



**Newcastle – an age friendly city
Adapting to demographic change**

October 2014

1. Background

Newcastle's Wellbeing for Life Strategy adopted by partners in 2012 includes 'Becoming an age-friendly city' as a cross-cutting theme and highlights:

We want Newcastle to be a place where people can grow up, live their lives and grow old with good health and positive wellbeing throughout. During this time we go through a number of changes – into adulthood, into parent, in and out of work, and into retirement – all of which bring both new opportunities and challenges.

Age and ageing is a matter that affects all of us. As the number of older people increases and the balance of our population shifts from younger to older, the shape of our communities, the city as a whole and economic markets are changing. We are committed to embrace this change by celebrating what people of all ages offer, challenging our attitudes to age and ageing and developing new thinking and practice in relation to our physical, social and cultural influence.

We have a long history of working strategically on ageing issues. We have strong political leadership with cross party support for the City Council's commitment to becoming an age friendly city and an age-friendly city portfolio lead. There are strong foundations in partnership working, engagement of older people, community action and world class academic research.

We are committed to working with a range of national and international networks to contribute and draw in learning and expertise. These include the UK Urban Ageing Network, WHO European Healthy Cities Network and the WHO Global Age Friendly Cities and Communities initiative.

2. Our Approach

We benefit from many organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors who bring expertise, resources and energy to taking us towards our collective ambition. People from these organisations come together regularly in meetings chaired by our portfolio lead for age friendly cities. Our core partners are listed in Appendix 1.

Individually and collectively they:

- Provide leadership on making Newcastle an age-friendly city and ensure that key strategic initiatives in the city (e.g. Economic Development; Digital Inclusion) take account of the implications of demographic change;
- Act as a resource of knowledge and expertise on ageing issues;
- Provide access to mentors/partners/alliances;
- Act as a platform for innovation.

Our approach to working on this complex agenda is not to develop a traditional action plan, but to work within a framework for action based on:

- A shared ambition;
- Agreed areas of action;
- Shared principles.

The Framework provides the context/gives permission for different types of action:

- Planned, managed responses e.g. to government policy;
- Opportunistic, entrepreneurial, 'ready to act' – responding to windows of opportunity.

Examples of the type of action which flow from this approach are given in section 3 below.

The following principles underpin our approach to becoming a city which adapts to ageing:

- taking a life course approach to framing and meeting the needs/aspirations of citizens;
- taking account of the changing age profile of the city when planning for the future;
- taking an asset based approach to the role of older people in the city;
- taking the indignity and dependency out of the way some people experience old age

3. Examples of action on making Newcastle an age-friendly city

The following examples provide a flavour of the type of activity being undertaken in the city:

Age Friendly City and the Economy

Recognising the importance of our ageing demographic to the economy of the city, we have brought together partners with expertise in the ageing workforce and business innovation to share their knowledge about trends and the opportunities. We are drawing on our experiences and research into these issues to consider ways in which work, workplaces, products and services need to adapt and to coordinate their actions for the benefit of the people and businesses of the city. The discussions are at early stages with many ideas in the 'melting pot' but opportunities are being sought to raise awareness of the issues; enter into discussion about possible implications for different forms of work, workplaces, products and services; and, prompt the adaptations required.

The resource and expertise the work is drawing on includes:

- World class research at Newcastle University's Institute for Ageing. 'Ageing' is one of Newcastle University's three societal challenges
- Voice North and the Elders Council supporting pro-active citizen engagement
- Centre for Research into the Older Workforce (CROW) at Newcastle University Business School
- Academic Health Science Network which has ageing as a theme
- Newcastle Science City bringing together research, industry, public sector and communities around ageing
- North East Local Enterprise Partnership which has ageing as an emerging theme in its Smart Specialisation Strategy.

