



# Advancing 'Ageing Positively' (into the next decade)

Conference Report



25th November 2015

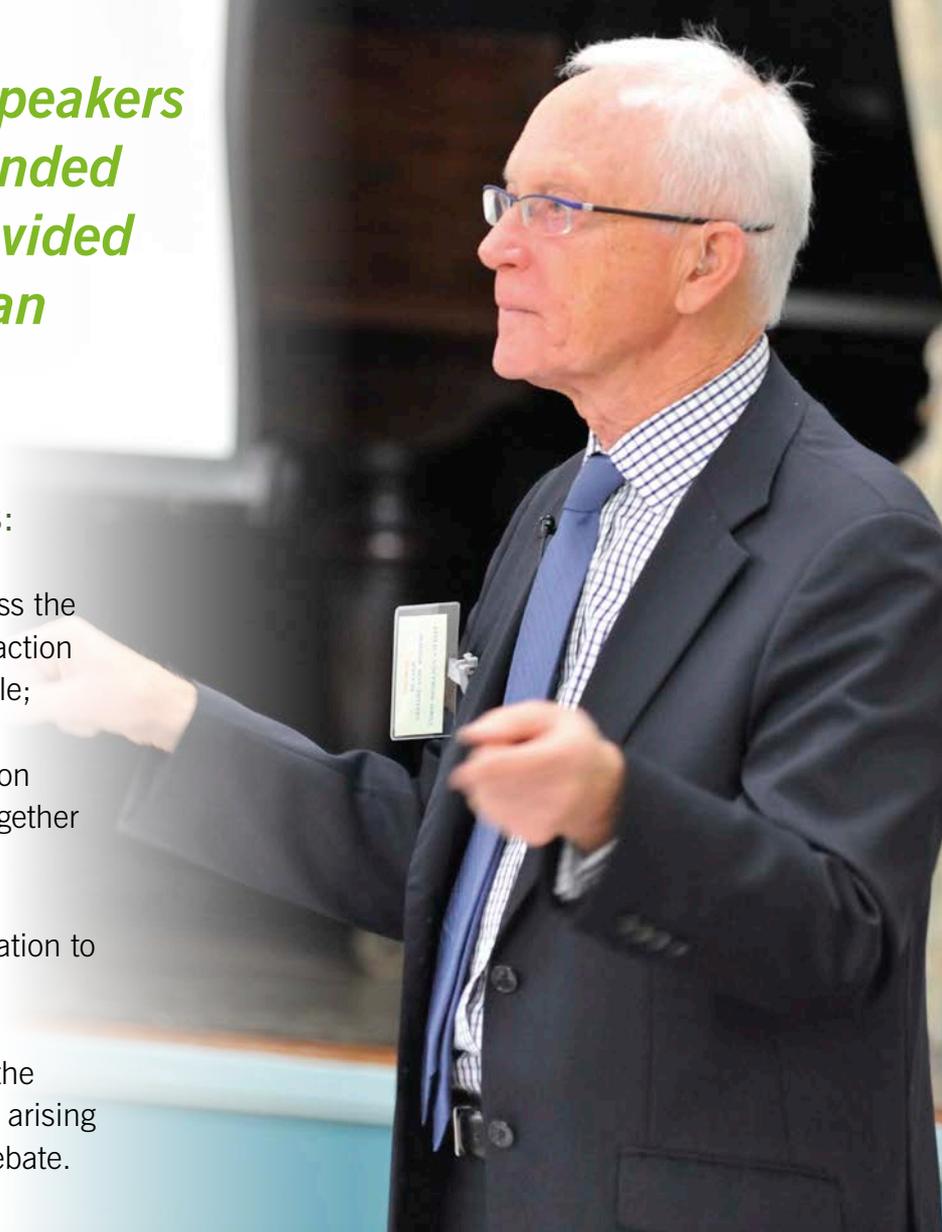
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*We wish to thank the speakers and delegates who attended the conference and provided the backdrop for such an energising day.*

This report has three main aims:

1. to give decision and policy makers across the East Midlands and nationally ideas for action that will improve the lives of older people;
2. to promote co-operation and collaboration between partners and older people – together we can make things happen;
3. to provide inspiration, ideas and information to all delegates;

We hope to have captured the essence of the conference, and illustrated the key themes arising from the presentations, discussions and debate.



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# 1. Overview

*The Conference is a follow on from our very successful event in 2012 which focussed on “Ageing Positively”. The theme in 2012 was Housing and the wider determinants that contribute to “ageing positively”. We are now in 2015 and the pace of change is increasing.*

The time felt right to consider what we can do together to maximise the opportunities which will help us to age positively now and into the next decade. There are immense challenges in 2015 and beyond for older people and organisations across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

We wanted to: -

- celebrate what works well and have produced a booklet of notable practice in the East Midlands to accompany this report;
- demonstrate the voice of older people in the East Midlands as contributors to the planning and delivery of services and initiatives;
- provide recommendations to take forward with the appropriate stakeholder/sector organisation;

Ageing is a journey and the past influences where we are now and shapes our future. Advancing Ageing Positively provided an opportunity to reflect on what we mean by ‘ageing positively’ and what is required to achieve positive ageing.

We were challenged to look ahead ten years to imagine how people’s later lives will change and to consider what we are most hopeful about and what are our greatest concerns about the future.

