

Age  
Friendly  
Belfast



# Age Friendly Belfast Plan

2023 - 2027

A city where older people live life to the full







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## Forewords

### *Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Tina Black*

I am delighted as Lord Mayor of Belfast to introduce our third Age Friendly Belfast Plan. We committed to our civic leadership in being the first city in Northern Ireland to sign up to the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

Our statutory, community and voluntary partners have been essential in this ongoing commitment. In particular, we benefit from the leadership of the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership who coordinate our Age Friendly Belfast Plan on behalf of Belfast Community Planning Partnership.

Ensuring an Age Friendly Belfast is a key workstream in Belfast's community plan, the Belfast Agenda. We want to ensure that the needs of older people are taken into account during service development and to help maximise the benefits of older people's experience.

Older people are at the heart of what we do. We could not fulfil our vision of Belfast being a city where older people live life to the full without the input, support and challenge provided by Greater Belfast Seniors Forum, the six local older people's forums and the many groups they represent.

We know that the pandemic has provided a number of key challenges, particularly for older people, however city-wide and community-based collaboration thrived during Covid-19. Older people were at the heart of this collaboration, both as volunteers and recipients of support. We will build on this partnership approach in tackling the challenges that older people have said are important to them.

**Chair, Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership,  
Ciara McClements**

Like many cities around the world Belfast's population is ageing and we need to adapt our services and structures to support the health and wellbeing of our



older people. We currently have a slightly smaller older population than the NI average, one fifth of our population is aged 60+; two in every 10 people.

There are variations across our city- East Belfast and North Belfast have a higher percentage of older people, but the percentage of older people in West Belfast is increasing. Between 2013-2015 and 2017-2019, there has been an increase in life expectancy at age 65 years for both men and women in Belfast, although the increase was only slight in women. In the same period life expectancy at age 65 years for both men and women in Belfast's most deprived areas were lower than for Belfast local government district (LGD).

The Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) has been working collaboratively for the past 10 years to ensure Belfast is an Age Friendly City. In the development of our third age friendly plan, we have been working with older people and our partners to evaluate our previous action plan. Through a series of engagement sessions with older people, we now know that most older people feel it is easy to 'get out and about' in Belfast with 74% of them now using public transport, however it is evident there are still some barriers.

Loneliness continues to be an issue for older people with friendships and participation in group activities being greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Older people have also told us that they are taking part in less physical activity and sitting down more than usual. Therefore, over the next four years, partners will be focusing on four thematic areas.

**1. Infrastructure**

We want infrastructure developments in Belfast to be designed in consultation with older people using agreed age friendly principles, ensuring that amenities are more accessible.

**2. Social inclusion, promoting connections**

We want older people to be more connected and involved through programmes, places, and services.

**3. Health and wellbeing**

We want older people to be active partners in the design and delivery of health and social care services. We also want to support older people to live more active and socially connected lives.

**4. Financial stability**

We want improved access to financial support for older people to equip them to deal with the increased cost of living. We also want older people to have access to employment, support when in employment and information on planning for their retirement.

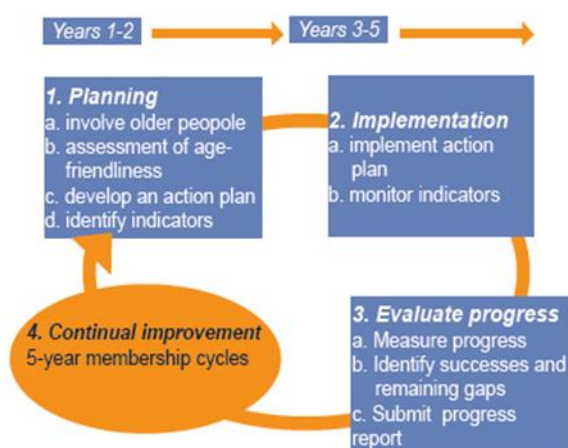
I look forward to building on the previous achievements of HASP, working collaboratively with older people and all partners to deliver on the key actions within this plan to ensure that Belfast remains an Age Friendly City ensuring that older citizens feel heard, included, and supported.

# Context

## Age-friendly Cities and communities

The WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities was established in 2010 to connect cities, communities, and organisations worldwide, with the common vision of making their community a great place to grow old in. The Global Network currently includes over 1333 cities in 47 countries, covering 298 million people worldwide.

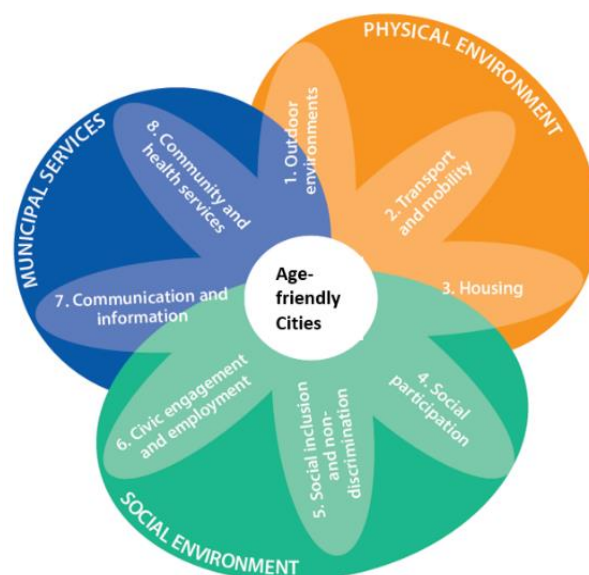
**Cycle of WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities©**



### 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,
3. Develop a 3-year city-wide action plan, and
4. Identify measurements to monitor progress against this plan.

The eight domains of age friendly cover all the aspects of community life that need to be considered to support citizens to age well. They can be summarised as actions to improve the physical environment, social environment, and delivery of key services. The pace of improvements and key themes in action plans are determined by what is needed in each city.



## Age Friendly Belfast

In 2012, Belfast City Council provided the initial leadership to explore Belfast becoming an Age Friendly City, and in May 2012, the Lord Mayor signed a declaration committing Belfast to this process by joining the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

The Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) coordinates the work of many organisations and agencies working with, and for, older people in Belfast. HASP manages the development and implementation of the city's Age Friendly Plan on behalf of Belfast

City Council and the wider Community Planning Partnership.

In 2014, Belfast produced the first Age Friendly Belfast Plan and developed a second action plan for 2018-2021. In early 2022 we commenced the process of review and development of our third plan.

## Age Friendly Connections

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Belfast benefits from regional, UK-wide, and European connections to support our age friendly work.

The Age Friendly Network NI was launched in 2019 with the aim of promoting the age friendly ethos and supporting practitioners in the 11 local councils across Northern Ireland to advance age friendly planning and practices. All 11 councils are committed to this process, and we are supported by Age NI, the Department for Communities, and the Public Health Agency.

Belfast is also part of the UK Network of Age Friendly Communities, which is a growing movement with over 50 member places across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Learning through case studies, peer meetings and conferences enhances our efforts to become more age friendly.

Belfast also participates in the Healthy Ageing Task Group, which is part of the WHO European Healthy Cities network. This task group provides leadership, coordination and sharing of good practice on healthy ageing.

## Strategic Connections

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The Belfast Agenda, the city's first community plan, was created by Belfast City Council in partnership with its community planning

partner organisations and published in November 2017. The Belfast Agenda will continue to enhance and support ongoing implementation of the Age Friendly Belfast Plan.

A formal review and update of the Belfast Agenda has taken place and older people have been identified as a cross-cutting theme. This means that the needs of older people are considered when identifying action plans across a range of priorities for the city.

A strategic intent for older people has also been identified for the refreshed Belfast Agenda over the next 4 years 2023-2027:

**To support our older people to live healthy and socially connected lives, with a focus on those most in need.**

Department for Communities' Active Ageing Strategy 2016–2022 is also a key strategic context for this plan.

