



Office of the

**First Minister and
Deputy First Minister**

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DELIVERING SOCIAL CHANGE

**Belfast Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership
response to:**

Active Ageing Strategy 2014-20

Consultation Questionnaire

May 2014

Context

Belfast Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) welcomes a regional ageing strategy for Northern Ireland. Joined up planning is at the heart of our partnership working and we look forward to working with other areas of NI in the implementation of this strategy.

In 2012, Belfast City Council All Party Reference Group on Older People provided the initial leadership to explore Belfast becoming an Age-friendly City. Subsequently, in May 2012, the Lord Mayor signed a declaration committing Belfast to this process.

Leadership and governance for Age-friendly Belfast is provided by Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP), which is a collaborative multi-sectoral partnership that aims to reduce life inequalities in Belfast.

The Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) co-ordinates delivery of the 3-Year Age-friendly Belfast Plan 2014-2017. We will submit a detailed action plan to the World Health Organisation (WHO) with agreed targets over time, and indicators. HASP will periodically monitor and publish progress against the action plan and report to BSP. After three years HASP will evaluate the project, identify successes and areas for future improvement. The evaluation report will be submitted to BSP and subsequently to WHO.

HASP involves the following organisations:

- Age NI
- The 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
- The Health and Social Care Board/Belfast Local Commissioning Group
- North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- The Public Health Agency
- Belfast Area Partnership Boards
- Volunteer Now

The Age-friendly Belfast vision is that “**Belfast will be a city where older people live life to the full**”

Within our action plan 3 Key themes have been identified:

- **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

Our experience in developing and delivering Age-friendly Belfast is that strong local partnerships involving statutory, community, voluntary, and private sector organisations are essential to deliver effective programmes.

Our response to the draft active ageing strategy reflects the priorities in the Age-friendly Belfast Plan and has been reached by general consensus. It will not be the same as the individual responses submitted by specific HASP members.

Your Details

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5. Are you responding as an individual or does this response represent the views of an organisation?

Organisation

6. If responding on behalf of an organisation, please state your organisation:

Belfast Strategic Partnership

7. What is your role in your organisation?

Healthy Ageing Co-ordinator

Strategic Context

8. Page 9 of the consultation document outlines the United Nations Principles for Older Persons upon which the Strategy's strategic aims are based. Do you agree that the UN Principles for Older Persons are a good basis on which to develop the strategic aims?

Yes

Do you have any further comments on the UN Principles?

That UN principles are articulated quite well in aims 1 and 2 but are not well articulated in the 3, 4 and 5.

In addition there SMART objectives are missing under each aim and this makes the document difficult to read, with quite vague statements under several aims.

Vision Statement

The Active Ageing Strategy outlines a vision (page 12 of the consultation document and page 4 of the summary version):

"Northern Ireland is an age friendly region in which all people, as they get older, are valued and supported to live actively to their fullest potential; with their rights and dignity protected."

9. Do you agree with the vision outlined above?

Yes.

Do you have any additional comments on the vision?

We strongly support the vision and in particular welcome the concept of a WHO Age-friendly Northern Ireland as this is consistent with the approach currently being implemented in Belfast. This positive and holistic approach to ageing is something that that older people in Belfast have readily embraced and support.

We would like to see a clearer statement on leadership and how partnership working will be developed, supported and resourced to realise this vision. Strong regional and local partnerships will be needed to tackle the complex multi factorial challenges associated with an age-friendly region.

In addition we would highlight that the age-friendly concept is about continuous improvement, and would suggest that the vision should state:

*'Northern Ireland is **committed to being** an age friendly region in which all people, as they get older, are valued and supported to live actively to their fullest potential; with their rights and dignity protected*

Strategic Aims

In order to achieve this stated vision, the Active Ageing Strategy has identified five strategic aims, based on the UN Principles (page 14 of the consultation document and pages 6 and 7 of the summary version):

