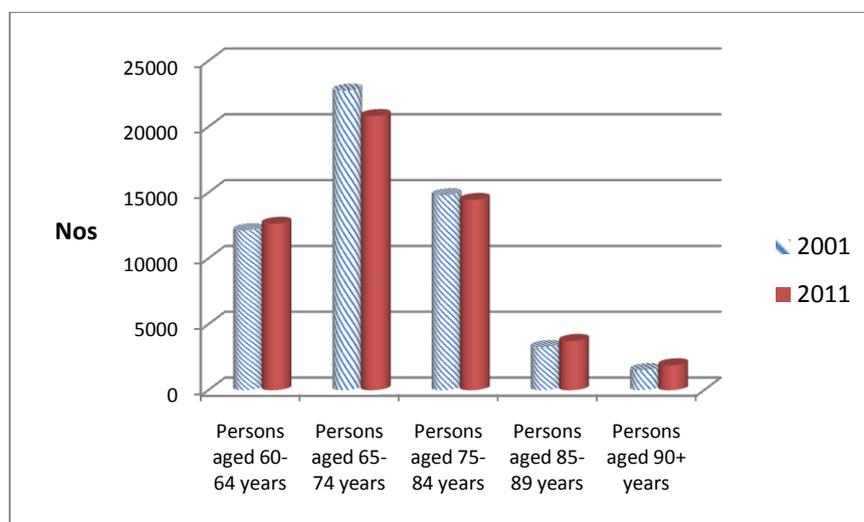
- To analyse and summarise the existing quantitative and qualitative data for the city and produce a completed baseline report.
- The report should provide a balanced and realistic baseline for the city that establishes “Age-friendliness”: outlining key things that are good, key areas for improvement and gaps that need addressed.
- The report should also provide older people, older people’s advocates, statutory bodies, the voluntary sector and policy makers with sufficient relevant information to allow decision making towards the development of a three year action plan to improve Age-friendliness.

## 2. DEMOGRAPHY

### 2.1 Population

On Census Day (27<sup>th</sup> March 2011) the usually resident population of Belfast Local Government District (LGD) was 280,962, accounting for 16% of the NI total. 19% (53,530) of the usually resident population was aged 60+. A comparative analysis with the 2001 census shows that the resident population in Belfast aged 60+ has decreased slightly by 1.8%. However people aged 85+ has increased by 17% over the period.

**Fig. 1: Belfast LGD Resident Population Aged 60+, 2001 and 2011, by Age Structure**



A recent report by Oxford Economics<sup>3</sup> highlights that whilst most regions within the UK recognise an ageing population, Northern Ireland and in particular Belfast has not experienced the full extent of this trend. The report further indicates that in 2001 individuals aged 65+ represented 15.3% of the total population in Belfast; a share which has since dropped marginally to 14.5% in 2011. In comparison the population of retirement age<sup>4</sup> has increased in both England and Wales from 18.3% and 20.1% in 2001 to 19.5% and 22% in 2010 respectively.

<sup>3</sup> Belfast Integrated Economic Strategy, Stage 1 Economics and Policy Synopsis, April 2013

<sup>4</sup> For males this is 65+ and for women it is 60+.

## 2.2 NI Population Projections

A Public Health Agency report on older people in Northern Ireland<sup>5</sup> acknowledges that in the last twenty years the % population who are aged 65+ has increased slightly to just over 15%. However the report shows much larger increases projected in the next twenty years.<sup>6</sup> In 2031, almost 22% of the Northern Ireland population will be aged 65+. In forty years the 65+ proportion of the population is expected to rise from 15% in 2011 to 26.6% in 2051. In the next twenty years, to 2031, the 65+ population is expected to increase by 60%, with the largest increase being seen in the 85+ age group, where an increase of 125% is expected.

## 2.3 Belfast Population Post Local Government Reform

The implementation of Local Government Reform (LGR), which is a key component of the Programme for Government (PfG), is due to be concluded in advance of the next round of elections in 2015. LGR will see part of 23 wards, currently in Castlereagh and Lisburn, move within the City Council's boundary, bringing an additional resident population of 56,000. There will be an estimated increase of 10,500 in the 60+ resident population within the remit of Belfast City Council (based on 2011 census figures).

## 2.4 Population at a Super Output Area Level

Analysis of the % population aged 60+ by Super Output Area<sup>7</sup> (SOA) shows that 68 SOAs have 20% and above of their population aged 60+. In Crumlin 1, Upper Malone 1, Stormont 1, Cherryvalley 1 and Fortwilliam 1 almost one third of the population is aged 60+. A list of the SOAs is provided in Appendix 1.

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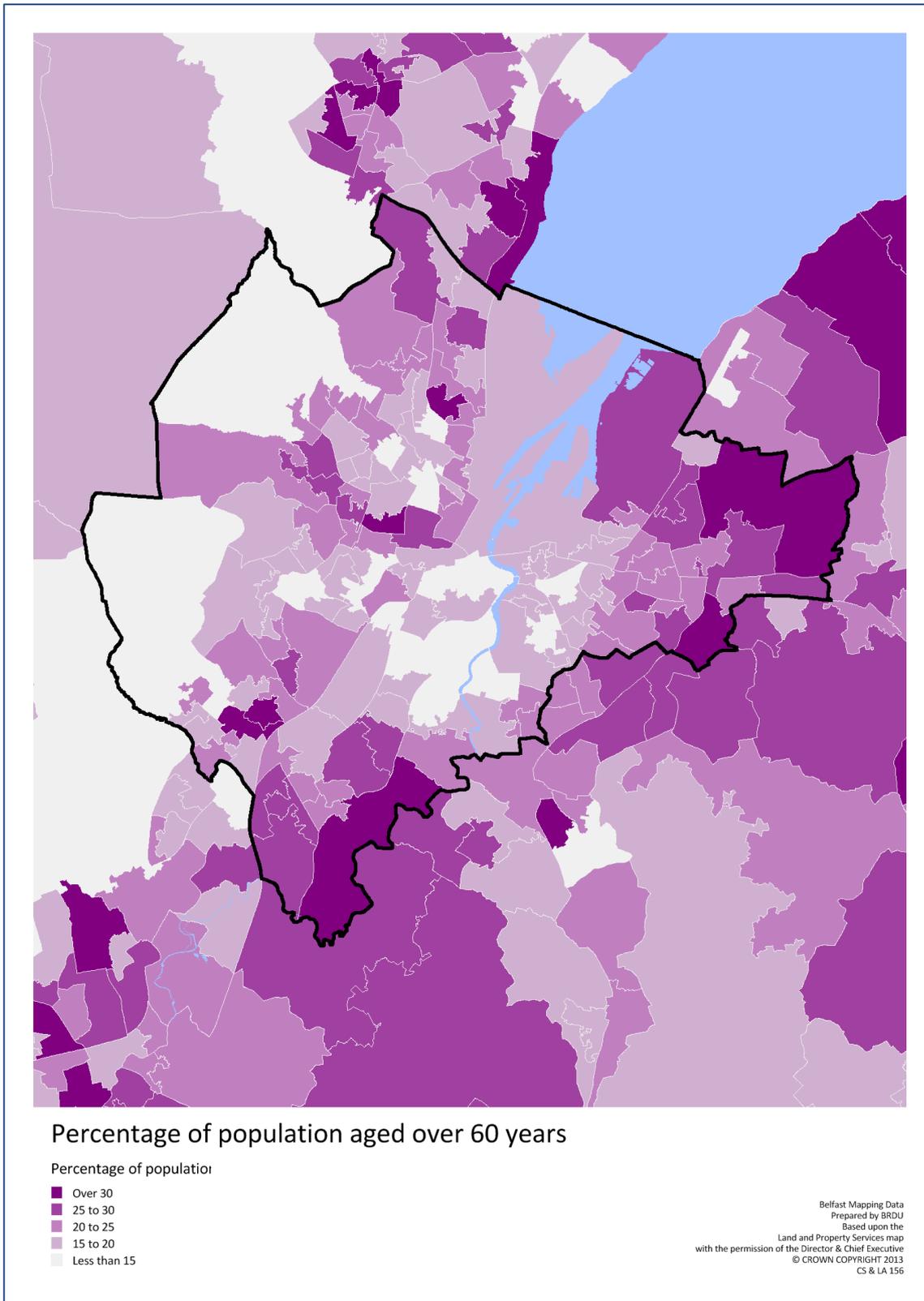
<sup>5</sup> Public Health Agency, Older People, June 2013

<sup>6</sup> Projections are based upon 2010 midyear estimates which slightly understated the elderly population

<sup>7</sup> A geographical unit with an average of just more than 2000 people



Fig.4: Percentage of Belfast's Population Aged 60+<sup>9</sup>

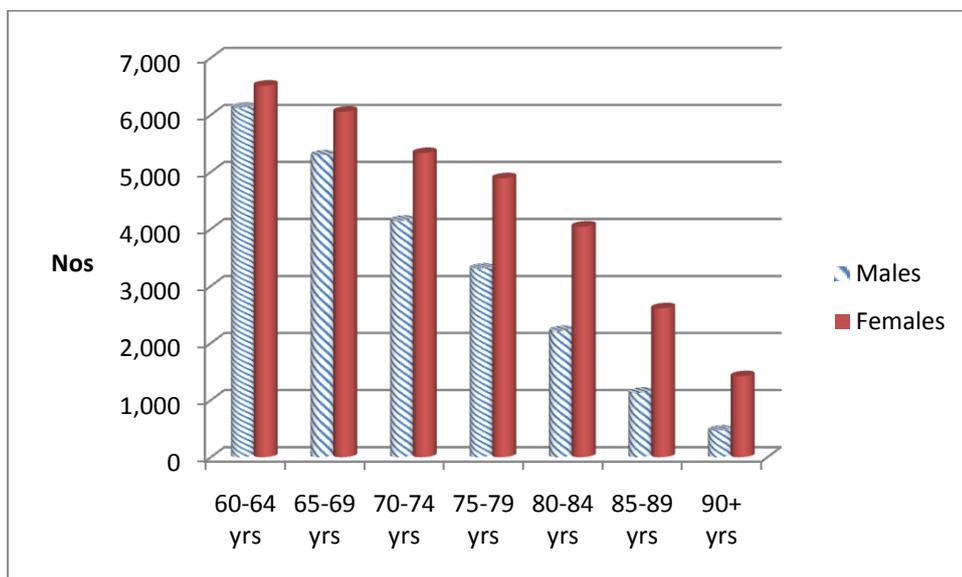


<sup>9</sup> Map produced by Belfast City Council Development Department

## 2.5 Gender

Of those aged 60+ living in Belfast at the time of the 2011 Census, 42% (22,672) were male and 58% (30,858) were female. Figure 5 shows that women outnumber men in all age groups over 60. The proportionate difference increases with age and is particularly marked in the age groups over 80, with twice as many women as men aged 80 to 89 and three times as many women as men aged 90+. This is explained by the longer life expectancy of women compared to men.

**Fig. 5: Population Aged 60+ by Sex and Age Structure, 2011**



## 2.6 Life Expectancy

Public Health Agency data shows that for the period 2008 to 2010, life expectancy at age 65 for males and females in Belfast Local Commissioning Group (LCG) area was 16.4 years and 19.6 years respectively. The comparative NI life expectancy rates were 17.4 years and 20.2 years respectively. Public Health Agency analysis shows that the gender gap in Belfast is greater than in any other area, although the gap is steadily reducing.

Table 3 shows life expectancy at a Belfast Parliamentary Constituency level<sup>10</sup>. Life expectancy in Northern Ireland is lowest in three Belfast constituencies (West, North and East).

**Table 3: Life Expectancy by Constituency 2007 - 2009**

Assembly Area	Male (yrs)	Female (yrs)
<b>Belfast West</b>	72.3	78.4
<b>Belfast North</b>	73.0	79.5
<b>Belfast East</b>	75.2	80.4
<b>Belfast South</b>	76.6	81.4

In terms of healthy life expectancy (the number of years an individual might expect to live in good health), PHA figures show that this has increased in NI for both males and females by 1.4 years over the period 2000-02 to 2007-09 to 60.5 and 62.5 years respectively. NI fares worse than England, Scotland and Wales for both the number of years and the proportion of an individual's life that might be expected to be lived 'in good health'.

## 2.7 Ethnicity of 65+ Population

Ethnic data by age is not currently available for Belfast LGD. Public Health information shows that in 2011 in Northern Ireland just over 90% of those aged 65+ were born in Northern Ireland, 4.4% in other UK countries, 4.3% in the Republic of Ireland, 0.3% in an EU country and 0.8% elsewhere. An assessment of the older ethnic minority population in Belfast is needed in order to help inform the work of developing Belfast as an Age-friendly city.

<sup>10</sup> NI Assembly Research and Information Service Briefing Paper – Health Inequalities in Northern Ireland by Constituency, Dr Raymond Russell, May 2012

## 3. DEPRIVATION AND POVERTY

### 3.1 Multiple Deprivation

The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2010<sup>11</sup> provides a relative measure of deprivation in small areas across Northern Ireland. Results are presented at the Super Output Area (SOA) geography which contains an average of 2,000 people. There are 890 Super Output Areas in Northern Ireland which are ranked from most deprived (rank 1) to least deprived (rank 890). It is constructed from 52 different indicators relating to seven types or 'domains' of deprivation: Income, Employment, Health, Education, Proximity to Services, Living Environment and Crime & Disorder.

There are 150 SOAs in Belfast, 51 (34%) of which are in the top 10% most deprived SOAs in Northern Ireland. An analysis of the distribution of older residents across Belfast shows that;

- one third of Belfast's resident population aged 60+ (17,752) live within the 10% most deprived SOAs in NI
- an additional 13% (7,004) live within the top 20% most deprived SOAs in NI
- 14% (7,328) live within the 10% least deprived SOAs in NI
- An additional 12% (6,161) live within the 20% least deprived SOAs in NI

### 3.2 Income Deprivation Affecting Older People

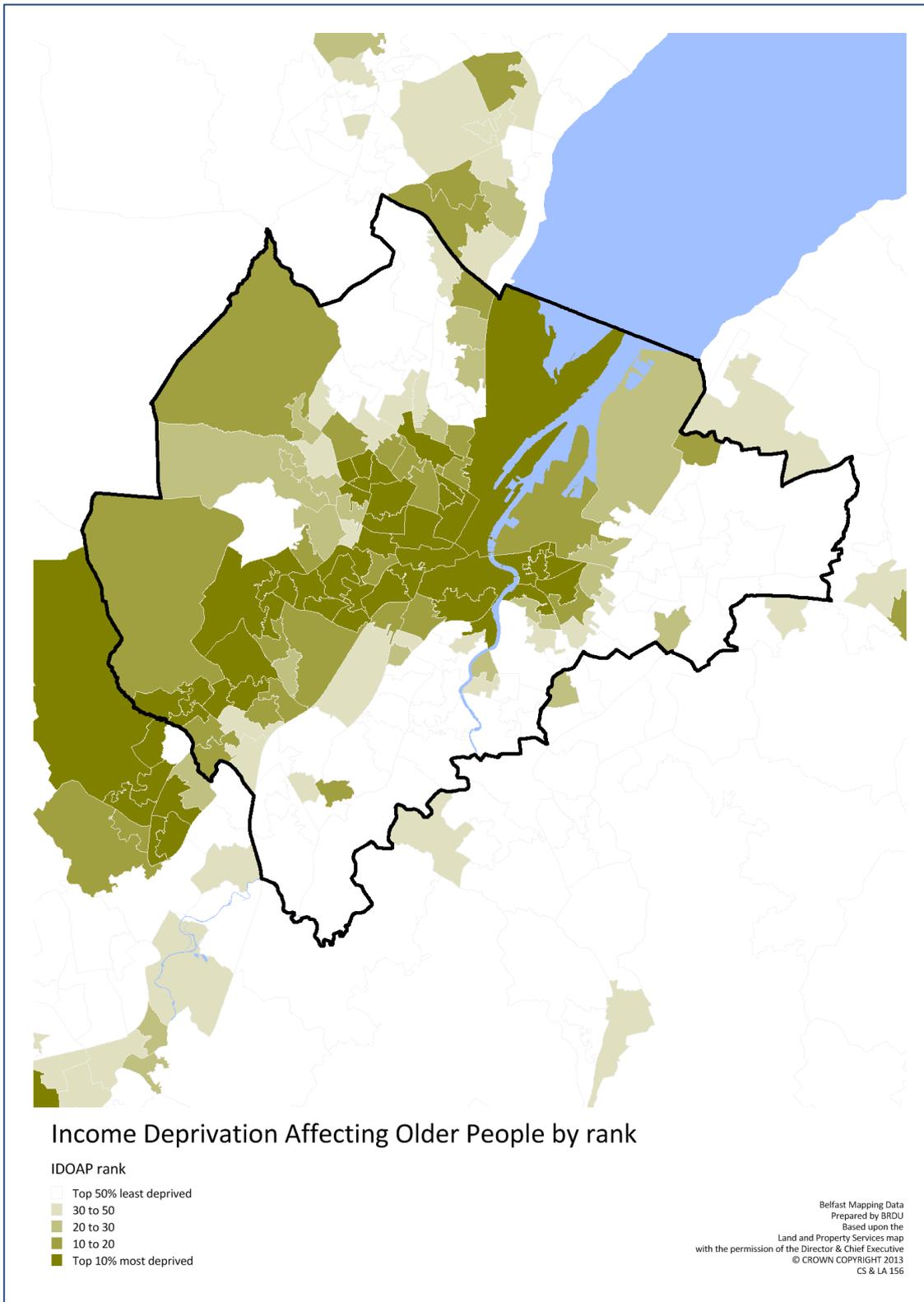
An analysis of the income deprivation affecting older people domain<sup>12</sup> shows that 13,716 older people in Belfast aged 60+ live in the top 10% most deprived SOAs in NI. This represents 25.6% of the resident population in Belfast aged 60+. Figure 6 illustrates the geographic distribution of older people experiencing income deprivation across the city and the predominance of older people experiencing income deprivation in the north and west of the city. See Appendix 2 for a list of the 10% most deprived SOAs and the resident population aged 60+ in Belfast.

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<sup>11</sup> the official measure of spatial deprivation in Northern Ireland

<sup>12</sup> a stand-alone measure combining the percentage of an SOA's population aged 60 or over and their partners (if 60 and over), living in households in receipt of Income Support, State Pension Credit, income based Jobseeker's Allowance, income based Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit

**Fig.6: Distribution of Older People by Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Measure<sup>13</sup>**



<sup>13</sup> Map produced by Belfast City Council Development Department

### 3.3 Fuel Poverty

A household is said to be fuel poor if it needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel to maintain an adequate level of warmth. Fuel poverty assesses the ability to meet all domestic energy costs including space and water heating, cooking, lights and appliances. The NIHE House Condition Survey (HCS) 2011 estimates that 41% of houses in Belfast were in fuel poverty. In 2006 the figure was 38.5%<sup>14</sup>. In 2011, for those households where the Household Reference Person was aged 60+, 53% of households in Belfast were in fuel poverty.

Households in Northern Ireland spend more than twice as much of their disposable income on energy than households in London and about 60% more than the UK average. In 2010 6% of residents in England and 28% in Scotland were considered fuel poor. It is suggested that the main reason for higher levels in Northern Ireland is a combination of lower incomes, higher fuel costs and a greater dependence on oil, electric and solid fuel for heating.

Measures have been introduced in Northern Ireland in an effort to reduce fuel poverty, particularly in the social sector, Belfast City Council runs a very successful fuel stamps scheme across the city and new energy efficiency measures such as heating conversions, insulation and double glazing by the Housing Executive in its own stock and also by the Warm Homes Scheme in private homes. However the 2011 HCS continues to indicate that even if the dwelling is given an efficient heating system and is insulated to the highest standards it does not mean that the household will automatically be brought out of fuel poverty. The cost of fuel and low income will remain important determinants of whether a household is still in fuel poverty. The HCS indicates that fuel poverty was correlated to a number of factors and shows that households headed by older people were much more likely to be living in fuel poverty. Almost two-thirds (66%) of NI households headed by an older person (75+) were in fuel poverty in 2011. Three-fifths (61%) of older households were fuel poor.

Tax free winter fuel payments are available for older people varying between £100 to £300 depending on an individual's circumstances.

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<sup>14</sup> NISRA, Fuel Poverty

### 3.4 Income

The Family Resources Survey Northern Ireland (FRS NI) collects information on the incomes and circumstances of private households in Northern Ireland. Data from the survey is used to compile the Pensioners' Income Series. The most recent findings<sup>15</sup> show that

- Pensioner units (all pensioner couples and single pensioners) in Northern Ireland received on average £400 per week in gross income in 2010/11, which is an increase of 13% from 2003/04. Approximately half of this total (£204) was sourced from state benefits
- A three year average of weekly gross income for pensioner couples and single pensioners shows that in 2008/11 Northern Ireland was the lowest ranking region for gross income of all regions in the United Kingdom (£520 and £242 respectively)
- In 2008/11, Northern Ireland had the highest weekly benefit income (£221) for pensioner couples of the United Kingdom regions, £12 per week higher than the United Kingdom average (£209). Single pensioners had the second highest benefit income (£177) of all regions in the United Kingdom
- 95% of all pensioner units for the three year period 2008/11 were in receipt of state pension
- In 2008/11 35% of pensioner units were in receipt of disability benefits and 14% were in receipt of earnings from employment
- Older pensioner couples were more likely to have lower incomes than younger pensioner couples

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<sup>15</sup> DSD, The Pensioners' Income Series Bulletin, Northern Ireland 2010/11

### 3.5 Social Security Benefits

Social security benefits provide a critically important safety net for the vulnerable and those in most need. DSD Client Group Analysis figures<sup>16</sup> show that there are 44,910 pension age<sup>17</sup> claimants in receipt of benefits in Belfast. The key benefits available for older people of pension age are;

- Attendance Allowance - 8,470 older people in Belfast are in receipt of Attendance Allowance (May 2013)
- State pension – there are 43,780 recipients of state pension in Belfast (June 2013)
- Pension Credit – 16,970 older people in Belfast are in receipt of Pension Credit (May 2013)
- Disability Living Allowance - 38,160 people in Belfast are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (June 2013), of which 30% (11,630) are aged 65+
- Carer's Allowance – 11,490 people in Belfast are in receipt of Carer's Allowance (June 2013), of which 27% (3,120) are older carers aged 65+

Data for Local Assembly areas shows a pensioner claimant count of;

- 17,440 in East Belfast
- 18,220 in North Belfast
- 16,550 in South Belfast
- 13,300 in West Belfast

No data exists on the uptake of benefits from older people in respect to all that they are entitled to. It is not possible therefore to make an assessment on the gap in benefits uptake. However DSD recognise and acknowledge that there is an issue in terms of benefit uptake and has launched their Benefit Uptake strategy<sup>18</sup> to address this issue. Approximately £3 million will be invested in proactive programmes and activities aimed at encouraging the uptake of benefits, services and supports amongst specific target groups of which older people has been identified as a priority group. This work will include DSD's Improving Benefit Uptake Unit working with Councils to better target those entitled to benefits. DSD have identified just over 25,000 people in NI who they believe could be potentially entitled to additional benefits, namely State Pension Credit and Attendance Allowance.

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<sup>16</sup> February 2013

<sup>17</sup> 65 years for men and 60 years for women

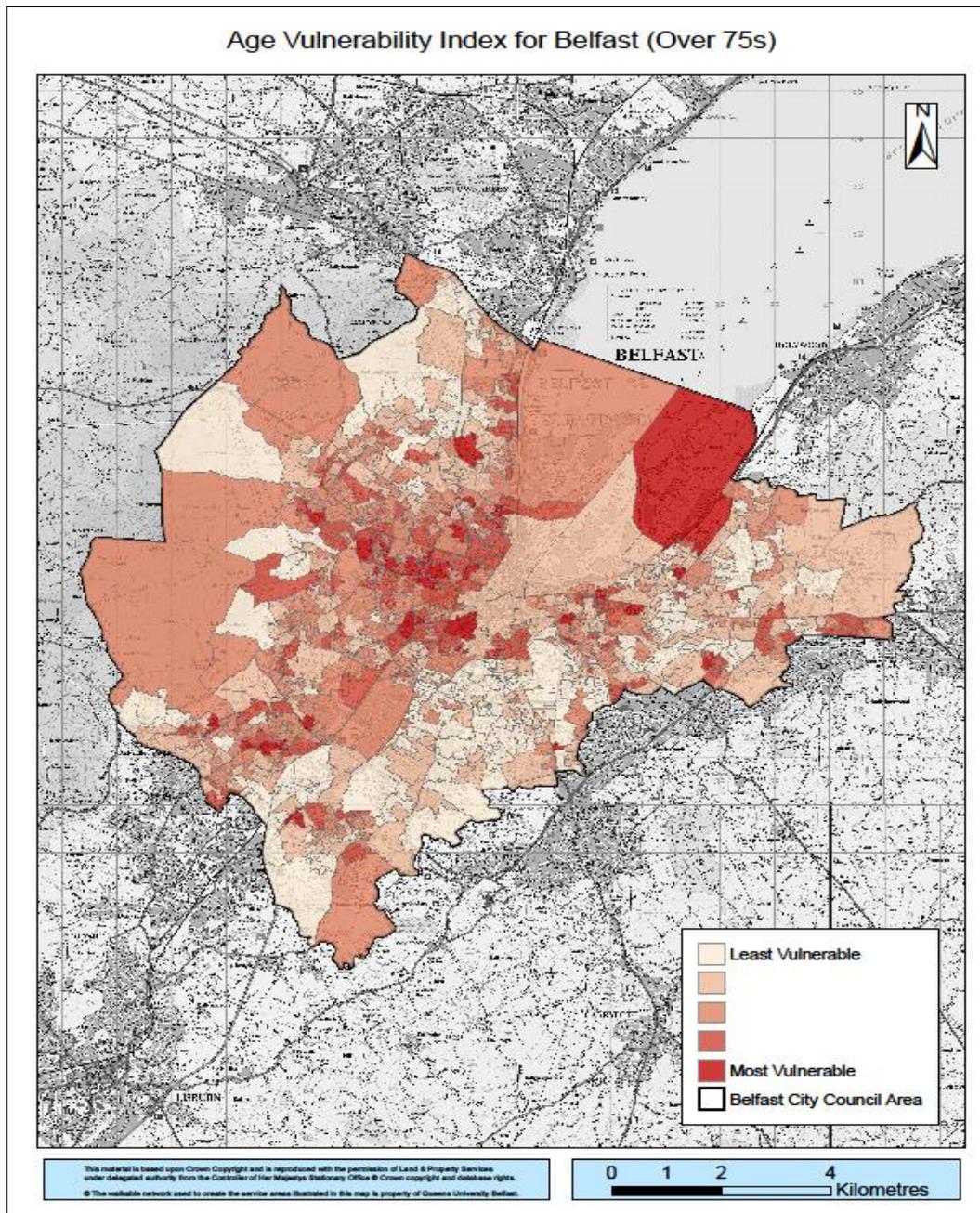
<sup>18</sup> DSD, Maximising Incomes and Outcomes, a 3 year plan for improving the uptake of benefits, July 2013

### **3.6 Age Vulnerability**

A series of walkability maps have been developed by the School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering at Queen's University Belfast through the Knowledge Exchange, Spatial Analysis and Healthy Urban Environments (KESUE) project, which involves Belfast City Council, Belfast Healthy Cities, Dept. of Regional Development, Derry City Council and Public Health Agency. These maps will be used along with a qualitative assessment tool by Belfast Healthy Cities to analyse the age-friendliness and walkability of local neighbourhoods

Figure 7 highlights areas of Belfast that can be highlighted as 'age vulnerable', i.e. people are aged over 75, live alone and do not drive.

Fig.7: Age Vulnerability for Belfast over 75's<sup>19</sup>



<sup>19</sup> Map produced by the School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering at Queen's University Belfast

### 3.7 Deprivation and Poverty Challenges

With 53% of older households in Belfast are in fuel poverty<sup>20</sup>, and a quarter of older people in Belfast live in the top 10% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland. This is an area of challenge and there are gaps that need addressed.

Work is currently underway and will continue on:

- The promotion of fuel stamps and winter warmth events through Belfast City Council
- Belfast City Councils free home safety check scheme
- Initiatives to improve the income level of older people through Age NI Advice and Advocacy service and the Make the Call Campaign through the Department of Social Development
- Support for over 50s to get back into work through GEMS NI
- Public Health Agency's work with community and voluntary organisations to counteract social isolation and put people in touch with local support and services
- Age Partnership Belfast provision of community hubs to increase the participation of isolated older people
- Age Partnership Belfast support and development of older people's groups in Belfast.
- Big Lottery funded Reaching Out Connecting Older People projects
- Tailored physical activity programme for people who have had a fall, stroke, heart disease, diabetes, cancer or lung disease through the Healthwise programme led by Belfast Strategic Partnership Active Belfast Team
- Age Sector Platform Pensioners Parliament
- Good Morning Network across Belfast who provide community based telephone support service for older and vulnerable people
- Belfast City Councils Investment Programme 2012-2015 commits the council to providing work placements and the potential to work in partnership with older peoples groups to assist with employability initiatives
- Volunteer Now Befriending and Time-banking Initiatives
- Provision of IT training for older people

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<sup>20</sup> NIHE Housing condition survey (HCS) 2011

## 7. OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS

The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life of older people and affect their ability to “age in place”. The WHO report that the recurring themes in cities around the world are quality of life, access and safety.

The availability of outdoor spaces for leisure and recreation is important for the physical and mental wellbeing of all people and research has shown that taking up physical activity in older age has clear health benefits in respect to reducing the risk of dementia and adding years to life<sup>21</sup>. In addition leisure activities encourage social contacts which in turn help to prevent isolation.

With respect to outdoor spaces and buildings for recreational and leisure use, Belfast City Council currently provides;

- 45 parks
- 10 community gardens
- 5 allotment sites
- 10 leisure centres
- 22 community centres
- 15 public toilets
- Waterfront Hall
- Ulster Hall

Residents aged 60+, have free access to all leisure centres until 11am, Monday to Friday, as well being able to avail of discounts on a wide range of classes and activities. Belfast City Council records<sup>22</sup> show that 103 people aged 60+ have a Boost card that enables them to avail of this free and discounted access. This equates to 0.2% of the resident population in Belfast aged 60+. Activities engaged in by older users were predominantly swimming, tennis or to use the fitness suite (GP referral).

Belfast City Council has responsibility for keeping outdoor public areas clean. It is a criminal offence to drop litter or dump litter. To reduce littering Belfast City Council's Litter campaign 'Litter makes a pig of you' has been running for nine years. Research has shown that the number of people who admit to dropping litter has

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<sup>21</sup> Belfast Healthy Cities, Older People: Health, social and living conditions, April 2006

<sup>22</sup> At 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013

fallen by 14%. In 2012 Belfast City Council issued 1,650 fixed penalty fines to litterers across the city. Belfast City Council also provides free pocket ashtrays and gum wraps in a bid to keeping Belfast clean. Belfast City Council completes 5% random sampling surveys to assess cleanliness of streets every month across each cleansing area of the city. This assessment takes into consideration Dog Fouling and BCC has the powers to fine dog owners if dogs are caught fouling in a public place. Belfast City Council has recently completed its Dog Fouling campaign which saw a 10% reduction in dog fouling across the city

Belfast has been recognised through national and local awards for the standards of its toilets. However, it is recognised that a more strategic approach is needed for toilet provision throughout the city. In the summer of 2012 the British Toilet Association (BTA) was commissioned to develop a Public Convenience Provision Strategy for Belfast. The recommendations contained could significantly increase the number of toilets open and available to the residents and visitors, yet at a minimal cost to the council directly.