**“Our vision is one of Northern Ireland being an age friendly region in which people, as they grow older, are valued and supported to live actively to their fullest potential; with their rights respected and their dignity protected.”**

This strategy aims to increase understanding of the issues affecting older people and promote and emphasise their rights, value, and contribution.

The Department for Communities has begun the process of co-designing a new Active Ageing Strategy.

The Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government (PfG) provides the overall strategic context the Active Ageing Strategy. The Executive is committed to producing a long-term strategic programme for government and consulted on a draft Outcomes Framework in 2021. Appendix 1 outlines the connections between the proposed outcomes for the Age Friendly Belfast plan, the Belfast Agenda, and the draft PfG Outcomes.



## Age Friendly Belfast Baseline Report

<https://www.makinglifebettertogether.com/age-friendly/>

The following word cloud summarizes what older people say is being done already to make a real difference in their lives.

**City** - structural and social developments in Belfast over recent years have generated feelings of pride in the city for older people, with some older people keen to get back into Belfast City Centre to meet up with others and enjoy new experiences.





## ***Listening to and co-designing with older people***

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Throughout the consultation period, it was apparent that the older people who engaged with this process want their needs to be respected and their opinions taken into account as the city develops. This is partly about the need to consult and engage in the first instance, but it is also about ensuring that views are listened to and acted upon.

We know that there is a balance to be struck between overwhelming people with information and also ensuring that they have the right information at the right time. The older people's forums and Greater Belfast Seniors Forum are excellent at meeting this need. However, there are groups which are not connected with the forums, and people who are not members of groups, so the challenge is to make sure that relevant information reaches them.

### ***Accessibility and inclusion***

We need to address additional barriers faced by older people who are:

- Are digitally excluded – don't have digital skills and / or internet connectivity
- Caring or providing support to spouses/family members,
- Coming from black and minority ethnic/asylum seeker backgrounds
- Experiencing language barriers,
- Living with dementia,
- Living on a low/fixed income
- Living with a long-term illness,
- Living with mobility issues,
- Living with a physical disability,
- Living with a sensory impairment, and
- Members of the LGBT+ community.



# Key Strategic Themes

A set of key strategic themes for Age Friendly Belfast 2023-2027 were identified through review and consultation. The following four themes are very similar to the 2018-2021 plan, and this reflects the ongoing nature of these themes and also the impact of Covid-19 on older people.

- Infrastructure- helping people to get out and about,

- Social inclusion- promoting social connections,
- Health and wellbeing- promoting opportunities to be healthy, active, and included and;
- Financial security- supporting people to manage the increasing costs of living.

## *Infrastructure, supporting people to get out and about*

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### *What we did*

Our partners have worked together to support and influence older people's use of public transport. It is the main mode of transport for many older people and the 60+ SmartPass and Senior (65+) SmartPass is viewed by older people as an invaluable support in enabling them to get out and about around the city and beyond.

A representative from Greater Belfast Seniors Forum is a member of the Translink Accessibility Working Group. Through this group older people (and disabled people) have provided input into the design of the Translink website, review of the Access Guide and future bus design.

Work has taken place to assess and influence the walkability of local areas as well as the city centre. With people spending more time in their local neighbourhoods during Covid-19, the walkability of local areas has been even more important. Seats have been added to sections of the Comber Greenway and the walkability tool now includes dementia friendly assessment.

Other achievements for older people included:

- The needs of older residents being proactively considered in key developments, including Connswater Greenway, Springfield Dam, Phase I of Belfast Rapid Transport (Glider),
- 20 Belfast City Council Parks have gained Green Flag status, including Roselawn cemetery. There has been increased use of parks by older people through age friendly walks, hosting of events and using community outreach to target older people's groups and networks,
- Work undertaken by the Department for Infrastructure and Belfast City Council to produce guidance and regulate the licensing of pavement cafes to ensure they are sensitive to the needs of street users, including those with mobility issues,
- A new road safety campaign 'Think Before You Park', aimed at highlighting the dangers associated with inconsiderate pavement parking, alongside a public consultation on pavement parking to help determine the need for more effective legislation
- Launch of the first Older Peoples Housing Strategy 2021/22-2025/26 by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, which includes an important theme of 'Planning for the Future'.



## Good Practice Case Study:

### Older People Involvement in Glider Design



Launched on 3 September 2018, the Glider is a modern, safe, efficient, and accessible public transport service which promotes increased use of public transport.

A collaborative approach to the development of this service, which directly involved older people from Belfast, meant they had the opportunity to influence the project at every stage. Older people participated in vehicle and stop design, shaped ticketing and passenger information, and influenced bespoke training for Glider Staff. Their feedback helped ensure changes to kerb heights, shelter and seating provision, audio-visual passenger information, ticketing facilities, and that colour contrasting was considered.

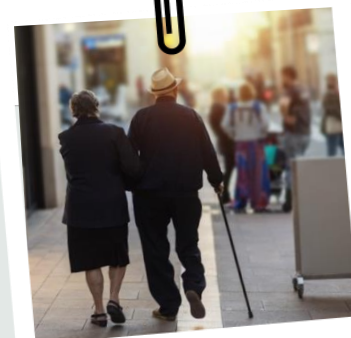
In particular, the training for Glider staff, which included interaction between older people and people with a disability, gave transport staff a unique opportunity to better understand their transport needs.

Engaging with and listening to people at the development and design stages of any project achieves buy in and helps ensure a project where the focus is on the customer.

Translink estimate that this approach contributed to the 25 per cent increase in public transport usage by older people and people with disabilities in 2018 compared to 2017.

## Good Practice Case Study:

### Walkability Assessments



By focusing on the needs of older people with various levels of mobility, it provides a built environment suitable for people using mobility aids, wheelchairs and with prams. The Walkability Assessment for Healthy Ageing (WAHA) tool was designed by Belfast Healthy Cities for use by older people and organisations to evaluate the age friendliness of the built environment on local streets and in parks. Walk assessments were conducted in neighbourhoods across Belfast to explore older people's perceptions of walkability across the city. The tool is designed to identify key elements in the built environment that affect older people's ability to be mobile and active, based on the WHO Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities.

The aim of the project was to engage with older people in Belfast to support them to assess the built environment in their local area using the WAHA tool. A pilot was undertaken focusing on short, guided walks on routes familiar to walk participants, while gathering their views. The results of the pilot highlighted consistent provision of maintained pavements and dropped kerbs, sufficient public seating, good street lighting and pedestrian crossings in appropriate locations as key positive aspects that support older people to remain active in their local neighbourhood. Key barriers identified focused on maintenance of pavements, seating, and dog fouling. The project also highlighted the importance of the personal safety of older people.

The evidence collected through this pilot, and from any future assessments, is used to inform policy consultations and public realm projects to ensure the needs of older people are considered. It will also help to ensure that the city centre and neighbourhoods consider the needs of an ageing population in their designs going forward.

## Learning from elsewhere

### Take a Seat campaign, Manchester (UK)

A low-cost initiative aiming to raise awareness about how older people may struggle to get out and about because there is not enough seating available in shops and other public spaces. By applying a We are Age Friendly sticker in their window, participating shops can let older people know they will be made welcome and offered a chair if they need to rest. The project, which was inspired by a similar initiative conducted in New York, was initially set in motion by Southway Housing Trust, a charitable housing association in south Manchester and is now being rolled out across the Greater Manchester region.

