



## **Engage With Age**

**'Giving a voice, providing a choice'**

**Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017**

**FINAL**

**May 2014**

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## Introduction from the Chair

### Background:

Partnerships and collaborative working have been central to the work of Engage With Age since the organisation was established in 2000. At that point eight organisations came together from across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors, interested in issues impacting older people in South and East Belfast and Castlereagh. They developed a shared vision and commitment, and shared resources to tackle social isolation and loneliness, low levels of community participation and usage of local services as well as poor health and health inequalities in the older population.

Today, through a community development approach, Engage With Age works in partnership alongside 1000's of older people across Belfast; with older people's groups and forums and with older people in their own homes and in supported housing schemes. We continue to work within and through a complex network of organisations and with a number of key strategic statutory and voluntary sector partnership including the Age Partnership Belfast and Belfast Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership.

Through partnership our work supports and enables older people to develop and maintain social relationships and connections with each other and in their communities. Our work enables older people to remain connected, involved and engaged; developing and sharing existing and new skills as well as speaking out and having their voices heard on issues that are important to them.

It is clear that Engage With Age have made significant progress over the past 14 years in terms of impact, reach and relationships. However over the last 3 years a number of key initiatives merit particular mention because of their impact on older people feeling more confident, engaged and socially connected.

- Through the support of The Atlantic Philanthropies funding older people have strengthened their capacity to lobby and campaign on issues important to them. The numbers of voices have significantly increased. A core network has been established bringing together the 6 Older People's Forums from across Belfast, the Greater Belfast Senior's Forum, who are now a major influencing voice and 'go to' grouping on older peoples issues.
- Giant steps have been taken in terms of partnership working across Belfast. Strong and enduring relationships have been established with Volunteer Now and North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum. We are committed to working together, under the banner of the Age Partnership Belfast, as a strategic alliance. This partnership brings our collective strengths to bear and has significantly increased the reach and depth of the work with older people and older peoples groups across Belfast.

- We have extended into new areas and are working with a new cohort of older people through the HOPE project, funded by The Big Lottery. This initiative, in partnership with three Belfast housing associations, Clanmil, Trinity and Fold, targets men and women over 50 who either live in one of the participating sheltered housing schemes or surrounding neighbourhoods; and who experience loneliness or are socially isolated. In the first 18 months this initiative has already had a real impact on the lives of over 200 participants. A key success has been the ability to attract and encourage participation of younger older men who are often the most isolated in our communities.

Our work continues to make a significant impact with older people feeling more confident, engaged and socially connected. However the issues that galvanised the original partnership in 2000 remain as relevant today as they did then.

### **Context:**

In developing our strategic plan for the next 3 year period we have gathered views from a range of key stakeholders, in particular older people through groups and forums, partner organisation on the board and from the staff and volunteer team.

We have considered a range of external factors and strategies (Appendix 1) and recognise that over the next 3 years the landscape in Belfast and across Northern Ireland is set to change significantly. Our strategic plan seeks to incorporate these changes.

We recognise that the older population is growing. The numbers of pensioners aged 85+ in Northern Ireland (29,665) has increased by almost a quarter since June 2002 (*NISRA, 2010 Mid-year Population Estimates*). Families and communities are becoming increasingly fragmented and greater numbers of older people are living alone with the potential to be isolated or lonely. In their study, 58% of people over 55 identify loneliness as the main problem facing older people in Northern Ireland (*ARK, Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, 2008*). Strategies enabling older people to remain active for longer alongside strategies to increase the use of new technologies will be key to living independently at home for longer, remaining connected and supported. Our strategy aims to do this as well as extending our reach to older people in different settings particularly supported housing through the continued work of the HOPE project.

Transforming Your Care, restructuring of the health and social care systems and reablement will continue to play an important role over the next 3 years particularly in relation to access to locally provided services. Additionally the workings of the Review of Public Administration will finally come into play with the formation of 11 new council areas. New powers combined with their existing functions will give the new councils powerful tools to shape areas and

communities, through community planning. We need to ensure that older people's influence over public service design and implementation continues to be strengthened so that appropriate, quality services are designed and accessible in their delivery.