### 4.1 Survey and Consultation Findings

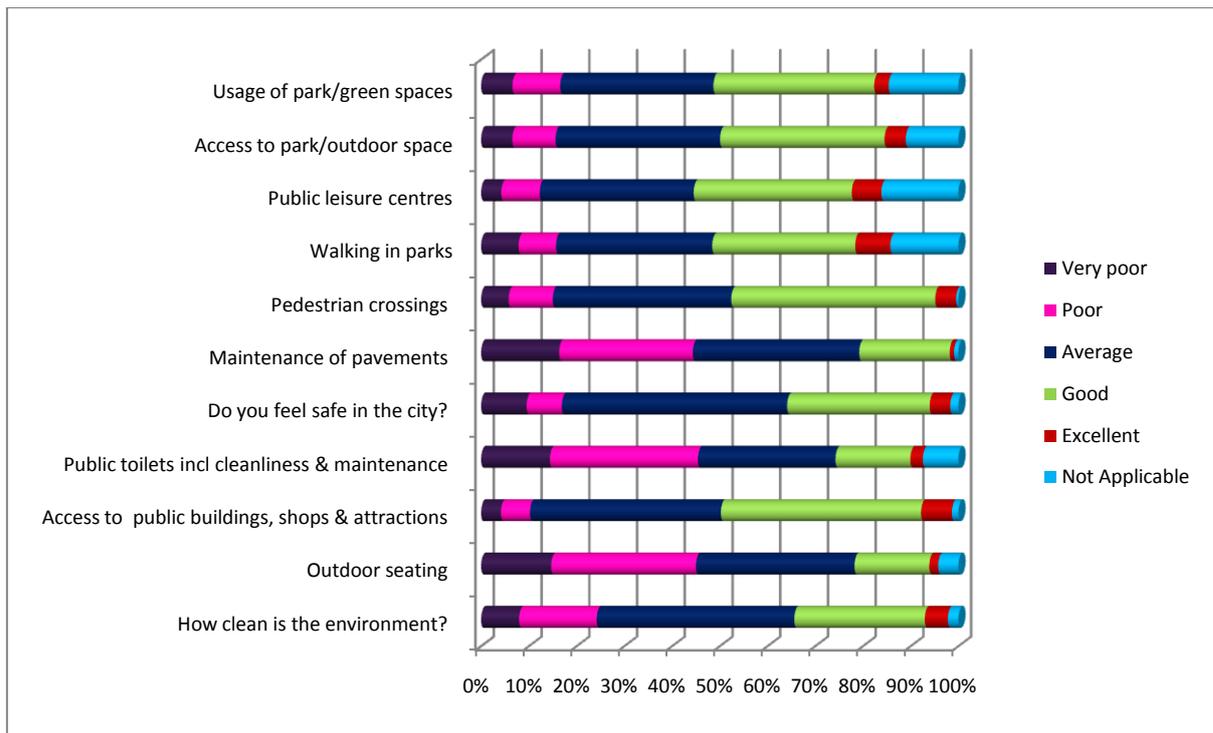
The HASP survey of 300 older people in Belfast asked respondents to rate outdoor spaces and buildings. Very few respondents rated each of the indicators as excellent, with most responses demonstrating an “average” or “good” response. While there is room for improvement in all of the indicators measured those indicators that scored highest, with approximately two thirds of respondents giving a rating of “average” or “good” included;

- Pedestrian crossings (32% average, 37% good)
- Access to public buildings, shops and other attractions (33% average, 34% good)
- Sense of safety in the city (42% average, 26% good)

Specific weaknesses reported are:

- Public toilets
- Outdoor seating
- Maintenance of pavements

**Fig. 7: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**



These findings are similar to those from the Belfast Healthy Cities consultation stand at a consultation event held in Titanic Belfast with 150 older people from across Belfast. The purpose of the stand was to gain the views of older people on outdoor space and buildings. Older people were shown twelve photographs of facilities and installations that might make city space more accessible and welcoming to older people. 50 older people participated in this consultation. Responses were collated and results show that the most popular responses were;

Clean, Accessible and Frequently Available Toilet Facilities / Public Seating / Safe and Even Public Footpaths / Adequate Street Lighting

#### 4.2 Stakeholder Feedback

DSD, Belfast City Centre Directorate will be delivering a number of public realm schemes within the City Centre as part of the Belfast City Centre Public Realm Improvement Strategy which sets out Government’s vision and approach to renewing the public streets and spaces in Belfast City Centre. The Belfast Streets Ahead project is one such initiative and is currently in Phase 3. This project provides surface treatments, street lighting and furniture as well as new trees to create an attractive pedestrian environment, promoting connectivity and linkages between key destinations and upgrading the quality of the external environment. DSD has advised that all projects will take account of the needs of an Age-friendly Belfast.

## 4.2 Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Summary and Challenges

The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life of older people and affect their ability to “age in place”. The availability of outdoor spaces for leisure and recreation is also important for the physical and mental wellbeing of all people and leisure activities encourage social contacts which in turn help to prevent isolation.

Belfast City Council manage an extensive range of recreational and leisure spaces and buildings, including parks, community gardens, allotments, leisure centres, community centres, public toilets and public venues such as the Ulster Hall and the Waterfront. They also offer free access before 11am to all leisure centres and discounts on a wide range of classes and activities.

Belfast’s external environment has undergone significant transformation in recent years with the Belfast City Centre Public Realm Improvement Strategy. This has seen investment in urban regeneration with improvements to streetscapes and general upgrading of the external environment.

In general survey and consultation responses were favourable with regards to the external environment. Areas for improvement identified included;

- The need for clean, accessible and frequently available toilet facilities
- Reduction in anti social behaviour in public parks
- Lifts in public buildings to aid access
- Safe and even public footpaths
- Gritting of pavements in Winter
- Reduction in litter
- Dog fouling
- Improved Neighbourhood policing
- Public Seating
- Adequate Street Lighting

Work is currently underway and will continue on:

- Work on dementia –friendly design taking place through the Dementia Centre NI and with advice from Age NI
- Implementation of Belfast City Council Public Toilet Strategy

## 5. TRANSPORTATION

Transportation, including accessible and affordable public transport, is a key factor influencing active ageing. In particular, being able to move about the city determines social and civic participation and access to community and health services.

### 5.1 Public Transport

Consultation has indicated very positive feedback about the availability of public transport in Belfast and in particular availability of free transport. The Department of Regional Development Roads Service has recently completed the Belfast on the Move project. This has reallocated road space in the city centre away from private cars, giving more priority for public transport, as part of the enabling measure for the Belfast Rapid Transit project.

Public transport availability includes;

- a) Translink operates the metro bus service in Belfast which has a network of 12 high frequency corridors along main arterial roads into Belfast city centre, with additional services operating throughout the Greater Belfast area. Translink report that buses operate a guaranteed service of between 5 to 10 minutes frequency during the day over the core portion of the corridor, Monday to Saturday. A reduced frequency of service operates on Sundays.
- b) The Metro service includes Easibus which provides localised routes to services such as health centres and clinics; local shops; housing for elderly people and shopping centres. Easibuses are fitted with ramps to make boarding easy.
- c) Ulsterbus service also operates from Laganside and the Europa Bus Centre, providing bus transport across Ireland. Both stations have ramp and level access for wheelchairs as well as wheelchair accessible toilets.
- d) Translink also operate the rail network which has 3 train stations and 6 rail halts in Belfast.
- e) Specialist transport services operate in Belfast for those who cannot use ordinary public transport and do not have access to a car. Such schemes include Department of Regional Development (DRD) funded services as well as services provided by voluntary and community sector operators. For example;
  - Disability Action Transport Service (DATS)
  - Red Cross transport and escort service

- Community Transport providers – Direct Links and Ardoyne Community Transport

Disability Action is responsible for operating their Transport Service throughout Northern Ireland. DATS is a local urban transport service for people with disabilities or for those who find it difficult using mainstream public transport. Membership is free but a fare is charged for each trip taken. It can be used for going to work, shopping, visiting and attending health related appointments. You have to apply to become a member of the scheme and there are criteria which people must meet. For example, those people over 80 years old automatically qualify for the scheme.

Anyone aged 60 to 64 can access free transport on all bus and rail journeys in Northern Ireland and all residents aged 65+ can access free all-Ireland and cross-border travel with a Senior SmartPass. Translink data shows that there are currently 218,254 Senior Smartpass customers in Northern Ireland, 45,866 of which live in Belfast (21%). Based upon 2011 population census figures this equates to 86% of the Belfast population aged 60+ that have a Smartpass.

73% of all Senior Smartpass holders have used their Smartpass at least once in the last 12 months. Between April 2012 and March 2013 there were;

- 946,585 Senior Smartpass uses on NI Railways services
- 3,839,883 Senior Smartpass uses on Ulsterbus services
- 4,041,156 Senior Smartpass uses on Metro services

DRD's Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 2009 – 2011 shows that only 3% of journeys undertaken by males aged 60+ and 4% of journeys undertaken by females aged 60+ are with Translink's bus service. Most journeys were taken by car or walking. Men and women made a similar number of journeys each year (919 for men, 910 for women). However, men travelled 28% further than women, averaging 7,137 miles a year, compared to 5,571 miles for women. The difference was greatest among those aged 60+ where the distance travelled by men was 34% more than women on average.

Translink has introduced the following to ensure that services, facilities and passenger information are accessible for all;

- The Metro service has low floored buses, making access on and off the buses easier for older people
- Timetables are available in large print
- Customers can use the Action on Hearing Loss Text Relay System to contact local bus and rail stations

- New bus and train stations have been purposefully designed to have all facilities on one level, tactile flooring and wheelchair accessible toilets.
- Access to all trains can be made by steps or passenger ramps.

Belfast City Council also runs a free bus service for older people (aged 50 or above) travelling to and from Roselawn Cemetery and City of Belfast Crematorium. Staff are available at Roselawn Cemetery to help passengers find their loved one's grave or memorial tree.

## **5.2 Shopmobility**

Shopmobility Belfast is a charity that provides electric scooters, powered wheelchairs and manual wheelchairs free of charge for daily use. Their aim is to help people with mobility problems to use the facilities of Belfast City Centre and surrounding areas with greater freedom, independence and dignity. The service is open to everyone who finds access to the city centre difficult, including people with disabilities, older people or those who, due to accident or illness, find themselves with temporary mobility difficulties.

Shopmobility Belfast is located at the following venues across the city:

- Westgate House
- Gresham Street
- Park Centre
- Connswater
- Victoria Square
- Forestside
- Titanic Centre
- Royal Hospital
- Europa Bus Station

## **5.3 Imtac**

The Accessible Transport Strategy, published by Government in 2005, confirmed the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (Imtac) as the main source of independent advice to Government and others in Northern Ireland on all transport issues that affect the mobility of older people and disabled people. Imtac works closely with policy makers and transport providers to ensure that accessibility for disabled people and older people is a major consideration in the development of transport policy and transport services. Imtac is resourced by DRD. Imtac has recently completed a survey of the Blue Badge Scheme as part of the monitoring process on the misuse of disabled parking.

## **5.4 Survey and Consultation Findings**

Belfast respondents report favourably on transport availability which enables them to stay in contact with family, to take holidays, to go shopping, to access services

and to socialise. Good transportation ensures that older people do not become isolated in their home.

Feedback from older people indicates that there are still improvements to be made in terms of;

- Reliability and frequency of transport
- Suitability of routes
- Accessibility of information and
- Safety on public transport

Consultation with older people has made reference to customer care and bus driver attitudes which are considered to be inconsistent. Negative comments included the perception that some drivers;

- move away from the stop before older people have sat down
- don't stop close enough to the footpath (although it was acknowledged that this can be difficult if cars are parked at bus stops)
- do not lower ramps for older people

Translink operate a complaints procedure and aim to provide a full response to 90% of complaints within 10 working days of acknowledgement and respond to all complaints within 15 working days of receiving them.

Reference was made at the Age NI consultation of the fact that participants had witnessed improvements in driver behaviour which some felt was attributable to the training DVD produced by Engage With Age.

The JAM Card (an abbreviation of 'Just a Minute') was launched in Belfast in 2012 by the NOW project, a Belfast-based supported employment and training organisation that works with people with learning disabilities. The card is a credit card-sized plastic card that people with learning disabilities/difficulties can carry and use to alert staff in retail outlets, public/private transport providers and other areas of public life that the card-holder needs Just a Minute of patience and time.

HASP survey weaknesses reported were in respect to taxis and affordability of transport (other than bus and rail which are free). Consultation indicated that older people considered taxis to be expensive and that fares / charges were inconsistent. A maximum taxi fare will be introduced in autumn 2014 which will prevent overcharging and all taxis in Northern Ireland will have to adhere to this.

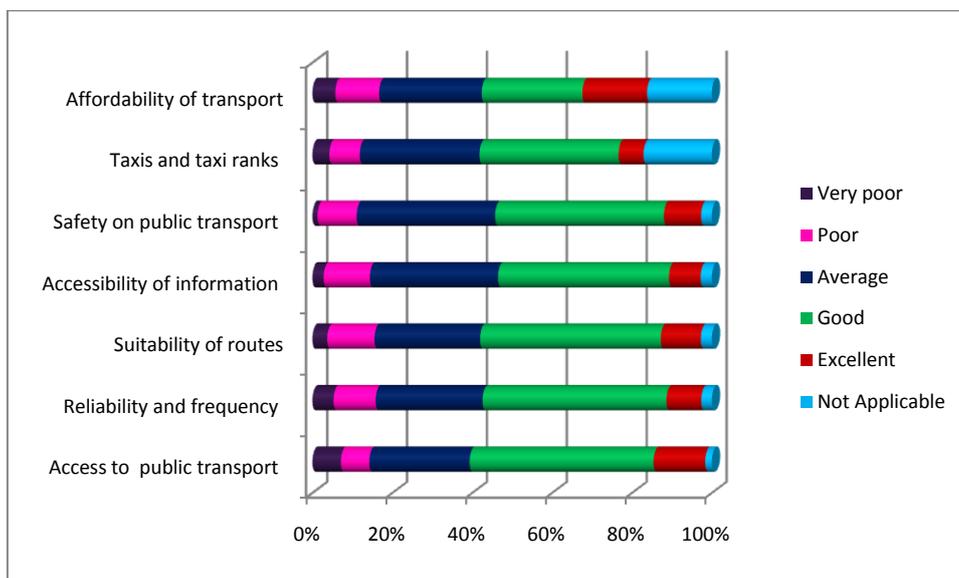
There are three types of Taxis operating in Belfast;

- Public hire working from a designated stand and can be hailed in the street

- Taxi buses work like buses on routes, picking up and leaving off passengers at bus stops on demand. Taxi buses (Black taxis) in Belfast serve North and West Belfast and the Shankill and are an important public transport resource for the communities in these areas.
- Private taxis must be pre-booked

Respondents report however that taxis are reliable and the accessibility of being lifted at the door is very important.

**Fig.8: Assessment of Public Transport**



DRD’s Accessible Transport Strategy is focused upon ensuring an accessible transport system that enables older people and people with disabilities to participate more fully in society, enjoy greater independence and experience a better quality of life. The Action Plan 2012-2015 acknowledges that *“too many disabled people and older people continue to find it difficult to get around because of the design of services, lack of suitable information and the cost of travel. Some have a lack of confidence to travel, with gaps in the travel chain still making services difficult to access.”*

### 5.5 Access to a Private Car

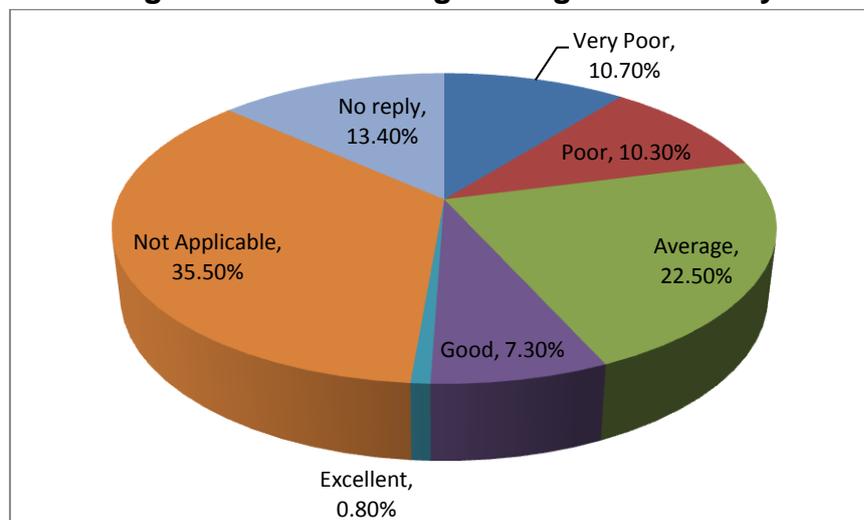
Access to a private car is significant for those people for whom access to public transport may be difficult. Most recent census figures are not available yet with respect to the number of pensioner households that do not have access to a car. The HASP survey of 300 older people shows however that when asked to rate

access to a car, 33% responded that this question was not applicable and 29% did not answer the question. As a minimum one third of respondents did not have access to a car although, an assumption could be made that those who did not respond may not have a car either, indicating that 62% of respondents potentially may not have access to a car.

DRD' s Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 2009 – 2011 shows that driving licence holding tends to decrease in older age groups, particularly those aged 70 and over (56%). There is also a gender gap in licence holding which is most noticeable in the 70+ age group where there is a difference of 39 percentage points between men (79%) and women (40%).

Fig. 9 shows that HASP survey respondents that have access to a car find ease of driving through Belfast city a relatively poor experience. There have been changes within Belfast City Centre recently as a result of the Belfast on the Move project which has resulted in the reallocation of road space away from private cars, giving more priority for public transport, as part of the enabling measure for the Belfast Rapid Transit project. As part of these works, improved facilities have been provided for pedestrians, who wish to cross inner city streets, and for Blue Badge holders, who wish to park close to the pedestrian core of the city.

**Fig.9: Ease of Driving Through Belfast City**



Availability and affordability of parking was not rated highly with only 8% and 2% respectively rating each as excellent or good.

## 5.6 Road Safety

PSNI statistics on road traffic collisions are the main source of information used in Northern Ireland for monitoring and tracking trends on the number of persons killed, seriously and slightly injured as a result of collisions on our roads. In 2011 175 people aged 60+ were casualties of a reported traffic collision in Belfast. Of these 1 person was killed, 19 were seriously injured and 155 were slightly injured.

A recent PSNI report<sup>23</sup> on Northern Ireland road traffic collisions and casualties identifies the following statistics in respect to people aged 65+;

- Older people, aged 65+, accounted for 12 fatalities in 2012, one quarter of the total number of 48 fatalities in that year.
- There were 86 older people seriously injured as a result of a road traffic collision in 2012, down from 110 in 2011.
- In contrast to those aged 16-24, the number of those people aged 65+ that were slightly injured in 2012 increased in comparison to previous years. There were 549 people aged 65+ slightly injured in a road traffic collision in 2012, up from 510 in 2011 and from 494 in 2008.
- The proportion of persons aged over 65 killed in a collision in 2012 was 3 times greater than the proportion of those aged 16-24.

Roads Service developments in Belfast have seen improvements to pedestrian crossings, with all existing pedestrian crossings upgraded and fully in line with current design standards. Additional controlled crossing points have been provided at over 20 locations and an additional 40 disabled parking bays have been introduced.

## 5.7 Stakeholder Feedback

- There is ongoing work on the delivery of the Accessible Transport Strategy, addressing issues and challenges that have been articulated by older people.
- DRD advise that the design stage of the Belfast on the Move project included full engagement with groups representing people with reduced mobility, to ensure all works met their needs and expectations. The design process also included an EQIA which specifically addressed the needs of the elderly, as one of the Section 75 groups.
- DRD report that they will consider options to improve the current passenger information systems for buses following completion of an on bus audio visual pilot and subject to funding, assess any subsequent opportunities offered by new technology to enhance existing systems. They have identified a number of barriers in their Accessible Transport Strategy Action Plan, which they will seek to address. These include physical, attitudinal, information provision, type of transport services available and their affordability.

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<sup>23</sup> PSNI Police Recorded Injury Road traffic Collisions and casualties in Northern Ireland – detailed Trends report, June 2013

## 5.8 Transport Summary and Challenges

Transportation, including accessible and affordable public transport, is a key factor influencing active ageing. In particular, being able to move about the city determines social and civic participation and access to community and health services.

DRD's Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 2009-2011 shows that driving licence holding tends to decrease in older age groups and also there is a gender gap in licence holding which is most noticeable in the 70+ age group where there is a difference of 39 percentage points between men (79%) and women (40%). There is therefore a reliance and dependence by older people upon public transport.

Consultation has indicated very positive feedback about the availability of public transport in Belfast and in particular the availability of free transport. Older people advise that a good public transport system enables them to stay in contact with family, to take holidays, to go shopping, to access services and to socialise. Good transportation ensures that older people do not become isolated in their home.

DRD's Accessible Transport Strategy is focused upon ensuring an accessible transport system that enables older people and people with disabilities to participate more fully in society, enjoy greater independence and experience a better quality of life. The strategy resulted in the establishment of the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory committee (IMTAC) who work closely with policy makers and transport providers to ensure that accessibility for older people and disabled people is a major consideration in the development of transport policy and transport services.

Transport was identified by HASP survey respondents as the third most important priority for an Age-friendly city. Areas for improvement highlighted include;

- consistent customer care across the bus network
- improved reliability and frequency of bus services
- improved route network of the bus service
- Better regulation of parking – misuse of disability spaces, parking on footpaths, parking in bus lanes
- increased Sunday bus service
- digital signage at all bus stops
- consistent taxi charges
- more priority parking
- increased priority seating on buses
- improved access to door to door service

Work is currently underway and will continue on:

- Use and promotion of the Just a Minute Card (JAM) and new DRD Access Travel Wallet
- Actions on transport resulting from the Accessible Transport Strategy, Consumer Council Surveys, Translink focus group, IMTAC surveys and Greater Belfast Seniors Forum mystery shopper surveys
- Promotion of Shopmobility Hubs for older people with disabilities
- Ensuring that older people are involved in developing Belfast Strategic Partnership Active Travel Strategy for Belfast

## 6. HOUSING

Housing is essential to safety and well-being. There is a link between appropriate housing and access to community and social services and in influencing the independence and quality of life of older people. WHO state that research shows that housing and support to allow older people to age comfortably and safely within the community to which they belong are universally valued.

Housing is a basic need and the type, location and condition of housing can have a significant impact on a person's health. With respect to older people good housing conditions can help older people remain active, independent and socially included.

### 6.1 Housing Statistics

a) On Census day 2011 there were;

- 14,555 one person households in Belfast where the resident was aged 65+. This equates to 12% of all households in Belfast.
- 6,357 one family houses where all people were aged 65+ (5% of all households)
- 615 households were other household types where all residents were aged 65+

b) Data from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive<sup>24</sup> show that in Belfast there are 1,223 applicants aged 60+ on the housing waiting list of which 65% (789 people) are in housing stress<sup>25</sup>. In West Belfast, 70% of older people on the waiting list are in housing stress.

**Table 4: NIHE Housing Need Assessment**

Area	Total No of Housing Applicants	Older Applicants		Older applicants in Housing Stress	
		No	%	No	%
<b>North Belfast</b>	2,501	225	9%	149	66%
<b>West Belfast</b>	3,652	435	12%	305	70%
<b>South &amp; East Belfast</b>	4,381	563	13%	335	60%
<b>TOTAL</b>	10,534	1,223	12%	789	65%

<sup>24</sup> NIHE, Belfast District Housing Plan & Local Housing Strategy 2013/2014

<sup>25</sup> A household is in housing stress if it is on the Housing Executive waiting list and assessed to be in the most need, for reasons of health, intimidation, insecurity of tenure and housing conditions

- c) In June 2012 the Disabled Facilities Grant, to improve the home of a person with a disability, was approved for 140 applicants in Belfast and 90 of these were aged 60+
- d) There were 8,440 Housing Benefit claimants aged 65+ in Belfast LGD in 2012.

## **6.2 Housing Condition**

The 2011 House Condition Survey estimated that there were some 35,200 dwellings that were statutorily unfit in Northern Ireland. This represents a headline rate of 4.6%, compared to 2.4% in 2009, 3.4% in 2006 and 4.9% in 2001. The three most common reasons for a property being classified as unfit in 2011 were:

- Unsatisfactory facilities for the preparation and cooking of food (26,300 dwellings)
- No, or unsuitably located, bath, shower or wash hand basin (24,600 dwellings)
- Serious disrepair (22,200 dwellings)

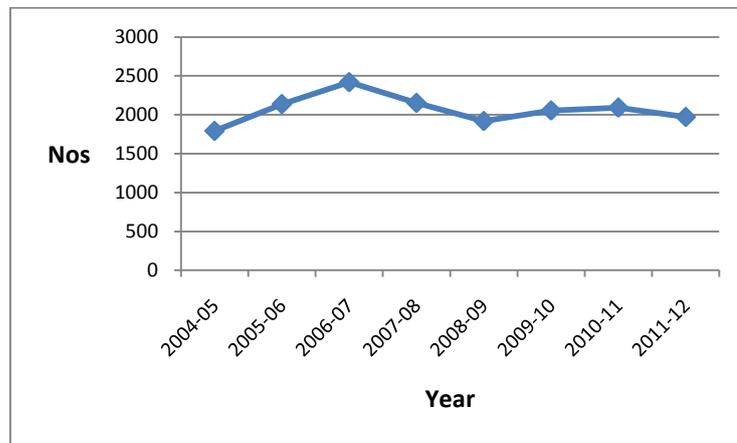
The state of repair of a dwelling is also a key element of the Decent Homes Standard. In order for a dwelling to be considered “decent” it must be in “a reasonable state of repair”. The 2011 House Condition Survey highlights that;

- dwellings occupied by an older Household Reference Person (and particularly one aged at least 75) had a much higher average repair cost than the comparable figure for the occupied stock as a whole. For example, for dwellings with a household reference person aged at least 75, the basic repair cost was £1,189 compared to the average of £644.
- Household Reference Persons over the age of 75 were much more likely to live in non-decent homes than other age groups.

## **6.3 Homelessness**

In 2011/12 there were 492 people in Belfast aged 60+ who were homeless. NI Housing Statistics 2011-2012 show that NI pensioner households presenting as homelessness has increased by 10% between 2004/05 and 2011/12. The NI increase for all households presenting as homeless has increased by 14% over the same period.

**Fig. 10: NI Pensioner Households Presenting as Homelessness, 2004/05 to 2011/12**

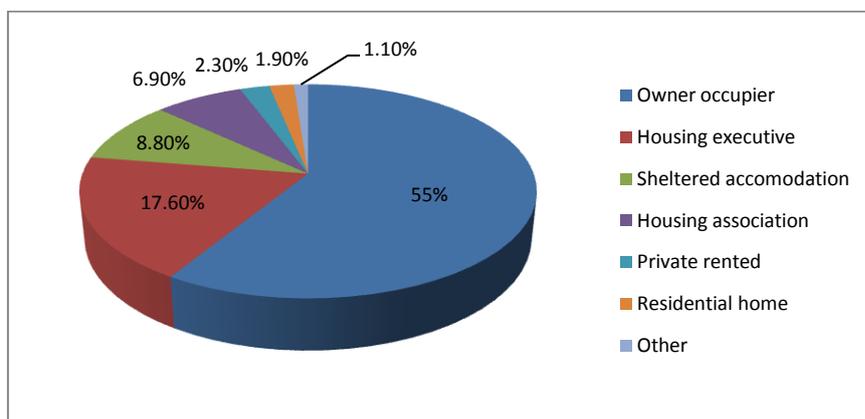


Statistics on Homelessness are sourced from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). Under the Housing (NI) Order 1988, NIHE has a statutory responsibility to secure permanent accommodation for persons who are unintentionally homeless and in priority need, to secure temporary accommodation in a variety of circumstances and to provide advice and assistance to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. NIHE published their Homeless Strategy in May 2012 and the Promoting Social Inclusion Homelessness Partnership, which brings together a wide range of agencies, has been meeting regularly to commence implementing the actions contained in the strategy. The overarching aim is to eliminate long term homelessness and rough sleeping across Northern Ireland by 2020.

#### 6.4 Survey and Consultation Findings

The HASP survey of 300 older people identified that the majority of respondents were owner occupiers (55%).

**Fig.11: What Type of Housing Do You Live In?**

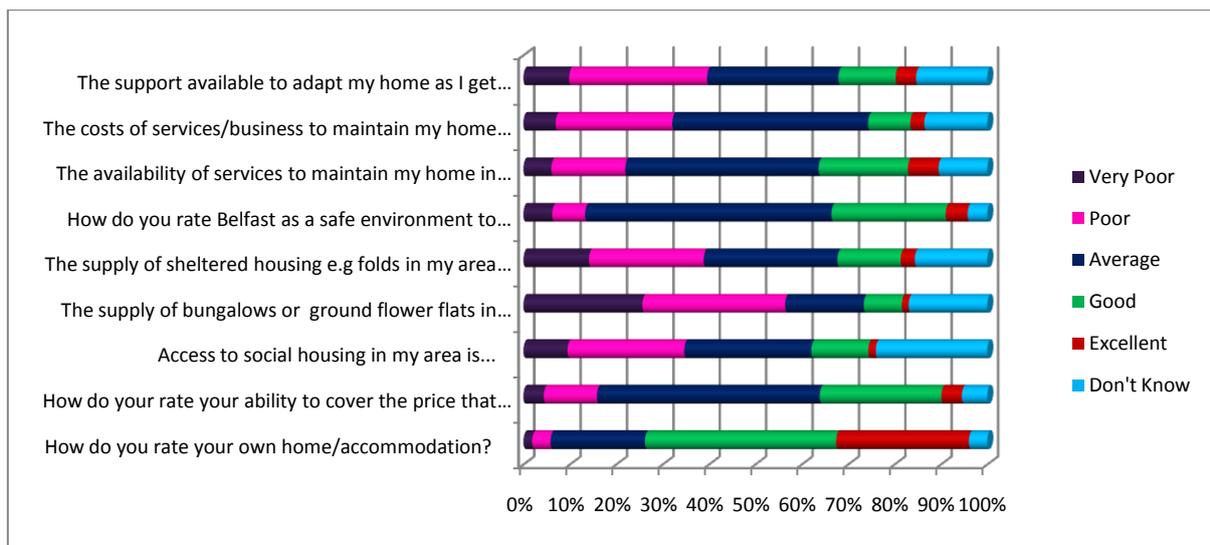


Respondents were asked to rate variables in respect to their home / accommodation. The rating of respondents' own homes scored highest with 55% rating their home as excellent or good. 'Very poor' and 'poor' responses were higher for;

- The supply of bungalows / ground floor flats
- The support available to adapt homes
- The supply of sheltered housing
- Access to social housing

Consultation findings have indicated that there is concern amongst older people of the availability of appropriate housing for older people. If people were thinking of downsizing from their own home or moving in later years to housing that is more manageable for an elderly person, respondents feel that there is not the availability of such housing.

**Fig.12: Assessment of Housing**



Other “average” responses to the HASP survey in respect to housing issues included ability of respondents to cover the price for their homes and costs of services to maintain homes. Consultation has indicated that;

- The economic recession is impacting upon home owners who report that they are trapped and unable to sell their homes and downsize
- Home owners are unable to afford the modifications needed to their homes to make them more Age-friendly
- There are difficulties in accessing affordable handyman services

A recent research report<sup>26</sup> completed by the NIHE on behalf of DSD looked at the housing aspirations of older people aged between 50 and 70 years old in relation to the suitability of their current housing circumstances and their housing aspirations as they grow older. Key findings from this survey show that;

- Almost two-thirds (63%) said they thought their current accommodation will continue to meet their needs as they get older, compared to 21% who said it would not and 16% who had not thought about their long term accommodation needs
- The most common accommodation type cited by more than half (51%) of those planning to move was 'bungalow/ground floor accommodation'. More than half of this sub-group (52%) said they planned to live in the owner-occupied sector, compared to 40% who wanted social housing
- Respondents were asked to think about the future and their current home and what they saw as potential barriers to remaining in their current home as they get older. Almost half (47%) of all respondents said they could see no barriers and 29% cited 'declining mobility'.
- When asked about the importance of measures to assist people to stay in their homes as they grow older - 79% rated practical help with repairs as important, 75% rated advice/information on available support as important, as did similar proportions of respondents who rated the importance of assistance with day-to-day household tasks (73%) and a grant to help with repairs/welfare adaptations (72%).