### The Age Friendly Design Group (Manchester)

The Age Friendly Design Group is made up of retired architects, planners, design students and urban designers. They meet every eight weeks. Their objectives are to:

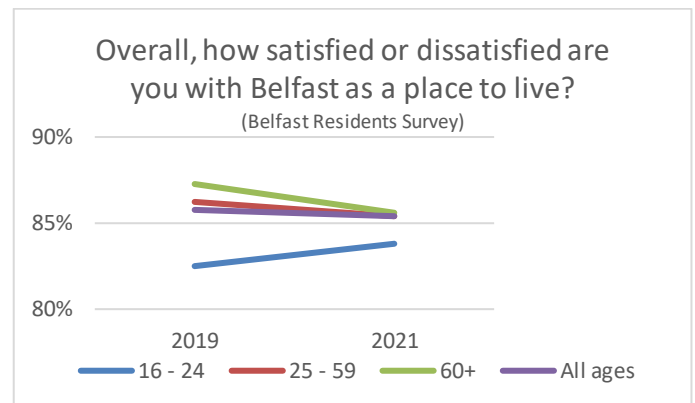
- Develop definitions of age friendly design,
- Develop a set of age friendly design guidelines for our city that will evolve over time,
- Test and hone these guidelines through a number of demonstrator projects,
- Learn and understand how age friendly design can work in practical application,
- Generate interest and ownership from a range of partners in age friendly design work,
- Present and promote reasons for age friendly design principles and criteria, and
- Influence how the city is currently designed so it is more age friendly in the future.

To date, the Manchester Age Friendly Design group has led the age friendly development of local parks, worked with older people and housing trusts to develop, and implement age friendly home design projects, and participated in research to inform a practical Age Friendly Design Reference.

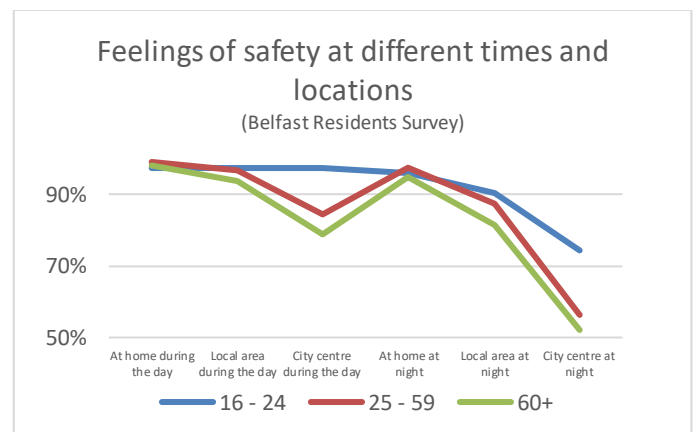
### Where we are now

In 2021, 85.4 per cent of residents aged 60 and over were satisfied with Belfast as a place

to live<sup>i</sup>. This was a slight reduction on 87.3 per cent in 2019. Nine out of 10 Belfast-based respondents (90.4 per cent) reported they were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with their “area” as a place to live<sup>ii</sup>. This is slightly less than across the whole of NI, where 95.3 per cent of respondents were very or fairly satisfied.



Older people are less likely to feel safe than other age groups. This is particularly noticeable when asked about feeling safe in the city centre both during the day and in the evening<sup>iii</sup>.



### What is needed

#### Who is most vulnerable/excluded?

Getting out and about in Belfast remains problematic for older people with mobility issues in particular.

### Access to amenities

Difficulty accessing amenities, and in particular toilets and seating in parks, public spaces and in the city centre, can be a barrier



to older generations choosing to spend time out and about. The removal of some seating due to COVID-19 and related safety measures has exacerbated what was already a challenge for older people. Similarly, we have heard that older people find there is less access to public toilets. As we emerge from restrictions, and more people are going out and about in their neighbourhoods and the city, these issues need to be re-examined.

The development and provision of new physical assets, parks and green spaces and recreation areas, need to take into account the needs of whole population. If we want to encourage older people to use more facilities, their needs must be considered in the design and development of these assets. Age friendly/dementia friendly design principles can be promoted, and these could be approached through an intergenerational lens which allows opportunities for older and younger people to meet and use the same spaces.

### **Public transport**

Prior to the pandemic, Age Friendly Belfast partners were working with Translink and local taxi firms to raise awareness with drivers on some of the challenges that older passengers might face. Older people have told us that whilst they are broadly happy with transport services, they still have concerns about the accessibility of buses, about using mobility aids on public transport and on having enough time to be safely seated before the bus moves off.

### **What partners have committed to do**

1. Develop a joined-up approach to engagement and co-design with older people on local and city centre developments.
2. Develop age friendly design principles, which can be used to inform new infrastructure developments.
3. Work to review and improve access to seating and toilets:

- reviewing provision of seating and toilets in parks and open spaces in Belfast and identify gaps (including provision of radar keys).
  - carry out an audit of current public toilet usage and identify any barriers to use.
  - exploring 'take a seat' pilots in several areas.
  - providing age friendly input into the development of parklets.
4. Revisit work to raise awareness and provide training for bus drivers on the needs of older people using their services.

### **Key programmes that are contributing to the Age Friendly Belfast Plan:**

- Work with Belfast City Council, the Department for Communities, and the Department for Infrastructure to co-design structural developments for the city, for example Belfast Street Ahead Phases 3 and 5, the Five Cs Public Realm Project and Belfast; A Bolder Vision
- Structural developments through the Belfast Region City Deal, for example Belfast Stories
- Belfast City Council's Disability Action Plan, including actions to engage with city stakeholders to put in place mechanisms to encourage businesses to support accessibility for disabled people and reviewing the temporary pavement café licensing scheme
- Belfast City Council Park Improvement Plans 2023-2025 (in support of the Belfast Open Space Strategy)
- Development of a Road Safety Strategy
- Sustrans work on sharing of paths and the One Path Initiative
- Developments through the Making Belfast an Active City – Belfast Cycling Network 2021
- Work with Translink on initiatives to encourage older people back on to public transport
- Consultation and involvement by older people in Belfast Rapid Transport Phase 2 and Belfast Central Transport hub

## ***Social inclusion, promoting social connections***

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### **What we did**

Belfast has developed a wide range of services which can support older people who may be on their own or isolated. Good morning calls and befriending services have provided a supportive voice or person, and community connectors provide support to engage more widely. During Covid-19 new approaches to befriending and connecting people developed and learning from these approaches has been shared through Age Friendly Belfast partners.

Belfast City Council, Engage with Age, Volunteer Now, older group leaders and a range of community and voluntary sector groups provide engaging and fun activities for older people to take part in. The yearly October Positive Ageing Month programme and regular age friendly events draw in new people who can then go on to be regular participants in cultural, leisure, community, and lifelong learning programmes.

### **“it’s nice to go to bed knowing you have somewhere to go”**

The establishment of four Dementia friendly neighbourhood groups covering north, south, east, and west Belfast has been a significant achievement. Covid-19 presented many challenges for this work, but concerted efforts by these neighbourhood groups and the Alzheimer’s Society led to online dementia friendly training from March 2020, creating over 120 dementia friends across Belfast and the development on virtual interactive training through Dementia Friendly East Belfast. Regular dementia friendly church services have also been established.

Other achievements for older people have included:

- The resilience and adaptability of older people’s groups and networks. Some connected online by using Zoom for meetings and others have set up informal check-in with member
- Belfast City Council’s Reuse IT and Get IT initiatives supporting older people to get online
- Work by Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Housing Associations to support work on digital inclusion and dementia friendly living for their tenants
- Development of Take 5 for emotional wellbeing senior champions and roll out of Take 5 sessions in local older people ‘s forums
- Completion of research to establish the need and recommended methods of training for staff and volunteers on loneliness and isolation
- The recruitment of new volunteers during Covid-19 and work through local communities to link with isolated older people





## Good Practice Case Study:

### Hug in a Box

As part of a campaign to connect with those struggling with isolation, loneliness, and lack of support, Dementia Friendly East Belfast delivered bespoke boxes containing dementia related activities, puzzles, crafts, and gifts to people living with dementia in East Belfast. Over 100 boxes were hand delivered to either the person living with dementia or their carers doorstep.