1. **Independence:** To promote active independent living by older people giving them choice and control in their lives through the co-ordinated delivery of good warm housing in safe neighbourhoods, accessible transport, adequate income and standard of living, access to social networks and good user friendly information and equal access to participation in the workplace.
2. **Participation:** To promote the active participation of older people in all aspects of life, including social participation which helps address isolation and loneliness and ensures that older people are properly integrated, valued and included in society; to promote the active participation and citizenship of older people in decision making on policies, the provision of services and volunteering opportunities.
3. **Care:** To promote equal access to high quality health and social care services, which promote and maintain physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing, and support those with long-term conditions. Health and social care services should conform to best practice and be informed by continuous professional development, research, individual preference and need.
4. **Self-fulfilment:** To support older people to develop to the fullest of their potential through promoting education, training, leisure and arts opportunities which will support the development of life skills, positive mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing.
5. **Dignity:** To promote and protect the human rights of older people here; to uphold dignity and respect for older people in all areas of life; to promote equality, address inequality, challenge ageism and outlaw discrimination, recognising the additional challenges faced by older people with multiple identities such as gender, age, religion, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and the locality that they grew up in.

10. For each of the strategic aims please tell us to what extent you agree that these are appropriate to a Strategy aimed at active ageing?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Independence	X				
2. Participation	X				
3. Care	X				
4. Self-fulfilment	X				
5. Dignity	X				

Do you have any additional comments on these strategic aims? (Please state which strategic aim your comments apply to).

The consultation and research carried out by HASP for Age-friendly Belfast revealed that older residents consider respect and social inclusion of vital importance, in order to ensure an Age-friendly Belfast. We welcome the strategic aims and in particular the aims of

Participation and Dignity. The structure of the draft active ageing strategy aligns with the Age-friendly Belfast themes of Age-friendly Lives Neighbourhoods and Image.

11. Are there any other areas or themes that you think the strategic aims should cover/address in the Active Ageing Strategy?

No

If yes, please outline these below.

Signature Programmes – Strategic Aim 1 (Independence)

Delivery on these strategic aims will be supported by a number of Signature Programmes, details of which are included in the Strategy's Action Plan (see Annex C of the consultation document, pages 83-107) and pages 8 to 11 of the summary version. These will be taken forward in phases. Phase 1 will involve programmes for which resources have already been identified. For the remaining project proposals (Phase 2), additional resources will be required. This section will examine Signature Programmes 1-8 which relate to Strategic Aim 1 (Independence).

Independence: To promote active independent living by older people giving them choice and control in their lives through the co-ordinated delivery of good warm housing in safe neighbourhoods, accessible transport, adequate income and standard of living, access to social networks and good user friendly information and equal access to participation in the workplace.

12. For each of the Signature Programmes please tell us to what extent you agree that these are appropriate to achieving the 'Independence' strategic aim?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. *Active Ageing (Age Friendly Environments): To promote physical and social environments that support healthy and active ageing and a good quality of life for older people through assisting the eleven new councils to become Age Friendly Environments working towards the longer term goal of making Northern Ireland an Age Friendly region.	x				
2. Poverty (Benefit uptake): To annually target up to 10,000 older people, older people living with a disability / care needs, older people as carers themselves and working age people caring for older people with the aim of increasing the uptake of benefits.		x			
3. *Fuel Poverty/Affordable Warmth: To enable Councils to implement energy efficiency measures, using local installers, for households facing fuel poverty in the Mid-Ulster (Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon) and Newtownabbey council areas.				x	
4. Housing – (Accessible Homes – Private Sector): To assist older and disabled people to find suitable, accessible property by developing and piloting a voluntary code of good practice for those renting or selling property.			x		
5. Housing – (Accessible Homes – Public Sector): To meet the housing needs of			x		

<p>older people and those with disabilities by implementing an Accessible Housing Register for social housing to identify and support the allocation of suitably accessible and adapted properties.</p>					
<p>6. Transport – (Improved Rural Transport): To improve access to health and welfare services and reduce social isolation. This may be through increasing the flexibility of the Rural Community Transport Partnerships and other transport service providers and by extending rural bus services provided by Translink where demand proves to exist.</p>	x				
<p>7. Transport – (Easier Travel): To make the use of public transport easier through use of technology to provide information for example through audio-visual displays on bus fleets.</p>		x			
<p>8. *Fear of Crime: To address fear of crime and promote community safety by engaging with and understanding the concerns of older people and addressing these through community safety initiatives and intergenerational approaches.</p>		x			

Do you have any additional comments on these Signature Programmes? (Please state which Programme your comment refers to)

Active Ageing (age-friendly environments)

Research and evidence available through World Health Organisation, Age-friendly networks and Belfast Healthy Cities highlight the importance of green spaces and the impact of an accessible built environment on the health and wellbeing of older people. We would recommend that this emphasised in developing a regional age-friendly approach.