NIHE research on the Future Housing and Support Needs of Older People<sup>27</sup> concludes that older people in future will mostly be home owners, with the proportion likely to increase significantly between 2006 and 2016 simply by the ageing of those with higher levels of home ownership about to enter older age. The research reports strong evidence that older people wish to maintain their independence in their own homes for as long as possible and that in many instances; this would require at most small levels of assistive input. A range of positive and negative 'pull' factors are identified that encourage older people to remain in their homes, as well as negative 'push' factors necessitating a move. Positive pull factors included;

- the maintenance of control and independence
- proximity of family
- emotional and practical ties to home, community and neighbourhood;
- retention of ownership
- value of assets

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<sup>26</sup> NIHE, Research on the Future Housing Aspirations of Older People, March 2013

<sup>27</sup> The Future Housing and Housing and Support Needs of Older People in Northern Ireland, Chris Paris, November 2010

Negative pull factors included;

- the lack of information about alternatives
- lack of realistic and/or local alternatives
- fear of upheaval and change
- reluctance of home owners to lose home and/or savings by going into rented housing
- fear of the cost of any other types of care

Push factors included;

- substandard or unsuitable accommodation, combined with inability to access grant funding for adaptations or repairs
- loneliness or isolation
- concern about security
- physical impairments or ill health
- a need to be nearer facilities and amenities
- fuel poverty and/or making ends meet in current home
- the burden of repairs
- maintenance and garden upkeep

The report highlights a limited awareness among older people about the assistance available either in the form of one-off grants or ad-hoc support through 'care and repair' schemes. The report also identified that health-related frailty emerged as a major reason for needing to move, and the rapid growth in the number of older people, especially those over 85, implies a growing need for care-related residential accommodation, especially relating to the near-certain rapid growth in the number of people suffering from dementia.

Reference is also made to the Bamford Review (2007) which commented on the limited housing options available for people with dementia and functional mental illness, and recommended that future planning must allow for a wider range of options. It is reported "*Acknowledging that many people with dementia will remain in their own homes, the report nevertheless advocated a choice of supported self-contained dwellings which are domestic and homely, as well as a choice of small group settings for those unable to live independently, but for whom a large nursing unit would prove unsuitable. Bamford also recommended that housing provision should include floating support, home support/personal care services and supported living accommodation.*"<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> The Future Housing and Housing and Support Needs of Older People in Northern Ireland, Chris Paris, November 2010

An Inter Departmental Review of Housing Adaptions Services<sup>29</sup> was launched in 2010, reviewing the current system of approval, resources and delivery of housing adaptations in Northern Ireland. The rationale for the review was that demographic trends indicated growing demand for services as the population ages and the Government has an obligation to ensure, through collaborative working, that resources are being used effectively and are helping as many people as possible. The review highlighted that there are a range of demographic, social and medical factors which will significantly increase future demand on health, social care and housing services in Northern Ireland. Also, evidence is emerging, demonstrating the benefits of housing adaptations and assistive technology in promoting the health and wellbeing of our population and cost savings for public services of such investment.

Amongst the recommendations made were the following which make specific reference to older people;

- a) The provision of advice and guidance - DSD and DHSSPS should explore the potential of establishing a Housing Options Service pilot to support older people in particular, to make choices about their housing.
- b) The need for a focussed review to determine how Electronic Assistive Technology can support service provision for older and disabled people.
- c) Improvements in design standards for all new build housing to include a lifetime home standard which would reduce the scale of need for future housing adaptations- it is accepted that lifetime homes may need future adaptations but the home is designed to make these relatively easy and cost effective to provide.

## **6.5 Supporting People Programme**

The Supporting People programme (from 2003), administered through NIHE, funds a range of housing support services for older people in Belfast:

- in sheltered housing schemes
- through provision of floating support and peripatetic services (i.e. BCM's 60+ service now extended across Belfast which also has a handyman element)
- in supported accommodation for older people who are frail or who have dementia (Mullan Mews, Sydenham Court, Hemsworth House)

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<sup>29</sup> Conducted by the Department for Social Development (DSD) and Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSS&PS)

- The Home Improvement Agency advice and information service provided by the Fold Staying Put service.

Commissioning of housing support services for a range of client groups including older people is through the Supporting People Commissioning process. Housing support needs are identified and prioritised by the local Belfast Area Supporting People Partnership (HSCB, Trust and Supporting People Area Team).

The future housing support needs of older people, as a key thematic client group, are prioritised in the new Housing Related Support Strategy 2012-15. An implementation Plan will be developed in autumn 2013 following public consultation on the new strategy earlier in 2013. The strategy acknowledges the range of housing related support needs of older people and the need for a continuum of service provision to respond to these needs.

## 6.6 Belfast City Council Home Safety Check Scheme

Belfast City Council has been at the forefront of Home Accident Prevention since the inception of a Home Safety Pilot Scheme in 1992. They offer free home safety checks for elderly and young families. The checks offer tips on all aspects of home safety, as well as specialist advice on topics like heating and energy saving. The advisors can:

- highlight potential risk areas in the home
- carry out minor repairs or modifications, free of charge
- replace dangerous plugs or fuses
- arrange for safety equipment to be delivered
- refer residents for a free smoke alarm installation

## 6.7 Community Safety

In 2011/12 there were 1,550 victims aged 60+ of recorded crime in Belfast<sup>30</sup>. The HASP survey asked respondents “how do you rate Belfast as a safe environment to live in?” 43% of respondents replied “average”. This response is reflected also in the findings from the 2011 Senior Citizens convention. A survey amongst the 202 older participants at the convention showed that 48% feel “fairly safe” in their neighbourhood. 29% reported that they feel “very safe” and approximately one fifth of attendees feel unsafe in their neighbourhood. 54% of attendees reported that they were very or fairly worried about anti-social behaviour in their local area. The NI Crime Survey<sup>31</sup> confirms that in terms of personal safety, older respondents were much more likely to feel very unsafe walking alone after dark, with those aged 75+

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<sup>30</sup> NINIS

<sup>31</sup> Department of Justice, Perceptions of Crime, Findings from the 2009/10 Northern Ireland Crime Survey

over four times as likely to feel very unsafe as people aged under 35. Additionally, respondent groups most likely to state that their lives are greatly affected by 'fear of crime' include women aged 75+.

Addressing community safety issues is a focus of the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) which is a new body established under the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to help make communities safer. In Belfast there is one overarching Partnership as well as four District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (North, South, East and West). Each Partnership is made up of elected and independent members and representatives from the statutory sector. The aim of the partnerships is to build safer, shared and confident communities by:

- engaging and consulting to help improve policing and community safety
- working in partnership with local communities, partners and agencies
- encouraging cooperation with, and inspiring confidence in, the justice system and, in particular the police

The Partnerships are tasked with identifying community safety issues and working in partnership with stakeholders and the local community to address the issues.

## **6.8 Neighbourhood Watch**

Neighbourhood Watch is one of the largest and most well-known crime prevention initiatives in NI. The scheme is promoted, supported and endorsed at a strategic level by a partnership between the Department of Justice, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB). At an operational level, the programme is supported through PSNI District Command Units and Policing and Community Safety Partnerships.

Neighbourhood watch is a method of developing close liaison between households in a neighbourhood, local police and other relevant agencies. The aim is to help people protect themselves and their property, and to reduce the fear of crime by:

- Improving home security
- Promoting greater vigilance
- Fostering community spirit
- Improving the environment

A mapping exercise of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes<sup>32</sup> compiled by Dr John Topping, University of Ulster highlights that;

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<sup>32</sup> Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Watch Participatory Mapping and Socio Demographic Uptake, Dr John Topping, University of Ulster

- 0.5% of schemes are located in Output Areas (OAs) that reside within the top 10% most deprived areas and 90% are located in OAs that reside within the bottom 10% least deprived areas
- 1.1% of schemes are located in OAs which reside in the top 10% highest crime areas and 89% of schemes are located in OAs which reside in the bottom 5% of the lowest crime areas
- 14% of schemes are located in OAs with a majority (80+) Catholic population and 55% are located in OAs with a majority (80+) Protestant population

A recent evaluation of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme<sup>33</sup> concludes that there is evidence to suggest that Neighbourhood Watch helps to reduce instances of antisocial behaviour and that such schemes play an important role in reducing the fear of crime, especially amongst older people

## 6.9 Stakeholder Feedback

### a) Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)

NIHE is the Regional Housing Authority for Northern Ireland and undertakes a range of functions including the management of the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) and housing management of its stock across NI. From 2008 NIHE prioritised and commissioned a suite of older people housing related research in relation to the future housing and housing related needs of older people – Housing related information and advice; Retirement Villages; The Role of Electronic Assistive Technology; Home Improvement Agency Services; Equity Release; The Future Role of sheltered Housing; The Future Housing and Housing Related Needs of Older People.

The Future Role of Sheltered Housing<sup>34</sup> highlights that;

- Most residents are happy with sheltered accommodation in terms of the type of housing and services.
- High proportions of applicants offered sheltered housing turn down the offer and it was identified that the benefits of sheltered housing are not always promoted and highlighted to prospective tenants and older people in general, and that many older people have limited knowledge of what sheltered housing is and what services are on offer.
- Sheltered housing in NI is in good physical condition with good accessibility.

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<sup>33</sup> DOJ, NI Policing Board, PSNI, Evaluation of Neighbourhood Watch, Perceptive Insight, July 2012

<sup>34</sup> The Role of Sheltered Housing in Northern Ireland and future issues, Fiona Boyle Associates, September 2012

- The survey of tenants indicated that for nearly two thirds of respondents (61%), a public transport stop was within 400 yards of the sheltered housing scheme. Substantial proportions stated that their scheme was not within walking distance of a post office (41%), a GP (46%), a supermarket (23%) and other services (46%).

NIHE through the Belfast Area Supporting People Partnership acknowledges that older people's housing needs continue to be a priority and will be an important strategic driver in the new Housing Related Support Strategy 2012-15.

The provision of new build social housing in recent years is in line with DSD policy for the provision of flats rather than single storey bungalow accommodation and all new social housing is developed based on local identified need and built to Decent Homes Standard and Lifetime Homes Standard.

### **b) Department for Social Development (DSD)**

- The Homelessness Strategy (2012) and Action Plan will address priorities. A number of sub-groups have been established by DSD to take this work forward which may impact on issues for older homeless people.
- DSD advise that they will be developing a new energy efficiency / fuel poverty scheme for 2014 and will continue to deliver new, high quality social housing.
- DSD has launched their Empty Homes Strategy 2013 – 2018

### **c) Linking Generations NI**

Linking Generations NI has a regional proposal recently approved by DOJ which looks at all-age approaches to community safety, working closely with Belfast Police and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP).

## 6.10 Housing Summary and Challenges

Housing is essential to safety and well-being. There is a link between appropriate housing and access to community and social services and in influencing the independence and quality of life of older people. As a basic need, the type, location and condition of housing can have a significant impact on a person's health and can help older people remain active, independent and socially included.

Housing was identified by HASP survey respondents as the second most important priority for an Age-friendly city. However research has indicated that there are issues and concerns to be addressed. Specifically in 2011/12 there were 492 people aged 60+ who were homeless and there are 1,223 applicants aged 60+ on the NIHE's housing waiting list of which 65% are in housing stress.

NIHE research on the Future Housing and Support Needs of Older People<sup>35</sup> concludes that older people in future will mostly be home owners and identified strong evidence that older people wish to maintain independence in their own homes for as long as possible. In many instances, this would require at most small levels of assistive input. A more recent NIHE research report<sup>36</sup> looked at the housing aspirations of older people in relation to the suitability of their current housing circumstances and their housing aspirations as they grow older. This survey identified that 63% of respondents said their current accommodation would meet their needs while 21% did not and 16% had not thought about their long term needs. Of those who planned to move, bungalow / ground floor accommodation was the most common housing aspiration. When asked about the importance of measures to assist people to stay in their homes as they grow older - 79% rated practical help with repairs as important, 75% rated advice/information on available support as important, as did similar proportions of respondents who rated the importance of assistance with day-to-day household tasks (73%) and a grant to help with repairs/welfare adaptations (72%).

HASP survey respondents (55% of which were owner occupiers and 33% social housing tenants) report a concern about the availability of appropriate housing (bungalow, ground floor flat). They also report that;

- The economic recession is impacting upon home owners who report that they are trapped and unable to sell their homes and downsize
- Home owners are unable to afford the modifications needed to their homes to make them more Age-friendly
- There are difficulties in accessing affordable handyman services

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<sup>35</sup>The Future Housing and Housing and Support Needs of Older People in Northern Ireland, Chris Paris, November 2010

<sup>36</sup> NIHE, Research on the Future Housing Aspirations of Older People, March 2013

Housing support mechanisms available to older people include;

- The Supporting People programme administered through NIHE and which funds a range of housing support services for older people
- The Disabled Facilities Grant scheme
- Belfast City Council's Home Safety check scheme

Handyman schemes – Good Morning North Belfast, Belfast Central Mission and Bryson

The research has identified the following areas for improvement;

- need to meet the housing needs of homeless older people
- need to address the housing needs of older people in housing stress
- affordability of home modifications
- financial support for home modifications
- provision of single storey accommodation
- improve older people's sense of security
- address anti-social behaviour in communities
- improve access to handyman schemes across the city
- delays in repair and maintenance work in social and private rented accommodation
- vacant properties in communities

Work is currently underway and will continue on:

- Implementation of the Department for Social Development's Housing Strategy and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Homelessness Strategy
- Development of a pilot handyperson scheme by Bryson Care

## 7. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Social participation and social support are strongly connected to good health and wellbeing throughout life. Participating in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities in the community, as well as with the family, allows older people to continue to exercise their competence, to enjoy respect and esteem, and to maintain or establish supportive and caring relationships. It fosters social integration and is the key to staying informed. WHO indicate that the capacity to participate in formal and informal social life depends not only on the offer of activities, but also on having adequate access to transportation and facilities and on getting information about activities.

### 7.1 Activities

Belfast City Council operates a calendar of events throughout the year as well as funding and resourcing community based activity. For example, events include;

- Parks based events (Music in the Parks takes place across Belfast from May to September each year, summer fun days, Spring Fair, Autumn Fair, Rose week)
- Weekly St Georges Market
- Cultural events
- Older people's arts festival
- Musical events
- Literary and reminiscence events
- Cinema programme

The Council operates city wide venues - the Waterfront, and Ulster hall as well as 10 Leisure centres<sup>37</sup> and 22 community centres which offer an ongoing programme of activity for older residents, for example;

- |                                   |                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| • Over 50's young at heart        | • Tea dance      |
| • Seniors tennis                  | • Boccia         |
| • Keep fit, chair & aqua aerobics | • Thai Chi       |
| • Wellness classes                | • Women's groups |
| • Lunch clubs                     | • Computers      |

Residents over 60, have free access to all leisure centres until 11am, Monday to Friday, as well being able to avail of discounts on a wide range of classes and

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<sup>37</sup> Anderstonstown, Avoniel, Ballysillan, Falls, Grove, Loughside, Olympia, Shankill, Whiterock and Indoor Tennis Centre and Ozone Complex

activities. As discussed previously however only 0.2% of the resident population aged 60+ has a Boost card that enables older people to avail of free use and discounts.

Belfast has a strong community infrastructure, with a healthy and vibrant older people's sector. It is estimated that there are approximately 400 to 500 community groups providing services and activities across the city. There are currently six senior citizens forums in Belfast which are representative of many active local networks and they are reported to be an excellent source of circulating information at a local level. Senior Citizens forums include;

- West Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
- Greater Shankill Senior Citizens Forum
- North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
- South Belfast Lifestyle Forum
- Belfast East Seniors Forum
- Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum

However consultations acknowledge that there are many isolated older people in Belfast who are not involved in any groups.

## 7.2 Survey and Consultation Findings

Consultation feedback has indicated that in general older residents believe that Belfast has a wide variety of activities available for older people. However results from the HASP survey indicate that there is still room for improvement. When asked about events and activities it is important to acknowledge that approximately one quarter of respondents (average 27%) either did not reply or responded "not applicable" to the questions. This would infer that respondents are not engaged in such activities if they are unable to comment on them.

- 34% of respondents reported that the variety of events and activities was excellent or good (18% replied very poor or poor)
- 19% of respondents reported that the variety of sports and physical activities was excellent or good (19% replied very poor or poor)
- 18% of respondents reported that the affordability of events and activities was excellent or good (24% replied very poor or poor)
- 27% of respondents reported that the availability of health and fitness programmes / activities in their area was excellent or good (26% replied very poor or poor)
- 25% of respondents reported that the availability of indoor facilities for physical activity in their area was excellent or good (30% replied very poor or poor)

- 15% of respondents reported that the availability of outdoor facilities for physical activity in their area was excellent or good (36% replied very poor or poor)

37% of those surveyed by HASP described their level of physical activity as excellent or good while approximately one quarter of respondents describe their level of physical activity as very poor or poor.

### 7.3 Provision of Information, Affordability and Timing of Events

Older people need to know about activities and opportunities in order to participate. Belfast City Council distributes information to residents in a variety of formats;

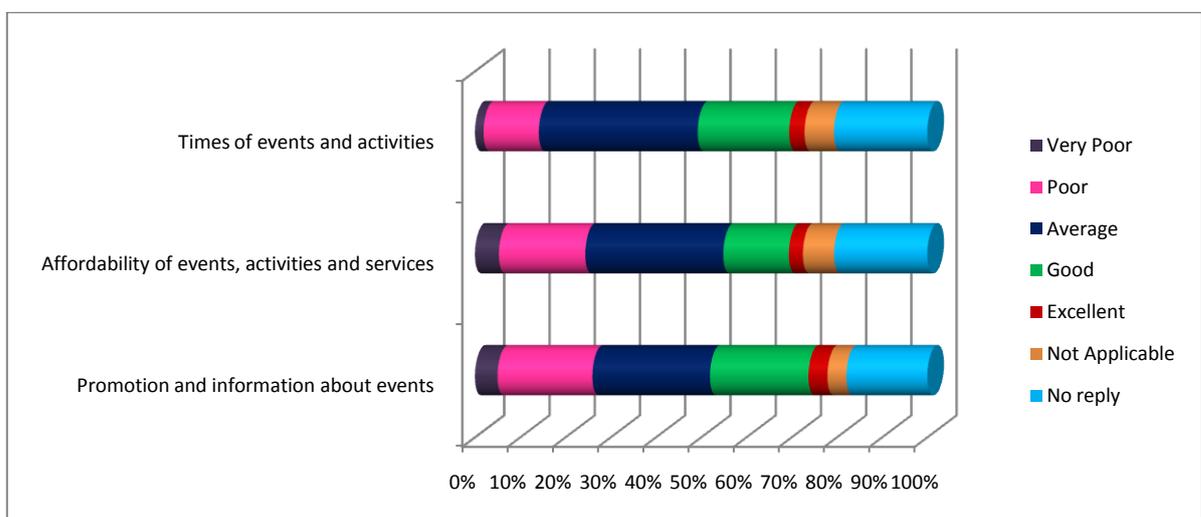
- Belfast City Council has a comprehensive web site with information on activities, events and specific information for senior citizens
- City Matters magazine is distributed every two months to 130,000 households in Belfast and is also available in Braille, DAISY, audio (tape or CD) or in a larger print format if requested. This magazine includes a calendar of events and activities and has a specific seniors section

The HASP survey has indicated that only;

- 26% of respondents report that promotion and information about events is excellent or good
- 18% report that affordability of events and activities is excellent or good.

Responses with respect to the timing of events for older people were similar, with 23% reporting that timing was excellent or good. Consultations with older people highlight that night time activities are not ideal as many older people are afraid to go out after dark. Additionally day time activities should not start too early in the morning, (not before 10.30am).

**Fig. 13: Respondent Feedback on Events**



### 3 Social Participation Summary and Challenges

Reported areas for improvement focus upon enhanced service provision, enhanced customer focus, the removal of barriers to inclusion and a need for recognition of older people as valuable and important members of society. Specific improvements identified included the following, many of which are linked to other thematic areas of an Age-friendly city;

Social participation and social support are strongly connected to good health and wellbeing throughout life. Participating in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities in the community, as well as with the family, allows older people to continue to exercise their competence, to enjoy respect and esteem, and to maintain or establish supportive and caring relationships.

There are many opportunities available throughout Belfast for social participation by older people in activities and events. Belfast City Council operates a calendar of events throughout the year as well as resourcing community based activity across the City. There is a strong community infrastructure network, with approximately 400 to 500 community organisations delivering activities at a local level, of which it is estimated approximately 200 specifically target older people. There are six Senior Citizens Forums covering North Belfast, South Belfast, East Belfast, West Belfast, the Greater Shankill and Castlereagh. However consultation and survey responses have indicated that there are barriers to social participation by older people. These include;

- targeting isolated older people
- enhanced service provision
- better recognition of older people's contribution to the community
- recognition that older people are not one homogenous group
- targeting needs of older people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and LGBT community
- more intergenerational work
- improved public image
- improved frequency and availability of public transport
- reduced automated answering services
- reduced bureaucratic procedures in older peoples services
- better customer service
- better awareness raising and information on events / activities
- recognition of the achievements of older people

Work is currently underway and will continue on:

- An Annual Age-friendly Convention
- Quarterly Age-friendly Belfast Update
- Older People's Art Festival
- Age-friendly Older Volunteer Awards programme
- Dementia friendly awareness workshops by the Alzheimer's Society
- Research and public awareness by the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland on the positive contribution of older people to Northern Ireland
- Intergenerational practice promoting positive working relationships between generations supported by Linking Generations NI and other organisations
- The development of child-friendly spaces led by Belfast Healthy Cities working with partners and synergising with the age-friendly approach
- Development of a Lifelong Learning City Charter for Belfast through Belfast Strategic Partnership
- Initiatives to improve the income level of older people through Age NI Advice and Advocacy service and the Make the Call Campaign through the Department of Social Development
- Support for over 50s to get back into work through GEMS NI
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust implementation of the Reablement programme and work through the Reablement Stakeholder Network to help people live independently
- Public Health Agency's work with community and voluntary organisations to counteract social isolation and put people in touch with local support and services
  
- Age Partnership Belfast provision of community hubs to increase the participation of isolated older people
- Age Partnership Belfast support and development of older people's groups in Belfast.
- Big Lottery funded Reaching Out Connecting Older People projects
- Tailored physical activity programme for people who have had a fall, stroke, heart disease, diabetes, cancer or lung disease through the Healthwise programme led by Belfast Strategic Partnership Active Belfast Team
- Age Sector Platform Pensioners Parliament
- Good Morning Network across Belfast who provide community based telephone support service for older and vulnerable people
- Belfast City Councils Investment Programme 2012-2015 commits the council to providing work placements and the potential to work in partnership with older peoples groups to assist with employability initiatives
- Volunteer Now Befriending and Time-banking Initiatives
- Provision of IT training for older people

## 8. RESPECT & SOCIAL INCLUSION

WHO report that older people experience conflicting types of behaviour and attitudes towards them. On the one hand, many feel they are often respected, recognized and included, while on the other, they experience lack of consideration in the community, in services and in the family. This clash is explained in terms of a changing society and behavioural norms, lack of contact between generations, and widespread ignorance about ageing and older people.

The extent to which older people participate in the social, civic and economic life of the city is also closely linked to their experience of inclusion. Social networks are important as they provide friendship and emotional and practical support as well as a sense of belonging and support. A lack of such social networks can have a detrimental impact in terms of health and wellbeing and can result in social exclusion.

For older people social exclusion is a particular issue as many live alone following the death of a partner. On Census day 2011 there were 14,555 one person households in Belfast where the resident was aged 65+. This equates to 12% of all households in Belfast.

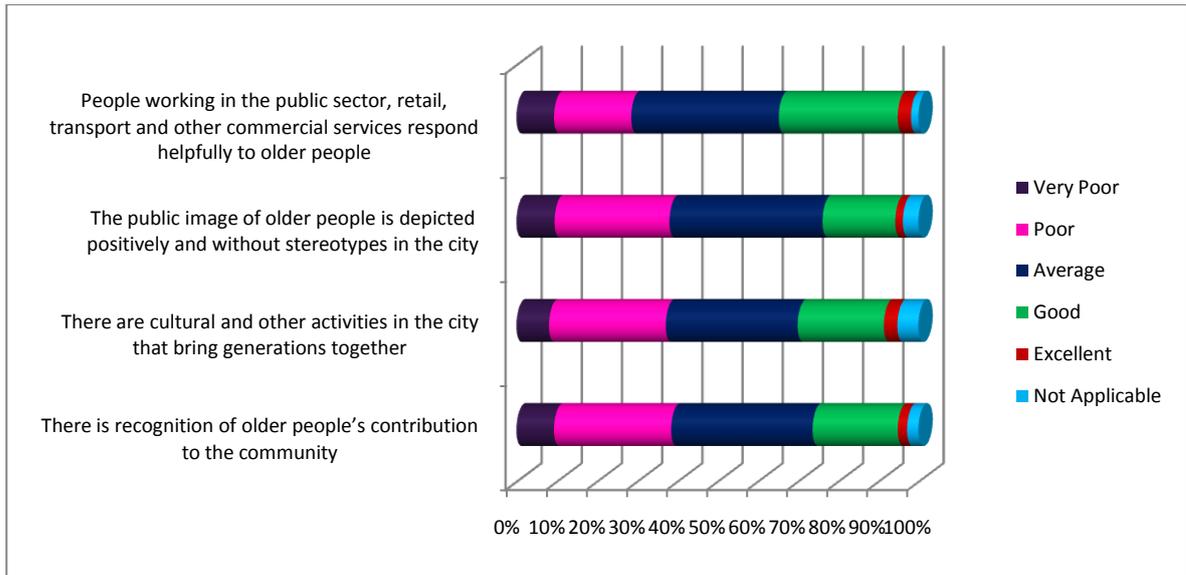
Good Morning Belfast schemes help seniors stay connected to their community through daily phone calls. There are four projects across the city - in West Belfast, North Belfast, Collin and South and East Belfast. These projects enable staff to check on isolated older people every day through a daily phone call. They will check on their health and wellbeing as well as provide them with information on activities and events in their local area. Each of these projects is run independently and funding dependent from a variety of funding sources and grant aid programmes.

### 8.1 Survey and Consultation Findings

Findings from the HASP survey indicates that 51% of respondents were living alone and 61% of respondents reported that contact with family and friends was good or excellent. A small number of respondents reported that contact with family and friends was poor or very poor (5%).

Questions in relation to respect and inclusion of older people show that there is much work to be done to improve respect for and inclusion of older people.

**Fig.14: Respect and Inclusion of Older People**



The survey asked respondents to rate the three most important elements of an Age-friendly city and respect and social inclusion was rated as most important. This was further confirmed in the survey conducted through the City Matters magazine where the top response, when asked to identify the top three priorities that would make respondent neighbourhoods more Age-friendly, was more respect and social inclusion for older people.

Consultation highlights that there is much good work being done in local communities and that many staff in Belfast are courteous towards older people. As previously referenced, Belfast City Council manages 10 Leisure centres<sup>38</sup> and 22 community centres which offer an ongoing programme of activity for older residents and there are approximately 400 to 500 community organisations across the city providing locally based activities. However it was believed that in general older people are not valued and that there is a need for greater diversity of events for all groups of older people (those with a disability, ethnic minorities, LGBT). It was also acknowledged that there is a need to target the inclusion of isolated older people.

Belfast City Council Youth Forum and representatives from the Greater Belfast Senior Citizens Forum have been engaging in intergenerational discussion around many of the themes of an Age-friendly city. The top three priorities identified in terms of respect and social inclusion were;

<sup>38</sup> Anderstonstown, Avoniel, Ballysillan, Falls, Grove, Loughside, Olympia, Shankill, Whiterock and Indoor Tennis Centre and Ozone Complex

- Older and younger people who are less well-off have good access to public, voluntary and private services
- Older people and younger people are regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial services on how to serve them better
- Service staff are courteous and helpful and Schools provide opportunities to learn about ageing and older people, and involve older people in school activities

## 8.2 Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholder consultation has identified;

- Belfast City Centre Management offers a Be Respected Discount Card for the 50+ age group in partnership with Age NI. As part of the Age Platform they are trying to get Tesco and other food retailers to let pensioners have a 10% food discount day
- Linking Generations NI has partnered with Age Action Ireland to access funding to deliver inter generational cross border exchanges to discuss Age-friendly processes. The project will involve members of Belfast city Council Youth Forum and Greater Belfast Seniors Forum and be supported by Belfast City Council, HASP and Dublin City Council.

### 8.3 Respect and Social Inclusion Summary and Challenges

The extent to which older people participate in the social, civic and economic life of the city is closely linked to their experience of inclusion. Social networks are important as they provide friendship and emotional and practical support as well as a sense of belonging and support. A lack of such social networks can have a detrimental impact in terms of health and wellbeing and can result in social exclusion.

2011 census figures show that there were 14,555 one person households in Belfast where the resident was aged 65+. 51% of respondents to the HASP survey were living alone.

Consultation findings indicate respect and social inclusion is extremely important to older people. It was the number one rated priority in the HASP survey when respondents were asked to indicate the three most important elements of an Age-friendly city. Older people report that in general people are courteous to them however it is felt that there is a need for more to be done to achieve real inclusion. The six Senior Citizens Forums are important resources that advocate for inclusion and respect for older people but respect and inclusion need to be a more explicit focus for all in Belfast.

Reported areas for improvement focus upon enhanced service provision, enhanced customer focus, the removal of barriers to inclusion and a need for recognition of older people as valuable and important members of society. Specific improvements identified included the following, many of which are linked to other thematic areas of an Age-friendly city;

- targeting isolated older people
- enhanced service provision
- better recognition of older people's contribution to the community
- recognition that older people are not one homogenous group
- targeting needs of older people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and LGBT community
- more intergenerational work
- improved public image
- improved frequency and availability of public transport
- reduced automated answering services
- reduced bureaucratic procedures in older peoples services
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Work is currently underway and will continue on:

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- Dementia friendly awareness workshops by the Alzheimer's Society
- Research and public awareness by the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland on the positive contribution of older people to Northern Ireland
- Intergenerational practice promoting positive working relationships between generations supported by Linking Generations NI and other organisations
- The development of child-friendly spaces led by Belfast Healthy Cities working with partners and synergising with the age-friendly approach
- Development of a Lifelong Learning City Charter for Belfast through Belfast Strategic Partnership
- Initiatives to improve the income level of older people through Age NI Advice and Advocacy service and the Make the Call Campaign through the Department of Social Development
- Support for over 50s to get back into work through GEMS NI
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust implementation of the Reablement programme and work through the Reablement Stakeholder Network to help people live independently
- Public Health Agency's work with community and voluntary organisations to counteract social isolation and put people in touch with local support and services
- Age Partnership Belfast provision of community hubs to increase the participation of isolated older people
- Age Partnership Belfast support and development of older people's groups in Belfast.
- Big Lottery funded Reaching Out Connecting Older People projects
- Tailored physical activity programme for people who have had a fall, stroke, heart disease, diabetes, cancer or lung disease through the Healthwise programme led by Belfast Strategic Partnership Active Belfast Team
- Age Sector Platform Pensioners Parliament
- Good Morning Network across Belfast who provide community based telephone support service for older and vulnerable people
- Belfast City Councils Investment Programme 2012-2015 commits the council to providing work placements and the potential to work in partnership with older peoples groups to assist with employability initiatives
- Volunteer Now Befriending and Time-banking Initiatives
- Provision of IT training for older people

## 9. CIVIC PARTICIPATION & EMPLOYMENT

Older people do not stop contributing to their communities on retirement. Many continue to provide unpaid and voluntary work for their families and communities. In some areas, economic circumstances force older people to take paid work long after they should have retired. An age-friendly community provides options for older people to continue to contribute to their communities, through paid employment or voluntary work if they so choose, and to be engaged in the political process.

### 9.1 Employment Statistics

- In the 2011/12 academic year there was 375 enrolments from people aged over 60 from Belfast at Higher Education Institutions and 1,010 enrolments from people aged over 60 at a Further Education College
- There was a total of 50 starts on the Steps to Work employment programme in 2012 for participants aged 60+ in Belfast
- In February 2012 135 people aged 60+ were claiming unemployment related benefits
- The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) employs 1,256 staff<sup>39</sup> who are aged 60+ which is 5% of the workforce. Of these employees 155 (12%) were resident in Belfast and 568 (45%) worked in Belfast.
- Belfast City Council employs 177 people aged 60+ which is 6% of the total number of employees
- There are currently 10 Belfast City Councillors aged over 60

It is evident that people aged 60+ are still interested in gaining qualifications and seeking / staying in work.