Working closely with the Dementia Navigator service in Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, they were able to reach out to people whose face-to-face supports had been reduced due to closure or suspension of services during the pandemic. The Hug in a Box scheme meant these people felt supported while remaining in their own homes.

This simple, yet highly effective project which began in East Belfast was replicated across the city. The content of boxes evolved based on feedback from recipients to ensure their needs and interests were met. Face-to-face delivery was a vital element of this initiative, as it was such an important source of support for carers and those living with dementia.

**A lady who is living with dementia commented on how she had not played dominoes for years and was so looking forward to sitting down with her husband and daughter to play a game that evening.**



## Good Practice Case Study:

### Cliftonville Men's Shed

Cliftonville Men's Shed is supported by North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum. The Shed, which was set up in 2018 with land leased from the Housing Executive at the Peace Wall in Manor St, is for older men aged 50, though most members are over 60. Between 10 and 20 men regularly attend the shed, some of whom have long term disabilities or debilitating illnesses, and some who are experiencing isolation or other challenges to their health and wellbeing.

For many of its members, the shed acts as an anchor, a place where they 'can do' and where they can share their skills, learn from others and avail of opportunities to participate in new activities.

The activities at the shed are guided by the interests of the men involved. Two members have trained as beekeepers and now tend to the 3 hives at the Shed. Some men carry out joinery work and have made 'Buddy Benches' for local primary schools. There is also a polytunnel and raised beds where members grow vegetables and herbs.

Most work with older people has been with women for a variety of reasons, and historically it has been difficult to engage men in programmes. The shed has proven an ideal way to provide connections and information about other services to men who would not normally have links with community and voluntary sector groups and to encourage them to participate. Involving men in their local communities through the men's shed is a step forward for an age friendly Belfast and a model which can be built upon to increase their participation.

## Good Practice Case Study:

### Engage with Age - the PAL Project

Every year Engage with Age receives in excess of 200 referrals for people who are experiencing loneliness or isolation. The PAL Project (People Addressing Loneliness) sets up sustainable activity groups for older people experiencing loneliness to ensure that when the funding ends the activity continues.

A range of groups were formed including Games Groups, Walking Groups, Social Groups, Book Groups, Dance Groups and more. Many of these groups survived the impact of Covid-19 and the pandemic lockdowns. Through these groups, older people who have experienced loneliness meet every week. A survey of over 170 participants showed that 86% said the groups improved their wellbeing, 73% said their circle of friends had increased because of the activity, and 61% said they were routinely in contact with more people every week. Participants said that:

*“Loneliness is a very dark place... and it was like [the project] opened the blinds and the light came in.”*

*“You go to somewhere that you’ve never been before, and it’s a strange place, and you meet all of these people, and you don’t know them... the door opened, and it was like another world, a brilliant world to live in...”*

The project is led by older people, with support and guidance from Engage with Age. Group leaders make sure older people have ownership of their groups and decide the activities they want. They also discuss how loneliness feels and are encouraged to give new members a very warm welcome, so that everyone feels valued.

We have learned that:

- there is a lot of trial and error and ‘positive failure’ in forming groups

- if the welcome for new participants isn’t right then the person may not come back, so setting that culture is a priority
- longevity of support at the start is important to grow a sense of routine and permanence within the group

## Good Practice Case Study:

### Supporting People, Northern Ireland Housing Executive Digital Inclusion Project

Supporting People had previously provided funding for Amazon Dots which can play music, play quizzes, tell jokes, give weather reports to name only a few functions. The provider was able to evaluate the project after the devices had been in place for 6 months and noted:

- an increase in the amount of time residents spend together
- an increase in satisfaction levels from residents who can access Amazon Dots independently
- an increase the amount of time the support staff have available to provide other areas of housing support.

They decided to purchase Amazon Echo Show devices, which allow an additional video call facility. This enabled residents to make video calls to family and friends without the need for assistance from staff or other residents. Due to Covid-19 many residents were still cautious about going out and visiting in some schemes can still be restricted. Video calling enables residents to keep in touch with friends and family in a more tangible way than phone calls alone.

The Echo devices will be situated in the communal areas where the residents gather together to eat and socialise. Residents will be able to use the Echo devices to enhance social activities such as quizzes and creates an atmosphere that encourages everyone to take part. Use of the Echo devices will be evaluated after 6 months of use.



## Learning from elsewhere

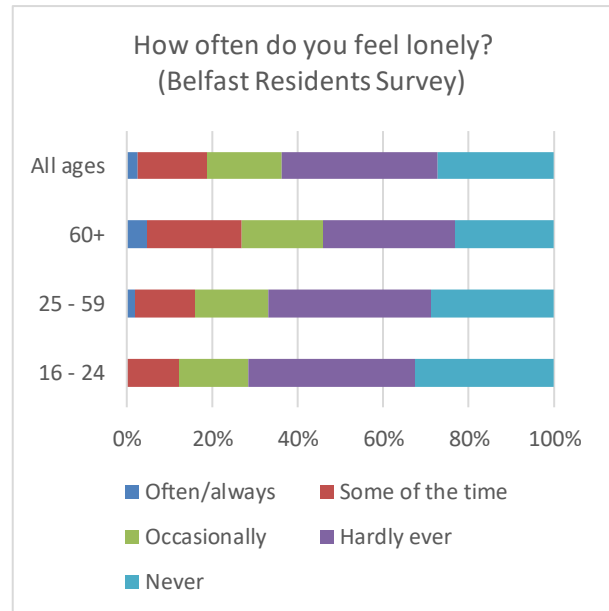
### Rock Through the Ages (Folkstone) – a musical get-together for all ages

Rock Through the Ages is a social participation initiative based on the PhD research of Dr Julia Jones, the CEO of Found in Music. Its primary aim is to harness the popular music taste of several generations and to facilitate events that encourage intergenerational social participation. These events were first run in Folkstone in 2011 – 2014 as part a piece of PhD research. The results clearly showed how pop and rock music themes could connect several age groups because the genre is now over 60 years old. Several generations have grown up with rock and pop music and can share an enjoyment of it.

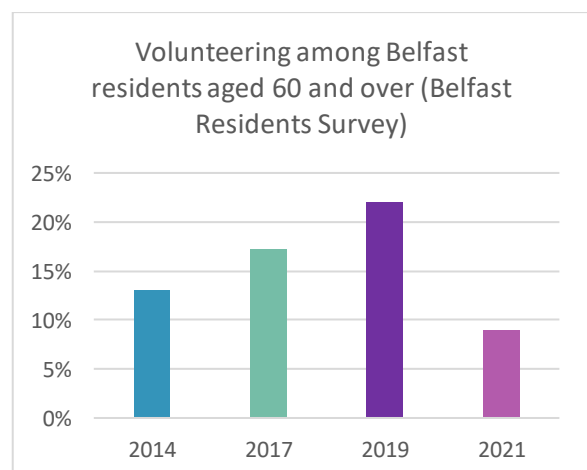
### Case Study: La Maison des seniors [Seniors House] (Dijon, France)

Launched in 2013, La Maison des Seniors (Seniors House) is a space dedicated to welcoming, informing, and helping anyone in need of support with an ageing-related issue. It aims to be a key resource for all the community, including older people, their families, and professionals. Residents of Dijon can stop by in person or phone to ask questions, meet with a professional, learn more about the city's services or take part in various cultural and leisure activities. The building also provides a physical place for people involved in the age friendly movement to meet and exchange information.

## Where we are now



People aged 60 and over were more likely to feel lonely often always and sometimes (26.8 per cent) and occasionally (19.1 per cent) than the general Belfast population (18.7 per cent and 17.6 per cent respectively)<sup>iii</sup>.