The trend of more public services being procured through a tendering process across wider areas looks set to continue. This will offer many new opportunities, particularly in relation to existing and new partnership coming together to tender as well as the potential to diversify our income streams. During the next 3 years we anticipate the need to even more clearly articulate what we do, our uniqueness and the value and impact of our work. Additionally we will conclude our internal discussion on whether Engage With Age wishes to become a service provider and if so is this through tendering and or social enterprise.

Engage With Age are looking forward to continuing to grow its partnerships and relationships with older people across Belfast as well and its strategic partnership with Volunteer Now and North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum. Working alongside groups and forums we will grow the numbers of older people involved in meaningful social, physical and educational activities; involved in service design and campaigns; continue to build capacity, attract new cohorts of younger older people as well as older people from a diverse range of communities and backgrounds. We will build on existing good practice and at the same time explore and develop new ways of working particularly through neighbourhood approaches.

We will continue to have a particular focus on older people who are or feel isolated, enabling lives to change for the better.

Gillian McEvoy,  
Chair

## **Vision, Mission and Values**

Engage With Age have a **Vision** of older people in Belfast living their lives to full potential.

Our **Mission** is to work with others creating opportunities for older people to become and stay connected, enjoy life and influence the future of their communities.

Our **Values** guide us in our work and our relationships. They guide our behaviour, our attitudes, the decisions we make and what we expect from one another. Engage With Age values are based on community development principles:

**We put older people at the centre of all that we do, believing in self-determination and the right to make their own choices.**

We do this by:

- Actively seeking participation, respecting and supporting older people to take part in decision making
- Being inclusive, respecting differences and embracing diversity
- Being person focused, creating energy and fun
- Promoting positive messages about age and older people
- Being empowering, challenging inequalities, promoting fairness and social justice.

**We are committed to working in partnership, believing in the strength of the contribution of many agencies, people and volunteers to make a real difference.**

We do this by:

- Building strong and enduring relationships
- Being open and honest
- Valuing and respecting all contributions
- Exercising mutual respect
- Sharing and learning from each other
- Being creative, innovative and embracing change.

## Strategic themes

Our work has a strong focus on preventing **isolation and loneliness**. We believe **being and remaining engaged** in communities, **maintaining and creating relationships and social connections** helps to give meaning, support and purpose to everyday life.

We are committed to promoting **health and wellbeing** in older age; and to supporting the **voices of older people** to be heard on issues that are important to them.

We are committed to working in **partnership** with older people's groups and forums and with a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations to provide **opportunities** for older people across Belfast to be involved and live life to **full potential**.

To achieve our vision and mission we have focused our work for the next three years under **five strategic themes**:-

1. Reducing **isolation** and loneliness and its impact on health and well being
2. **Connecting** and supporting older people and communities
3. **Influencing** decisions and contributing to everyday life
4. Working in **partnership** to achieve more
5. **Developing** a strong and sustainable organisation.

## Strategic objectives

### **1. Isolation – Reducing isolation and loneliness and its impact on health and well being**

*'Older people are particularly vulnerable to becoming isolated through loss of friends and family, loss of mobility or loss of income with not just practical but emotional and psychological implications'* (Safeguarding the convoy; A call to action from the campaign to end loneliness).

#### **Over the next 3 years Engage With Age will:**

- 1.1 Further develop, implement and promote a model of practice which enables early identification of isolated and potentially lonely older people and supports them to get involved in meaningful activities.
- 1.2 Increase awareness of causes, effects and solutions to older people's isolation and loneliness.
- 1.3 Continue to work in partnership to support the development and delivery of a range of targeted physical and social activities which contribute to improving health and well-being.
- 1.4 Explore and trial new programmes aimed at younger older people to develop connections and involvement in their local communities.
- 1.5 Continue to work in partnership to extend the HOPE Project to reach greater numbers of older people in supporting housing schemes.