In order to assist Councils and local partnerships to create Age-friendly communities OFMDFM should:

- Establish a regional Age-friendly forum including OFMDFM, the Public Health Agency and the eleven new Councils to collaborate, share information and resources.
- Through the Northern Ireland Statistical and Research Agency develop appropriate and robust statistical data, indicators and targets to plan and evaluate the Age-friendly Programmes and Action Plans. Data should be available as appropriate at regional, Council, electoral ward and super output areas.
- Develop a regional positive ageing campaign, involving local Age-friendly Partnerships, to promote the value of older people, to encourage respect and improve intergenerational relationships
- Develop further research to support Active Ageing and Age-friendly Communities in Northern Ireland
- The final action plan to include resources, and milestones

Poverty (benefit uptake)

HASP agrees that poverty including fuel poverty must be tackled to ensure independence. Poverty is a major challenge in significant parts of Belfast and older people are disproportionately affected. It is also recognised that older people even in more affluent areas can live in large houses be cash poor and not have the money for heat them and food.

We believe that the proposal to increase benefit uptake among older people and carers would benefit from to working closely with COPNI as the Commissioner is regarded as a trusted and proactive figure by older people and will lead to a larger number of older people to coming forward.

In our experience some older people will not use a phone line for the uptake of benefits and a service which actually visits older people in their homes is also needed.

Fuel Poverty/Affordable Warmth

This is a very important issue given the statistics quoted in the document of 52% of people aged 60-74 and 66% of people aged 75 and over living in fuel poverty.

With respect to fuel poverty the proposed action does not reflect the proposals released by the DSD in February 2014 to roll out the affordable warmth scheme across Northern Ireland and to work with all Councils to target the 33,000 households who are spending more than 25% of their income on fuel. The Action Plan should seek to clarify the full extent of actions planned to tackle fuel poverty over the next 6 years. In addition the extent of schemes is unclear and opportunities for self-referral by older people are not outlined.

Housing (accessible homes-private sector)

HASP suggests that a voluntary code of good practice is unlikely to bring real improvements on this issue and that legislation would be more effective.

Housing (accessible homes –public sector)

HASP suggests that the action suggested to implement an accessible housing register is quite limited

Transport (easier travel)

Introduction of a travel wallet, monitoring good standards of customer care and supporting greater use of the DATS would also be needed to make use of public transport easier.

Signature Programmes – Strategic Aim 2 (Participation)

This section will examine Signature Programmes 9 to 10 which relate to Strategic Aim 2 (Participation). Again, please refer to the Strategy’s Action Plan (Annex C of the consultation document) and pages 8 to 11 of the summary version for further details of these Signature Programmes.

Participation: To promote the active participation of older people in all aspects of life, including social participation which helps address isolation and loneliness and ensures that older people are properly integrated, valued and included in society; to promote the active participation and citizenship of older people in decision making on policies, the provision of services and volunteering opportunities.

13. For each of the Signature Programmes please tell us to what extent you agree that these are appropriate to achieving the ‘Participation’ strategic aim?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9. *Engagement (Having a Say): To enable older people to inform policies that affect them through their engagement in development, delivery and review of the Active Ageing Strategy and Action Plan.					x
10. *Digital Inclusion: To ensure older people are not excluded from accessing information and services: by promoting digital inclusion through the Go ON NI programme which works with various organisations to recruit digital champions, provide tuition and detail the help that is available to assist older people and people with disabilities access online government services , and by providing information in alternative formats.			x		

* Programmes for which resources are already available Aim 2 (Participation)

Engagement (Having Say)

This appears to refer to the current ageing strategy steering group. This appears quite limited, is not a signature project and does not make use of or support the wide age sector structure across NI.

***Digital Inclusion**

HASP would consider this action as limited if it only relates to government services and doesn't represent the breadth of older people lives or their day to day needs- for example banking, shopping, and communicating with family and friends

Do you have any additional comments on these Signature Programmes? (Please state which Programme your comment refers to.)

Yes-the 2 signature programmes under this aim are very limited-there is potential to include programmes on addressing isolation, support for the age sector structure, volunteering, and employment.