- Volunteering was rising steadily among people aged 60 and over until 2021 when it fell to 8.9 per cent. Those aged 60 and over experienced the sharpest drop in volunteering between 2019 and 2021 with

5.2 per cent reporting they had to stop or limit their activity<sup>v</sup> during Covid-19. Whilst this is understandable in terms of people reducing their risk of infection, efforts to support older people to return to, or take up, volunteering are important

- Alcohol-related admissions to hospital is greater for men compared to women in both West and North Belfast. This could be a factor in reducing loneliness in men and developing healthy coping mechanisms.

### **What is needed**

#### **Who is most vulnerable/excluded?**

People can be more vulnerable to loneliness or isolation when they live alone or have mobility problems/are housebound. People who experience additional barriers such as addiction, mental health challenges, language barriers or disability will all find it more challenging to form social connections.

*“Poverty increases isolation – people think they can’t afford to go out”*

#### **Loneliness**

Loneliness has always been a key concern for, and about, older people in the city, and this concern has been exacerbated by Covid-19. There is a need to rebuild confidence so that older people feel that it is safe for them to re-establish connections with people outside of their own homes. This might mean ensuring there is support for smaller local organisations for people to re-engage initially in smaller and more controlled groups before they have the confidence to be part of larger groups or events.

There is a strong lobby for hubs for seniors where they can access information, refreshments, stay warm and a safe comfortable place to rest. Advocates for such a space believe it will have broader appeal than organised groups as it will offer a

commitment-free opportunity to meet others or ask for advice/support.

### **Communication and information**

We have heard that people still rely on word of mouth to find out about the opportunities available to them. While the amount of information and support available has increased and is shared through different channels, we still need to reach out to engage new people to make people aware of what is happening for them in their area and the city.

*“Good programmes for those that know about them and can get out”*

#### **What partners have committed to do**

1. Work together to support the recovery of groups and programmes with older people.
2. Coordinate an Age Friendly Belfast annual programme of activities.
3. Develop local connection hubs and a city centre hub where older people can drop in and access information.
4. Develop dementia carers cafes in all four dementia friendly neighbourhoods.
5. A recruitment drive to encourage older people to re-engage in volunteering, and to recruit new volunteers. Promotion of initiatives to manage and support older people’s participation in volunteering.
6. Celebrate older volunteers through a yearly older volunteer awards programme.

### ***Programmes that are contributing to the Age Friendly Belfast Plan:***

- A range of age organisations, community, and voluntary sectors groups to connect older people, for example Good Morning schemes, CLARE CIC, Healthy Living Centres, Red Cross Community Connector Service and Volunteer Now Men's Volunteering Challenges
- Belfast City Council's community facilities, programming activity and grant funding
- A range of digital inclusion programmes through Belfast City Council, Department for Communities, Libraries, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, and local providers
- Development of Take 5 benches, chatty seats, and chatty cafes
- Work through dementia friendly neighbourhood groups
- Partnership work to join up and invest in social connections programmes through an Older Active and Connected programme, funded through Public Health Agency
- Safe Seniors, Safer at Home and 'confidence in policing' programmes through Belfast's Police and Community safety Partnership
- Linking Generations NI Intergenerational network and programmes in Belfast
- Belfast's 10-year Cultural Strategy – A City Imagining





## Health and wellbeing

### What we did

Working with Age Friendly Belfast partners we have shared and promoted health and wellbeing messages and opportunities to older residents across the city to take part in regular programmes. The Age Friendly Belfast yearly calendar and Belfast City Council City Matters magazine have been very effective ways to share messages and direct people towards programmes. Covid-19 made this challenging, but walking groups continued across the city, taking advantage of the green spaces, parks, and greenways across the city.

Older people had previously stated that they didn't understand social support available to them in the community. Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in partnership with Age Friendly Belfast, produced an easy read Health & Wellbeing Information Booklet for seniors. This booklet has been very well received and used by older people in Belfast.

Other achievements for older people have included:

- Work by Greater Belfast Seniors Forum to raise awareness of suicide among older people and to promote the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing
- Physical activity and strength and programmes supported or provided through the Public Health Agency, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Belfast City Council, Better Gyms and Leisure Centres and local community providers
- Development of the Keeping Well at Home and Good Vibrations resources through Age NI, the Age Friendly Network NI, and the Northern Ireland Frailty Network
- Work by Belfast City Council and Volunteer Now to celebrate and promote the benefits of volunteering in older people.

### Good Practice Case Study:

#### The Health & Wellbeing Information & Support for Seniors in the Community booklet

Launched in January 2022, the *Health & Wellbeing Information & Support for Seniors in the Community* was created in response to the Age Friendly Belfast Plan 2018-2021. The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust had made a commitment to produce an easy read *Patient, Client, and Carers' Guide on Community Care*. The booklet would provide information about services provided by the Trust for seniors living in Belfast.

For this information booklet to be meaningful, it was important that seniors who lived in Belfast were involved in its development. Seniors from the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum (G6), Cross Cultural Senior Citizen Forum and Good Morning Colin members were all involved through discussion groups, telephone interviews and questionnaires. Trust services and the community and voluntary sector also partnered in the booklet's development. All the contributors were then involved in coproducing the content, style, and layout of the booklet, whilst also helping plan distribution and accessibility.

This partnership approach ensured the right information was included. The amount of information to be included increased as the process continued and the format for the information changed from a foldable A3 brochure to a 48-page booklet. The result is an information booklet about the health and social care services provided by the Belfast Trust alongside information about key services in the wider community to support older people with their health and wellbeing. Over seven thousand copies distributed across Belfast, through community and voluntary organisations, GP practices, Health and Wellbeing Centres and Trust services.





## Good Practice Case Study:

### BraveHEARTS

At the H.E.A.R.T. Project Healthy Living Centre, the aim is to promote health and wellbeing, mentally and physically and to encourage people to take responsibility for their own health. For the BraveHEARTS (50+ Men's group) and the SweetHEARTS (50+ Women's Group), age is no barrier to getting up and active. From walking water polo and Danderball, to circuits cycling and walking groups, the activities on offer are informed by what people want to do, not what others decide might be good for them.

Like all similar groups, during the pandemic, they needed to think out of the box and look at outdoor activities and different ways of doing things. Having a variety of activities on offer has helped with physical and mental health. Perhaps more importantly however just to have people out meeting others was a massive benefit for those who found themselves isolated. A sense of community was restored.



## Good Practice Case Study:

### Safer Together Project'

'Safer Together Project' was developed by the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service East, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Older Persons Social Work Service and Ulster University. It came about as a result of a meeting between the Fire Service and an older people's social worker to discuss home fire safety checks, which identified a need to increase awareness of the referral mechanisms and support available to older people from the Fire Service.

In the initial stages, the project focused on providing informal training to social workers on what fire risk is, how to identify risk and how to refer older people for a home fire safety check.

When a PhD student, who was also a member of the Fire Service came on board, the project evolved further. The focus groups highlighted that as well as developing resources to increase fire risk awareness, there was a need for items such as fire-retardant bedding and smoking aprons, as well as nightlights and panic alarms which would help protect older people in the event of a fire. These items can now be provided to those older people who are identified by social workers as being most at risk.

In the first year of the project, referrals for home fire safety checks increased by 45% which has enabled the case to be made for further funding.