#### **Expected Outcomes**

- Increase awareness of the impact of isolation and loneliness on health and wellbeing.
- Increase the range of and access to the numbers of physical and social activities on offer for older people.
- Increase the number of older people actively involved in older peoples groups and forum.
- Reduce the sense of isolation and loneliness felt by older people in their homes and in supported housing settings.

## **2. Connecting – Connecting, developing and supporting older people and communities**

*'The mutual support and the sense of purpose we feel through our relationships help to give meaning to our day to day experience'. (Safeguarding the convoy; A call to action from the campaign to end loneliness).*

### **Over the next 3 years Engage With Age will:**

- 2.1 Increase the range and number of older people's interest groups, their capacity and sustainability.
- 2.2 In partnership with older people's groups and forums increase diversity and attract a new cohort to get involved.
- 2.3 Support the development and delivery of a range of community based education and training programmes.
- 2.4 Alongside our partners increase the number of older men's groups and activities targeted at men across Belfast.
- 2.5 Work through our partners to raise awareness and increase the range of volunteering opportunities with and for older people.
- 2.6 Support the Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum with the transition into the new Lisburn and Castlereagh Council area.

### **Expected Outcomes**

- A recognised model of excellence which is shared and implemented by others.
- Increase the diversity and numbers of older people involved and connected in their communities.
- Increased access to community based education and training programmes.
- Increase capacity, governance and sustainability of older people's groups and forums.
- A newly configured Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum.

### **3. Influencing** - Influencing decisions and contributing to everyday life

*'Older people themselves feel that they are not viewed or valued as important community stakeholders and have few opportunities to input and contribute to decision making'* (Age NI Social Capital Research into the relationships between the age sector and statutory sector 2010)

#### **Over the next 3 years Engage With Age will:**

- 3.1 Enable older people to have a voice in the commissioning, planning, design and review of service delivery, particularly services provided by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and Belfast City Council.
- 3.2 Work through the Age Partnership Belfast to support the Greater Belfast Senior's Forum (The G6) to articulate the voice of older people's groups and forums, effectively influence decision makers and engage with the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership.
- 3.3 Develop new campaigning and communications channels through social media platforms such as twitter and face book.
- 3.4 Improve and target communications so that information on 'what's happening across Belfast' is accessible, enabling greater opportunities for networking and participation.

#### **Expected Outcomes**

- Older people participating and influencing Age-friendly process and community planning.
- Increase the scope, influence and capacity of the Greater Belfast Senior's Forum to participate in Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership and other partnerships.
- Contribute to the development of skills and knowledge of social media across the age sector.

## **4. Partnership – Working in partnership to achieve more**

*'If you bring the appropriate people together in constructive ways with good information, they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organisation or community'. (David Chrislip)*

### **Over the next 3 years Engage With Age will:**

- 4.1 Work with older people's forums to review need, identify gaps and develop the range of opportunities we offer.
- 4.2 Continue to strengthen our strategic partnership with North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum and Volunteer Now (Age Partnership Belfast).
- 4.3 Explore and identify potential new partnerships, voluntary, statutory and private, to deliver on our strategic intentions in relation to health and wellbeing and in particular loneliness in older age.
- 4.4 Through partnership working continue to promote positive and realistic messages and challenge the range of negative stereotypes about age and ageing.

### **Expected Outcomes**

- Increased the capacity of older people to influence the development of the Age Partnership Belfast.
- Increased the recognition of the breadth and impact of the Age Partnership Belfast.
- Through partnership extend the diversity of the work of Engage With Age.