Signature Programmes – Strategic Aim 3 (Care)

This section will examine Signature Programmes 11 to 15 which relate to Strategic Aim 3 (Care). Again, please refer to the Strategy's Action Plan (Annex C of the consultation document) and pages 8 to 11 of the summary version for further details of these Signature Programmes.

Care: To promote equal access to high quality health and social care services, which promote and maintain physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing, and support those with long-term conditions. Health and social care services should conform to best practice and be informed by continuous professional development, research, individual preference and need.

14. For each of the Signature Programmes please tell us to what extent you agree that these are appropriate to achieving the 'Care' strategic aim?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
11. Care - Dementia Services: To improve the services and support arrangements currently available for people with dementia, their families and their carers through actions to complement recommendations in the Northern Ireland Dementia Strategy, November 2011.			x		
12. Care - My Home Life: To improve the quality of life of care home residents by implementing the "My Home Life" programme aimed at empowering and enabling older people to have more control over their lives.	x				
13. Care - Healthy Homes: To promote the health and wellbeing of older people and reduce accidents through a home visit scheme which will also make small home improvements and fit equipment with a view to making the home environment safer.	x				
14. Care – Carers Support (Short Breaks): To improve the health and well being of carers and their choice and control over respite provision by establishing a Short Break Bureau and influencing change in traditional models of respite.			x		
15. Care - Co-ordination (Single Assessment Tool): To enable older people with a disability to continue					x

<p>living at home, with appropriate home care support, or to make a decision regarding the need for nursing or residential home care by coordinating and sharing information to improve decision making and risk management. This will be achieved by rolling out the Single Assessment Tool for Northern Ireland into physical and sensory disability care programmes.</p>					
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Do you have any additional comments on these Signature Programmes? (Please state which Programme your comment refers to.)

Care - Dementia Services

In principle we are supportive of resources to implement the dementia strategy but it is difficult to agree or disagree with this programme as specifics on support through Atlantic Philanthropies are not outlined.

Care - My Home Life:

HASP welcomes the My Home My Life programme

Care - Healthy Homes:

HASP welcomes the proposal for the DHSSP/Public Health Agency to extend the current home safety check scheme to promote the health and wellbeing of older people and reduce accidents through a home visitation scheme which will also make small home improvements and fit equipment with a view to making the home environment safer. This appears to be a well developed demonstration programme and Councils may be well placed to manage the scheme locally. Funding for the programme needs to be carefully and clearly outlined by DHSSP/PHA.

Care – Carers Support (Short Breaks):

HASP welcomes the idea of short breaks for carers and has had some positive feedback about their benefit for older people in Belfast However, the proposed short break bureau programme is described as a one-stop-shop travel agency and does not appear to cover people who need a break away from the person they care for or support. It is also unclear if cost would be covered for those who cannot pay for a break

Care - Co-ordination (Single Assessment Tool):

This is a programme that is already happening and therefore HASP would not consider it as a key demonstration programme for 2014-2017

Signature Programmes – Strategic Aim 4 (Self-fulfilment)

This section will examine Signature Programmes 16 and 17 which relate to Strategic Aim 4 (Self-fulfilment). Again, please refer to the Strategy's Action Plan (Annex C of the consultation document) and pages 8 to 11 of the summary version for further details of these Signature Programmes.

Self-fulfilment: To support older people to develop to the fullest of their potential through promoting education, training, leisure and arts opportunities which will support the development of life skills, positive mental, emotional and physical health and wellbeing.

15. For each of the Signature Programmes please tell us to what extent you agree that these are appropriate to achieving the 'Self-fulfilment' strategic aim?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
16. Self-fulfilment - Employment Opportunities (Working Life): To develop a proposal, as part of the new strategy to tackle economic activity in NI, to increase the employment prospects of economically inactive older people, particularly those with a work-limiting health condition or disability and those with family or caring commitments.		x			
17. Self-fulfilment - Education and Leisure: To explore how to better promote the benefits of further education opportunities amongst older workers.	x				

Do you have any additional comments on these Signature Programmes? (Please state which Programme your comment refers to.)