## Learning from elsewhere

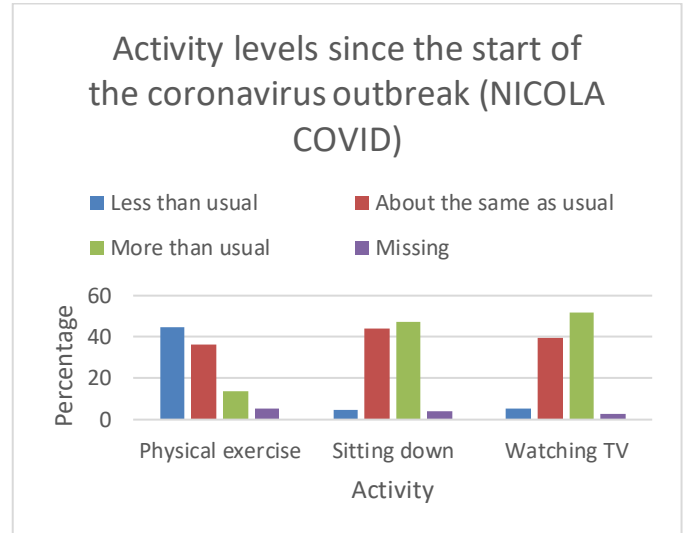
### The Elder Academy scheme (Hong Kong)

An education and social inclusion initiative was launched in early 2007 by The Labour and Welfare Bureau and the Elderly Commission in Hong Kong. The activities provide access to learning opportunities in schools and university campuses and are aimed primarily at older people who have had little or no education. The scheme optimizes the use of existing educational facilities and has been successful in promoting both lifelong and initial learning for older people, encouraging participation, and helping to maintain physical and mental wellbeing. School and university students are engaged in the scheme, thereby also promoting civic education and intergenerational understanding. Currently, some 125 elder academies in various districts and seven tertiary institutions offer a wide variety of courses.

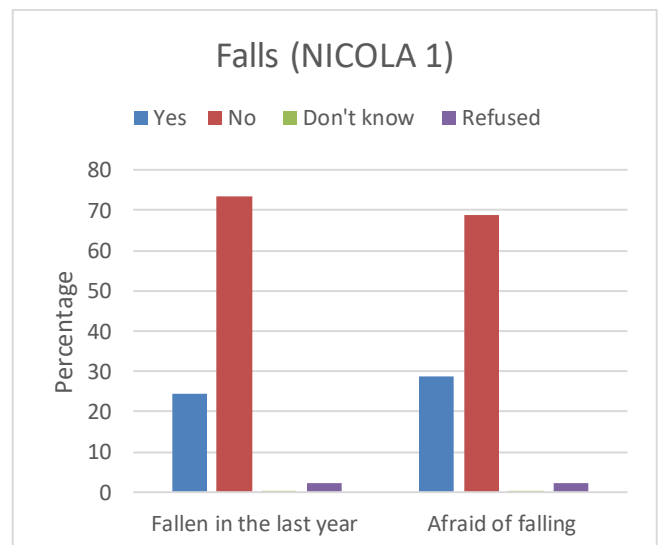
Another intergenerational scheme is run by the NGO Aberdeen Kai Fong Welfare Association. This focuses on community education, intergenerational learning, and volunteer development, and promoting cultural heritage. Older people interact with students of all ages in activities including creating stories and plays with primary school children; mentoring secondary school children and helping with homework; and secondary school children organising trips with older people to explore Hong Kong sites.

## Where we are now

During Covid, older people in Belfast<sup>vi</sup> reported taking part in less than usual physical exercise and sitting down or watching TV more than usual.



Among NICOLA research respondents, 24.3 per cent had fallen in the last year and 28.9 per cent were afraid of falling.



Compared to other parts of Northern Ireland, Belfast has higher rates of avoidable deaths and early deaths from circulatory disease and cancer. West Belfast has the highest rates followed by North Belfast.







## ***What is needed***

### ***Who is most vulnerable/excluded?***

People who are already isolated may find it more challenging to be more active – sometimes it takes having a companion to encourage people out. Mobility and mental health issues can also be barriers.

### ***Access to primary care***

Being able to see their doctor or get the treatment they need it is a source of real concern for older people in the city. The Greater Belfast Seniors Forum continues to lobby on these issues, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. There are many older people for whom technology-based health care- online prescription requests, appointments by phone/video call – are no substitute for seeing a health care professional face to face.

### ***The importance of strength and balance and moving more often***

Despite a range of physical activity programmes, physical activity levels in many older people in Belfast are well below what is recommended for good health and wellbeing, and people face challenges in keeping strong and active. Covid-19 has also had a significant impact on the strength and activity levels of older people and so there is a need to work with those who are most in need to help them improve their strength and balance and get more active.

### ***What partners have committed to do***

1. Work with Greater Belfast Seniors forum to link with GP representatives and multi-disciplinary teams on a regular basis to ensure that the voice of older people is heard in discussions on access to services and influences new developments.
2. Support 600-800 older people (most in need) to improve their mobility levels and to feel more connected and less lonely.

3. Promote key messages and connect up programmes for older people to increase their strength and mobility, including falls prevention.
4. Older people's involvement in the expansion of the 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' approach.

### ***Key programmes that are contributing to the Age Friendly Belfast Plan:***

- Greater Belfast Seniors Forum participation in the Healthy Ageing Reference Group with Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- Links to Integrated Care Partnerships and Multi-Disciplinary Teams to support 2-way conversations between older people and health professionals
- Continued distribution and updating of the Health and Wellbeing Information Booklet for seniors
- Work through Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's Carer Support Service
- Older people's participation in parks and open spaces and programmes in Belfast City Council community centres and bowling pavilions
- Physical activity, strength and balance and falls prevention programmes supported or provided through Public Health Agency, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Belfast City Council, Better Gyms and Leisure Centres, Healthy Living Centres, and local community providers
- Partnership work to tackle health inequalities through Belfast Community Planning Partnership and Belfast Health Development Unit
- Home safety work carried out through a range of partners including, the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Belfast City Council, the Safer Homes Scheme and the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP)
- The Connected Community Care Service, a citywide social prescribing service, connecting people to local health and wellbeing support services.

## Financial security, assisting with the increasing cost of living

### What we did

We have sponsored a yearly award in the Belfast Business Awards.

Won in 2021 by Sync Living, and in 2020 by Bank of Ireland, the Age Friendly Business Award recognised those businesses that provide exceptional customer care for older customers, and which value an age diverse workforce.

Through communication in the council's City Matters Magazine and social media, we have promoted awareness of the Make the Call campaign, scam awareness initiatives, and advice services. All these initiatives, in different ways, contribute to the financial security of our older residents. Greater Belfast Seniors Forum and local forums have campaigned to raise awareness of advice services and to reduce the stigma of asking for help through food banks.

Other achievements for older people have included:

- Work with the Ulster Bank, Hourglass and the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland (COPNI) to raise awareness of financial abuse
- Development of the Warm and Well Project through the Living Here Board in Belfast's Community Planning Partnership, coordinated by National Energy Action
- Be Prepared information sessions across the city, which focused on financial security, benefits uptake, and scam awareness
- Business in the Community and Age NI work with employers and employees through the Age at Work campaign aimed at helping older workers to remain in work or return to work. This approach enables older workers to have enough income, stay connected and have a fuller working life. It urges employers to commit to an MOT at

50, to help people with future plans and pension savings

- Work with Belfast's Police and Community Safety Partnership on Safe Seniors packs and avoiding scams.

### Good Practice Case Study:

#### Age NI Helpline

The Age NI Helpline provides advice to older people on a range of issues including benefit entitlements. Mrs P was contacted by Mrs P (aged 83) in relation to her benefit entitlements. Until recently, Mrs P had been the main carer for her severely disabled adult daughter. When Mrs P developed her own illnesses and they impacted on her personal care and support needs, Mrs P's daughter moved into a residential home and Mrs P now lives alone.

Mrs P was in receipt of a State Pension and Guarantee Pension Credit. She received a Carers Premium included in her Pension Credit award for looking after her daughter, so the fact that she was not caring for her daughter anymore meant that she would lose the Carers Premium, a loss of £37.70 per week.

No longer being able to care for her daughter was a life-changing event for Mrs P, the upset of which was further exacerbated by the fact that her income was going to be impacted and she was worried about finances.

Like many long-term carers, Mrs P had rarely focused on her own health and wellbeing. Advice workers were able to check Mrs P's eligibility for additional benefits and support her to successfully apply for them. The support provided by the helpline staff reduced some of the additional stresses caused by the change of circumstances and increased her income.