### 9.2 Volunteering

In 2008 Volunteer Now was funded by Atlantic Philanthropies for their 'Unlocking Potential Project', a five year initiative which aims to encourage and support healthier ageing and civic engagement in Northern Ireland, by enabling and empowering older people to take part in volunteering. Volunteer Now's 'Making the Connection' report (2009) and 'Making the Connection 2' report (2011) shows an increasing trend in volunteering participation rates among the 50+ age group. In 2011 approximately 36% and 59% respectively of this age group indicated involvement in formal and informal volunteering activities.

In 2011 Belfast City Council introduced their Older Volunteer of the Year competition during European Year of Volunteering, supported by Volunteer Now,

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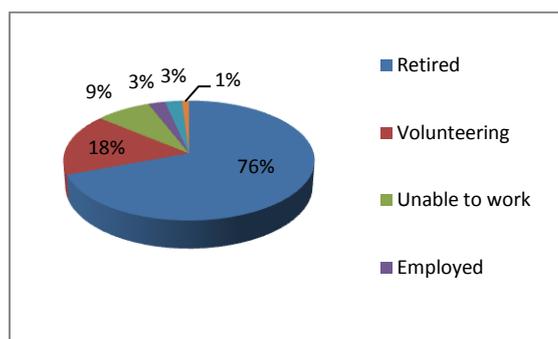
<sup>39</sup> On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012

through Atlantic Philanthropies. In 2012, as part of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, The Council worked with Volunteer Now’s Unlocking Potential Project to invite groups and organisations working in Belfast to nominate individual volunteers for the award. The Older Volunteer Award celebrates the considerable contribution made by older volunteers (60 years and over) to the work of organisations and groups across the city. It also provides an opportunity for groups and organisations to promote and recognise the difference older volunteers and their volunteering make to the people and communities of Belfast.

### 9.3 Survey and Consultation Findings

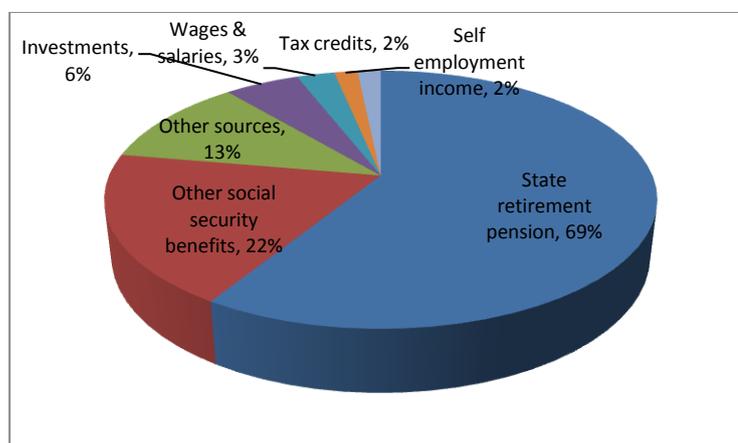
The HASP survey of 300 older people shows that the three quarters of respondents are retired. One fifth however are volunteering, working or looking for work.

**Fig.15: Economic Status of Respondents**



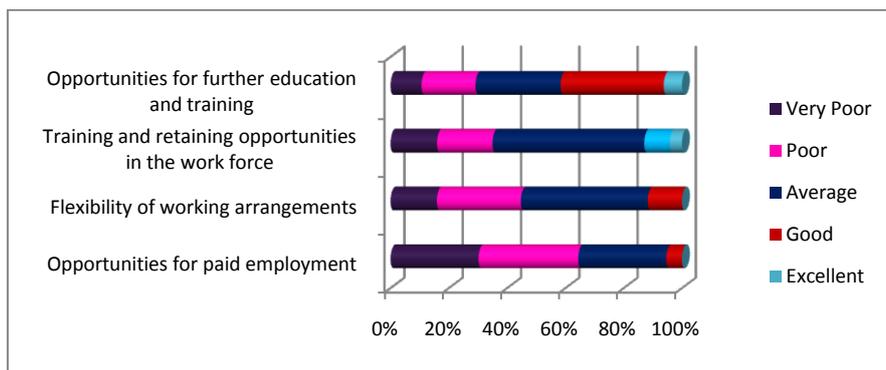
The primary source of income for HASP survey respondents is state retirement pension and other benefits.

**Fig.16: Respondent Sources of Income**



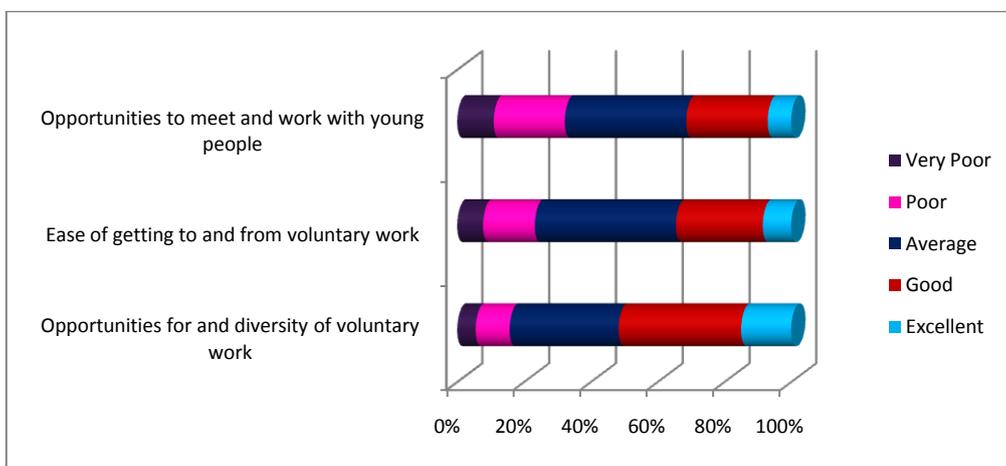
Survey responses to questions on employment show that on average 69% of respondents either did not reply or responded “not applicable.” This leaves approximately one third of respondents who did reply. Of those who did respond results show that work related opportunities are poor although opportunities for further education and training are rated higher. Lifelong learning was identified during consultation as a valuable tool for enhancing health and wellbeing and reducing isolation. However there was negative feedback in respect to the cost of training and education courses, which can be prohibitive.

**Fig.17: Education, Training and Employment Opportunities**



The lack of response to questions on training and employment should not be interpreted as a lack of interest among the older Belfast population. Statistics would suggest that there is an interest in training and employment and there may be merit in HASP following up with organisations such as Belfast Metropolitan College, QUB Open Learning and GEMS NI to get a better understanding of and targeting of older people for whom this area is of relevance. Belfast has a strong community and voluntary sector where opportunities for volunteering are widely available. This is reflected in survey findings and in consultation event findings.

**Fig.18: Volunteering Opportunities**



## 9.4 Kestrel Project

GEMS NI was funded in Belfast, through Atlantic Philanthropies Ageing Programme, to deliver an employability programme for older people in Belfast (KESTREL). The rationale for the programme was that whilst older people can experience the same multi-faceted barriers to employment and employability as people in the younger age range, there are particular institutional physical, social, emotional and intellectual barriers that older people experience which are distinctive for this client group. The GEMS NI experience indicated that the major barrier was often a person's own overwhelmingly negative perception of what, if anything they can offer an employer which is based on the age factor i.e. employers would be "put off" by the prospect of investing training and development in someone who was heading towards retirement anyway. The programme was very successful in supporting older people to overcome barriers to job search activity, helping people into employment and volunteering positions and overall positively influencing the health and wellbeing of over 200 older people.

The success of the Kestrel programme has demonstrated that there is a real challenge and an opportunity to ensure that the economic and social value of older people is recognised and catered for. In a recent report completed by the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR)<sup>40</sup>, the findings from a nationwide survey of more than 10,000 over 50s was analyzed to compile the Saga Quality of Life Index (QOLI) for the over 50s. This study concluded that quality of life for the over 50s is worsening as they are suffering falling income, rising inflation and higher unemployment. The report acknowledges *"Against the backdrop of plans to increase state pension age, the unemployment situation is particularly worrying. If people in their 60s cannot find work, then they will become poorer and, without adequate pension support, they will cut back their discretionary spending even further, thereby negatively impacting the economy."*

One of the objectives of Kestrel is to work with employers to improve how older people in the workplace are valued, how their career development needs and career progression opportunities are met and how change is managed. The project identified that pre-retirement practices by organisations are out of date and do not prepare older people for modern day retirement and the opportunities available to them.

## 9.5 Self Employment

The Exploring Enterprise<sup>2</sup> Programme is a pre-start programme which supports activities to extend the employment opportunities of unemployed, long-term unemployed and inactive people by helping them to enter, remain and make

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<sup>40</sup> Saga Quarterly Report, Centre for Economics and Business Research, February 2011

progress in sustained employment. Specific target groups have been identified for the programme, of which older workers are one such target group. This programme is delivered through the Local Enterprise Agency (LEA) network, with 7 LEAs in Belfast.

## 9.6 Civic Participation

The Older People: Health, Social and Living Conditions profile published for Belfast Healthy Cities<sup>41</sup> identified that at that time there were no formal older people's councils or other formal structures to represent older people's interests in decision making processes. This has been redressed and there are now currently 6 senior citizens forums representing older people's interests in Belfast. These are;

- West Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
- Greater Shankill Senior Citizens Forum
- North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
- South Belfast Lifestyle Forum
- Belfast East Seniors Forum
- Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum

Several representatives of each of the above forums sit on Greater Belfast Seniors Forum, which aims to facilitate better working together to try to make life better for older people in Belfast. The forum:

- Meets monthly in Belfast City Hall
- Requires representatives to feedback information to local forums monthly to ensure as many as possible have their views heard
- Takes part in regular team building, lobbying and campaigning training
- Is working to get improvements in transport services for older people in the Greater Belfast area
- Meets regularly with Belfast City Council's All Party Reference Group on older people, the Commissioner for Older People for NI and Belfast Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership partners
- Has two representatives on Belfast Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership

The forum has become a powerful force to raise older people's issues and to give a voice where decisions are made that affect older people in Belfast. They are represented on the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament which was launched in 2011 and allows older people from across Northern Ireland to have their say on the issues that matter to them. It is organised by the Age Sector Platform.

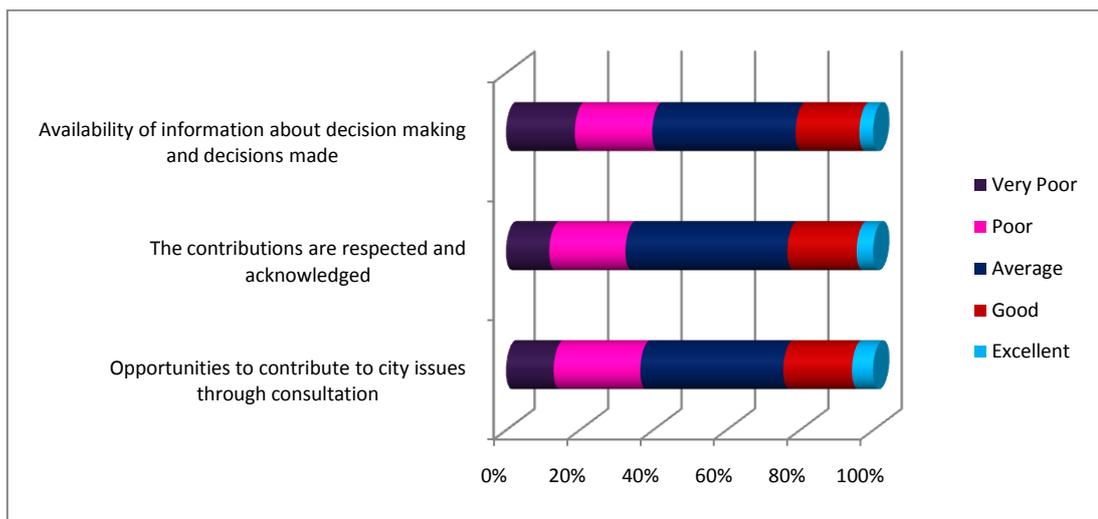
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<sup>41</sup> Belfast Healthy Cities, Older People: Health, Social and Living Conditions, April 2006

At present approximately 20% (10) of Belfast City Council’s 51 elected members are aged over 60. Belfast City Council hosts an annual Senior Citizens convention which is attended by approximately 200 older people, to discuss issues affecting older residents in Belfast.

On average 53% of respondents to the HASP survey either did not reply or responded “not applicable” to questions in respect to civic participation. An assumption could be made that this in itself is indicative of a lack of interest in civic participation. Responses show that there is room for improvement in terms of engaging older people in decision making processes. Consultations highlighted the good work that is being done through the older people’s forums which bring older people into contact with Belfast City Council staff and elected members. Reference was also made to the good work of the Pensioner’s Parliament and the Older People’s Commissioner.

**Fig.19: Civic Participation**



## 9.10 Civic Participation and Employment Summary and Challenges

An Age-friendly city provides options for older people to continue to contribute to their communities, through paid employment or voluntary work if they so choose, and to be engaged in the political process.

Research indicates that older people in Belfast want to remain active through employment or volunteering activity. Older members of the community are remaining in work, looking for work and increasingly engaging in formal or informal volunteering. There are good practice initiatives that are supporting older people to remain active. For example, Volunteer NOW's Unlocking Potential project is enabling and empowering older people to take part in volunteering and GEMS NI's Kestrel project has supported over 200 older people to overcome barriers to job search and has helped them to find work or volunteering positions.

Three quarters of HASP survey respondents were retired, with one fifth in or looking for work or volunteering. Responses show that employment opportunities for older people are considered to be poor while opportunities to engage in further education / training are good. However the cost of training and education can be prohibitive. Opportunities to engage in volunteering were also considered to be good.

Opportunities for older people to engage in decision making and governance in Belfast are good. The 6 Senior Citizens Forums and the Greater Belfast Senior's Forum provide an opportunity for older people to articulate issues and concerns, engage in consultative processes and to input to decision making. Currently approximately 10% of Belfast City Council's elected members are aged 60+ and the Council acknowledge the civic role of older people by hosting an annual Senior Citizens Convention that focuses upon issues.

Opportunities for improvement in respect to promoting better civic participation and employment include the following;

- need for more diversity in volunteering opportunities
- more opportunities for inter generational engagement
- poor employment opportunities
- lack of flexible working opportunities
- knowledge loss of older people upon retirement not valued
- lack of awareness of training opportunities
- cost of training
- need for accessible public transport to allow uptake of volunteering opportunities
- upper age limit for jury service or tribunals
- lack of recognition of the experiences of older people

Work is currently underway and will continue on:

- Research and public awareness by the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland on the positive contribution of older people to Northern Ireland
- Development of a Lifelong Learning City Charter for Belfast through Belfast Strategic Partnership
- Initiatives to improve the income level of older people through Age NI Advice and Advocacy service and the Make the Call Campaign through the Department of Social Development
- Support for over 50s to get back into work through GEMS NI
- Age Sector Platform Pensioners Parliament
- Belfast City Councils Investment Programme 2012-2015 commits the council to providing work placements and the potential to work in partnership with older peoples groups to assist with employability initiatives
- Volunteer Now Befriending and Time-banking Initiatives
- Provision of IT training for older people

## 10. COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION

Staying connected with events and people and getting timely, practical information to manage life and meet personal needs is vital for active ageing. WHO report that in an Age-friendly city it is important to have relevant information that is readily accessible to older people with varying capacities and resources. This is particularly important in an age when rapidly evolving information and communication technologies are to both welcomed as useful tools and criticized as instruments of social exclusion.

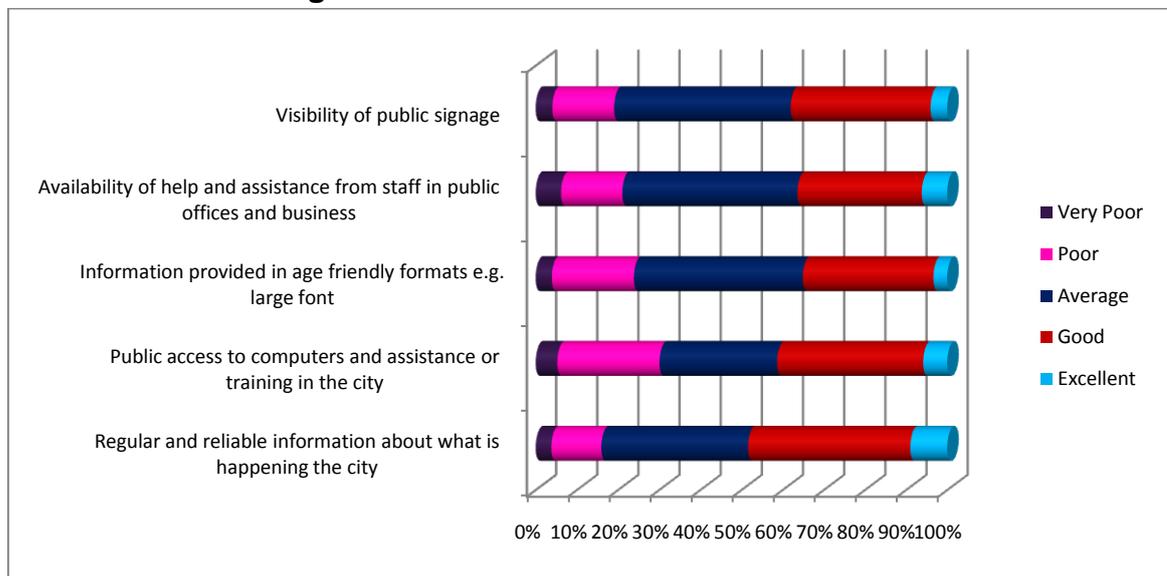
Sources of information available in Belfast include;

- Belfast City Council City Matters magazine which is distributed to approximately 130,000 households six times a year and includes a specific Seniors Section
- Belfast City Council Seniors information Directory which is available in hard copy and on line. The Directory provides information on a wide range of topics and services for older people in Belfast. It was first developed in 2008 and has had two reprints in 2010 and 2013, with over 35,000 copies distributed throughout Belfast.
- Belfast City Council web site which has a seniors section
- A variety of newspapers – 3 regional papers (Belfast Telegraph, Belfast News Letter and Irish News) as well local community papers (North Belfast News, South Belfast News and Andersonstown News)
- A variety of community based newsletters produced by local community groups
- Local libraries

Public library services are delivered through a network of 96 branch libraries, of which there are 17 in Belfast. Learning and Information is one of Libraries NI's thematic areas of work and the target groups for Libraries NI engagement are children, students, parents, older people and the unemployed. Adult learning services are focused upon making learning accessible within local communities for people who would not consider attending a formalised training environment. ICT training is provided with one to one support and is focused upon practical use and application of ICT for people day to day.

### 10.1 Survey and Consultation Findings

Survey and consultation findings have been positive about communication and information in Belfast, with very positive feedback on Council's City Matters magazine and the availability of regular information on what is going on in the city.

**Fig. 20: Communication and Information**

Public access to computers scored less well in the HASP survey and was reinforced in the consultation events where participants made reference to the fact that so much information is now available on the internet. For older people who do not have access to the internet they advised that they believe they are getting “*left behind*.” Belfast has recently been successful in securing funding to become a ‘Super Connected City’ with superfast broadband. It is 1 of 10 UK cities to successfully secure this funding through the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. By 2015 Belfast will have;

- Access to next generation fibre broadband across the city
- Affordable ultrafast broadband for businesses
- Wi-Fi access in areas of high footfall
- More affordable access to broadband for small businesses

In promoting an Age-friendly city the challenge will be to ensure that the older population have access to this great opportunity.

At the 2012 Senior Citizens Convention feedback on the level of bureaucracy associated with benefits and public services was referenced as a difficulty for older people and one which needs addressed in terms of the information made available to older people and how it is communicated.

## 10.2 Stakeholder Feedback

Linking Generations NI is currently the intergenerational partner in the WEA's Digital Age Project (2012-2016) which promotes the digital inclusion of older people.

## 10.3 Communication and Information Summary and Challenges

Staying connected with events and people and getting timely, practical information to manage life and meet personal needs is vital for active ageing. In an Age-friendly city it is important to have relevant information that is readily accessible to older people with varying capacities and resources. This is particularly important in an age when rapidly evolving information and communication technologies are to be both welcomed as useful tools but equally can be criticized as instruments of social exclusion.

Sources of information for older people are wide and varied and include primarily printed media. Sources include;

- Belfast City Council's City Matters Magazine delivered to all households, the Council's web site and a Senior's Information Directory of which 35,000 copies have been distributed across Belfast
- 3 regional newspapers as well as local community newspapers
- 17 Public libraries across the City
- A variety of community newsletters produced by local community groups

Learning and Information is one of Libraries NI's thematic areas of work and older people are one of the specific target groups for engagement. Adult learning services include the provision of ICT training, with one to one support, to help develop practical skills in the use of ICT and the internet.

Survey and consultation findings have been positive about communication and information in Belfast, with very positive feedback on Council's City Matters magazine and the availability of regular information on what is going on in the city. More negative feedback concerned accessibility of computers and the growing importance of the internet to relay information. For older people who do not have access to the internet there is a sense that they are being 'left behind'. As Belfast becomes a 'Super Connected City' with superfast broadband the challenge will be to ensure that older people do not miss out on accessing this exciting opportunity.

Specific areas for improvement highlighted in the survey and consultation include

- need for more large print formats
- limited coverage in local media of good news stories about older people
- access to the internet
- ICT skills
- targeting of isolated older people
- automated answering services - older people prefer to talk to someone
- internet awareness
- access to computers

Work is currently underway and will continue on:

- Quarterly Age-friendly Belfast Update
- Seniors section in Belfast City Council City Matters Magazine
- An Annual Age-friendly Convention
- Older People's Art Festival
- Age-friendly Older Volunteer Awards programme
- Dementia friendly awareness workshops by the Alzheimer's Society
- Public Health Agency's work with community and voluntary organisations to counteract social isolation and put people in touch with local support and services
- Age Partnership Belfast provision of community hubs to increase the participation of isolated older people
- Age Partnership Belfast support and development of older people's groups in Belfast.
- Big Lottery funded Reaching Out Connecting Older People projects
- Age Sector Platform Pensioners Parliament
- Good Morning Network across Belfast who provide community based telephone support service for older and vulnerable people
- Volunteer Now Befriending and Time-banking Initiatives
- Provision of IT training for older people

## 11. COMMUNITY SUPPORT & HEALTH SERVICES

A person's health status impacts on their ability to work and participate in society and ultimately on their quality of life. Age is related to health in that many illnesses are more common among older people and many conditions become more severe and limiting with increasing age. Older people are therefore more at risk of poor health and poor health may be more limiting to them. Health and support services are vital to maintaining health and independence of older people in the community.

The 2011 Census asked people to assess their general health over the last twelve months. Census results show that the percentage who described their health as 'bad' or 'very bad' increased with age, from 12.7% of those aged 65-74 years to 17.2% of those aged 85+. Higher proportions of females replied that their health was 'bad' or 'very bad', ranging from 12.7% of those aged 65-74 years to 18.2% of those aged 85+. Male figures are 12.6% and 15.5% respectively.

In 2011, 36% of persons aged 65+ had a long term health problem, where day to day activities were 'limited a lot' and 23.6% replied that activities were 'limited a little'. This compares to 11.9% and 8.8% respectively in the total population. 56.1% of males and 62.2% of females aged 65+ stated that their day to day activities were 'limited a lot' or 'limited a little'. This compares to 19.4% and 21.9% respectively in the total population.

Public Health Agency data shows that for the period 2008 to 2010, life expectancy at age 65 for males and females in Belfast Local Commissioning Group (LCG) area was 16.4 years and 19.6 years respectively. The comparative NI life expectancy rates were 17.4 years and 20.2 years respectively. Public Health Agency analysis shows that the gender gap in Belfast is greater than in any other area, although the gap is steadily reducing.

In terms of healthy life expectancy (the number of years an individual might expect to live in good health), PHA figures show that this has increased in NI for both males and females by 1.4 years over the period 2000-02 to 2007-09 to 60.5 and 62.5 years respectively. NI fares worse than England, Scotland and Wales for both the number of years and the proportion of an individual's life that might be expected to be lived 'in good health'.

Statistical data for Belfast provided to HASP by NINIS indicates that;

- 1637 people aged 65+ received meals on wheels during 2011/12
- There were 45 residential homes in BHSC (does not include nursing homes) and on average there were 1,294 places available
- There were 862 Persons without Material Disablement aged 65+ registered at a Day Centre in BHSC

- There were 9,000 Attendance Allowance recipients aged 65+ in 2012. Attendance Allowance is a tax free benefit paid to people aged 65 and over who need help with their personal care because of an illness or disability.
- There were 11,440 recipients of Disability Living Allowance aged 65+ 2012
- Almost 6,000 people aged 50+, of which 2,980 are aged 65+ claimed Carer's Allowance in 2012. Carer's Allowance is a benefit for people who care for someone with a severe disability

## 11.1 Health Issues

Specific health related issues highlighted by the Public Health Agency in respect to older people include physical activity, nutrition, falls, dementia and social isolation / mental health.

### 11.1.1 Physical Activity

As people age it is important that they are physically active to maintain physical function, muscle strength, balance and bone health, and cognitive function and sleep. Only 35% of people aged 65+ (40% of males and 31% of females) are meeting the recommended physical activity levels (30mins of moderate activity on at least 5 days a week). This figure decreases with age - 29% of all persons aged 65-74 and 13% of those aged 75 meet the required levels. The proportion of older women meeting the recommended physical activity levels is 22% for 65-74 year olds and 9% of women aged 75+. <sup>42</sup>

### 11.1.2 Nutrition

As people age they may become malnourished due to poor diet or dehydration, social isolation, poor dental health, physical problems, poor mental health, confusion and the effect of medication. Access to a healthy and well balanced diet is essential for maintaining health and wellbeing in older people. Only 35% of people aged 65-74 (30% of males and 37% of females) are eating the recommended portion of fruit and vegetable (5 portions of fruit/vegetable to eat each day). However, across all genders only 28% of those aged 75+ eat this recommended level. <sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> NI Health Survey 2011/12

<sup>43</sup> NI Health Survey 2011/12

### 11.1.3 Falls

Falls are a major cause of disability and the leading cause of death due to injury, in people aged 75+. People aged 75+ have a higher risk of falling as a result of medical conditions, environment, medication, and drugs and alcohol. Osteoporosis and bone fragility increases morbidity resulting from falling. In addition, those with a fear of further falling have been shown to have an increased risk of further falling, reduced activities of daily living, social isolation and depression, and increased admission to institutional care.

Over 6,000 people aged 65+ are admitted to hospital in Northern Ireland following a fall (30% of admissions were females aged 85+). Those who fall and have an admission had primary diagnosis of head injuries (16%), fractured neck of femur (15%), fractures of lower leg, ankle or wrist. In addition to injuries one third of older people, after a fall, develop a fear of further falling.

### 11.1.4 Dementia

It is estimated that there are 19,000 people living with dementia in Northern Ireland; fewer than 1,000 of these people are under 65. As the population of NI ages, dementia will increasingly be a major public health and societal issue, with numbers of people with dementia rising to 23,000 by 2017 and around 60,000 by 2051.<sup>44</sup>

### 11.1.5 Social Isolation/Mental health

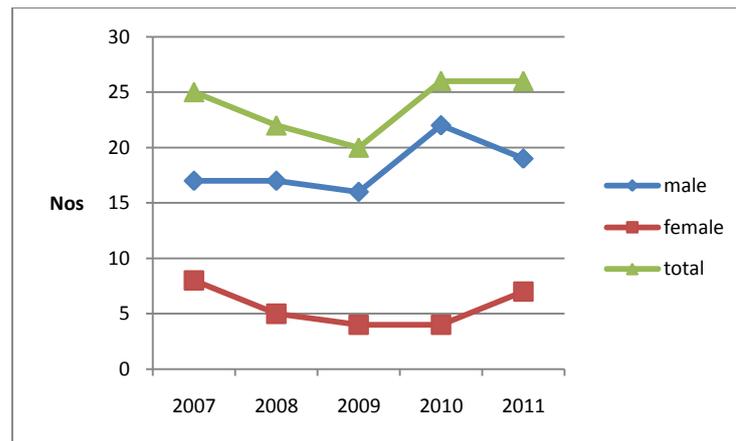
Social, emotional and mental health are key elements in the overall health and wellbeing of older people. As people age their physical health, changes in their family relationships and social factors can contribute to a sense of loneliness and isolation. This in turn impacts on their mental and physical health. In Northern Ireland there is a low but increasing rate of suicide amongst people aged 65+. 2010 and 2011 saw the largest number of suicides (26 deaths) in those aged 65 + in the last 20 years in Northern Ireland<sup>45</sup>. Figure 21 shows that male suicide deaths are in the majority, which is consistent for all ages.

**Fig. 21: Number of Registered Deaths Due to Suicide in Those aged 65+ in NI 2007-2011**

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<sup>44</sup> Improving Dementia Services in Northern Ireland, November 2011

<sup>45</sup> Public Health Agency, June 2013



## 11.2 Reablement

The key policy document 'Transforming Your Care' established the principle that 'Home is the Hub of Care' for older people and recommended greater provision of support for older people living at home and in the community to reduce institutional care such as in Nursing and Residential Homes. This is dependent on the development of 'housing with care' as an alternative to institutional care. A programme of Supported Housing, jointly funded by the DHSSPS and DSD, has enabled the replacement of more than 100 residential home places with purpose-built apartments for people with mild-moderate dementia or physical frailty and their carers. Floating support is also provided to older people with particular needs in their own homes. Older people are more likely to be living with long term conditions which impact significantly on their quality of life, mobility and ability to live independently. It is estimated that there are more than 7000 older people living with Diabetes (of which 90% will be Type 2) and nearly 4000 older people in Belfast who have had a Stroke. Living with these conditions requires support to informal carers, self care and integrated working between GPs, Pharmacists, Trust community staff and Community and Voluntary Providers.

There are currently approximately 4500 packages of care supplied to older people living at home, an average of just under 10 hours per week. If a care package is provided over a long period it can create dependency and disable an older person from living as full a life as possible. To reduce this dependency, the Belfast HSC Trust has established a Reablement Programme which provides time-limited home support to help older people with everyday tasks with the aim of enabling the older person to do the task independently.

An evaluation by the Partnerships for Older People (2009) in England found that low intensity practical services which helped people to live well in their own homes (such as home repair, befriending, DIY) such as are provided by the community and voluntary sector, had the greatest impact on the quality of life of an older person.

The Belfast Reablement Stakeholder Network is coordinating a community and voluntary sector response locally to the Reablement Strategy and is involving older people in the planning process.

### **11.3 Home Care Services**

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust offers Intensive Homecare which is a flexible, responsive service to enable older people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. The service is provided to people aged 65 and over who have a range of diverse health and social care needs and require the assistance of two staff at all times. An individualised package of care over a 24-hour period is provided based on the needs of the older person, to enable them to remain in the community rather than going into residential or hospital care. The service also offers support to their carers.

The Intensive Domiciliary Support Scheme provides assistance with all aspects of daily living including:

- Assistance with personal care tasks
- Assistance with all transfers
- Assistance with medication
- Assistance with meal provision
- Household tasks
- Shopping
- Carer Relief

In 2012 the number of clients receiving intensive domiciliary care in BHSCT was 1,572. Consultation findings make reference to limitations in terms of what home helps can do, the length of time they spend with each clients and the time at which they attend. Concern was also raised about factors such as the manner of dealing with older person and issues relating to dignity.

### **11.4 Older Carers**

Most recent figures from the Department of Social Development (DSD) show that in 2013 there are 11,490 people in Belfast claiming Carers Allowance, of which 3,120 (27%) are older carers, aged 65+. 1,440 are older male carers and 1,680 are older female carers.