Self-fulfilment - Employment Opportunities (Working Life):

We would also suggest that employment is very important to current and future older people. The recent COPNI report on Valuing an Ageing workforce highlighted clear recommendations that need to be implemented. We believe that a clear and funded programme is needed to push forward progress in this important area. The work of GEMS in Belfast is an example of good practice on employment initiatives with older people.

In the Age-friendly Belfast plan, Business in the Community have committed to support employers to plan better for an age diverse workforce, encourage businesses to support older workers to remain in work if they wish and support employment opportunities for older people.

Self-fulfilment - Education and Leisure:

HASP would suggest that older people should be able to pursue opportunities which help them to live life to the full. This would involve good access to lifelong learning, arts, cultural, spiritual, social and recreational programmes. In Belfast older people specifically highlighted the need for intergenerational discussions and programmes. Cost and support to take part in self-fulfilment programmes need to be considered.

Signature Programmes – Strategic Aim 5 (Dignity)

This section will examine Signature Programmes 18 and 19 which relate to Strategic Aim 5 (Dignity). Again, please refer to the Strategy's Action Plan (Annex C of the consultation document) and pages 8 to 11 of the summary version for further details of these Signature Programmes.

Dignity: To promote and protect the human rights of older people here; to uphold dignity and respect for older people in all areas of life; to promote equality, address inequality, challenge ageism and outlaw discrimination, recognising the additional challenges faced by older people with multiple identities such as gender, age, religion, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and the locality that they grew up in.

16. For each of the Signature Programmes please tell us to what extent you agree that these are appropriate to achieving the 'Dignity' strategic aim?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
18. *Dignity – Discrimination: To end unfair age-related discrimination through developing and consulting on proposals to extend age discrimination legislation on the provision of goods, facilities and services.	x				
19. *Dignity – Decision making (Mental Capacity): To uphold the right of people to make decisions in respect of their healthcare, welfare or financial affairs; and to provide support and protection to those who do not have capacity to do so. This will be achieved by progressing the draft Mental Capacity Bill which will introduce a new, single statutory framework governing all decision making in relation to the care, treatment or personal welfare of a person aged 16 or over, who lacks capacity to make a specific decision for themselves.	x				

Do you have any additional comments on these Signature Programmes? (Please state which Programme your comment refers to.)

Dignity – Discrimination

- The Action 18 on age discrimination to 'develop and consult on proposals ... [and]...after analysis ...we will develop and progress the legislation through the Assembly' falls far short of the commitment given in the Programme for Government to 'extend age discrimination legislation'. HASP would urge OFMDFM to amend this

Action to align with the Programme for Government commitment to extend age discrimination legislation.

- The strategy highlights the need to challenge the stereotypes of ageing and particularly the need to ensure older people are seen as an asset rather than a burden to society, to recognise the active role they play in their communities and in the economy. This has been identified as one of the key priorities within the Age-friendly Belfast plan. Consideration should be given to developing a positive ageing campaign, involving local Age-friendly Partnerships, to promote the value of older people, to encourage respect and improve intergenerational relationships.

Dignity – Decision making (Mental Capacity):

This appears to me a positive demonstration programme but some more detail on timescales will be important

Signature Programmes – Phase 2

As mentioned, the Signature Programmes will be taken forward in two phases. Phase 1 will involve programmes for which resources have already been identified. For the remaining project proposals (Phase 2), additional resources will be required. This section seeks to prioritise the 12 Phase 2 Signature Programmes.

Again, please refer to the Strategy's Action Plan (Annex C of the consultation document) and pages 8 to 11 of the summary version for further details of these Signature Programmes.

17. If you had to select six Phase 2 Signature Programmes to go ahead first, which six would you select? (Please tick SIX ONLY)

Please note: This is designed to gauge what level of priority respondents place on each proposed Phase 2 Signature Programme. It should not be read as a suggestion that only six programmes will go ahead. (Continued overleaf)