## Good Practice Case Study:

### Belfast Warm and Well



The Belfast Warm and Well (WAW) Project was developed by the Living Here Board in Belfast Community Planning Partnership. It is coordinated by National Energy Action (NEA) and aims to help local people who are struggling to keep their homes warm. The project works with local community and voluntary groups, to provide helpful independent and confidential advice and practical support to people aged 65 years or older; people living with disability or long term physical or mental health condition; pregnant women; households with young children (from new-born to school age); and people on a low income.

WAW has received calls from over 300 householders and provided practical assistance to 250 households. This assistance included organising boiler-checks, emergency out of hours referrals to restore heating to vulnerable households, providing oil filled radiators and Winter Warmth Packs, emergency fuel top-ups, and energy efficiency advice. In addition, project staff can make onward referrals for draughtproofing/insulation measures, benefit checks and food parcels.

With the unprecedented increase in energy costs combined with rising inflation impacting many vulnerable households, demand for assistance has risen significantly. Without the practical interventions provided by the WAW Project, many vulnerable householders who did not qualify for assistance under existing schemes would have been left having to continue to live in circumstances which could ultimately impact on their health.

As households continue to make tough financial choices, those households who have been struggling to keep the lights and heat on, will continue to struggle. This figure is most likely to continue climbing and therefore continuing measures to support these householders will continue to be critical.

It has been difficult to identify case studies from elsewhere on this theme, but the recent partnership response to Covid-19 has highlighted important learning

### Learning from Belfast Covid-19 community response

Covid-19 had a profound impact on the residents of Belfast of all ages, and on delivery of a range of services. A regional and citywide community response mechanism was established including:

- Community and voluntary groups leading local response efforts
- The development of a citywide helpline, remote contact centre and a central food distribution hub for Belfast residents
- A contact centre to process and coordinate responses to local needs
- Area based teams to manage welfare referrals and provide a link between partners
- The creation of a grant funding scheme to support emergency response and recovery activities.

The following results were achieved:

- 9,770 calls handled by the Belfast City Council contact centre
- 5,115 calls handled by local community run helplines,
- 107,407 food parcels and hot food were delivered over 16 weeks,
- 930 welfare referrals were managed by the area teams, and
- 9,320 deliveries or prescription pick-ups were made on behalf of residents.

During 2020-2021 Belfast City Council Provided almost £4.5 million additional funding to help organisations to deliver support for those individuals impacted by Covid-19 restrictions and supported 679 projects by providing £698,532.00 to deliver small scale projects across the city with grants ranging from £1,000 - £5,000.

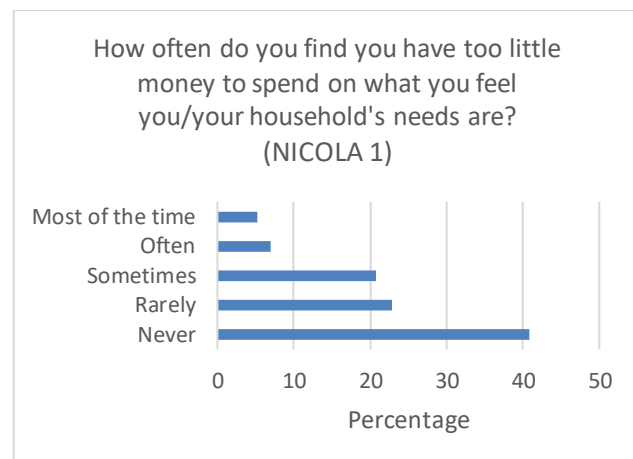
During 2021-2022 Belfast City Council provided £1 million additional funding to help organisations to deliver support for those individuals impacted by Covid-19 restrictions and cost of living issues and supported 414 organisations with £1,089,781.00 to deliver small scale projects across the city with grants ranging from £1,000 - £5,000.

### Learning for work on financial security with older people

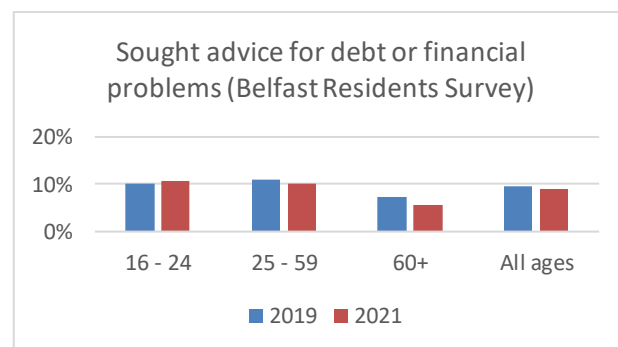
The Covid-19 response demonstrated at scale and pace, a whole-system approach to supporting vulnerable populations. The response tested new approaches to joint working across sectors at both the strategic / policy setting level and the operational / neighbourhood level. Whilst the scale and urgent timing of response is different, lessons from this joint working is needed to help the most vulnerable citizens in Belfast with the rising cost of living.

#### Where we are now

Over a third of older people<sup>vii</sup> stated that they do not have enough money for household needs sometimes, often, or most of the time. One in ten reported that this kept them from keeping their house in a reasonable state of decoration or from replacing or repairing broken electrical items, and 8.5 per cent reported that this impacted on their choice of food.



According to the Belfast Residents Survey, those aged 60 and over are least likely to have sought advice for debt or financial problems, falling from 7.2 per cent in 2019 to 5.5 per cent in 2021.



#### What is needed

Although there has been some increase in the uptake of some benefits, we still need to encourage older people to find out what they are entitled to and to access those supports. Older people tell us that the system is complex and at times overwhelming, that the forms are not age friendly and that where online application is the only option, they are deterred from applying. There is a continued need for support and advice for older people to navigate the benefit system.

#### Who is most vulnerable/excluded?

It is challenging to identify the people who are really in need of support as they may be among the more hidden/less heard members of our communities. People with a medical condition or disability who may need to keep

the heat on longer or power medical equipment are particularly vulnerable to rising fuel costs. Those who are on a fixed income are also vulnerable.

### ***Fuel and food poverty***

Rising fuel and food costs and rising inflation are issues which particularly impact on older people. While there are support systems available, these may not be adequate, or indeed people may not know the support is there. Increasing awareness of grants to assist with energy efficiency and signposting residents to the help available from foodbanks will be important during the current cost of living crisis. Of almost equal importance is de-stigmatising asking for advice or assistance.

### ***The need for further research***

There are fewer case studies and practical examples of projects in other Age Friendly cities on this theme. In order to better inform how HASP progresses on this theme, further research will be needed into measures taken to address food and fuel poverty amongst older people in other parts of Europe and the world.

### ***What partners have committed to do***

1. Work with older people to provide information and support on financial security in a way that is easy to understand and navigate.
  - information events in four localities
  - promotion of information through local older people's forums
2. Work to normalise and reduce stigma of older people accessing financial entitlements and addressing debt
3. Promote debt advice services to older people

4. Review and support the wider policy level work on food and fuel poverty. For example:
  - increase uptake of reducing food waste cookery sessions and promotion of fuel stamps
  - promote links to foodbanks and social supermarkets.
5. Offer access to employment support and employment for those aged 50+.
6. Promote and support of the Age at Work approach to recruit, retain and retrain workers aged 50+.