Built Environment (Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings)

We identified the need to ensure that current policy takes account of the implications of demographic change and that new development and regeneration in the city address our aspiration to make it a good city in which to live and grow old. We are taking part in the following activity and hosting public conversations as a way of engaging key partners:

- Engaging with the Local Development Framework (Planning) process to ensure that it reflects the needs of an ageing demographic;
- Working with Newcastle University on a major EPSRC funded research project on ageing, mobility and the built environment (My Place) <http://di.ncl.ac.uk/projects/myplace/> ;
- Hosting an event (November 2013) to bring organisations from public, private and voluntary sector together for the first time to engage in thinking about their role in making the city centre a good place to live, work, play and age in. The group is currently working on taking forward the ideas which emerged from this event;
- Hosting 'Changing Age, Changing Place' (June 2014) as contribution to the 'Newcastle City Futures – People, Place, Change' programme;
- Working with the Royal Institute of British Architects to host an event and competition to promote 'Silver Linings – The Active Third Age and the City.' (September 2014).

Communication and Information

Information in an Age Friendly City

Keeping up to date with information about services and opportunities is essential for citizens in an age friendly city. We have developed a comprehensive website for older people, their families and carers and staff who work with them – www.informationnow.org.uk. The site has been nationally recognised as an example of good practice and receives over 6,000 unique visitors per month. Information NOW is part of 'Information in the City' – a partnership of key web resources developed with and for the people of the city.

Community Support and Health Services

Better Care

The Better Care Fund is a national government initiative across the NHS and local government aimed at driving transformation towards integrated health and social care. Newcastle's approach to the Better Care Fund has been to build systems, governance and ways of working that will support our future ambitions and make care seamless to the user irrespective of the organisation providing it. Whilst a key driver for this activity is to reduce the use of high cost hospital based services through the provision of community based services, the main intention is to provide better quality care for the citizens of Newcastle.

Healthy Life Simulation – a behavioural simulation on public health policy

The NE of England like other areas has significant variation in how well people age depending on where they live. Government data shows the number of healthy years a 55 year old can expect to live will vary by 11 years by living just a few stops apart on the Metro line. We know what can change this, but success depends on making this work at a very local level. The 'Healthy Life Simulation' hosted by Newcastle University explored different ways of addressing this. It set out to:

- Shine a spot light on the complex and challenging problems of health inequalities and ageing
- Provide a forum for actual decision makers (prominent members of local government, health and social services, local citizens, voluntary & community groups, academics) to explore and exchange ideas and develop innovative solutions on how to close the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy for 55 year olds
- Increase understanding of the complexities of decision-making in health and local government
- Produce a simulation package that is reusable as a tool for policy makers in other regions and as an educational application for use by medical students, schools and any other interested parties.

In September 2014 a group of citizens from a deprived city centre neighbourhood used the Simulation as a tool for developing strategies to address local issues. It was a powerful event in which citizens engaged with the data and the issues and proposed practical and immediate solutions to key issues.

For further information see

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/changingage/engagement/simulation.htm>

Ways to Wellness

Ways to Wellness is a project which aims to improve the quality of life of people with long term conditions (LTCs) in Newcastle West by giving them access to social prescribing. It will reduce the cost to the Newcastle West Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) of supporting these patients. The Project will use a social impact investment solution, to enable up to 5,000 patients per year to access social prescribing. Funding has been secured from the Social Enterprise Investment Fund, to undertake the necessary development work to put in place the framework to massively scale up existing work.

Social prescribing is the use of non-medical interventions to achieve sustained healthy behaviour change and improved self-care. Social prescribing supplements the support a patient gets from their health care professional. A doctor or health care professional can prescribe an intervention, as they would medicine/drugs. Typically, the interventions include physical activity, healthy eating/cooking, developing social networks, welfare rights advice and support with positive relationships.

For further information see www.vonne.org.uk/policy/waystowellness/

Housing

Newcastle City Council is committed over the next 5 years to providing a broader choice of housing options, including increasing the number and range of housing based models of care to meet the needs of people as they age. At the same time, the Council is committed to substantially reducing its use of residential care services for older people by 2020 by providing housing options that offer genuine alternatives to residential care. Newcastle City Council is currently engaging with housing and care providers and people to use services to understand what is currently on offer and what services should look like in the future.

For further information on Newcastle's Older People's Housing Delivery Plan see www.newcastle.gov.uk/sites/drupalncc.newcastle.gov.uk/files/wwwfileroot/housing/supported_and_sheltered_housing/older_peoples_housing_delivery_plan_2013-2018.pdf

For further information on the Housing with Care Market Position Statement see www.letstalknewcastle.co.uk.