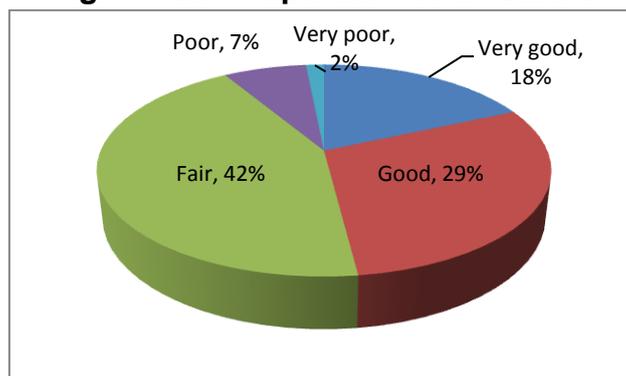
Findings of a study conducted by the Carers Trust<sup>46</sup> on the challenges facing older carers (aged between 60 and 85) in Northern Ireland show that;

- nearly 75% of over-60s looking after an ill or disabled family member or friend said being a carer had damaged their health
- two-thirds had health problems or a disability themselves
- 73% reported that being a carer had a negative impact on their psychological well-being
- a third reported that money and the cost of caring is a constant worry
- 70% have become more isolated because of their caring duties

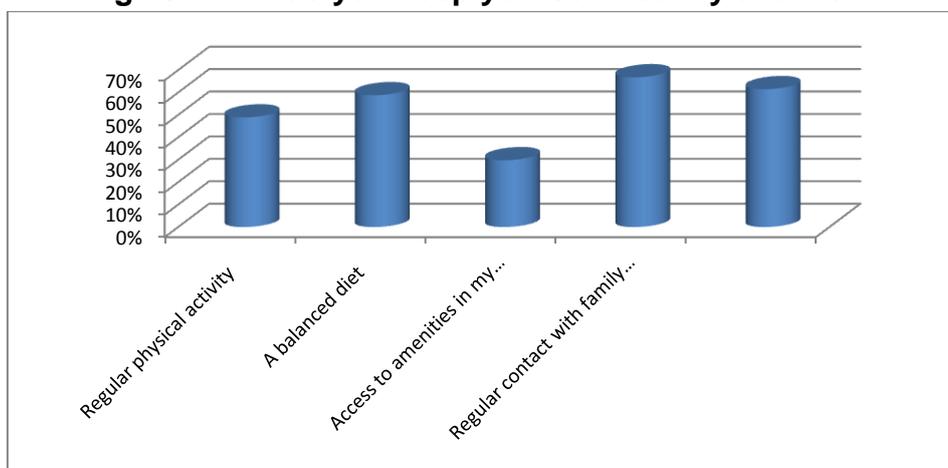
### 11.5 Survey and Consultation Findings

Survey respondents to the HASP survey show that a high proportion of respondents state that they have good health and emphasise the importance of social networks in keeping well i.e. regular contact with family and friends.

**Fig. 22: Self Reported Health Status**



**Fig.23: How do you keep yourself healthy and well?**



<sup>46</sup> *Mind the Gap (2012)* a survey report on the lives and challenges faced by older carers in Northern Ireland by The Carers Trust.

NI Health Survey 2010/11 data shows that more older people would describe their lifestyle as 'very healthy' (20.4% 65-74yrs), (27.6% in 75+) compared with 12.5% of those under 65. When asked if they felt there was anything they could do to make their own life healthier three quarters of those over 75 said no. Between 65-74, the balance shifts between those who think they can do something to make their life healthier and those who do not. Of those who answered "no", respondents were more inclined to identify that they did not want to make any changes or felt making change was just too difficult for them to do. Areas for improvement focussed on physical condition and disability or health problems. When asked if they had made any changes in the last year older people were less likely to have made changes and also less likely to want to in the future. This was most marked in those over 75. Those aged 65-74 identified possible changes in weight control, eating more healthily and being more physically active.

Consultation events have highlighted the importance that older people in Belfast place on the importance of community and health services. Table 5 shows the maximum and minimum travel time to health services in Belfast<sup>47</sup>.

**Table 5: Belfast LGD Access to Services**

Travel time to	Max travel time for OAs (mins)	Min travel time for OAs (mins)
<b>GP premises</b>	3.86	0.10
<b>Accident &amp; Emergency Hospital</b>	9.91	0.16
<b>Dentist</b>	3.58	0.10
<b>Pharmacist</b>	3.29	0.09
<b>Optician</b>	8.23	0.09

At a consultation event held in March 2012, attended by 103 older people representing the six Seniors Forums throughout the city, Community Support & Health Services was identified as the number one priority. 42% of participants reported this was the most important thing for them in terms of Belfast being Age-friendly. At a further consultation event, the most important features of Age-friendly community support and health services were identified as;

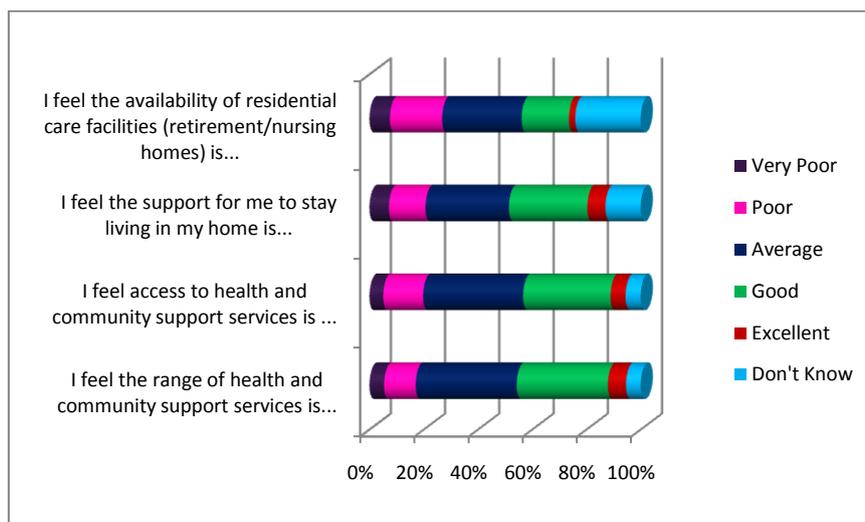
- An adequate range of health and community support services is offered for promoting, maintaining and restoring health. 50% of participants rated this as most important
- Delivery of services is coordinated and administratively simple. 43% of participants rated that as most important

<sup>47</sup> Based on the NI Deprivation Measure Proximity to Services Domain at an output area level

- All staff are respectful, helpful and trained to serve older people, also 43% rated this as most important

An assessment of health services in the HASP survey shows that the level of poor responses is low, with more respondents reporting that services are average / good. One fifth of respondents do not know about the availability of residential care.

**Fig.24: Community Support and Health Services**



Consultation has indicated that there are mixed opinions on the health and community support services available in Belfast. Services deemed to be adequate (and more) included;

- well organised GP services and open surgeries
- pharmacy services (including delivery of medication to home and pre-made medication packs)
- discharge from hospital
- opening hours suitable
- good access to other non-core services e.g. smoking clinic
- speed of GP referral process for hospital appointments
- provision of community based services such as physiotherapy
- Excellent paramedic services etc.

More negative views of health and community support services included:

- Out-patient care varies
- Mixed views on GP surgeries – and differing waiting times (from 2 days to 2 weeks) to see the GP
- Opening hours of GP's
- Small window of time to speak with GP (10 minutes)

- Fear of asking GP questions due to short amount of time available
- Not seeing your own GP / locum doctors not aware of your health condition
- Long waiting times at A&E
- Lack of co-ordination in services
- Lack of arrangements to cover absence and holiday periods
- Some concern was expressed about A&E services
- concerns about being discharged from hospital without social care package discussion and support being part of the discharge process

A Greater Belfast Seniors Forum survey into member experiences of GP Surgeries found that the majority of problems experienced within the GP's surgery concern the appointment process, with most stating that the waiting time between the initial telephone call and the appointment was too long.

A UK Charity, Friends of the Elderly conducted a UK survey with people over the age of 60 in 26 UK cities to determine how age 'Friendly' they felt their community was<sup>48</sup>. Belfast scored the highest and was rated as the most Age-friendly UK city. Despite ranking first in respect to dementia services, the survey highlighted that access to, and awareness of, dementia resources were found to be the elements most lacking everywhere in the UK and scored low across all UK cities, including Belfast.

## 11.6 Provision of Information

BHSCT web site ([www.belfasttrust.hscni.net](http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net)) clearly details the range of services for older people available in the community, at home and in hospitals. The web site is designed to help older people to find out more about BHSCT services, what they offer, where they are and how to access them.

Belfast City Council's web site ([www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk)) includes a senior's section which provides information on health and well being and includes information on the health issues affecting older people and support organisations with contact details and linkages to their respective web site.

Belfast City Council has also published a Seniors Info Directory which provides similar information in hard copy format.

Findings from older people's consultation events have indicated that they thought there was an overall lack of information on services available. Information was generally received through word of mouth. Issues with respect to access to a

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<sup>48</sup> The survey was conducted among 2,652 people over the age of 60 across 26 UK cities with at least 100 people in each place

computer and computer literacy were raised. Good information may be available on web sites but this does not mean that older people can access it. Currently “word of mouth” relaying of information is a preferred means of communication for older people

Provision of larger print information for people with visual impairment was done well, as were telephone calls/reminders to notify older people of appointments.

### **11.7 Belfast Resilience Forum**

Belfast Resilience Forum provides a coordinated approach to major emergencies in the City and it brings together representatives of more than 50 different organisations from public, private and voluntary sectors. Their role is to prepare emergency plans for major disasters and they advise individuals, local communities and businesses in how to prepare their own emergency plan.

Some older people can become vulnerable during emergencies and in severe weather conditions. Additional support is provided for older people in Belfast through HASP coordinating a winter planning group, which works together on winter warmth events and sharing of advice in extreme weather. A voluntary organisations subgroup of Belfast Resilience Forum works closely with several organisations that work with older people in Belfast, including Age NI.

### **11.8 Stakeholder Feedback**

Stakeholder responses to the consultation have identified;

- The Red Cross supports reablement of older people and has plans for the provision of more services which will be used to support independent living, assist with hospital discharge and prevent readmission to care facilities
- Active Belfast is a partner in the Active Aging Group, promoting a coordinated approach to physical activity opportunities across Belfast for older people
- Oasis Caring in Action’s RECALL project provides services that enable older people to remain independent in their own homes and overcomes isolation and the risk of mental ill health
- ArtsCare is working with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the five Health and Social Care Trusts, Department of Health and community groups to deliver quality arts in health projects across older people’s health and social care groups over the next 5 years.
- Belfast Healthy Cities is currently a partner and co-funder of a project run by Queens University which aims to expand the ‘walkability index’ across Belfast.

## 11.9 Health and Community Services Summary and Challenges

Age is related to health in that many illnesses are more common among older people and many conditions become more severe and limiting with increasing age. Older people are more at risk of poor health and poor health may be more limiting to them. Health and support services are therefore vital to maintaining health and independence of older people in the community.

Figures show that life expectancy is less for males and females in Belfast than for NI as a whole and 2011 census figures show that the percentage of people who describe their health as 'bad' or 'very bad' increases with age. Specific health related issues highlighted by the Public Health Agency include;

- Older people are not getting the recommended level of physical activity
- Older people are not getting a healthy and well balanced diet
- Falls are a major cause of disability and the leading cause of death due to injury
- Dementia is increasing and becoming a major public health and societal issue
- Suicide rates are increasing amongst older people

Approximately one quarter of carers in Belfast are older carers aged 65+ and findings of a study conducted by the Carers Trust<sup>49</sup> on the challenges facing older carers in Northern Ireland show that;

- two-thirds had health problems or a disability themselves
- 73% reported that being a carer had a negative impact on their psychological well-being
- a third reported that money and the cost of caring is a constant worry
- 70% have become more isolated because of their caring duties

Consultation has highlighted that older people consider community and health services to be very important for an Age-friendly city. It was reported to be the number one most important feature of an Age-friendly city at a consultation event attended by representatives from the six Seniors Forums. At a further consultation event, the most important features of Age-friendly community support and health services were identified as;

- An adequate range of health and community support services is offered for promoting, maintaining and restoring health.
- Delivery of services is coordinated and administratively simple.

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<sup>49</sup>*Mind the Gap (2012)* a survey report on the lives and challenges faced by older carers in Northern Ireland by The Carers Trust.

- All staff are respectful, helpful and trained to serve older people

HASP survey respondents report that community support and health services were average / good. Areas for improvement that have been highlighted through the research include;

- A&E services
- GP services - waiting times, opening hours, length of time for appointment, feedback
- limitations of Home Help service
- better distribution of information
- public transport access to facilities
- parking at hospitals
- role of the community and voluntary sector which faces sustainability challenges
- lack of co-ordination between services
- hospital discharge without appropriate care / support package
- accessibility of some health service buildings
- perception that health service resources are insufficient to meet the needs of older people
- lack of awareness of residential facilities
- larger print on medications

Work is currently underway and will continue on:

- Work on dementia –friendly design taking place through the Dementia Centre NI and with advice from Age NI
- Promotion of Shopmobility Hubs for older people with disabilities

## 12. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The development of an Age-friendly Belfast will be enabled and supported by the strategic and policy context of both regional and local priorities. At a regional level, the role of the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland is an important resource for all age related work that seeks to enhance the lives of older people.

On 14 November 2011, the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland was appointed. The Commissioner for Older People Act 2011, passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly, provides the Commissioner with a wide range of promotional, advisory, educational and general investigatory functions, duties and powers to be deployed in the interest of older people both generally and individually. The principal aim of the Commissioner, as set out in legislation, is to 'safeguard and promote the interests of older people'. The specific legal powers and duties that have been given to the Commissioner reflect the need to better recognise the positive contribution, rights and interests of older people and to challenge any discrimination and unfair treatment that they face.

In June 2013 the Commissioner for Older People launched "Hope, Confidence, Certainty," a Corporate Plan to bring about real and positive change for older people in Northern Ireland. The plan was produced following an extensive period of direct engagement and consultation with older people, organisations that work with them, and other stakeholder groups. The focus of the plan and the future work of the Commissioner for Older People is on;

- Promoting positive ageing
- Securing and protecting older people's rights
- Reducing fear of crime
- Employment for older people
- Protecting against abuse of older people
- Older Carers

There are many other central Government strategies whose strategic priorities are aligned to the issues and priorities that are emerging through the Age-friendly baseline.

Strategy	Relevant Age-friendly Strategic Priorities
<b>NI Programme for Government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating Opportunities, Tackling Disadvantage and Improving Health and Wellbeing – includes reducing fuel poverty</li> <li>• Protecting Our People, the Environment and Creating Safer Communities – includes improving community safety and tackling crime against older people</li> <li>• Building a Strong and Shared Community</li> </ul>
<b>Aging in an Inclusive Society (a new Active Aging strategy is currently being developed)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that older people have access to financial and economic resources to lift them out of exclusion and isolation;</li> <li>• To deliver integrated services that improve the health and quality of life of older people;</li> <li>• To ensure that older people have a decent and secure life in their home and community;</li> <li>• To ensure that older people have access to services and facilities that meet their needs and priorities;</li> <li>• To promote equality of opportunity for older people and their full participation in civic life, and challenge ageism wherever it is found;</li> <li>• To ensure that Government works in a coordinated way interdepartmentally and with social partners to deliver effective services for older people.</li> </ul>
<b>Lifetime Opportunities: Anti Poverty &amp; Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland</b>	To ensure older people are valued and respected, remain independent, participate as active citizens and enjoy a good quality of life in a safe and shared community
<b>Facing the Future: Housing Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring access to decent, affordable, sustainable homes</li> <li>• Meeting Housing Needs and Supporting the most vulnerable – this includes a focus upon homelessness and independent living</li> <li>• Driving Regeneration and Sustaining Communities through Housing</li> </ul>
<b>Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To place homelessness prevention at the forefront of service delivery</li> <li>• To reduce the length of time households and individuals experience homelessness by improving access to affordable housing</li> <li>• To remove the need to sleep rough</li> <li>• To improve services to vulnerable homeless households and individuals</li> </ul>
<b>Transforming Your Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home as the hub of care for older people, with more services provided at home and in the community</li> <li>• Introduction of reablement to encourage independence</li> <li>• A focus on promoting healthy ageing, individual resilience and independence</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More integrated planning and delivery of support for older people</li> <li>• Personalised care</li> <li>• A diverse choice of provision to meet the needs of older people, with appropriate regulation</li> </ul>
<b>Improving Dementia Services in Northern Ireland – A regional Strategy</b>	to promote a greater understanding of how dementia impacts on the lives of individuals, and how people can be supported to live well, with dignity and as valued members of our society
<b>Join In, Get Involved: Build a Better Future - A Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan for Northern Ireland 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognising the Value and Promoting the Benefits;</li> <li>• Enhancing Accessibility and Diversity;</li> <li>• Improving the Experience;</li> <li>• Supporting and Strengthening the Infrastructure</li> </ul>
<b>Warmer Healthier Homes: A New Fuel Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeting of resources at the most vulnerable (includes householders over the age of 60)</li> <li>• To improve energy efficiency of vulnerable households</li> <li>• To achieve affordable energy</li> </ul>
<b>Maximising Incomes and Outcomes - a 3 year plan for improving the uptake of benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the evidence base of benefits uptake</li> <li>• Better targeting of beneficiaries</li> <li>• Improving access and delivery</li> <li>• Intervention at critical life changes</li> </ul>
<b>Sport Matters</b>	To promote a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport and by 2019 to deliver at least a 6 percentage points increase in participation in sport and physical recreation among older people
<b>Accessible Transport Strategy Action Plan 2012-2015</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop, in partnership with key stakeholders, an integrated, fully accessible public transport system which will enable older people and people with disabilities to travel by bus, train, taxi, private and community transport services in safety and in comfort and move easily between these modes;</li> <li>• To enable older people and people with disabilities to travel safely using cars and other means of private transport;</li> <li>• To address attitudinal and psychological barriers that prevent or discourage older people or people with disabilities from using transport services and facilities that are available to them;</li> <li>• To ensure that information in a range of formats is available for all public transport services, including the full range of accessible services supported by the Department, to enable people to plan and make these journeys easily;</li> <li>• To provide help with travel costs to enable older people and people with disabilities to use the transport services available to them.</li> </ul>

**Public Health Strategy  
2013-2023**

NI's proposed new 10-year public health framework which recognises the importance of the social, economic, physical and cultural environment to the health of the population. The strategy aims to provide direction for policies and actions to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Northern Ireland, and reduce health inequalities, by working across government departments using a life-course approach.

In addition the Age-friendly work will be guided by Belfast Strategic Partnership's Framework for Action 2011-2015 which has four priorities to address life inequalities;

- mental health and emotional wellbeing
- lifelong learning
- alcohol and drug related issues
- Focusing on early years and early interventions
- Regenerating living places and healthy spaces

**12.1 Local Government Reform (LGR)**

Preparations are underway for the reform of local government, which will take place by April 2015. As part of the plans, the 26 existing councils in Northern Ireland will be replaced by 11 new councils, including Belfast. Belfast will grow to take in parts of the existing Lisburn and Castlereagh councils, as well as a small part of North Down council, and welcome around 56,000 additional citizens and approximately 22,000 extra households, as well as hundreds of new businesses.

The Northern Ireland Executive wants to make local government stronger, more effective and more citizen-focused. Many key functions are therefore transferring from central to local government as part of the reform programme. This will give Belfast City Council the ability to directly influence the enhancement of Belfast as an Age-friendly City. Changes confirmed under LGR include:

- Planning (including development of area plans, processing planning applications and planning enforcement responsibilities) - transferring from Department of the Environment
- Urban regeneration (including environmental improvement schemes, neighbourhood renewal and some community development programmes for the voluntary and community sectors) - transferring from Department for Social Development

- Part responsibility for local roads (including off-street parking, but not Park and Ride) - transferring from Department for Regional Development
- Regulatory housing responsibilities, including the registration of multiple occupancy houses and the issuing of repair and demolition notices - transferring from Department of Social Development
- Local economic development (including the Start a Business Programme, youth entrepreneurship schemes and neighbourhood renewal funding relating to enterprise initiatives) - transferring from Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
- Local tourism (including business start-up advice and customer care schemes) - transferring from Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
- Local sports facilities - transferring from the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure
- Authority to draw up local lists of buildings that are of architectural and historic interest - transferring from the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure
- Rural development - transferring from the Department for Rural Development.

With LGR Belfast City Council services will become more citizen-focused and integrated, with a real emphasis on how Council meets community need and improves quality of life. Two new areas of responsibility that will facilitate this include:

- a) Community planning - This is a new council-led duty aimed at improving quality of life for people, communities and neighbourhoods. It will provide a framework for Belfast City Council, central government departments, statutory bodies, the third and business sectors, and other relevant agencies to work together and engage with communities to develop a shared vision for promoting wellbeing.
- b) General power of competence - This power will enable Belfast City Council to act in the interests of Council and develop innovative approaches to addressing issues within the area.

As a result, Belfast City Council will be working closely with communities and engaging with them to target and plan services better, according to where they are needed most. This will create stronger neighbourhoods which, in turn, will help support local residents and businesses.

## 13. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Completion of this baseline assessment has involved collating findings from a variety of sources including consultation events and surveys. The surveys do not claim to be a representative sample of the total older population of Belfast but findings do provide a baseline in terms of raising issues and concerns from which to begin further discussions and debate about making Belfast more Age-friendly. As the work of enhancing Belfast as an Age-friendly city is developed HASP will seek resources to conduct a representative survey amongst the older population of Belfast.

Similarly, there has been considerable consultation with older people through HASP and the Senior Citizens Forums which has produced much anecdotal feedback. This feedback is important in that it conveys the perceptions of older people in respect to different Age-friendly variables. It will also be important that future progress in developing Belfast as an Age-friendly city includes explicit mechanisms / processes for engagement with and involvement of older people in planning and decision making processes.

Many stakeholders have provided feedback to the survey findings and anecdotal comments. These have been included to ensure a balanced overview of the strengths, issues, concerns and challenges.

A parallel process has involved the completion of a three year action plan which will be circulated for public consultation. This action plan will be reflective of the needs and challenges identified during the base lining process.

### 13.1 Key things that are viewed as age-friendly and rated highly

Population ageing is one of the major successes of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In Belfast there has been a 17% increase in the numbers of people age 85+ since 2001. Currently 19% of the population is over 60 and this is expected to increase to 36% by 2050. Belfast is benefiting from the contribution that older people make to their families, their communities and the economy.

Older people are a diverse group involved a wide range of activities including; seeking employment, caring for family members, volunteering, taking part in lifelong learning, getting married, participating in local groups and using leisure centres.

Belfast City Council employs 177 people aged 60+ which is 6% of the total number of employees and there are currently 10 Belfast City Councillors aged over 60.

Older people surveyed indicate that “Belfast is already a good place to grow old”. They report favourably on transport availability, which enables them to stay in contact with family, to take holidays, to go shopping, to access services and to socialise. 55% of older people rate their homes as good or excellent.

Belfast has a strong community infrastructure, with a healthy and vibrant older people’s sector. It is estimated that there are approximately 400 to 500 community groups providing services and activities across the city. Consultation highlights that there is much good work being done in local communities and that many staff in Belfast are courteous towards older people.

Free public transport, information received through the City Matters Magazine and access to public attractions and are all rated quite highly by older people.

Planned developments through the Streets Ahead project in the city centre, the Belfast on the Move project to increase use of public transport, programmes through the Active Belfast Partnership and planned arts and older people programmes, will all contribute to Belfast becoming a more age-friendly city.

### 13.1 Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

There has been considerable investment in Belfast’s external environment and feedback from older people was positive about the quality of the environment. Recommendations for consideration include the need for;

- increased and better public toilet facilities
- increased public seating
- improved street lighting
- improved surfacing of public footpaths
- adequate gritting of pavements in winter
- increased neighbourhood policing in communities so that older people feel safe and secure within their community
- measures introduced to public parks to reduce anti social behaviour
- improved cleanliness of the environment – reduced litter and dog fouling
- review of accessibility of public buildings

## 13.2 Transportation

Feedback has been very positive on public transport in Belfast and the availability of free public transport is greatly welcomed and appreciated by older people. Transport was identified by respondents and consultees as one of the top three most important aspects of an Age-friendly city. The following indicative actions are recommended for consideration;

- Review the use of public transport by older people and how access to public transport can be improved, addressing concerns about frequency, routes, reliability, priority seating, customer care
- Complete a scoping study to evidence perceptions of older people re. customer care
- Promote sustained use of Engage with Age's DVD – Travelling On
- Liaise with Translink on the outcome of the pilot initiative on visual and audible information systems
- Better regulation of misuse of car parking in disabled spaces, on footpaths and in bus lanes
- Increase awareness of door to door services

## 13.3 Housing

Housing was identified in the HASP survey as the second most important feature of an Age-friendly city. Research has indicated the issues that need to be addressed including homelessness, housing stress, fuel poverty and community safety. Older people in the future will mostly be home owners and there are concerns that there is insufficient appropriate housing for older people e.g. single storey and ground floor accommodation. Home owners are also concerned about the affordability of home adaptations that may be needed to accommodate their needs in older age. Recommendations for consideration include;

- Engage with the Promoting Social Inclusion Homelessness Partnership to discuss work in respect to addressing homelessness amongst older people
- Liaise with NIHE on housing issues
- Information and awareness raising of housing options, including residential provision and supports available for older people
- Review provision of a city wide Handyman scheme and consider a potential social enterprise / employability opportunity
- Increase awareness of and uptake in Belfast City Council's Home Safety check initiative
- Develop a fuel poverty action plan to reduce fuel poverty in Belfast

### 13.4 Social Participation

There are many opportunities for social participation across Belfast in terms of city centre events and activities and community based local activities delivered through a strong, vibrant community based age sector network. Belfast City Council manages a good network of leisure and community centres as well as outdoor parks and allotments. There is also an annual calendar of events with all year round opportunities for older people to participate. However there is a need to ensure that older people are aware of these events and that any barriers to engagement are removed to ensure participation by older people in the diversity of opportunities that are available currently.

Recommendations for consideration include;

- **Develop a coordinated action plan for reducing social isolation across Belfast**
- **Liase with transport providers to ensure that older people can access events and activities**
- **Information and awareness raising of events – coordinate promotion of events and activities in conjunction with the Seniors Forums**
- **Introduction of more activities and events specifically for older people**

### 13.5 Respect and Social Inclusion

Respect and social inclusion was rated as the number one priority for older people in the HASP survey. Older people report that in general people are courteous but it was believed that more needs to be done in terms of improving service provision, ensuring better customer service, removing barriers that promote exclusion and a need for recognition of older people as valuable members of the community. Specific recommendations include;

- **Develop an Age-friendly Charter for the city that service providers can sign up to that will ensure a more enhanced and better customer experience for older people**
- **Positive aging media campaign**
- **More inter generational activities and programmes**

### 13.6 Civic Participation and Employment

Research shows that older people want to remain active and engaged in employment, education, training or volunteering opportunities. However it is considered that while volunteering opportunities are good, there are not the same employment opportunities for older people and the cost of some education and training opportunities can be prohibitive.

Opportunities for civic engagement in decision making are good in the city, through the 6 Senior Citizen's Forums and the Greater Belfast Senior's Forum. There is a need to ensure that these organisations are effectively engaging in strategic decision making processes that impact upon older people in the long term.

Recommendations for consideration include;

- Support and development for the Senior's Forums in respect to effective engagement at a strategic and policy level
- Programme with employers to update pre-retirement practice and increase recognition of the value and role of older employees
- Employability support for older job seekers
- Awareness raising of volunteering opportunities
- Awareness raising of the Senior Citizens Forums and opportunities locally for older people
- Public awareness campaign of the positive health benefits of active aging
- Provision of community based education and training programmes

### 13.7 Communication and Information

Feedback has been very positive about the provision of printed media to inform older people of what's happening in Belfast. However as Belfast becomes a Super Connected city there is a concern that older people are being left out of the opportunities of broadband and emerging technologies because of a lack of awareness and skills to access such developments. Recommendations include;

- Provision of community based education and training on the internet and e-technology
- Review access to ICT in local communities for older people and address gaps in provision
- Raise awareness of ICT access opportunities in local communities
- Develop a Senior's information web site
- Reduce automated answering services in public services

### 13.8 Community Support and Health Services

As the older population of Belfast increases the demands on community support and health services will also increase. Many of the WHO Age-friendly thematic areas that have already been discussed will help towards improving quality of life, active aging and overall health and wellbeing of the older population. A co-ordinated approach should therefore be considered across all WHO Age-friendly indicators to address the health impact across each of the thematic areas of work.

The health theme covers a diverse and vast area of work. Issues that have been identified include life expectancy, physical activity, nutrition, dementia, mental health, suicide and older carers. Transforming Your Care advocates for a focus upon the home as a hub for older people, with more services provided at home and the introduction of reablement as an approach, that seeks to encourage independence for older people. Working towards an enhanced Age-friendly Belfast supports and enables this approach.

Recommendations for consideration in a future action plan include;

- Improved co-ordination between services
- Review of GP services to better meet the needs of older people in terms of accessibility, information and communication
- Improved A&E services waiting times
- A review of Home Help provision to determine if it meets the current and future needs of older people
- Review of priority parking at health service premises
- Increased resourcing for community and voluntary sector activity
- Increased resourcing for the health sector to meet the needs of a growing older population
- Increased resourcing for health and wellbeing activities – physical activity programmes, food initiatives, luncheon clubs, reminiscence work, social activities, befriending schemes
- Build on the work of the Walkability study to develop safe and accessible walks in communities
- Review information and communication mechanisms and develop more Age-friendly practice e.g. feedback, large print on medications

# **APPENDIX 1**

SOAs with a 20% +  
Population Aged 60+

## SOAs with a 20% + Population Aged 60+

SOA	% Pop Aged 60+	SOA	% Pop Aged 60+
<b>Crumlin 1</b>	34.96	<b>Castleview 2</b>	23.80
<b>Upper Malone 1</b>	34.56	<b>Knock 2</b>	23.69
<b>Stormont 1</b>	32.90	<b>Orangefield 2</b>	23.56
<b>Cherryvalley 1</b>	32.73	<b>Musgrave 1</b>	23.49
<b>Fortwilliam 1</b>	32.29	<b>Cavehill 2</b>	23.23
<b>Andersonstown 1</b>	31.06	<b>Upper Malone 3</b>	23.21
<b>Andersonstown 2</b>	30.06	<b>Hlghfield 2</b>	23.14
<b>Cherryvalley 3</b>	29.50	<b>Cliftonville 2</b>	23.03
<b>Stormont 2</b>	29.21	<b>Legoniel 2</b>	22.93
<b>Glencairn 2</b>	27.76	<b>Sydenham 2</b>	22.88
<b>Falls Park 2</b>	27.70	<b>Falls Park 1</b>	22.71
<b>Shankill 2</b>	27.24	<b>Glencairn 1</b>	22.70
<b>Knock 3</b>	27.20	<b>Glencolin 4</b>	22.68
<b>Woodvale 2</b>	27.16	<b>Fortwilliam 3</b>	22.60
<b>Finaghy 1</b>	26.79	<b>Glen Road 1</b>	22.57
<b>Castleview 3</b>	26.69	<b>Ladybrook 2</b>	22.41
<b>Finaghy 3</b>	26.63	<b>Cherryvalley 2</b>	22.36
<b>Belmont 1</b>	26.50	<b>Ballyhackamore 2</b>	22.31
<b>Finaghy 2</b>	26.47	<b>Orangefield 3</b>	22.23
<b>Malone 2</b>	26.06	<b>Ballyhackamore 1</b>	22.07
<b>Sydenham 1</b>	25.55	<b>Woodvale 1</b>	22.03
<b>Knock 1</b>	25.51	<b>Falls Park 3</b>	22.02
<b>Malone 1</b>	25.27	<b>Rosetta 2</b>	21.17
<b>Legoniel 3</b>	25.24	<b>Falls 1</b>	21.17
<b>Belmont 2</b>	25.16	<b>Cavehill 3</b>	20.98
<b>Bellevue 2</b>	25.04	<b>Rosetta 3</b>	20.83
<b>Stormont 3</b>	24.92	<b>Bloomfield 2</b>	20.81
<b>New Lodge 1</b>	24.87	<b>Ballysillan 1</b>	20.73
<b>Cavehill 1</b>	24.49	<b>Ballyhackamore 3</b>	20.73
<b>Musgrave 2</b>	24.46	<b>New Lodge 2</b>	20.31
<b>Andersonstown 3</b>	24.44	<b>Shankill 1</b>	20.28
<b>Stranmillis 1</b>	24.20	<b>Ballysillan 2</b>	20.23
<b>Woodvale 3</b>	24.10	<b>Upper Malone 2</b>	20.13
<b>Fortwilliam 2</b>	23.84	<b>Duncairn 2</b>	20.05

## **APPENDIX 2**

**Resident Population in  
Belfast by NI's 10%  
Most Deprived SOAs  
for Income Deprivation  
Affecting Older People Domain**

### Resident Population in Belfast by NI's 10% Most Deprived SOAs for Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Domain

SOA	Pop Aged 60+ Nos	SOA	Pop Aged 60+ Nos
Ardoyne 3	352	Crumlin 1	706
Clonard 1	405	Ballymacarrett 1	310
Whiterock 3	243	Shankill 2	577
Upper Springfield 3	296	Ardoyne 1	310
Falls 2	283	Beechmount 3	274
Upper Springfield 1	278	Shaftesbury 1	313
Whiterock 2	313	Whiterock 1	264
New Lodge 3	227	Ballymacarrett 3	311
New Lodge 2	300	Beechmount 1	340
Falls 1	317	Glen Road 1	487
Falls 3	343	Water Works 3	293
New Lodge 1	490	Beechmount 2	269
Shankill 1	344	The Mount 1	394
Botanic 5	210	Upper Springfield 2	334
Glen Road 3	230	Woodvale 3	322
Glen Road 2	337	Ardoyne 2	329
Shaftesbury 2	471	Crumlin 2	458
Glencolin 2	228	Glencolin 3	331
Ballymacarrett 2	249	Duncairn 1	481
Glencolin 4	370	Woodstock 2	327

## **APPENDIX 3**

# AgeNI Consultation On Lesser Heard Older People

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# Age- friendly Belfast

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AgeNI Consultation  
On Lesser Heard Older  
People

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## Introduction

In May 2012, the Mayor of Belfast signed a submission to the World Health Organisation to commit Belfast to becoming an Age-Friendly City. An Age-Friendly City is an inclusive and accessible urban environment that promotes active ageing.