## **5. Developing – Developing a strong and sustainable organisation**

*'Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success'. (Henry Ford)*

### **Over the next 3 years Engage With Age will:**

- 5.1 Secure sustainable income from a range of statutory organisations and charitable foundations.
- 5.2 Through the Reablement Stakeholder's Network, explore a case for a social enterprise to develop access to an information and communications tool to support the development of Reablement and community navigation
- 5.3 Further develop our evaluation systems and processes to more effectively measure impact and evidence outcomes.
- 5.4 Continue to support Trustees to meet good governance requirements particularly required by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.
- 5.5 Provide strong leadership, management and development for all our staff and volunteers.

### **Expected Outcomes**

- The strategic plan is implemented and outcomes achieved.
- A social enterprise identified which will financially contribute to support the work of the charity.
- Improve key performance indicators and measures for evaluation impact and outcomes.
- Clear leadership, transparency and accountability throughout the organisation.
- An engaged, supported and empowered team.
- Be registered as a charity with the NI Charity Commission.

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Engage with Age is incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee no. NI039665, registered Charity n0.XR31916. Registered Office: 55 Templemore Avenue, Belfast, BT5 4FP.

## Strategic Plan - Summary

Strategic Theme	We Will	Expected Outcomes
<p><b>Isolation:</b></p> <p>Reducing isolation and loneliness and its impact on health and well being</p>	<p>Further develop, implement and promote a model of practice which enables early identification of isolated and potentially lonely older people and supports them to get involved in meaningful activities.</p> <p>Increase awareness of causes, effects and solutions to older people’s isolation and loneliness.</p> <p>Continue to work in partnership to support the development and delivery of a range of targeted physical and social activities which contribute to improving health and well-being.</p> <p>Explore and trial new programmes aimed at younger older people to develop connections and involvement in their local communities.</p> <p>Continue to work in partnership to extend the HOPE Project to reach greater numbers of older people in supporting housing schemes.</p>	<p>Increase awareness of the impact of isolation and loneliness on health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Increase the range of and access to the numbers of physical and social activities on offer for older people.</p> <p>Increase the number of older people actively involved in older peoples groups and forum.</p> <p>Reduce the sense of isolation and loneliness felt by older people in their homes and in supported housing settings.</p>
<p><b>Connecting:</b></p> <p>Connecting, developing and supporting older people and communities</p>	<p>Increase the range and number of older people’s interest groups, their capacity and sustainability.</p> <p>In partnership with older people’s groups and forums increase diversity and attract a new cohort to get involved.</p> <p>Support the development and delivery of a range of community based education and training programmes.</p> <p>Alongside our partners increase the number of older men’s groups and activities targeted at men across Belfast.</p> <p>Work through our partners to raise awareness and increase the range of volunteering opportunities with and for older people.</p> <p>Support the Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum with the transition into the new Lisburn and Castlereagh Council area.</p>	<p>A recognised model of excellence which is shared and implemented by others.</p> <p>Increase the diversity and numbers of older people involved and connected in their communities.</p> <p>Increased access to community based education and training programmes.</p> <p>Increase capacity, governance and sustainability of older people’s groups and forums.</p> <p>A newly configured Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum.</p>

Strategic Theme	We Will	Expected Outcomes
<p><b>Influencing:</b></p> <p>Influencing decisions and contributing to everyday life</p>	<p>Enable older people to have a voice in the commissioning, planning, design and review of service delivery, particularly services provided by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and Belfast City Council.</p> <p>Work through the Age Partnership Belfast to support the Greater Belfast Senior's Forum (The G6) to articulate the voice of older people's groups and forums, effectively influence decision makers and engage with the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership.</p> <p>Develop new campaigning and communications channels through social media platforms such as twitter and face book.</p> <p>Improve and target communications so that information on 'what's happening across Belfast' is accessible, enabling greater opportunities for networking and participation.</p>	<p>Older people participating and influencing Age-friendly process and community planning.</p> <p>Increase the scope, influence and capacity of the Greater Belfast Senior's Forum to participate in Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership and other partnerships.</p> <p>Contribute to the development of skills and knowledge of social media across the age sector.</p>
<p><b>Partnership:</b></p> <p>Working in partnership to achieve more</p>	<p>Work with older people's forums to review need, identify gaps and develop the range of opportunities we offer.</p> <p>Continue to strengthen our strategic partnership with North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum and Volunteer Now (Age Partnership Belfast).</p> <p>Explore and identify potential new partnerships, voluntary, statutory and private, to deliver on our strategic intentions in relation to health and wellbeing and in particular loneliness in older age.</p> <p>Through partnership working continue to promote positive and realistic messages and challenge the range of negative stereotypes about age and ageing.</p>	<p>Increased the capacity of older people to influence the development of the Age Partnership Belfast.</p> <p>Increased the recognition of the breadth and impact of the Age Partnership Belfast.</p> <p>Through partnership extend the diversity of the work of Engage With Age.</p>