Signature Programme	
Poverty (Benefit uptake): To annually target up to 10,000 older people, older people living with a disability / care needs, older people as carers themselves and working age people caring for older people with the aim of increasing the uptake of benefits.	X
Housing – (Accessible Homes – Private Sector): To assist older and disabled people to find suitable, accessible property by developing and piloting a voluntary code of good practice for those renting or selling property.	
Housing – (Accessible Homes – Public Sector): To meet the housing needs of older people and those with disabilities by implementing an Accessible Housing Register for social housing to identify and support the allocation of suitably accessible and adapted properties.	
Transport – (Improved Rural Transport): To improve access to health and welfare services and reduce social isolation. This may be through increasing the flexibility of the Rural Community Transport Partnerships and other transport service providers and by extending rural bus services provided by Translink where demand proves to exist.	
Transport – (Easier Travel): To make the use of public transport easier through use of technology to provide information for example through audio-visual displays on bus fleets.	X
Care - Dementia Services: To improve the services and support arrangements currently available for people with dementia, their families and their carers through actions to complement recommendations in the Northern Ireland Dementia Strategy, November 2011.	X
Care - My Home Life: To improve the quality of life of care home residents by implementing the “My Home Life” programme aimed at empowering and enabling older people to have more control over their lives.	X
Care - Healthy Homes: To promote the health and wellbeing of older people and reduce accidents through a home visit scheme which will also make small home improvements and fit equipment with a view to making the home environment safer.	X
Care – Carers Support (Short Breaks): To improve the health and well being of carers and their choice and control over respite provision by establishing a Short Break Bureau and influencing change in traditional models of respite.	
Care - Co-ordination (Single Assessment Tool): To enable older people with a disability to continue living at home, with appropriate home care support, or to make	

<p>a decision regarding the need for nursing or residential home care by coordinating and sharing information to improve decision making and risk management. This will be achieved by rolling out the Single Assessment Tool for Northern Ireland into physical and sensory disability care programmes.</p>	
<p>Self-fulfilment - Employment Opportunities (Working Life): To develop a proposal, as part of the new strategy to tackle economic activity in NI, to increase the employment prospects of economically inactive older people, particularly those with a work-limiting health condition or disability and those with family or caring commitments.</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>Self-fulfilment - Education and Leisure: To explore how to better promote the benefits of further education opportunities amongst older workers.</p>	

Equality Impact

Any Strategy is likely to have impacts beyond the specific areas and issues it may be targeting. As such we would welcome views on how delivering this Strategy and the contents within it may affect other groups in society.

18. Please describe the effect that you think delivery of the Strategy may have on the nine groups contained within Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act.

	Strongly positive	Mainly positive	No effect	Mainly negative	Strongly negative
Religious beliefs			x		
Political opinion			x		
Racial groups			x		
Age	x				
Marital status		x			
Sexual orientation			x		
Gender			x		
Persons with a disability and persons without		x			
Persons with dependants and persons without		x			

Please provide any further detail as to why you feel the Strategy will have negative/positive effects.

Further comments

19. Do you have any further comments/suggestions regarding the proposed Active Ageing Strategy?

HASP would make the following general comments in regards to the Active Ageing Strategy 2014-2020 consultation document:

- **We welcome the language in the consultation document which emphasises the contribution of older people, the diversity of their lives and a move away from a dependant welfare model of ageing**
- **We welcome the emphasis on becoming an Age -friendly region - the age-friendly approach is an internationally recognised model for developing communities and cities that support older people's lives**
- **We are concerned that there is a disconnect between the narrative of the document and the action plan**
- **We are concerned about minimal mention of support for older people's groups and the age sector in the document-we have found in Belfast that this structure is essential to shape services, prevent isolation and to help older people remain active. There is a need to support community development infrastructure which supports local older peoples forums in their day to day activities and avoids the need for government services**
- **We are concerned about the gap in the strategy in relation to acknowledging the value of volunteering. Volunteering helps older people to remain engaged in their communities, feeling valued and making a tangible contribution to a range of good causes. Volunteering has a role to play in combating stereotypes of all older people as being vulnerable, dependent and being a drain on state resources. There needs to be more support and focus in the strategy on encouraging older people to volunteer coming up to and post retirement.**
- **We would recommend several key targets in relation to improvements in the lives of older people in Northern Ireland and the addition of SMART objectives under each aim in the final strategy. This structure would help the strategy to be clearer, more concise and easier to outline in an executive summary**
- **We would recommend a communications plan is developed and published in the final strategy.**

Confidentiality and Access to Information Legislation

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with access to information legislation: these are chiefly the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice (section 45) with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this, it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information, we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office on 028 9026 9380 or email ni@ico.gsi.gov.uk (or see their website at www.ico.gov.uk).

Please circle below if you wish your response to be treated as anonymous.