Age-Friendly cities assess themselves in 8 areas from the perspective of older people and identify how they can become more Age-Friendly:

- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Social participation
- Respect and social inclusion
- Civic participation and employment
- Communication and information
- Community and health services

At a consultation event in March 2012 Belfast City Council spoke to 103 older people from the 6 individual senior's forums in Belfast. They were asked about their priorities for an Age-Friendly city, what is done well or needs to improve under the headings above.

Following this research, it became clear that there was a need to seek input from older people from underrepresented groups including older carers, black and minority ethnic groups, a lesbian gay bisexual transgender group, those in sheltered housing, those with a disability and others who may be particularly isolated.

## Methodology

As part of Belfast Strategic Partnerships/ Healthy Aging Strategic Partnership's Age-Friendly City approach, Belfast City Council invited Age NI to deliver a series of consultations with harder to reach groups of older people via the Peer facilitator Programme. The groups targeted are as follows:

- Black/Minority Ethnic
- Isolated and less mobile people in sheltered accommodation
- Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT)
- Older Carers
- Older Men
- Disability (including deaf/blind groups)

For this project, a total of 6 Age NI peer facilitators attended a bespoke briefing session (1/2 day) with the Age NI Project Manager, where they received a detailed input and overview of the Belfast City Council's Age-Friendly proposal and action plan, as well as information about the previous consultation sessions. The briefing also provided facilitators with a detailed agenda for each of the focus groups to be carried out, as well as a list of prompt questions to help facilitate and support the discussions. Facilitators were also given direction in relation to the prioritising of criteria, and also the compiling of questionnaires by participants at the end of each of the focus groups. Facilitators were allocated focus groups as and when they were organised, and according to availability on each occasion. At this session facilitators also provided their own input into the questionnaire, allowing Belfast City Council to subsequently make some amendments to it, to make it more user friendly. Age NI facilitators carried out focus groups with 5 out of the 6 groupings from October – December 2012. It was not possible to gather a group of carers together for a prolonged period of time for a focus group, so carers groups were invited to complete the questionnaire in their own time. A total of 48 individuals attended the focus groups, breakdown as follows: Older Men – 7 participants, Disability – 11 participants, LGBT – 6 participants, Ethnic Minority – 16 participants, Sheltered Accommodation – 8 participants. A further 4 carers completed the questionnaire.

## Focus Group Analysis

At the beginning of each focus group, participants were asked to prioritise the 8 criteria in relation to what was most important to them in considering Belfast as an Age-Friendly city, (number 1), and what was least important to them personally (number 8).

Out of a total of 48 participants across 5 focus groups, the following key findings emerged:

Participants indicated that the most important criteria for them were

- **Community and Health Services:** An overwhelming majority of participants (71%) felt that this was the most important issue for them personally
- **Transportation:** 67% of participants rated this in their top 3 priorities
- **Housing:** half of participants (50%) ranked housing as important to them

Least important to the older people attending the focus groups were

- Social Participation – less than a quarter of participants (23%) rated this in their top 3
- Outdoor spaces – only 12.5% of participants felt this was important to them personally
- Civic participation and employment – 10% of older people viewed this as a priority for them

General comments from participants are outlined in the table below:

<b>Age-Friendly Criteria</b>	<b>Comments from hard to reach groups</b>
<b>Community and health services</b>	Indicated as the highest priority for participants, Belfast scores well in its provision, but also noted are concerns about access to GPs, closures of A&E facilities, and lengthy waiting lists for hospital appointments.
<b>Transportation</b>	Noted as the second most important criteria for participants, the subject of transportation attracted a wide range of comments, largely focusing on the importance of free travel for older people, but also taking into account respect for older people, consideration for transport users with disabilities, and the withdrawal of services in certain areas.
<b>Housing</b>	Whilst Belfast was largely considered as a safe place to live, comments in this category varied, according to participating groups. One of the key issues emerging here is housing provision for those with disabilities.
<b>Communication and information</b>	Across all sessions, communication was consistently seen as being of a high standard, largely due to City Matters. However some areas were noted for improvement, particularly access to information by minority groups.
<b>Respect and social inclusion</b>	A number of issues were highlighted here as needing improvement, particularly in relation to respect and inclusion of older people from minority communities, as well as those with

	disabilities.
<b>Social participation</b>	A range of views were noted on this issue, with many indicating the need for good transport links, to enable participation in the first place.
<b>Outdoor spaces and buildings</b>	One of the criteria rated as least important to older people, it nonetheless generated discussion and comments, many relating to access for older people with disabilities, and safety in our parks.
<b>Civic participation and employment</b>	Volunteering was considered favourably, particularly in its delivery by third sector bodies. However participants largely felt that there were fewer opportunities for input into Belfast City Council's work on this issue.

## Detailed analysis by criteria

### Community Support and Health Services

This ranked as the most important issue for older people who took part in the discussions. Again, a wide range of comments were raised in the focus groups with much good practice being recognised, and several areas for concern or improvement raised as well.

Overall, almost 60% of participants considered that the range of Health and Community Support Services was good or excellent, whilst over 60% stated that the access to Health and Community Support Services was also good or excellent.

Older people participating overwhelmingly praised the provision of health related activities and programmes in leisure centres across the city, indicating that this is definitely one thing Belfast City Council does well. Some participants also stated that Environmental Health has also improved, and had been particularly successful in reducing the instances of multiple occupation in homes across the city, for example.

Some concerns highlighted by participants included the issue of waiting lists, and older people having to resort to paying privately for treatment. In some cases, they are treated by the same doctors as on the National Health Service. Other people were worried about the closure of hospital facilities (for example the City Hospital A&E), stating that they were disconcerted at having to travel elsewhere for treatment. Some people felt that whilst good relations existed between the Council and the Health trust, the outcomes of discussions and decisions about services for older people is not always made known to them.

### Transportation

This criteria received mixed feedback, with many positive comments, and several recommendations for improvement. Overall, 50% of participants felt that accessibility of transport was good or very good. However, almost 30% of older people participating felt that the suitability of routes was either very poor or poor. A significant issue for many

(41%), related to access to information about transport, including timetables and changes to bus routes.

On the plus side, people were very happy with the provision of free travel through the bus pass, and stressed that this should be continued. Also praised was the city council's removal of buses from in front of the City Hall. Overall, participants noted that the city was very well provided with taxi services, and that some improvement had been witnessed in the behaviour of bus drivers towards older people, some felt as a result of a training DVD which had been produced in recent years in collaboration with older bus users.

### **Door to Door Transport**

Many views were given on what could be done differently in Belfast in relation to transport. Much emphasis was placed on the provision of door to door transport, with participants noting that this service was poor, particularly for those with disabilities.

### **Transport by Bus**

Whilst some improvement had been noted in the attitude and conduct of bus drivers, nevertheless, many comments related to the lack of use of the 'kneeling bus', and also the 'jerky' driving manner of some drivers, resulting in negative experiences for some users. Some participants noted that public transport should ideally have verbal as well as visual indicators – this would facilitate those older people who are hard of hearing, sight impaired and others.

### **Disabled Parking Permits**

Also mentioned was the need to monitor more closely the designated parking areas for people with disability parking permits, as it was suggested that this is often abused.

### **Road works/Planning Notifications**

Older people participating, who were visually impaired, also raised the issue of the placing of planning notices in newspapers which advise the general public about road works, for example. It was recommended that alternative means of alerting specific users or groups who may not be able to access the newspaper, be explored.

## Housing

Ranked by participants as one of the top 3 most important criteria, this issue received a wide range of comments during the focus groups. One of the key issues for people was the provision of housing for people with disabilities.

Almost 57% of participants felt that Belfast was a safe place to live in. However, Belfast is seen to be lacking in its provision for social housing, with over 40% indicating that the current provision ranged from very poor to average.

It was interesting to note that in the ethnic minority group, no housing issues were noted, with participants indicating that due to the cultural aspect of shared housing and joint family living, housing is less of an issue for them.

The Housing Executive was praised for its management of properties, and older people felt safe in their homes, due to the provision of various home safety devices. Participants did comment, however, that many properties are lying vacant, and these could be disposed of more quickly. The issue of LGBT older people living in sheltered accommodation was raised, and the question asked of Belfast City Council had done any research into this issue? Furthermore, it was commented that housing for older people can be 'ghetto-ised', and is not always well planned, despite being purpose built.

Much of the discussion focused on the provision of housing, and in particular, sheltered accommodation for people with disabilities. It was considered that sheltered accommodation was not always suitable for people with disabilities, in particular for those with visual impairments, and with guide dogs. It was noted that some older people living in sheltered dwellings, and who were on upper floors and in a wheelchair for example, did not participate in activities, owing to poor access to all areas of the dwelling. Some older people in the focus group with visually impaired people highlighted the importance of blind or visually impaired people being allocated housing in a location which is nearby, or local to them, as they have grown familiar with their surroundings. It can be hugely disconcerting if a blind or visually impaired person has to adjust to completely new surroundings. This can often lead to increased social isolation and lack of independence.

## Communication and Information

This is one criteria which scored favourably with participants, with overwhelming praise going to the 'City Matters' magazine. 50% of participants indicated that the information received about what was happening in the City was either good or excellent. 52% felt that staff were available to assist them in public offices, however just over 44% of older people participating indicated that the range of information in Age-Friendly formats could be improved.

Some older people stated that the best place to get information about what is happening is their local community centre, with the Indian Community Centre being highlighted as one example of best practice in this regard. There was praise for how Belfast City Council coped with both the freezing conditions, as well as the flooding in Belfast recently – the provision of emergency sand bags and financial help being cited as two examples of this.

Recommendations came in relation to the inclusion of people from minority groups, for example, one recommendation from the LGBT focus group was that LGBT older people could be encouraged to contribute to publications such as City Matters. Others highlighted the lack of access in general of some older people to computers and the internet, citing that much information is now only available on the internet, and therefore they feel left behind.

The provision of information in accessible formats such as Braille was raised as an issue, however with some participants stating that it **is** available, but only if people request it.

## Respect and Social Inclusion

Even though this criteria did not rank amongst the top 3 prioritised by older people, it nevertheless generated lengthy debate and discussion, and a wide range of views. A significant 72.5% of participants felt that the range of services tailored to suit the needs of older people ranged from very poor to average. 65% of respondents indicated that more needs to be done to recognise the achievements of older people in the city, and a considerable 72% of older people participating indicated that the public image of older people could be depicted in a better way.

It was considered that Belfast performs well in some areas – for example, one group cited the provision of separate facilities in the Shankill for Muslim men and women. It was also the view that the City Council responds well with complaints.

The older people who took part in the focus group with the ethnic community, perhaps not surprisingly raised the issue of wearing **traditional dress** in public places. “We feel discriminated against if we wear our traditional dress”. They have a fear of going out wearing it, and do not feel safe going out alone if they are dressed in traditional clothes. They stated that the same is true for younger generations.

Also mentioned was the need for greater inclusion of those who cannot participate due to illness or disability, as well as the need for activities which encourage the greater inclusion of LGBT older people, one recommendation was the provision of specific swimming groups or sessions in leisure centres.

The focus group which took place in the sheltered housing complex raised the issue of “feeling invisible”, and stated that “we are not valued, our opinion does not count”. This is a group which feels (collectively) significantly isolated and cut off. This is largely due to a bus route being suspended, but nevertheless, their input into this consultation demonstrates the impact this can have across all the areas covered by the consultation.

## Social Participation

Whilst not ranked particularly high in terms of importance to individuals, social participation did, nevertheless, attract a range of comments and views, particularly on how Belfast is faring presently, and some recommendations on how it could improve in the future.

Just under half of the participants (42%) felt that the variety of activities on offer was good or excellent, whilst an overwhelming majority (71%) felt that contact with friends and family was paramount. However around one fifth of participants (20%) felt that there could be better promotion and information of events and activities.

Opinions varied across the sessions, for example, there was general consensus in the group of older people from ethnic minorities (all participants in this group were of Indian origin), that social participation in their community was excellent, made possible by the

excellent community centre in which most of the events take place. Social interaction here is excellent, and participation from the wider community is also welcomed, and takes place regularly. Other groups viewed that existence of neighbourhood watch groups as a crucial aspect to making older people feel safe, and therefore more confident in participating in their local community. This was considered as one initiative which is working well in many neighbourhoods in Belfast. On the downside, however, some older people felt 'cut off' – in particular, the focus group which took place with older people living in sheltered accommodation highlighted the lack of a bus route (this has been withdrawn) as the main factor in the feeling of isolation and lack of social participation. They stated, for example, that they could not travel to local events or activities, except by taxi. This has resulted in a loss of independence for many. Older people from LGBT groups recommended that all older people are not considered in a stereotypical way, "Why does Belfast City Council think we all want to play Bingo?". This group also highlighted the need for events and activities for older LGBT whom they feel do not "fit into the gay scene" when they get older. Participants also felt that some organisations could do more to welcome participation from those with a disability.

## Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Belfast achieved positive comments from a large number of participants on having a clean environment. (46% rated the environment in Belfast to be good or excellent) Public facilities such as toilets, however, was an issue, with 48.1% of participants indicating that they were very poor or poor.

The main finding under this heading was in relation to accessibility, and the needs of **older people with disabilities**. Particular mention was given to the increased use of street furniture, and people highlighted that this often presents a hazard to people with sight impairments, or those in wheelchairs.

The issue of planning notices placed in newspapers to advise about changes or upgrades to pavements or roads was mentioned, in that the notices are often missed by those with a sight impairment, who are subsequently unaware of road/pavement works which are going on.

The lack of gritting of pavements in winter was something participants felt needed to be addressed, if Belfast is to become more Age-Friendly. The perception was that older people will be less likely to leave their homes during winter if pavements are not adequately gritted, and safe for people to walk on.

Praise was given to leisure centres in Belfast, 51.6% of participants rated them as good or excellent. Likewise, usage of park green areas was highly rated, with 49.1% of people agreeing that they were good or excellent. In the discussions, however, some participants commented that the management of the parks could be improved, and in particular, that the use of 'friendly patrols' should be encouraged, so as to reduce the instances of anti social behaviour in some Belfast parks.

A further area for improvement was the instances of cyclists on pavements in Belfast. It was commented that this poses a significant obstacle and a danger for older people with disabilities, and in particular those with sight or hearing impairments. Similar comments were noted in relation to external café/restaurant furniture.

In relation to good practice elsewhere, participants noted that facilities are much better in the South of Ireland, in the main cities.

## **Civic Participation and Employment**

This category ranked as the least important for all participants, in terms of priority. Nevertheless, a range of views and recommendations were received in relation to this issue.

Belfast scores well in relation to opportunities for diversity in volunteering, with almost 40% of participants indicating that they are either good or excellent. Perhaps not surprisingly, almost 40% of participants felt that opportunities for paid employment for older people were either very poor or poor. A further 42% of all participants considered that the opportunities to participate in issues affecting the City of Belfast ranged from very poor to average.

Some older people stated that Belfast City Council had "left volunteering to charities and Volunteer Now. Is this the correct approach?" Again the issue of transport raised its head here, with one group indicating that they could not travel to their chosen place of

voluntary work, due to a bus route being withdrawn, and leaving them isolated. There was also a sense from participants that older people are not rewarded for their life experience when it comes to employment. “Paper qualifications, rather than life experience is rewarded”. One group also stated “People forget that life experience has brought us to this point”

## Specific issues raised by socially excluded groups

In addition to the comments above, the following specific issues were raised by the specific socially excluded groups:

### Ethnic Minority

The main issue raised by this group related to **Respect and Social Inclusion**. Older people attending the focus group stated that they tend not to go out dressed in their traditional dress, as it can lead to them feeling discriminated against. They stated that the same was also true for younger generations from their community.

### Older Men

One of the main issues for this group was **social participation**, including the importance of neighbourhood watch schemes, and the role of the community police in conjunction with this. Their view was that both are crucial and need to operate together, in order for older people to feel safe and secure in their homes and in their communities.

### Sheltered Accommodation

One single issue dominated all areas of discussion for this group of participants - **Transportation**. It relates to the withdrawal of the city bus service closest to the accommodation. Because of this, the residents within the home have experienced increased isolation and a reduction in their participation in the local community, unless activities or events are very close by. It highlights the importance of older people having access to a well networked transport service which will provide them with the ability to participate, and feel included in society.

### Disability

The participants in this group were all visually impaired; therefore comments were focused largely on access, and in particular, **outdoor spaces**. Older people who are visually impaired spoke specifically about the increased use of street furniture, and how this can be a hazard to them. Another specific issue related to changes to the kerbs in

Belfast City Centre. Often, as there are fewer defined kerbs, this poses a particular problem for guide dogs, who do not know where to stop with their owner.

### LGBT

Comments specific to this group of people, related largely to **social participation**. In particular, participants felt that older people tended to be 'stereotyped', and therefore, older people from the LGBT community can feel isolated or excluded from activities or events aimed at older people. Specific mention was also made of older people from the LGBT community in sheltered accommodation, and what, if any research has been done on this issue.

## Conclusions

The findings of the additional consultation with socially excluded groups have highlighted several areas where Belfast is performing exceptionally well:

- The provision of information for all residents of Belfast, through its publication 'City Matters' was rated very highly;
- Services delivered in leisure centres across Belfast were also highly ranked by older people;
- Particular mention was given to the help and assistance made available by staff from Belfast City Council venues, including Leisure Centres and Community Centres for older people;
- Belfast was also largely considered a safe place to live, and this has been helped by the provision of security equipment for homes, as well as the existence of neighbourhood watch schemes in many communities.

Issues of concern for older people coming from harder to reach groups included:

- Closure of health facilities including A&E;
- Attitude of drivers on public transport to older people and those with disabilities;
- Lack of respect for older people wearing traditional dress in public;
- Isolation and loss of independence due to bus routes being withdrawn in certain areas of the city;
- Increase in street furniture and cyclists on pavements, resulting in greater hazards for older people with sight/hearing impairments;
- Inclusion of older people from LGBT community in events and activities;
- Access to computers and the internet for many older people;

All participants in the focus groups welcomed the opportunity to be consulted in this way, with evaluation comments including:

- "Excellent facilitation" and "Small groups worked well"
- "Freedom of speech" and "Good to be consulted"

## Recommendations

Based on the findings from the focus groups, as well as the questionnaires, the following recommendations emerge in relation to taking this important piece of work to the next level:

- More **consultation** with socially excluded groups. All groups taking part in the focus groups felt that their voice was heard on issues relating to Age-Friendly Belfast via bespoke facilitation, and welcomed further consultation and engagement on the issue. Consultation needs to take into account the needs of the participants, and address any barriers they face – for example:
  - hold events at locations where older people from socially excluded groups normally attend;
  - ensure all materials are accessible for the group, e.g. available in large font/Braille/alternative languages;
  - ensure materials (including questionnaires) user friendly, and written in 'plain English', with as little jargon or technical language as possible;
- Consultation with Carers – a significant issue relating to the availability of carers for the time allocated to taking part in a focus group, meant that it was not possible to engage them in a focus group on this occasion. All of the groups notified about the event indicated that due to the nature of their caring responsibilities, any gatherings or meetings of carers groups are given over to socialising, or engaging with other carers on points of common interest. Or more generally, taking the time out as respite from their normal duties. A more suitable approach may be to interview carers in their home on a one-to-one basis.
- Provide **feedback** to groups who have participated in this process. Older people stated that after having participated in this process, they were keen to hear more about Age-Friendly Belfast, and how their input has helped shape any measures which are implemented in the future.

Some further recommendations emerged from the focus groups, relating to the Age-Friendly criteria specifically:

- Increased utilisation of local and community venues, both for events and activities, and also as a source of information for older people living in the vicinity.
- More neighbourhood watch schemes across the City. This works very well in certain areas, (East Belfast was used as an example in this exercise), and helps ensure increased confidence and social participation in older people who are living in their own homes.
- A wider range and diversity of activities organised for older people, to reduce the 'stereo-typing' of older people, and the activities they like to engage in.
- That the publication 'City Matters' contains more information for socially excluded groups, and seeks input from them on relevant issues.
- That consideration is given to how planning notifications are made accessible to older people who cannot access the standard notifications in the newspaper or internet.
- Further training for bus drivers on age awareness.
- Audio notifications on buses for those who are visually impaired

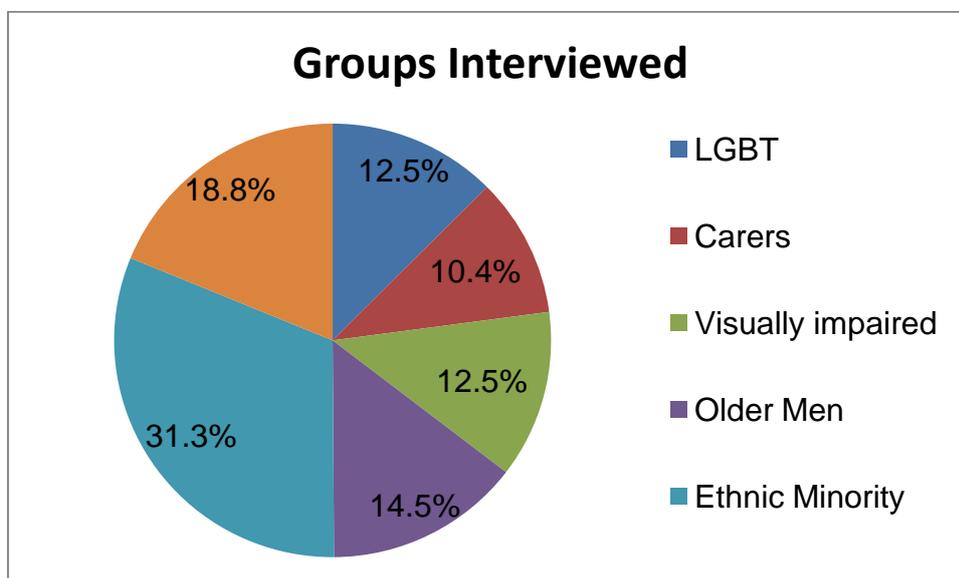
## Appendix one: Summary of all questionnaire responses

### Age-Friendly Belfast Questionnaire Summary

#### Groups Interviewed

LGBT = 12.5% Carers = 10.4% Visually impaired = 12.5%

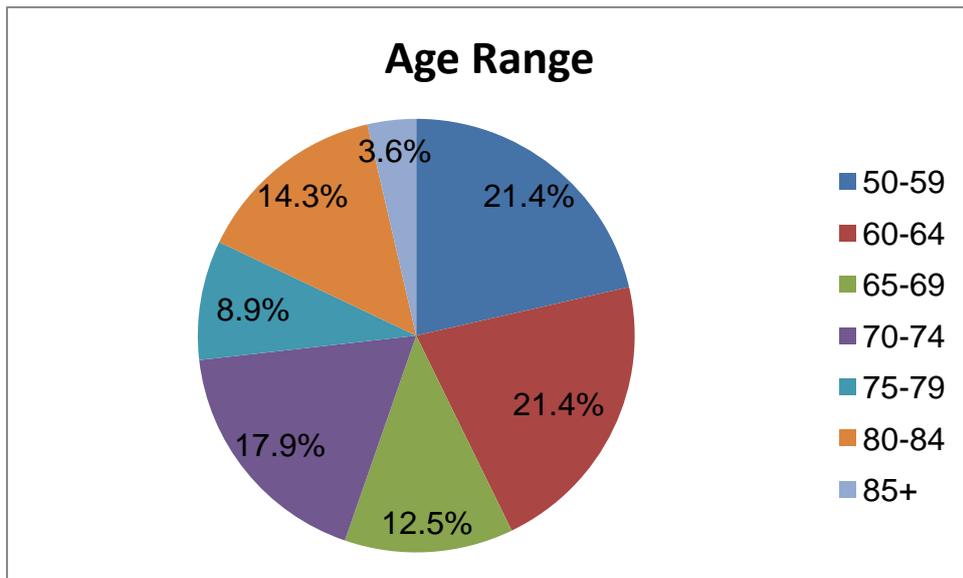
Older Men = 14.5% Ethnic Minority = 31.3% Sheltered Accommodation = 18.8%



#### Age Range

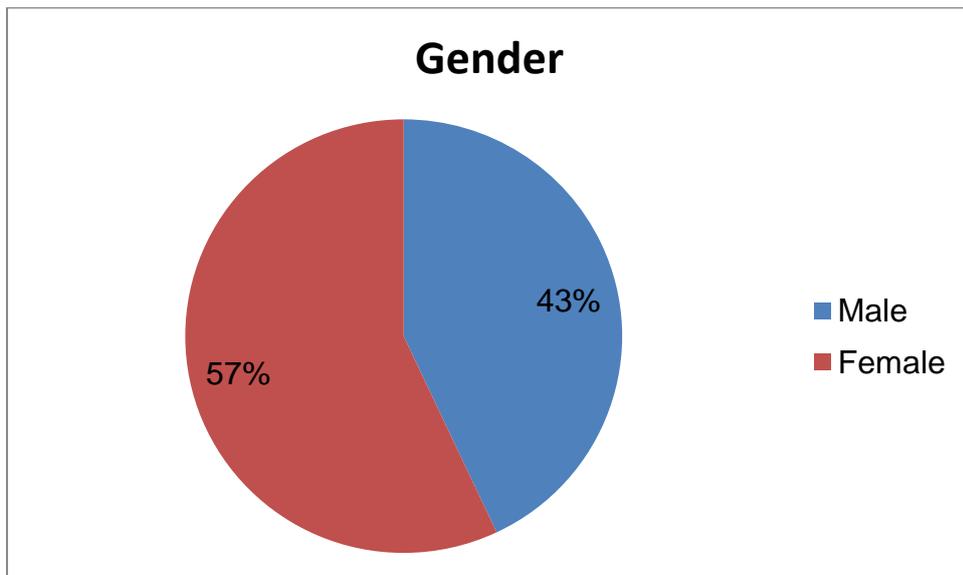
50-59 = 21.4% 60-64 = 21.4%% 65-69 = 12.5% 70-74 = 17.9% 75-79 = 8.9%

80-84 = 14.3% 85+ = 3.6%



**Gender**

Male = 43% Female = 57%



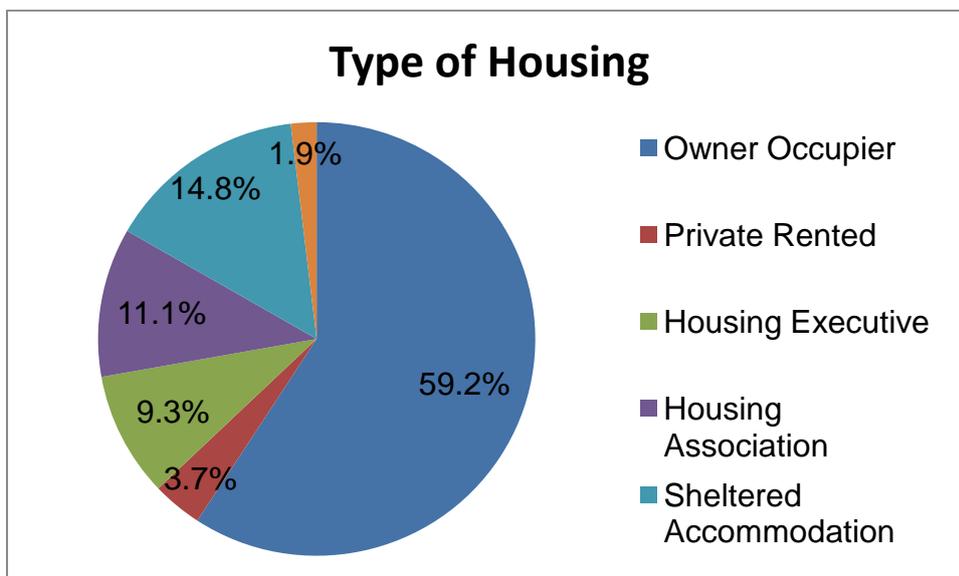
**Postcodes**

- BT4
- BT5
- BT6
- BT7

- BT8
- BT9
- BT10
- BT13
- BT36
- BT37
- BT39

**Type of Housing**

- Owner Occupier = 59.2%%
- Private Rented = 3.7%%
- Housing Executive = 9.3%
- Housing Association = 11.1%
- Sheltered Accommodation = 14.8%
- Nursing Home = 0%
- Residential Home = 0%
- Other = 1.9%

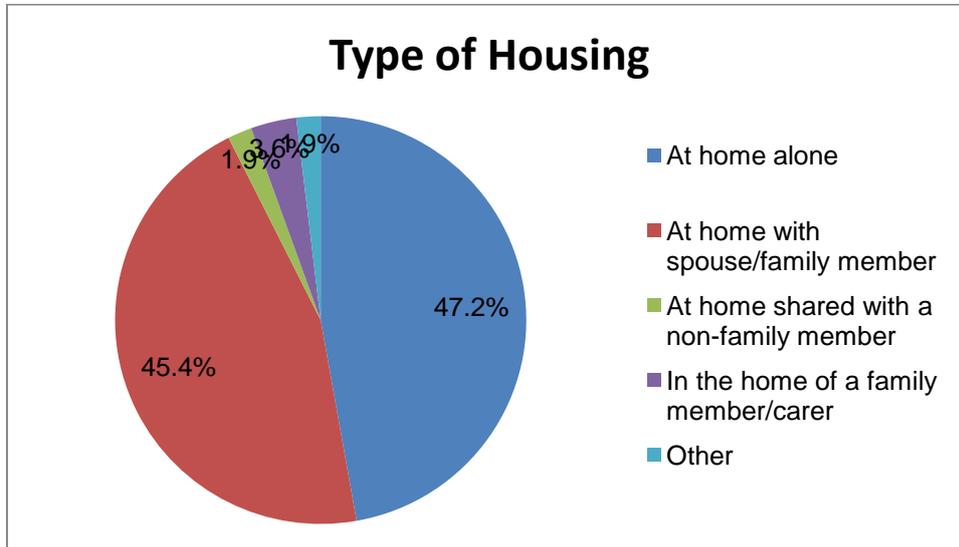


**Living Arrangements**

- At home alone = 47.2%
- At home with spouse/family member = 45.4%
- At home shared with a non-family member = 1.9%