Civic Participation and Respect and Social Inclusion

Elders Council of Newcastle

The Elders Council of Newcastle is an organisation led by older people for older people. It acts a forum in the city for ensuring that older people's voices and expertise inform the development of policy and practice in the city.

Information and communication are important to the Elders Council, which distributes a bi monthly newsletter to people in the city, hosts a monthly radio programme and has a 'Pass It On' session through which older people keep their peers up to date with developments in the city.

The Elders Council also undertakes projects and research for the benefit of older people in the city. Current projects include community conversations on the theme of 'Growing older in my home and neighbourhood' which includes working with a drama group to present ideas and issues in a short performance. This is complemented by 'Staying Connected' a small grants programme for individuals and organisations in the city to test out activities which will enable older people to stay involved and engaged in their communities, thereby tackling social isolation.

For further information see www.elderscouncil.org.uk

4. Evaluating Progress

The WHO European Healthy Cities Network – Healthy Ageing Taskforce have identified a number of key requisites for success in becoming an age friendly city. We have made significant progress in achieving these:

Political Commitment: Newcastle City Council has a Deputy Portfolio Holder with a specific remit for age-friendly city;

Healthy Ageing Profile: Our Healthy Ageing profile is embedded in Know Newcastle (www.knownewcastle.org.uk). It includes statistical information about people in the city and is also a repository of narratives and reports that give qualitative insights into lives of people in the city;

Healthy Ageing Strategy: Age Friendly City is a cross cutting theme within our statutory Wellbeing and Health Strategy and is being delivered through our framework approach described in Section 2;

Community Participation: The Elders Council is an example of the commitment of citizens to the ageing agenda. There are many other examples of ways in which citizens can have a say (e.g. Let's Talk Newcastle) and of asset based approaches where citizens are taking the lead in finding their own solutions;

Action Programmes: Section 3 above illustrates the types of action which are taking place in the city to deliver an Age Friendly City. Current key priorities are Ageing and the Economy and Ageing and the Built Environment where we are seeking to make real impact on the way in which the city does business;

Resources: Partners in the city have committed direct resources to Age Friendly City and significant indirect resources through the capacity and expertise within their respective organisations;

Evaluation: We continuously evaluate our progress towards becoming an age friendly city and are exploring the use of indicators as a way of gaining insight into progress.

5. Networks

Newcastle's Age Friendly City programme welcomes the opportunity to share learning by engaging with others working on the ageing agenda. Our networks include:

Regional: Years Ahead – Regional Forum on Ageing – www.yearsahead.org.uk.

National: UK Network of Age Friendly Cities (www.bjf.org.uk/age-friendly) and Age Action Alliance (<http://ageactionalliance.org>).

International: WHO European Healthy Cities Network (Healthy Ageing SubNetwork) and WHO Global Age Friendly Cities Programme (www.agefriendlyworld.org)

6. Useful links

For more information about our work in Newcastle see:

Wellbeing for Life – www.wellbeingforlife.org.uk

Newcastle City Council - www.newcastle.gov.uk

Elders Council of Newcastle - www.elderscouncil.org.uk

Newcastle's Initiative on Changing Age – www.ncl.ac.uk/changingage

Newcastle Science City – www.newcastlesciencecity.com

AdvantAGE Newcastle – www.advantagenewcastle.co.uk

University of Northumbria – www.northumbria.ac.uk

Quality of Life Partnership – www.qualityoflife.org.uk

Age UK Newcastle – www.ageuknewcastle.org.uk

For information and advice for older people see Information NOW – www.informationnow.org.uk.

7. Contact details

To find out more about Newcastle's Age Friendly City programme contact:

Barbara Douglas
Quality of Life Partnership
Room 2.38, Biomedical Research Building
Campus for Ageing and Vitality
Nuns Moor Road
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 5PL

barbara.douglas@qualityoflife.org.uk

Tel: +44 (0) 191 208 2706

Appendix 1

Organisations currently participating in Age Friendly City:

Newcastle City Council
NHS (Clinical Commissioning Groups)
University of Newcastle
University of Northumbria
Elders Council of Newcastle
Voluntary Sector (e.g. Age UK Newcastle)
Newcastle Science City
North East Chamber of Commerce
Royal Town Planning Institute
Royal Institute of British Architects
Trades Union Congress (TUC)
Tyne and Wear Museums and Archives (TWAM)