### ***Programmes that are contributing to the Age Friendly Belfast Plan:***

- Make the Call, Age NI helpline and various advice centre work to support older people to access entitlements
- Advice NI Rights for Seniors initiatives and the Debt Advice Service
- Repair cafes
- Belfast City Council Fuel stamps initiative
- The Warm and Well project and NEA Energy efficiency information sessions
- Belfast Safer Homes project
- Work with Police and Community Safety Partnership and the police service for Northern Ireland on Scam Awareness and Older Adults Cyber Safety work
- Work by age organisations to retain older people's access to local post offices and banks
- Promotion of advice services and scam awareness through the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum and local older people's forums
- Belfast City Council Employability and Skills/ Belfast Labour Market Partnership training/skills programmes which allow residents of all ages in the city to gain skills to secure employment across a broad range of sectors and employers
- The Economic Strategy for Belfast 2022-2030





## Summary of actions

Infrastructure, helping people to get out and about Outcomes:	Key partners	Timescale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure developments in Belfast are designed in consultation with older people using agreed age friendly design principles</li> <li>Amenities and services in Belfast are more accessible for older people</li> </ul>		
Develop a joined-up approach to engagement and co-design with older people on local and city centre developments	Greater Belfast Seniors Forum, Older people's forums, the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) and the Department for Infrastructure	Years 3 and 4
Develop age friendly design principles, which can be used to inform new infrastructure developments	Age Friendly Network NI, Belfast City Council, Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) and older people's forums	Years 3 and 4
Work to review and improve access to seating and toilets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review provision of seating and toilets in parks and open spaces in Belfast and identify gaps (including provision of radar keys)</li> <li>Carry out an audit of current public toilet usage and identify any barriers to use</li> <li>Explore 'take a seat' pilots in several areas</li> <li>Provide age friendly input into the development of parklets</li> </ul>	Belfast City Council Age Friendly Officer, Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure and local neighbourhoods	Years 1 and 2
Revisit the work to raise awareness of the needs of older people when using transport	Age Partnership Belfast and Translink	Years 1 and 2



<b>Social inclusion, promoting social connections</b> <b>Outcome:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>older people are more connected and involved through programmes, places and services</li> </ul>	<b>Key partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Work together to support recovery of groups/programmes with older people	Age Partnership Belfast, Belfast City Council, and voluntary and community sector partners	Years 1 and 2
Co-ordinate an Age Friendly Belfast annual programme of activities	Belfast City Council Age Friendly officer and a range of city partners	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4
Develop local connection hubs and a city centre hub where older people can drop in and access information	Older people's forums, community partners and Belfast City Council	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4
Develop dementia carers cafes in all four dementia friendly neighbourhoods	Dementia friendly neighbourhood groups, supported by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4
A recruitment drive to encourage older people to re-engage in volunteering, and to recruit new volunteers. Promotion of initiatives to manage and support older people's participation in volunteering.  Celebrate older volunteers through a yearly older volunteer awards programme	Volunteer Now and HASP partners  Volunteer Now and Belfast City Council	Ongoing Years 1 and 2  Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4
<b>Health and wellbeing</b> <b>Outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older people are active partners in the design and delivery of health and social services to ensure access</li> <li>Older people, who are most in need, are supported to live more active and socially connected lives</li> </ul>	<b>Key partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Work with Greater Belfast Seniors forum to link with GP representatives and multi-disciplinary teams on a regular basis to ensure that the voice of older people is heard in discussions on access to services, and influences new developments	Age Partnership Belfast, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust, and primary care teams	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4



Support 600-800 older people (most in need) to improve their mobility levels and to feel more connected and less lonely	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, supported by Belfast Health Development Unit	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4
Promote key messages and connect up programmes for older people to increase their strength and mobility, including prevention of falls	Age NI and Public Health Agency	Years 1 and 2
Involve older people's involvement in the expansion of the 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing' approach	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and Greater Belfast Seniors Forum	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4
<b>Financial security, supporting people to manage the increasing costs of living</b> <b>Outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved access to financial support for older people to equip them to deal with the increased cost of living</li> <li>Older people have access to employment, support in employment and information on planning for retirement</li> </ul>	<b>Key partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Work with older people to provide information and support on financial security in a way that is easy to understand and navigate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information events locally and citywide</li> <li>Promotion of information through local older people's forums</li> </ul>	Advice NI, Department for Communities Make the Call team and older people's forums	Years 1 and 2
Work to normalise and reduce the stigma of older people accessing financial entitlements and addressing debt	Age Friendly NI Network supported Belfast City Council Age Friendly Officer and Advice NI	Years 1 and 2
Promote debt advice services to older people	Advice NI, Belfast City Council Age Friendly Officer	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4
Review and support the wider policy level work on food and fuel poverty e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increase uptake of reducing food waste cookery sessions and promotion of fuel stamps</li> <li>promote links to foodbanks and social supermarkets</li> </ul>	Belfast City Council Trussell Trust, FairShare NI and other community food providers	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4

Offer access to employment support and employment for those aged 50+	Belfast City Council Employability and Skills Team/Belfast Labour Market Partnership	Ongoing Years 1, 2, 3 and 4
Promote and support the Age at Work approach to recruit, retain and retrain workers aged 50+	Business in the Community and Age NI	Years 1 & 2

Can we have a line here to close the box

## Safeguarding

Age Friendly Belfast recognises everyone has a fundamental right to be safe. Whatever the cause, or wherever it occurs, harm caused to adults by abuse, exploitation or neglect is not acceptable and safeguarding is everybody's responsibility with communities playing a part in preventing, detecting, and reporting neglect and abuse. Every partner that has committed to the plan has measures in place locally to protect those least able to protect themselves. E.g., Belfast City Council's Safeguarding policy can be found here: <https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/part-2-safeguarding-policy-for-adults>



## Leadership- making it happen

Leadership and governance for Age Friendly Belfast will be provided by the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP). They will co-ordinate the Age Friendly Belfast Plan against specific timescales with agreed resources.

HASP partners will oversee the delivery and performance management of the Age Friendly action plan and report on progress to Belfast Community Planning Partnership.

A detailed action plan will be developed, and we will know that we are making a difference by using an outcomes-based accountability approach (OBA).

This means that we will measure progress against the draft outcome framework outlined in the included Appendix 1.

HASP currently involves the following organisations:

- Age NI
- The Alzheimer's Society
- Belfast City Council
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- Belfast Healthy Cities
- Dementia NI
- The Department for Communities
- The Department for Infrastructure
- Engage with Age
- Greater Belfast Seniors Forum
- North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- The Public Health Agency
- Volunteer Now



## Appendix 1 - Draft Outcomes Framework

Key Strategic Theme	Proposed Thematic Outcomes	Belfast Agenda Outcomes	Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework
1. <b>Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure developments in Belfast are designed in consultation with older people using agreed age friendly design principles</li> <li>Amenities and services in Belfast are more accessible for older people</li> </ul>	Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city for older people	<p>People want to live, work, and visit here</p> <p>We have an equal and inclusive society where everyone is valued and treated with respect</p> <p>We all enjoy long, healthy active lives</p>
2. <b>Social Inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older people are more connected and involved through programmes, places, and services</li> </ul>	<p>Belfast is a welcoming, safe, fair, and inclusive city for older people</p> <p>Everyone in Belfast fulfils their potential</p>	
3. <b>Health and wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older people are active partners in the design and delivery of health and social services to ensure access</li> <li>Older people, who are most in need, are supported to live more active and socially connected lives</li> </ul>	Older people in Belfast experience good health and well being	<p>We have a caring society that supports people throughout their lives</p>
4. <b>Financial Security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved access to financial support for older people to equip them to deal with the increased cost of living</li> <li>Older people have access to employment, support in employment and information on planning for retirement</li> </ul>	Older people in Belfast benefit from a thriving and prosperous economy	<p>Everyone feels safe – we all respect the law and each other</p> <p>Everyone can reach their potential</p>

- i Belfast Residents Survey
- ii NICOLA Study
- iii Belfast Residents Survey
- iv Belfast Residents Survey
- v Belfast Residents Survey
- vi NICOLA Study
- vii NICOLA Study



# Age Friendly Belfast

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We're committed to making sure that our publications are available to all sections of the community and will consider providing this in other formats. If you need an alternative format, please call 9027 0234.