



Subject:	Age Friendly Belfast Update
Date:	17 th September 2024
Reporting Officer:	Joanna Holland, Age Friendly Coordinator
Contact Officer:	Joanna Holland, Age Friendly Coordinator

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To update members on the Age Friendly Belfast plan and Age Friendly Belfast activities.
2.0	Recommendations

2,1	Members are asked to note the updates provided on the Age Friendly Belfast Plan and activities.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Key Issues</p> <p>Age Friendly Belfast Plan 2023 – 2027</p> <p>Members will recall that the plan focuses on the following key themes;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Infrastructure/getting out and about. 2. Social connections 3. Health and wellbeing 4. Financial security/cost of living
3.2	<p>Infrastructure</p> <p>Age Friendly Design Principles</p> <p>The Age Friendly Coordinator in partnership with the Age Friendly Coordinator in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council has arranged a webinar for Thursday 24th October from Dr Mark Hammond -the session will explore how the needs and aspirations of older people can be better addressed by architects, planners and developers creating new residential developments. We will explore the different ways that built environment professions think about older people, what we mean by ‘age-friendly’ housing, and how we can mainstream it in the places we work. Another piece of work that will be completed as part of the Age Friendly Network NI is the design of a questionnaire to assess the housing needs and issues of older people to be completed with older people’s groups. The Age Friendly Coordinators also report back at the Age Friendly Network for NI , which met on 25th June and 4th September.</p>
3.3	<p>Social Connections</p> <p>Tea Dances-</p> <p>Since the last committee report Age Friendly Belfast have organised 4 tea dances and supported the Lord Mayor’s Office with the D Day themed Tea dance. They continue to be very popular, with many people meeting up with friends but also new people attending.</p> <p>Connection Hub update</p> <p>The first drop-in session of the connection hub, also known as the Grapevine started on Tuesday 16th April 11am-2pm in 2 Royal Avenue and continued every Tuesday until the end of June. There was a break for the month of July and it started back again on Tuesday 6th August. Each week two age friendly volunteers are there to meet and greet older people dropping in. As requested they are supported on site by the Age Friendly Coordinator and Community Projects Manager, Volunteer Now, in case any issues should arise.</p>

Whilst numbers of older people dropping in started off with a handful, the numbers have steadily increased, with up to 15 people dropping in each week for a chat and some tea. Some observations that have been made in relation to the people dropping in - there is a high percentage of men and most of the people are living alone. As a result of the drop in people have connected into other activities and one has signed up with Volunteer Now to become a befriender.

Feedback from the Age Friendly volunteers has also been positive, with all agreeing to continue to do sessions after a break during July.

Whilst the Grapevine has been open, other organisations have used the session to coincide with the promotion of their services, such as the Alzheimer's Society and Forward South Partnership and the Clare Project.

There will be an evaluation of the project when it has been operation for 6 and 12 months to review potential to develop the Hub concept in other venues. However, this will be dependent of staff and financial resources available.

3.4

Health and wellbeing

On Wednesday 29th May there was a dementia information day in the City Hall. Information stands ranged from regional to local and were able to offer one to one support both to people living with dementia and also carers and family members. There was great feedback from the event- and there were nearly 200 people who dropped in. As a result of this event dementia Information days have also been arranged for local areas including East and North Belfast by the local dementia friendly neighbourhoods.

Isolation and Loneliness Training

As a result of its popularity the Older, Active & Connected Programme Co-ordinator from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has been able to organise more sessions of the isolation and loneliness sessions- these will be happening during September and October and will include online and face to face sessions.

Physical Activity kit bags for older People

The Older, Active & Connected Programme Co-ordinator from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust ordered equipment to help increase physical activity amongst older people. It was delivered to the Morton Community Centre and has been distributed amongst all the BCC owned community centres. It is hoped that further training can be delivered to the Assistant Community Development Officers to ensure they can provide programmes using the equipment to older people to help increase physical activity levels and as a result help prevent falls and other injuries.

3.5	<p>Financial Security / cost of living.</p> <p>Peter from Advice Space has recently attended the HASP meetings and as result is able to provide updates on the advice sector and its impact and issues affecting older people.</p> <p>Connections have been made with colleagues in economy and place to help promote the 50+ Jobstart programme to the Age Friendly distribution list.</p> <p>A meeting was held in September to explore Belfast City Council becoming an Age Friendly employer.</p>
3.6	<p>Internal Officer working group.</p> <p>The internal BCC officer working group has been established to ensure that work which will benefit older people is carried out through greater collaboration, sharing of information and resources. There have been three meetings in April, May and August, in which partners shared projects on older people, inputted activities to be included in the Positive Ageing Month booklet and also work has begun on the Age Friendly calendar to ensure council initiatives which support older people are highlighted.</p>
3.7	<p>Positive Ageing Month</p> <p>Plans have begun to organise Age Friendly events during the month of October and the Positive Ageing month booklets have been distributed.</p> <p>There are many events and activities planned for the month of October to encourage older people to try something new.</p> <p>Events organised exclusively by Age Friendly include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st October 11am- 12pm boccia sessions in 2 Royal Avenue to coincide with the Grapevine and Active Ageing week. • 4th October Age Convention Event 12-2pm to launch Positive Ageing Month • 8th October Tea dance in Belfast Castle to help celebrate its 90th year. • 15th October Movie afternoon in City Hall 2-4pm Calamity Jane • 16th October Walking tour of Friars Bush 11am • 22nd October Movie afternoon in City Hall 2-4pm Arsenic and old Lace • 24th October online Age Friendly housing webinar <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>All work outlined in this report will be carried out within existing budgets and staff resources of Age Friendly Belfast and the partners involved.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>This work is part of The Age Friendly Belfast Plan which has been equality and rural needs screened in line with the Council's agreed processes.</p>