Strategic Theme	We Will	Expected Outcomes
<p><b>Developing:</b></p> <p>Developing a strong and sustainable organisation</p>	<p>Secure sustainable income from a range of statutory organisations and charitable foundations.</p> <p>Through the Reablement Stakeholder’s Network, explore a case for a social enterprise to develop access to an information and communications tool to support the development of Reablement.</p> <p>Further develop our evaluation systems and processes to more effectively measure impact and evidence outcomes.</p> <p>Continue to support Trustees to meet good governance requirements particularly required by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Provide strong leadership, management and development for all our staff and volunteers.</p>	<p>The strategic plan is implemented and outcomes achieved.</p> <p>A social enterprise identified which will financially contribute to support the work of the charity.</p> <p>Improve key performance indicators and measures for evaluation impact and outcomes.</p> <p>Clear leadership, transparency and accountability throughout the organisation.</p> <p>An engaged, supported and empowered team.</p> <p>Be registered as a charity with the NI Charity Commission.</p>

## External Drivers and Strategies

### A Growing Older Population:

- There are over 350,000 older people in NI. (*NISRA, 2010 Mid-year Population Estimates*).
- The number of pensioners aged 85+ in NI (29,665) has increased by almost a quarter since June 2002. (*As above*).
- The 85+ is growing faster than the rest of the age groups. By 2033 it is estimated that the 85+ age group will account for 4% of the total population. (*NISRA, 2009 Mid-year Population Estimates*).
- 58% of people over 55 identified loneliness as the main problem facing older people in NI. (*ARK, Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, 2008*)

### Transforming Your Care and Reablement:

- With increasing pressures on the current health and social care system and services the DHSS&PS Review concluded that restructuring of services is required. The Review concluded that the individual needs to be placed at the heart of the model of care and that there is a need to:
  - ✓ integrate services at a local level
  - ✓ provide more community-based services
  - ✓ care for people at home when safe and appropriate to do so
- Transforming Your Care (TYC) aims to provide:
  - More diverse provision of services, delivered closer to home
  - A focus on delivery of services through Integrated Care Partnerships
  - Reconfiguration of the hospital network to ensure safe, resilient and quality services into the future
  - Greater personal choice and control for patients
  - Greater use of technology
  - Increased involvement and role for the independent, voluntary and community sectors.

### Dementia Strategy and Active Ageing Strategy:

- Increasing older population and increasing numbers of older people.
- Early detection, intervention and support.
- Maintaining independence for as long as possible.
- Changes to how services are delivered.
- Remaining active and healthy for longer.
- Involvement of voluntary and community sectors.

### Local Government Reform:

- Twenty six local council areas reconfiguring to 11 new council areas with local council elections in May 2014 and shadow councils operating up to 2015.
- New powers combined with their existing functions will give the new councils powerful tools to shape areas and communities. Amongst others the new powers will include:
  - Community Planning, Community Development, Local Planning, Urban Regeneration, Local Economic.

### **Age-friendly Belfast/Region**

- Involving older people in planning and decision making to make Belfast an age-friendly city.
- The Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership as a key strategic partner
- Opportunities for older people to influence policy and practice in relation to key issues including outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, community support and health services.