In the home of a family member/carer = 3.6%

Other = 1.9%



**Rate your Health**

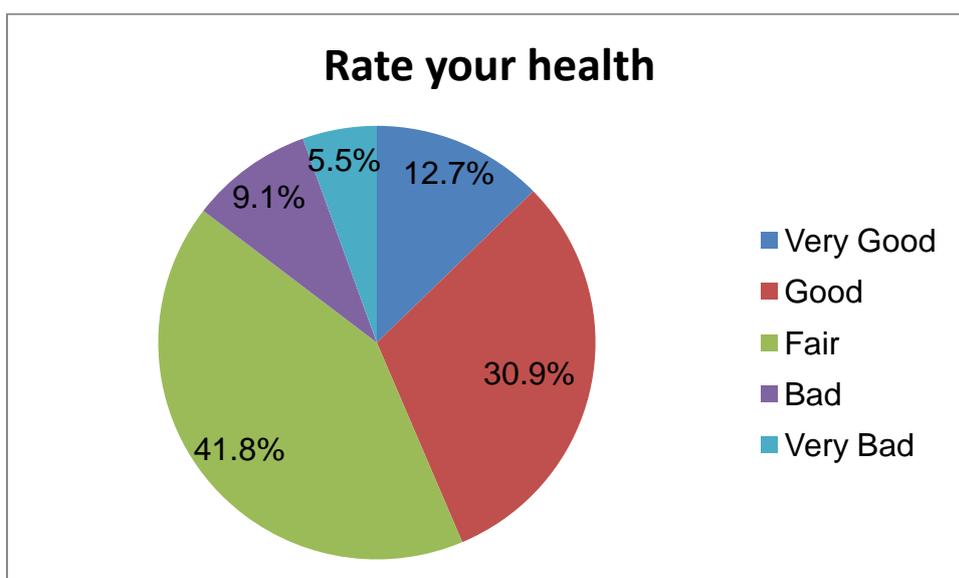
Very Good = 12.7%

Good = 30.9%

Fair = 41.8%

Bad = 9.1%

Very Bad = 5.5%



**Keeping Healthy and Well**

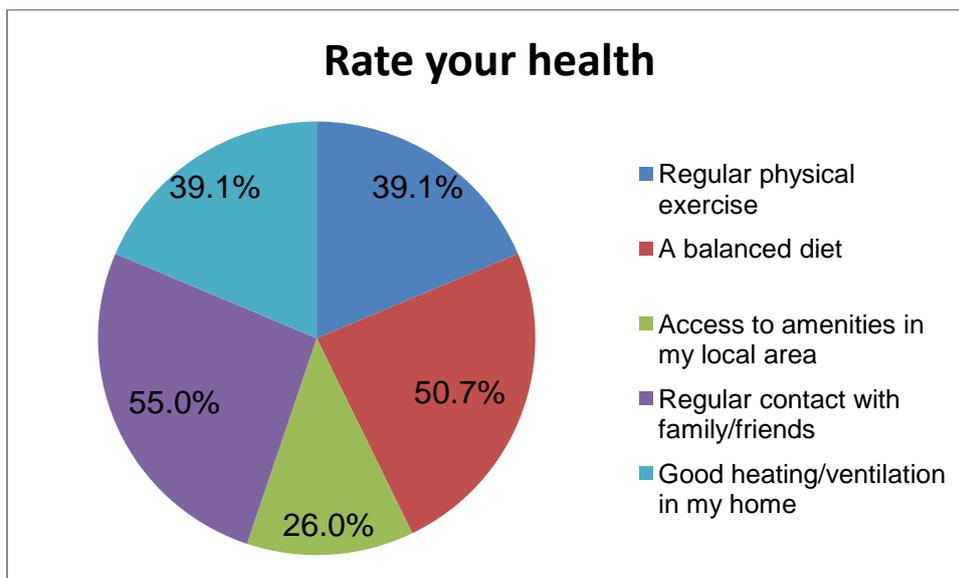
Regular physical exercise = 39.1%

A balanced diet = 50.7%

Access to amenities in my local area = 26%

Regular contact with family/friends = 55%

Good heating/ventilation in my home = 39.1%



**Work Status**

Employed = 13.2%

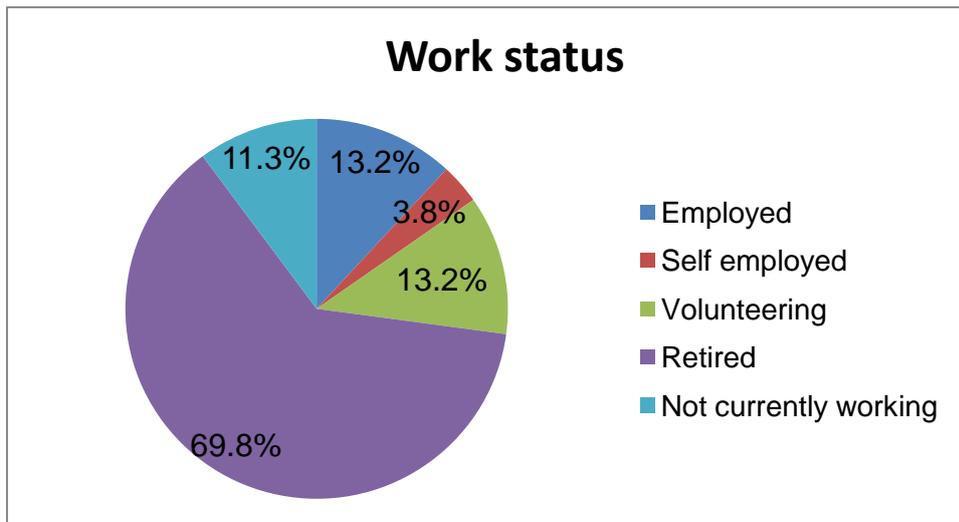
Self employed = 3.8%

Volunteering = 13.2%

Retired = 69.8%

Not currently working = 11.3%

Looking for work = 0%



### Ethnic Origin

White = 68%

Indian = 32%

Chinese = 0%

Bangladeshi = 0%

Black Caribbean = 0%

Mixed Ethnic Group = 0%

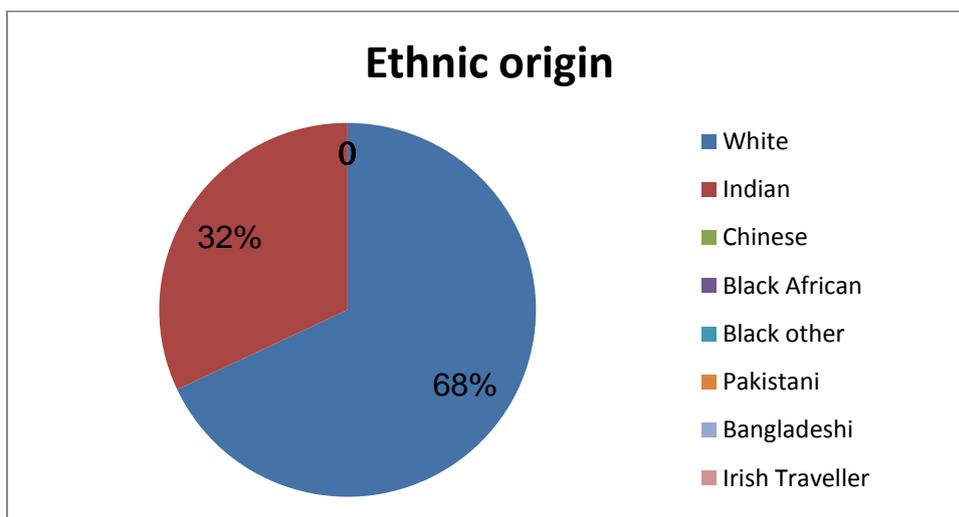
Pakistani = 0%

Black African = 0%

Black other = 0%

Irish Traveller = 0%

Other = 0%



### Source of Income

Wages and Salaries = 15.4%

Self employment income = 7.7%

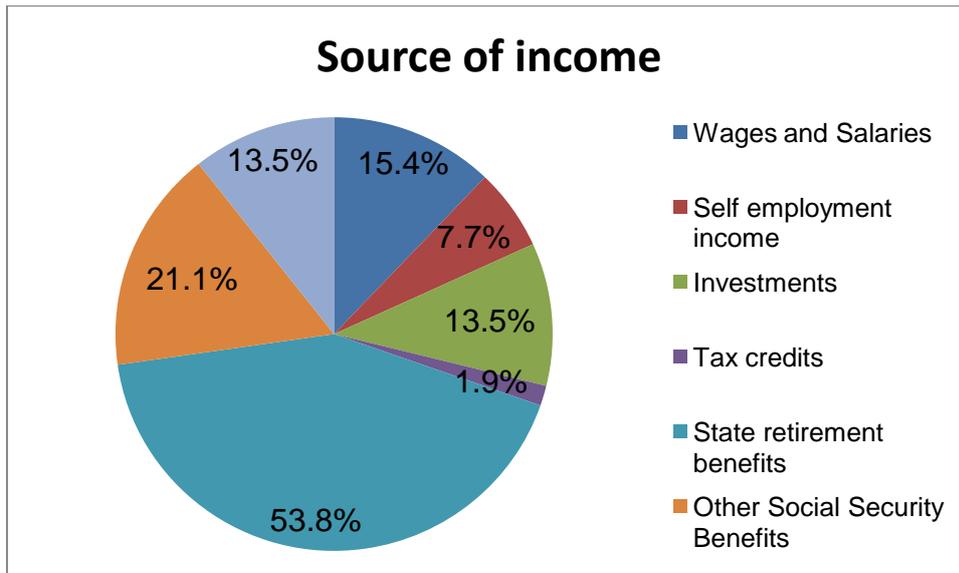
Investments = 13.5%

Tax credits = 1.9%

State retirement benefits = 53.8%

Other Social Security Benefits = 21.1%

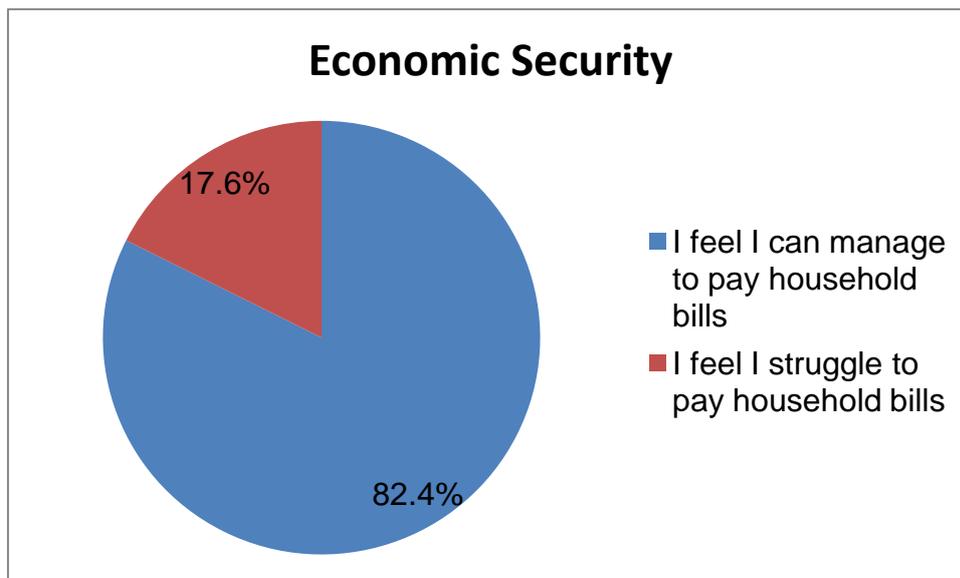
Other sources 13.5%



### Economic Security

I feel I can manage to pay household bills = 82.4%

I feel I struggle to pay household bills = 17.6%



**Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**

	V Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	N/A
Clean environment	2%	6%	36.6%	38%	8%	10%
Sufficient Outdoor Seating	12.5%	27.1%	35.4%	20.8%	2.1%	2.1%
Accessible public Buildings/shops etc	6.1%	8.2%	36.7%	44.8%	2.1%	2.1%
Public toilets Cleanliness etc	17.3%	30.8%	34.6%	15.4%	1.9%	0%
Safety in the city	1.9%	7.3%	55%	30%	2.5%	5%
Maintenance of Pavements	15.4%	15.4%	34.6%	32.7%	1.9%	0%
Pedestrian crossings	2%	8%	28.0%	54%	6%	2%

<b>Walking in parks</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>26.3%</b>	<b>36.8%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>18.4%</b>
<b>Public Leisure Centres</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>36.7%</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>30.6%</b>
<b>Access to park</b>						
<b>Outdoor spaces</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>25.1%</b>	<b>34.2%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>25.1%</b>
<b>Usage of park</b>						
<b>Green areas</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>12.1%</b>	<b>26.7%</b>

**Transport**

	<b>VPoor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Accessibility of Public Transport</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Reliability &amp; Frequency</b>	<b>18.8%</b>	<b>6.2 %</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>35.4%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
<b>Suitability of routes</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>36.3%</b>	<b>29.7%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
<b>Access of Information</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	<b>19.6%</b>	<b>23.9%</b>	<b>30.4%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>
<b>Safety on public Transport</b>	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>23.9%</b>	<b>41.3%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
<b>Taxi &amp; taxi ranks</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>17.3%</b>	<b>34.7%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>21.8%</b>
<b>Affordability of Transport</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>25.5%</b>	<b>18.7%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>18.7%</b>

**Parking**

	<b>VPoor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Availability</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>42.3%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>36.5%</b>
<b>Affordability</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>26.5%</b>	<b>22.4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>38.7%</b>
<b>Access to disabled Parking</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>21.2%</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>44.6%</b>
<b>Access to a car</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>27.9%</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>44.3%</b>

**Driving**

	<b>VPoor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Ease of Driving In the city</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>22.6%</b>	<b>18.8%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>43.4%</b>
<b>Sufficient easy to Read signage</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>11.6%</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>42.3%</b>

**Social Participation**

	<b>VPoor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Variety of activities And events</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>37.8%</b>	<b>32.1%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>16.9%</b>
<b>Variety of sports Physical activities</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>21.2%</b>	<b>36.5%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>26.9%</b>

<b>Affordability of Events/activities</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>35.3%</b>	<b>25.4%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>19.7%</b>
<b>Times of events And activities</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>29.4%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>23.5%</b>
<b>Promotion and Information of events</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>31.3%</b>	<b>29.4%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>17.6%</b>
<b>Contact with friends And family</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>22.3%</b>	<b>48.8%</b>	<b>22.3%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>

**Civic Participation and employment**

	<b>VPoor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Opportunities for Paid employment</b>	<b>15.7%</b>	<b>21.6%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>45.1%</b>
<b>Flexibility of working Arrangements</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3.9 %</b>	<b>60.8%</b>
<b>Training and retaining Opportunities in The workforce</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>62.7%</b>
<b>Opportunities for Further education</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>40%</b>

<b>Opportunities to Contribute to city Issues through Consultation</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>The contributions Are respected &amp; Acknowledged</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>Availability of Info about decision Making</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>36%</b>

**Volunteering**

	<b>VPoor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Opportunities for Diversity of Voluntary work</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Ease of getting To and from Voluntary work</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>25.5%</b>	<b>21.6%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>37.2%</b>
<b>Opportunities for Intergenerational Work</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>56.8%</b>

**Housing and Living in Belfast**

	VPoor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	N/A
<b>Affordability</b>	4.1%	12.2%	28.6%	20.4%	2%	32.7%
<b>Supply of social Accommodation</b>	4.3%	14.8%	21.3%	21.3%	0%	38.3%
<b>Supply of supported Accommodation</b>	2.1%	10.6%	29.8%	14.9%	0%	42.6%
<b>A safe environment To live in</b>	2.1%	6.5%	30.4%	52.2%	4.4%	4.4%
<b>Accommodation which Can be modified to suit Needs</b>	4.2%	14.9%	25.6%	27.6%	2.1%	25.6%
<b>Affordability of Services to maintain Home</b>	10.4%	16.7%	33.3%	20.8%	0%	18.8%
	11.1%					

**Community Support and Health Services**

VPoor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	N/A
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<b>Range of Health and Community support Services</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>
<b>Access to Health And Community Support Services</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>13.1%</b>	<b>17.4%</b>	<b>56.6%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>
<b>Access to Residential Care Facilities</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>23.9%</b>	<b>19.6%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>43.4%</b>

**Communication and Information in Belfast**

	<b>VPoor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Regular &amp; reliable Information re what is Happening in the city</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>27.4%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>
<b>Public access to Computers and Assistance or Training in the city</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>28.8%</b>	<b>26.9%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>28.8%</b>
<b>Information in an Age-Friendly format eg large fonts</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>35.3%</b>	<b>29.4%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>23.6%</b>
<b>Availability of help &amp; assistance of staff</b>						

<b>in public offices</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>34.6%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>7.2%</b>
<b>Visibility of public Signage</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>25.4%</b>	<b>41.1%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>21.6%</b>

**Respect and Social Inclusion in Belfast**

	<b>VPoor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>The range of services Tailored to needs of Older people</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>27.4%</b>	<b>43.2%</b>	<b>19.6%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>
<b>There is recognition Of older peoples Contribution To the community</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>30.6%</b>	<b>34.7%</b>	<b>22.4%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>12.3%</b>
<b>There are Cultural And other activities In the city that bring generations</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>22.4%</b>	<b>32.6%</b>	<b>30.6%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>
<b>The public image Of older people is depicted positively</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>25.5%</b>	<b>44.7%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>
<b>People working in the public sector, retail transport, other commercial</b>						

**Sectors respond**

**Helpfully**                      **2%**      **8%**      **32%**      **38%**      **6%**      **14%**

**Level of Physically Activity**

	<b>VPoor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Current level of Physical activity</b>	<b>11.9%</b>	<b>12.9%</b>	<b>35.5%</b>	<b>25.9%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>
<b>Availability of health Fitness programmes In your area</b>	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>	<b>25.1%</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>7.7%</b>
<b>Info on Health &amp; Fitness lifestyles In your area</b>	<b>11.6%</b>	<b>17.3%</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>44.2%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>
<b>Availability of indoor Facilities for Physical Activity in your area</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>18.8%</b>	<b>26.4%</b>	<b>41.5%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>
<b>Availability of outdoor Facilities for Physical Activity in your area</b>	<b>11.6%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>28.8%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>13.5%</b>

**Please indicate the types of activities you would like to participate in**

- Indoor/outdoor bowls
- Swimming, gym, and badminton

- Indoor activities in the winter i.e. different types of games – outdoor activities (light physical activities)
- Indoor walking space during bad weather and a few indoor sitting games for older people
- Walking
- Walks
- Dancing, yoga, and swimming
- Physical Education
- Getting out and about – bus trips
- Armchair aerobics
- More courses for older people in the Shankill area
- Golf, walking, and yoga
- Bowling and keep fit
- I have an active social life
- No spare time
- We have a fairly good social life in Hughes Court Community
- Model making and walking
- No bus service in this area to enable me to participate in activities
- At present disabled. In time I hope to walk, swim etc
- Walking, swimming, and gym
- Dancing
- Knitting (struggle to get to places and back)
- Indoor bowls, yoga. Chair aerobics
- Short mat bowling
- Walking
- Swimming

**If these activities were available in your area, please indicate the type of place you would like them to take place**

- In church halls, community centres
- Leisure centre (3 replies)
- Loughmoss centre Carryduff
- Leisure centres and libraries
- Glengormley
- Parks, riverside paths
- Community Centre
- In our common room (3 replies)
- Community centres and leisure centres
- Anywhere in the Shankill
- Community centres and sheltered dwellings
- Leisure centre, more guides to walking in Belfast – long
- Local East Belfast Area
- Pensioner in areas should be able to use sheltered dwelling common rooms
- Community Centres

**Most important elements in the development of Age-Friendly Strategy**

Better outdoor spaces and buildings	4.2%
Better Transport Links	22.7%
Housing that is safe, affordable, sufficient, and close to amenities	13.2%
Improvement to road safety, including pavements	11.9%
More social, cultural and learning opportunities	8.4%
Community support and health services	15.6%
Better communication and information	10.8%

More respect and social inclusion for older people 13.2%

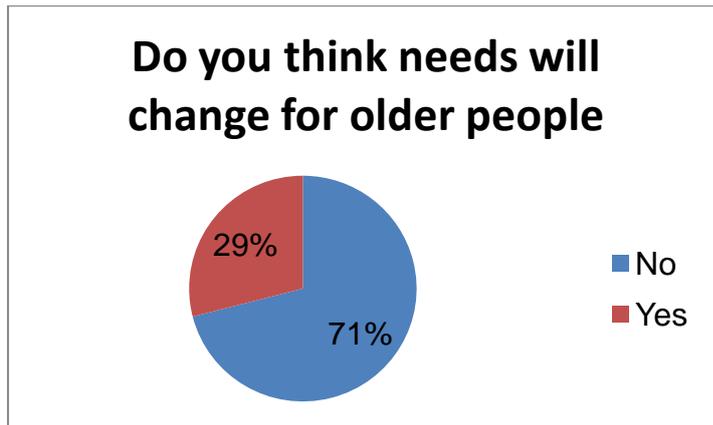
Other 0%

### **What do you think could be done better in the City**

- Specific events organised for older people
- Safety for the aged from teenagers
- More cultural activities to bring people together, social events
- More amenities
- There could be better consultation of the elderly and better information available to the results. Councillors should be more in contact with their constituents
- More information on what activities are going on
- Almost everything, except leisure centres
- Respect for older people and disabled
- Transport infrastructure could be improved
- Get the bus lanes sorted out (3 replies)
- Sort out the bus lanes for motorists which is very important for trades
- Better transport
- More flexible bin and refuse collections
- More information and more active inclusion and involvement between different groups or opposing interest etc
- Encouraging and funding participation in shows, concerts, and dance events for older people on a monthly basis throughout Belfast in civic buildings
- Free transport for all
- More provision of public transport
- Better pavements and less abuse of disabled parking spaces
- More information about what is happening in Belfast. Better value for rates
- Audio on buses. And buses to stop at designated stops
- More defined kerbs, buses to stop, road works to provide a safe passage to walk around
- Intergenerational, intercommunity relations with different cultures

**Do you think the needs will change for future generations of older people**

Yes = 71%    No = 29%

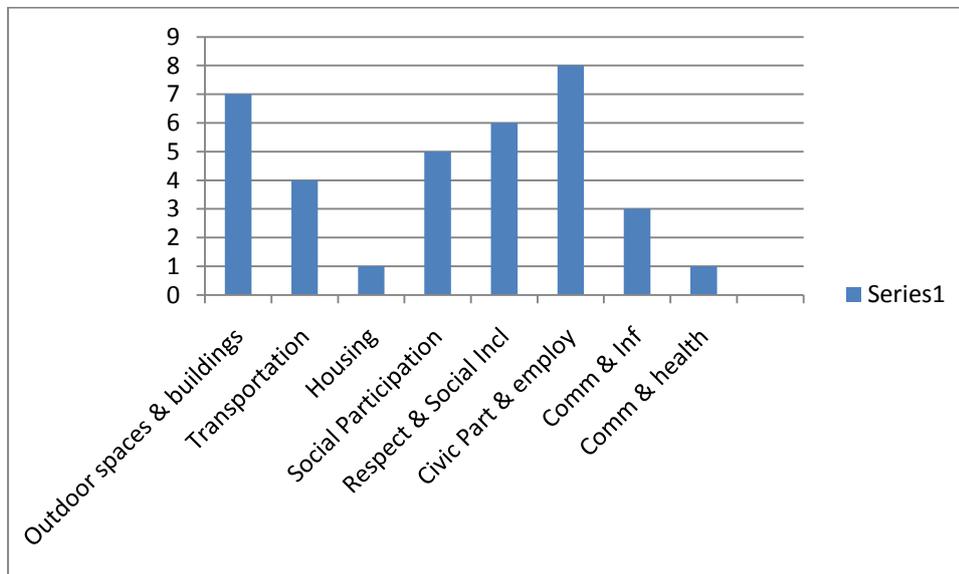
**If yes, what do you feel they will need or use in the future that is not available now?**

- More contact with other groups of elderly people
- We agreed ( older people commissioner) so as to make a better life for them
- Good family life and upbringing from childhood – good parenting
- Future generations mix more with the local community and take part in political and social life
- Crystal ball (3 replies)
- More information on events
- Transport (4 replies)

- Greater understanding
- LGBT and other minority groups need to be catered for
- Use of social networks for seeking information i.e. Gaydor
- Can't tell
- Impossible to predict as people are living longer the answer is to periodically review services and amenities to make them Age-Friendly
- More technology
- People who have been forced to stay at home as carers may lose out

## Appendix 2: Age-Friendly themes in order of priority

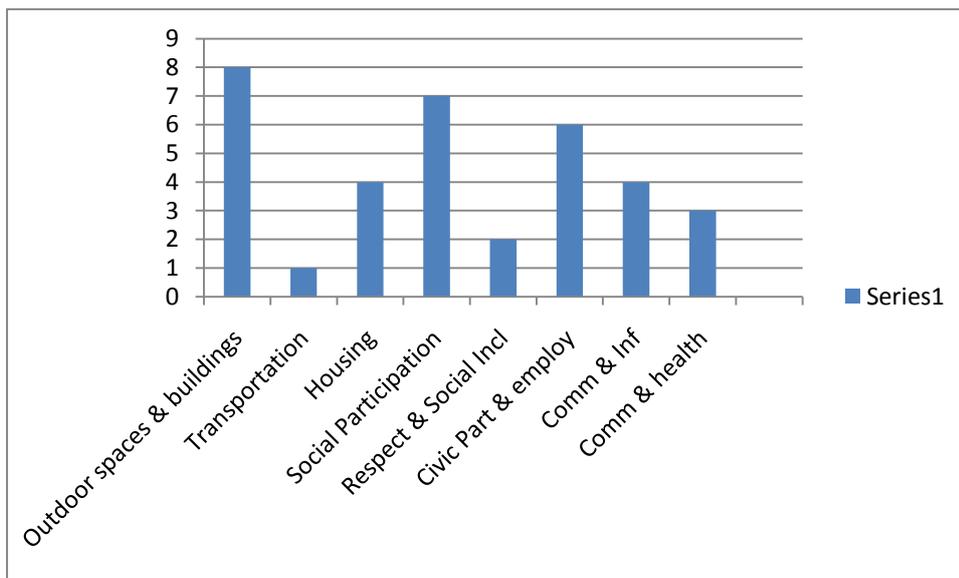
### Older Men – Priority ranking



In order of priority for older men, the following areas were ranked in order of importance to them, with 1 being the most important, and 8 being the least important

- 1 – Housing
- 2 – Community and Health
- 3 – Communication and information
- 4 – Transportation
- 5 – Social Participation
- 6 – Respect and Social Inclusion
- 7 – Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- 8 – Civic participation and employment

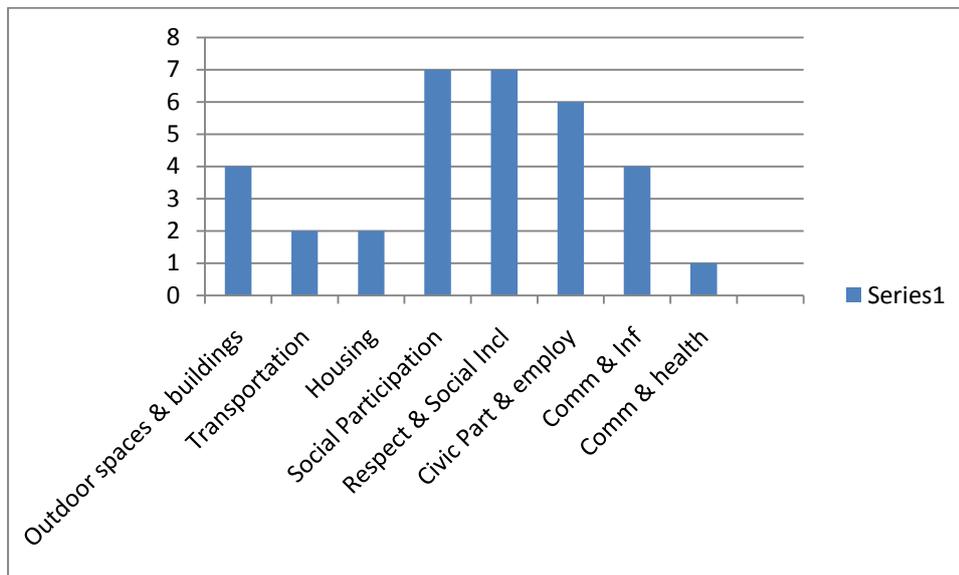
### Sheltered Accommodation – Priority Ranking



In order of priority for older people living in sheltered accommodation, the following areas were ranked in order of importance to them, with 1 being the most important, and 8 being the least important

- 1 – Transportation
- 2 – Respect and Social Inclusion
- 3 – Community and Health Services
- 4 – Housing/Communication and Information (joint)
- 6 – Civic Participation and Employment
- 7 – Social Participation
- 8 – Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

## LGBT – Priority Ranking



In order of priority for older people from the gay, lesbian and transgender community, the following areas were ranked in order of importance to them, with 1 being the most important, and 8 being the least important

1 – Community and Health Services

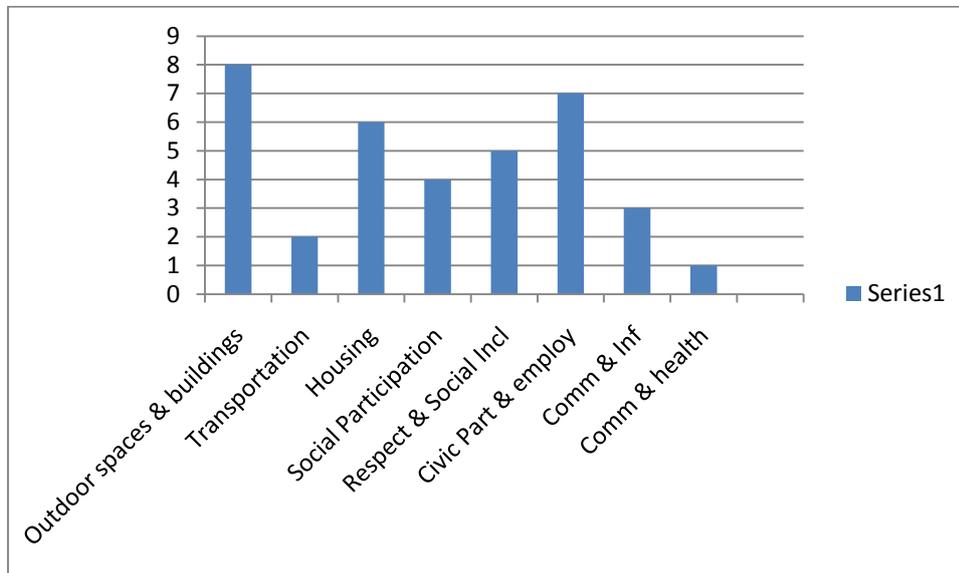
2 – Transportation/Housing (joint)

4 – Outdoor Spaces and Buildings/Communication and Information (joint)

6 – Civic Participation and Employment

8 – Social participation/Respect and Social Inclusion (joint)

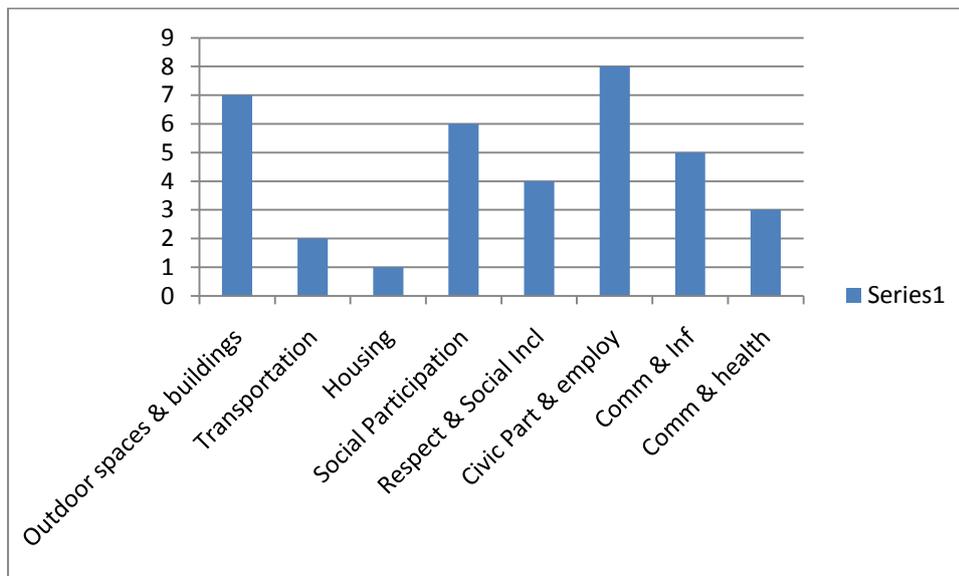
### Ethnic Minority – Priority Ranking



In order of priority for older people from the ethnic minority community, the following areas were ranked in order of importance to them, with 1 being the most important, and 8 being the least important

- 1 – Community and Health Services
- 2 – Transportation
- 3 – Communication and Information
- 4 – Social Participation
- 5 – Respect and Social Inclusion
- 6 – Housing
- 7 – Civic Participation and Employment
- 8 – Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

### Disability – Priority ranking



In order of priority for older people from the disability group, the following areas were ranked in order of importance to them, with 1 being the most important, and 8 being the least important

- 1 – Housing
- 2 – Transportation
- 3 – Community and Health
- 4 – Respect and Social Inclusion
- 5 – Communication and Information
- 6 – Social Participation
- 7 – Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- 8 – Civic Participation and Employment

## APPENDIX THREE: Age NI

Age NI was created through the merger of Age Concern Northern Ireland and Help the Aged. Together, the new organisation draws on over 60 years experience of working with and for older people in Northern Ireland. We deliver care services, provide advice and advocacy, fundraise and influence our decision-makers to improve later life for us all. We tackle ageism where we face it, fight for enough money for older people to live in dignity and demand the quality of care that people in later life deserve. Through all of this, we ensure that older people's voice is not only heard, but has impact.

### *Age NI's Vision, Mission and Value*

<b>Vision</b>	Our vision is of a world where older people flourish
<b>Mission</b>	Our mission is to enhance and improve the lives of older people
<b>Values</b>	<p>We are passionate and determined about making later life better.</p> <p><i>We do this by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Putting older people at the heart of all that we do</i></li> <li>• <i>Challenging Injustices</i></li> <li>• <i>Being determined and driven in our hope for better futures</i></li> <li>• <i>Being inspired and inspiring</i></li> </ul>
	<p>We act with integrity and pride in all that we do.</p> <p><i>We do this by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Being honest, open and respectful</i></li> <li>• <i>Listening, hearing and responding</i></li> <li>• <i>Keeping promises and commitments made to others</i></li> <li>• <i>Demonstrating that people are valued and appreciated</i></li> </ul>

	<p>We work together as one team, believing in the potential of people.</p> <p><i>We do this by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Creating energising and fun places where people love to work</i></li> <li>• <i>Always being there for each other</i></li> <li>• <i>Involving, supporting and participating with enthusiasm</i></li> <li>• <i>Learning from each other, nurturing talent and developing leaders</i></li> </ul>
	<p>We set the standards of success for ourselves and others to follow.</p> <p><i>We do this by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Being pioneering in ideas and solutions</i></li> <li>• <i>Being professional and caring about everyone's well being</i></li> <li>• <i>Being committed to continuous improvement</i></li> <li>• <i>Consistently achieving results and celebrating when we do</i></li> <li>• <i>Always making a difference</i></li> </ul>

## Peer Facilitators

Age NI has designed and developed a unique programme over the last two years, where older people are recruited, and trained in facilitation, listening skills, and report delivery. Once trained, facilitators are engaged in carrying out bespoke, facilitated sessions with older people on key issues including health and social care, poverty and citizenship so that their voices can be heard, and their views and experiences can be used to influence and shape the work of Age NI. In 2011/12, Age NI facilitators carried out a total of 45 facilitated sessions with older people in a range of settings, engaging with over 500 older people in total. Engagement has focused on reaching those older people who are not connected to Age NI through local networks or other older people's groups. Through the peer facilitator programme, Age NI has carried out listening sessions or focus groups with older people in sheltered accommodation, from ethnic minority communities, those involved in church groups, older people with disabilities, older LGBT, and older men. Peer facilitators have also supported the development of specific research. For example, Age NI commissioned research on the provision of adult social care in Northern Ireland, and peer facilitators were used in the delivery of focus groups in 3 locations in Northern Ireland. Findings can be viewed in the report entitled "Would you eat sandwiches for your tea every night: older people's views of adult social care in Northern Ireland" <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland/for-professionals/policy/publications/>

# APPENDIX 4

## WHO Checklist Review

## 1. Outdoor Spaces &amp; Buildings Check List

WHO Check List	Strengths	Challenges / Areas for Improvement
<b>Public Areas are Clean and Pleasant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many good public areas and Good city centre area</li> <li>• City Hall is a very attractive city centre attraction</li> <li>• BCC Litter campaign</li> <li>• BCC monthly random sampling surveys to assess cleanliness of streets</li> <li>• BCC Dog Fouling campaign which has seen a 10% reduction in dog fouling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Litter</li> <li>• Dog fouling</li> <li>• Lack of seating in the City centre</li> </ul>
<b>Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well maintained &amp; safe</b>	Good parks that are well maintained and provide good outdoor seating	Perceived sense that parks are not safe due to anti social behaviour
<b>Pavements are well maintained, free of obstructions and reserved for pedestrians</b>	Belfast City Centre has a large pedestrian area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking on pavements in neighbourhoods can make walking on footpaths difficult for older people</li> <li>• Maintenance of pavements needs improving</li> <li>• Pavements not adequately gritted in Winter</li> </ul>
<b>Pedestrian crossings are sufficient in number and safe for people with different levels and types of disability , with non slip markings, visual audio cues and adequate crossing times</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All existing pedestrian crossings upgraded and fully in line with current design standards</li> <li>• Additional controlled crossing points provided at over 20 locations</li> <li>• All tactile surfaces are in accordance with the British/European Standards (BS EN 1339 &amp; CEN/TS 15209:2008)</li> <li>• Crossing times at controlled pedestrian crossings are fully compliant with the National UK standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knobs on the surfacing are too big and are considered to be a tripping hazard as well as making it difficult for people with walking frames or wheelchairs</li> <li>• Need for longer crossing times</li> </ul>
<b>Cycle paths are separate from pavements and other pedestrian walkways</b>	Belfast has a good cycle path infrastructure	Cyclists can cause problems for pedestrians on the Lagan towpath and on footpaths
<b>Outdoor safety is promoted by good lighting, police patrols and community education</b>	Street lighting is good	Lack of community / neighbourhood police patrols
<b>Buildings are well designed, with sufficient seating and toilets, accessible elevators, ramps, railings, stairs and non slip floors</b>	Access to public buildings, shops and other attractions is good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs missing or placed too high</li> <li>• Not all public buildings have lifts to aid accessibility internally for older people</li> </ul>
<b>Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well-maintained and accessible</b>	BTA Public Convenience Provision Strategy for Belfast completed with recommendations to increase the number of toilets open and available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public toilet facilities need to be improved</li> <li>• Better signage of existing facilities is needed</li> </ul>

There is no available information to enable an assessment to be made at this stage of the following;

- Pavements are non-slip, wide enough for wheelchairs and have dropped curbs to road level
- Drivers give way to pedestrians at intersections and pedestrian crossings
- Services are situated together and are accessible
- Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as separate queues or service counters for older people

## 2. Transport Check List

WHO Check List	Strengths	Challenges / Areas for Improvement
Public transportation costs are consistent, clearly displayed and affordable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free bus and rail transport</li> <li>A maximum taxi fare will be introduced in autumn 2014 which will prevent overcharging</li> </ul>	
Public transportation is reliable and frequent, including at night and on weekends and holidays	Train system and timings good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrequent bus services - perception that busses are less frequent at times suitable to older people – mid to late morning and in the evenings</li> <li>Poor Sunday bus service</li> <li>Rail routes across NI</li> <li>Access to and information on specialist transport services</li> </ul>
All city areas and services are accessible by public transport, with good connections and well-marked routes and vehicles	Good arterial roads bus service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suitability of routes - there are areas where accessibility via public transport is poor</li> <li>Fear of using the bus at night</li> </ul>
Vehicles are clean, well-maintained, accessible, not overcrowded and have priority seating that is respected	Buses are in good condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not enough priority seating</li> <li>Misuse of priority seating</li> </ul>
Specialized transportation is available for disabled people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All the main Metro corridors are operated by low floor vehicles and 70% of other Metro buses allow wheelchair access (with space for one wheelchair)</li> <li>Easibuses with ramps</li> <li>Access to all trains can be made by steps or passenger ramps</li> <li>Specialist transport provision available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to book door to door transport far in advance</li> <li>Accessibility ramps not always working</li> <li>Drivers not keen to use accessibility ramps</li> </ul>
Drivers stop at designated stops and beside the curb to facilitate boarding and wait for passengers to be seated before driving off	Use of the Engage With Age DVD has resulted in improved driver awareness of the needs of older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drivers do not always stop close enough to the curb</li> <li>Buses moving off before passengers are seated</li> <li>Problems with lowering steps</li> <li>Inconsistencies with respect to customer care</li> </ul>
Complete and accessible information is provided to users about routes, schedules and special needs facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital signs at bus stops</li> <li>Timetables available on line &amp; in printed format, including large print</li> </ul>	Digital signs should be at all bus stops
Taxis are accessible and affordable, and drivers are courteous and helpful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taxis very accessible and reliable</li> <li>A maximum taxi fare will be introduced in autumn 2014 which will prevent overcharging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taxi fares too expensive</li> <li>Taxi fares inconsistent</li> </ul>
Roadways are free of obstructions that block drivers' vision		Parking in bus lanes causes obstructions to the flow of traffic and can hinder access to the bus for older people

<b>Driver education and refresher courses are promoted for all drivers</b>	Engage With Age DVD produced - Travelling On	Customer care training for bus drivers
<b>Traffic flow is well-regulated</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belfast on the Move aims to reduce the number of private cars through the City Centre</li> <li>• New directional signage in the City</li> </ul>	Belfast traffic flow considered to be poor, with too much traffic in Belfast
<b>Priority parking and drop-off spots for people with special needs are available and respected</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good monitoring of parking at Shopping centres</li> <li>• 40 additional disabled parking bays introduced to the City</li> <li>• Survey completed of the Blue Badge scheme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for more priority parking</li> <li>• Disabled parking frequently misused</li> <li>• Parking on footpaths restricts access for people on mobility scooters</li> </ul>

There is no available information to enable an assessment to be made at this stage of the following;

- Transport stops and stations are conveniently located, accessible, safe, clean, well lit and well-marked, with adequate seating and shelter
- Parking and drop-off areas are safe, sufficient in number and conveniently located
- Roads are well-maintained, with covered drains and good lighting
- Traffic signs and intersections are visible and well-placed

## 3. Housing Check List

WHO Check List	Strengths	Challenges / Areas for Improvement
<b>Sufficient, affordable housing is available in areas that are safe and close to services and the rest of the community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current social housing provision - NIHE and housing association stock across Belfast comprises a range of age friendly accommodation including bungalows and ground floor accommodation</li> <li>• All new social housing is developed based on local identified need and is built to Decent Homes Standard &amp; Lifetime Homes Standard</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Watch in many areas</li> <li>• Support available through the PCSP to establish Neighbourhood Watch schemes</li> <li>• Belfast City Council home safety checks to all residents aged 65+</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 492 older people were homeless in 2011/12</li> <li>• 1,300 applicants aged 60+ on the housing waiting list of which 64% are in housing stress</li> <li>• Respondent perception that there is insufficient single storey housing and apartments</li> <li>• Some older people feel vulnerable and at risk in their homes</li> </ul>
<b>Public and commercial rental housing is clean, well-maintained and safe</b>	Public/social housing is maintained and eligible repairs are carried out by the relevant social housing landlord	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing private rented properties with problem tenants</li> <li>• Private rented properties lying vacant or falling into disrepair</li> </ul>
<b>Interior spaces and level surfaces allow freedom of movement in all rooms and passageways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All new social housing stock is built to high standards and allows freedom of movement in all rooms and passageways.</li> <li>• For the past 15-20 years all new social housing is built to Lifetime Homes Standards.</li> <li>• Adaptations in social housing stock and grants for improvement works to privately rented or owner occupied properties are also carried out to Lifetime Homes Standard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitability of older housing stock in terms of meeting the needs of older home owners</li> </ul>
<b>Sufficient and affordable housing for frail and disabled older people, with appropriate services, is provided locally</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social housing ground floor flats and bungalows are allocated according to priority and position of applicants on the social housing waiting list, in particular to people with reduced mobility or a specified health issue.</li> <li>• Supported housing schemes for frail older people and people with dementia in Belfast, commissioned through the Supporting People Programme with need identified through Belfast Trust i.e. Mullan Mews and Sydenham Court in East Belfast and the new Hemsworth House in Shankill area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception amongst respondents that there is a lack of supply of private bungalows and ground floor flats / apartments</li> <li>• Economic recession impacts upon older people's ability to downsize</li> </ul>
<b>Sufficient and affordable home maintenance and support services are available.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Morning handyman schemes</li> <li>• NIHE funds Belfast Central Mission's 60+ older people floating support scheme which now operates across Belfast. The scheme includes a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of a city wide handyman scheme</li> <li>• Limited awareness of support services available</li> <li>• Delays in repair and</li> </ul>

	handyman service for the clients supported.	maintenance work in social and private rented accommodation
<b>Home modification options and supplies are available and affordable, and providers understand the needs of older people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory Grants available include the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) managed by NIHE. For the owner occupied/private rented sector this is a means tested grant.</li> <li>• The Fold Staying Put scheme is an add on service to the grants scheme and is an advice related service funded by Supporting People to advise and assist older applicants and people with a disability through the grants application process.</li> <li>• There is a separate process for NIHE and social housing landlords carrying out adaptation works in social housing for people with a disability.</li> <li>• NIHE funds Belfast Central Mission's 60+ older people floating support scheme which now operates across Belfast. The scheme includes a handyman service for the clients supported.</li> <li>• Good Morning handyman schemes</li> <li>• Belfast City Council free home safety checks for older people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordability of modifications</li> <li>• Limited awareness of support services available</li> <li>• Financial support for home owners to make modifications</li> <li>• Listed building restrictions</li> <li>• Lack of a city wide handyman scheme</li> </ul>
<b>Housing is well-constructed and provides safe and comfortable shelter from the weather</b>	Good standard of housing	Perception amongst respondents that there is a limited supply of housing that meets older people's future needs

## 4. Social Participation Check List

WHO Check List	Strengths	Challenges / Areas for Improvement
<b>Venues for events and activities are conveniently located, accessible, well-lit and easily reached by public transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council leisure centres with free access at certain times</li> <li>• 22 community centres</li> <li>• Free public transport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of parking</li> <li>• Availability of parking</li> <li>• Poor access to public transport in areas not accessible to Metro bus service</li> <li>• Limited Sunday transport</li> <li>• Poor door to door transport</li> </ul>
<b>Events are held at times convenient for older people</b>	While many events are well timed there is room for improvement	Respondents report that there is a need for better timing of events
<b>Activities and events can be attended alone or with a companion</b>	Wide variety of activities available	Need for more group activities and visits
<b>Activities and attractions are affordable, with no hidden or additional participation costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free access to leisure centres until 11am Monday to Friday</li> <li>• Discounts on a wide range of classes and activities</li> <li>• Community based activities through strong community infrastructure</li> </ul>	Cost of transport can make participation in activities and events prohibitive
<b>Good information about activities and events is provided, including details about accessibility of facilities and transportation options for older people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belfast City Council web site</li> <li>• City Matters magazine</li> <li>• 6 Senior Citizens Forums</li> <li>• Information Directory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior events / activities advertised in City Matters get booked up very quickly – distribution methods result in those receiving the magazine late not being able to participate</li> <li>• Coordination between Forums</li> </ul>
<b>A wide variety of activities is offered to appeal to a diverse population of older people</b>	Wide variety of activities available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better diversity of activities for older people needed</li> <li>• Outdoor facilities for physical activity</li> </ul>
<b>There is consistent outreach to include people at risk of social isolation</b>	BIG Lottery recently funded Reaching Out Connecting Older People projects	Inconsistent approach across Belfast
<b>Gatherings including older people are held in various local community spots, such as recreation centres, schools, libraries, community centres and parks</b>	Wide variety of venues for older activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to venues</li> <li>• Information and awareness of activities and events</li> </ul>

## 5. Communication and Information Check List

WHO Check List	Strengths	Challenges / Areas for Improvement
<b>Regular and widespread distribution of information is assured and a coordinated, centralized access is provided</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City matters magazine</li> <li>• Community newspapers</li> <li>• Belfast City Council web site</li> <li>• Superfast broadband</li> </ul>	Not enough large print formats
<b>Regular information and broadcasts of interest to older people are offered</b>	Variety of programmes available on digital television	Limited coverage in local media of good news / stories of interest for older people
<b>People at risk of social isolation get one-to-one information from trusted individuals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong community and voluntary sector</li> <li>• Big Lottery Reaching Out Connecting Older People programme</li> </ul>	Need for better targeting of isolated older people
<b>Telephone answering services give instructions slowly and clearly and tell callers how to repeat the message at any time</b>	Belfast City Council good service (not automated)	Inconsistencies in other public service organisations
<b>There is wide public access to computers and the Internet, at no or minimal charge, in public places such as government offices, community centres and libraries</b>	Availability of computers and the internet at public libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT skills of older people</li> <li>• Internet awareness amongst older people</li> <li>• Lack of awareness of availability of computers for community use</li> </ul>

There is no available information to enable an assessment to be made currently of;

- Public and commercial services provide friendly, person-to-person service on request
- Printed information – including official forms, television captions and text on visual displays – has large lettering and the main ideas are shown by clear headings and bold-face type
- A basic, effective communication system reaches community residents of all ages
- Print and spoken communication uses simple, familiar words in short, straightforward sentences
- Electronic equipment, such as mobile telephones, radios, televisions, and bank and ticket machines, has large buttons and big lettering

## 6. Community Support &amp; Health Services Check List

WHO Check List	Strengths	Challenges / Areas for Improvement
All staff are respectful, helpful & trained to serve older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very good health staff</li> <li>• GP knowledge of patients</li> </ul>	
An adequate range of health and community support services is offered for promoting, maintaining and restoring health	<p>Many excellent services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GP surgeries</li> <li>- Open surgeries</li> <li>- Pharmacy services</li> <li>- Community based services</li> <li>- Paramedic service</li> </ul>	<p>Many areas for improvement needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A &amp; E waiting times for older people</li> <li>- GP accessibility</li> <li>- lack of coordination between services</li> <li>- hospital discharge</li> </ul>
Home care services include health and personal care and housekeeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BHSCT Intensive Homecare service</li> <li>• BHSCT Intensive Domiciliary Support Scheme</li> <li>• Stay Put scheme</li> </ul>	Limitations in terms of what home helps can do, the length of time they spend with each clients and the time at which they attend
Health and community service facilities are safely constructed and fully accessible	Planning policy ensures that new building and extensions / developments comply with health and safety and accessibility legislation	Accessibility of some older buildings is an issue
Clear and accessible information is provided about health and social services for older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BHSCT web site</li> <li>• Belfast City Council web site</li> <li>• Large print format</li> <li>• Telephone reminders of appointments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for appropriate distribution of information</li> <li>• Feedback from Doctors</li> <li>• Poor size print on medications and prescriptions</li> </ul>
Economic barriers impeding access to health and community support services are minimized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS provides free health care for the elderly</li> <li>• Free prescriptions</li> <li>• Healthy Living Centres in local communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception that not enough resources to cope with needs and demands</li> <li>• Closure of geriatric beds</li> <li>• Emphasis on moving people out of hospital beds too quickly</li> </ul>
Health and social services are conveniently located and accessible by all means of transport	Travel time to health services shows that services are within a short travel time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public transport access to facilities</li> <li>• Parking at hospitals</li> </ul>
Residential care facilities & designated older people's housing are located close to services and the rest of the community		Limited awareness of residential facilities
Delivery of services is coordinated and administratively simple	Transforming Your Care will introduce more integrated planning and delivery of support services	Poor coordination of services
Voluntary services by people of all ages are encouraged and supported	Strong community and voluntary sector in Belfast	Sustainability is a challenge as organisations depend on funding
There are sufficient and accessible burial sites	<p>6 cemeteries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Roselawn Cemetery</li> <li>- City of Belfast Crematorium</li> <li>- Belfast City Cemetery</li> <li>- Dundonald cemetery</li> <li>- Milltown Cemetery</li> </ul>	

	<p>– Knockbreda Cemetery Belfast City Council runs a <b>free</b> bus service for older people travelling to and from Roselawn Cemetery and City of Belfast Crematorium</p> <p>Cemeteries accessible via public transport</p>
<b>Community emergency planning takes into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of older people</b>	<p>Belfast Resilience Forum provides a coordinated approach to major emergencies in the City and support is provided for older people through a winter planning group</p>

## 7. Respect and Social Inclusion Check List

WHO Check List	Strengths	Challenges / Areas for Improvement
<b>Older people are regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial services on how to serve them better</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 Senior Citizens Forums representing local older people's groups</li> <li>• Pensioners Parliament</li> <li>• Age Sector Platform</li> </ul>	Removal of public transport routes that can impact upon isolation and social exclusion of older people is an example where older people are not consulted
<b>Services and products to suit varying needs and preferences are provided by public and commercial services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good availability and accessibility of public services</li> <li>• Belfast City Council staff and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public toilet provision</li> <li>• Public seating provision</li> <li>• Community policing</li> <li>• Automated telephone answering services instead of access to an individual to talk to</li> <li>• Overly bureaucratic administrative processes are off putting</li> </ul>
<b>Service staff are courteous and helpful</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belfast City Council staff very helpful</li> <li>• Organisations are getting better in their attitudes to and dealings with older people</li> </ul>	Some Translink staff unhelpful and disrespectful
<b>Older people are visible in the media, and are depicted positively and without stereotyping</b>	Appointment of an Older Persons Commissioner	Public image of older people is insulting and patronising
<b>Community-wide settings, activities and events attract all generations by accommodating age-specific needs and preferences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good community infrastructure across Belfast</li> <li>• 400-500 community organisations across the City</li> <li>• Approx. 200 older peoples groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of awareness amongst older people of community activities and events</li> <li>• Limited acknowledgement of ethnic minority cultural traditions</li> <li>• Need for greater social inclusion of specific groups of older people – people with a disability, LGBT, ethnic minorities</li> </ul>
<b>Older people are specifically included in community activities for “families”</b>	Wide variety of activities and events available for everyone	Need for more integration of older people
<b>Schools provide opportunities to learn about ageing and older people, and involve older people in school activities</b>	Intergenerational work is happening in the city, albeit on a sporadic basis	Inconsistent and limited approach
<b>Older people are recognized by the community for their past as well as their present contributions</b>	Belfast City Council's annual Older Volunteer of the Year award	Achievements of older people are not widely recognised
<b>Older people who are less well-off have good access to public, voluntary and private services</b>	BIG Lottery's Reaching Out Connecting Older People programme is targeting isolated and disadvantaged older people	Isolation of disadvantaged older people is a concern

## 8. Civic Participation and Employment Check List

WHO Check List	Strengths	Challenges / Areas for Improvement
<b>Training in post-retirement options is provided for older workers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variety of opportunities for training</li> <li>Good practice e.g. GEMS NI, University of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Age, Silver Surfers, Libraries NI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of awareness of training opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>A range of flexible options for older volunteers is available, with training, recognition, guidance and compensation for personal costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good opportunities available for volunteering</li> <li>Volunteers Now's One Good Reason initiative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More diversity in volunteering opportunities needed</li> <li>Lack of accessible public transport restricts volunteering opportunities</li> <li>Limited intergenerational engagement</li> </ul>
<b>A range of flexible and appropriately paid opportunities for older people to work is promoted</b>	Good examples of employment practice e.g. M&S, B&Q	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor employment opportunities for over 50s</li> <li>Lack of flexible working opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Discrimination on the basis of age alone is forbidden in the hiring, retention, promotion and training of employees</b>	Age Regulations came into force on 1st October 2006, making it unlawful for employers and others to discriminate on grounds of age	
<b>Decision-making bodies in public, private and voluntary sectors encourage and facilitate membership of older people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership encouraged</li> <li>6 Senior Citizens Forums</li> <li>Greater Belfast Seniors Forum</li> <li>NI Pensioners Parliament</li> <li>Older People's Commissioner</li> <li>Belfast City Council procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upper age limit for jury service or tribunals</li> </ul>
<b>The qualities of older employees are well promoted</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life experiences of older people are not recognised</li> <li>Knowledge loss of older people in retirement not recognised</li> </ul>
<b>Self-employment options for older people are promoted and supported</b>	Exploring Enterprise <sup>2</sup> Programme is available	

There is no available information to enable an assessment to be made at this stage of;

- Workplaces are adapted to meet the needs of disabled people

# APPENDIX 5

## Age- friendly Belfast Questionnaire

# Age-friendly Belfast Questionnaire



In May 2012, the Mayor of Belfast committed to Belfast becoming an Age Friendly City.

An age friendly city is a place that encourages intergenerational use of its facilities to improve healthy ageing, wellbeing, participation and social inclusion.

Belfast is keen to encourage a city that is accessible and inclusive of all people, including the diversity of older people living, working or visiting the central city.

Following a program devised by the World Health Organisation, Belfast is asking older people to share their thoughts of the age-friendliness of the city. We have already carried out some consultation in the city but we would like as many people as possible to have their say so if you could take the time to complete this questionnaire it would be a great help.

Age friendly cities assess themselves in 8 areas from the perspective of older people and identify how they can become more age friendly:

- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Social participation
- Respect and social inclusion
- Civic participation and employment
- Communication and information
- Community and health services

*Please be assured that the information you supply is confidential. The information gathered is anonymous and individual respondents cannot be identified from the information collected*

*This questionnaire is available on request in other formats or languages*

*If you have any queries, please contact Anne Ross on 028 90502073 or e-mail [seniorsinfo@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:seniorsinfo@belfastcity.gov.uk).*

**Part 1 - About You**

**1. What age are you:**

55 – 59

70 – 74

60 – 64

75 – 79

85+

65 – 69

80 – 84

**2. Are you:**

Male

Female

**3. Please enter your postcode (or address):**

---

**4. What type of housing do you live in:**

Owner occupier

Private rented

Housing Executive

Housing association

Sheltered accommodation

Nursing Home

Residential home

Other, please state

---

**5. Are you living?**

At home alone

At home with spouse/family member

At home shared with a non-family member

In the home of a family member/carer

Other, please state

---

**6. How would you rate your health?**

Very Good

Good

Fair

Poor

Very Poor

**7. How do you keep yourself healthy and well?** (tick any of the following that apply to you)

Regular physical activity

A balanced diet

Access to amenities in my local area

Regular contact with family members/friends

Good heating and ventilation in my home

**8. Which of these best describes you?**

Employed

Self-employed

Volunteering

Retired

Not currently working

Looking for work

Unable to work

9. Ethnic origin (please tick)

White		Pakistani	
Indian		Bangladeshi	
Chinese		Irish Traveller	
Black African		Black Caribbean	
Black other, please specify		Mixed ethnic group, please specify	
Other, please specify			

10. Source of income

Please tick all that apply to you

Wages and salaries	
Self employment income	
Investments	
Tax Credits	
Self employment income	
State Retirement Pension	
Other Social Security benefits	
Other sources	

**Part 2 - About Belfast**

**1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**

Please rate the following items placing one tick on each line in the appropriate box. If you do not use any of these please indicate by choosing not applicable

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Not applicable
<b>How clean is the environment?</b>						
<b>Outdoor seating</b>						
<b>Access to public buildings, shops and other attractions</b>						
<b>Public toilets including cleanliness and maintenance</b>						
<b>Do you feel safe in the City?</b>						
<b>Maintenance of pavements</b>						
<b>Pedestrian crossings</b>						
<b>Walking in parks</b>						
<b>Public Leisure Centres</b>						
<b>Access to park/outdoor space</b>						
<b>Usage of park/green spaces</b>						

## 2. Transport

This relates to how easy it is for you to access the places you want to go and the services you need to use. Please rate the following items placing one tick on each line in the appropriate box

### Public Transport

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Not applicable
Access to public transport						
Reliability and frequency						
Suitability of routes						
Accessibility of information						
Safety on public transport						
Taxis and taxi ranks						
Affordability of transport						

### Parking

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Not applicable
Availability						
Affordability of parking						
Access to disabled parking						

### Driving

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Not applicable
Ease of driving through the City						
Sufficient/easy to read signage						
Access to a car						

### 1. Social Participation

Social participation is about how well you feel you can participate in City life. Please rate the following items placing one tick on each line in the appropriate box

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Not applicable
Variety of events and activities for you						
Variety of sports and physical activities for you						
Affordability of events, activities and services						
Times of events and activities						
Promotion and information about events						
Contact with friends and family						

### 2. Civic Participation and Employment

This reflects your experience of working, volunteering and the opportunity for you to participate in civic decision making. Please rate the following items below.

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Not applicable
Opportunities for paid employment						
Flexibility of working arrangements						
Training and retaining opportunities in the work force						
Opportunities for further education and training						
Opportunities to contribute to City issues through consultation						
The contributions are respected and acknowledged						
Availability of information about decision making and decisions made						

## Volunteering

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Not applicable
Opportunities for and diversity of voluntary work						
Ease of getting to and from voluntary work						
Opportunities to meet and work with young people						

## 3. Housing and Living in Belfast

This reflects your ability to choose where you live and the type of housing you live in and enables you to rate if your preferences are affordable, comfortable and able to meet your needs now and in the future. Please rate the following items placing one tick on each line

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Don't know
How do you rate your own home/accommodation?						
How do you rate your ability to cover the price that you pay for your home/accommodation e.g. heating, rent, rates, mortgage?						
I feel access to social housing in my area is...						
I feel that the supply of bungalows or ground floor flats in my area is ...						
I feel that the supply of sheltered housing e.g. folds in my area is...						
How do you rate Belfast as a safe environment to live in						
I feel that the availability of services to maintain my home in the area that I live is....						
I feel that the cost of services to maintain my home is...						
I feel the support available to adapt my accommodation /home as I get older is...						

#### 4. Community Support and Health Services

This section is about the availability and accessibility of services in the City for older people living in the City. Please rate the following items placing one tick on each line in the appropriate box

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Don't know
I feel the range of health and community support services is...						
I feel access to health and community support services is ...						
I feel the support for me to stay living in my home is.....						
I feel the availability of residential care facilities (retirement/nursing homes) is.....						

#### 5. Communication and Information in Belfast

This section is about all forms of communication and information. Please rate the following items placing one tick on each line in the appropriate box

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Not applicable
Regular and reliable information about what is happening in the City i.e. City Matters, radio, seniors info directory						
Public access to computers and assistance or training in the City						
Information provided in age friendly formats e.g. large font						
Availability of help and assistance from staff in public offices and business						
Visibility of public signage						

## 6. Respect and Social Inclusion in Belfast

This reflects the way in which the range of services, events and activities are respectful of the needs of older people and allow them to participate in social, economic and community life. Please rate the following items placing one tick on each line in the appropriate box

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Not applicable
The range of services available in the City are tailored to the needs of older people						
There is recognition of older people's contribution to the community						
There are cultural and other activities in the City that bring generations together						
The public image of older people is depicted positively and without stereotypes in the City						
People working in the public sector, retail, transport and other commercial services respond helpfully to older people						

## 7. Level of Physical Activity

This section is about your current level of physical activity and some of the barriers which exist to you being more physically active. **Please rate each one.**

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Not applicable
What is your current level of physical activity (V poor= none, Poor = *Once a week, Average= *Twice a week, Good= *Three times a week, Excellent= *More than three times) *30 minutes of moderate intensity activity						
Availability of health & fitness activities in your area for you						
Information on health, fitness & lifestyle services in your area for you						
The availability of indoor facilities for physical activity in your area						
What is the availability of outdoor facilities for physical activity in your area for you						

Please indicate the types of activities you would like to participate in?

.....

If these activities were available in your area, please indicate the type of place you would like them to take place?

.....

### Part 3. Future priorities

1. What do you consider to be the most important elements in the development of the City's Age friendly City Strategy?

Please tick the three **(3)** you think are most important.

Better outdoor spaces and buildings

Better transport links

Housing that is sufficient, affordable, safe and close to amenities

Improvements to road safety including pavements

More social, cultural and learning opportunities

Community support and health services

Better communication and information

More respect and social inclusion for older people

Other, please state:



**2. What do you think could be done better in the City?**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**3. Our generation has certain needs and priorities do you think these will change for future generations?**

**Yes**

**No**

If yes, what do you feel they will need/use that is not available now?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Return to:**

FREEPOST RTAL-ZBLE-ATLT

HASP

Belfast Health Development Unit

5th Floor

9 Lanyon Place

Belfast BT1 3LP

**Thank you for your participation**