84 delegates including older people from forums and 50+ networks worked alongside colleagues from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors and academic institutions to share knowledge and experience and celebrated the rich diversity of older people in the East Midlands. Participants created a lot of positive energy and discussions were passionate, lively and animated. The well informed contributions of both the speakers and participants made the event a success, thanks to everyone.



## 2. Advancing Ageing Positively executive summary

The East Midlands Later Life Forum is a strategic partnership between older people and agencies from all sectors. It is run and managed by older people who volunteer their time to make change happen. One of its objectives is to highlight and disseminate information on the key issues facing the ageing population in the East Midlands and nationally. To achieve this objective, the Forum hosted a high profile Conference on 25th November 2015.

The theme was “Advancing Ageing Positively, into the next decade”, and was a follow up to our highly successful 2012 Conference. The Report demonstrates that the pace of change has been rapid and new challenges and priorities have emerged:

- the rise of loneliness and isolation amongst many older people;
- the importance of support for older people to enable them to engage fully in the digital world in which we live;
- the increasing importance of communities and the need to maintain and sustain relationships and community infrastructure;
- the need to recognise the important role played by small local voluntary and community sector providers as key partners in enabling people to remain independent, and
- there is a sense of urgency to find ways of encouraging younger generations to plan ahead for later life.

### Three excellent speakers addressed the Conference:



**Lord Geoffrey Filkin CBE**, Chairman of the Centre for Ageing Better (a What Works Centre, promoted by government, endowed by the BIG Lottery, independent of both and funded for ten years) challenged participants to consider the Future of Ageing – Yours and Mine! He had messages for all stakeholders – as individuals we need information and advice of what works; we need help to make changes in our attitudes and behaviours and we must prepare and plan for later life.

We need older people themselves to have a stronger voice and be much better at listening to them. He felt that government Leadership is crucial:

- to affirm the benefits of longer lives;
- give leadership for change;
- transform health and social care systems for an ageing society;
- address housing supply failures for old and young;
- maximise the benefits of the silver economy, longer working and GDP growth, and
- how can we all work together to realise better longer lives



**Guy Robertson, Director of Positive Ageing Associates** gave an excellent presentation covering what Councils and communities should be doing to enable positive ageing. He outlined the importance of Age Friendly Cities which goes beyond health and social care, covering housing, transport, outdoor spaces and buildings, social participation, civic participation, employment, communication and information, respect and social inclusion.

He stressed the positive contribution that older people make to the economy, far from being a burden on the economy, older people made a net contribution of £45 billion in 2010 which is set to rise to £77 billion by 2020. Older people contribute £34 billion to the economy in informal care. He challenged participants to consider their own well-being and gave tips on personal development techniques to build resilience.



**Sharan Jones, Health & Wellbeing Manager, Nottingham City Council** outlined what Nottingham City has achieved by working together and with older people to establish an Age Friendly City. The achievements were far reaching and a Charter has been developed. She felt that it had been a success because it was driven by older people themselves, but there was also practical support to make change happen. Her key message was that change can be achieved by working with older people and not by doing things to them! Delegates had the opportunity to have round table discussions on what is positive ageing and what is needed to achieve it.

The challenge is now to consider the key themes and recommendations and to determine what individuals and organisations across all sectors can do together to respond to the Agenda for Action.

It is hoped that all who read this report will find ways to use the information to make positive ageing a reality both now and in the future.

# 3. Agenda for Action

## Recommendations to policy makers, all stakeholders and older people

### 1. Engagement and involvement of today's older people and the next generation needs to be a priority

Everyone has the right to be involved in the decisions that affect their lives, speak for themselves wherever possible, and be valued for their views. All stakeholders need to review how they engage with older citizens, enabling them to inform and influence decision making which leads to the best outcomes.

### 2. The ageing agenda needs to be addressed across government

The needs and aspirations of an ageing society necessitate a 'whole system' approach, and government is asked to develop a strategic approach to age and ageing across its departments and ensure that policies and subsequent practice is 'joined up'.

The government is asked to consider the appointment of an Older People's Commissioner to champion, across all departments, the views and rights of older people at the highest level.

### 3. Planning for later life needs to start earlier

Financial planning, planning for retirement, housing needs in later life and the development of resilience to major life changes all need consideration as we age.

Policy makers are asked to consider how to support and encourage younger people to plan for the future.

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### 4. Attitudes to ageing

The image of older people is critical in these times of austerity. Older people make many positive contributions to the economy; to communities; to family life and many are informal Carers. Older people are often portrayed as a burden on society, and younger people and older people are being polarised, particularly by the media.

Policy makers are asked to work with older people and other stakeholders to challenge ageism and promote the positive contributions that older people make to society.

## 5. Communities

Communities are where people live. Services delivered closer to where people live, where possible, are considered a priority at this time of austerity and funding reductions. Conference delegates recommended that more needs to be done to support small local voluntary and community sector organisations that have the knowledge of the communities that they serve and are essential to the wellbeing of its older citizens.

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## 6. Loneliness and isolation

Loneliness and isolation impacts on the health and wellbeing of older citizens and reduces positive ageing. Much is being done to alleviate loneliness and isolation and local voluntary sector and smaller charities are often key to providing the crucial support necessary at a local level.

It is recommended that stakeholders give consideration to making funding available to voluntary groups and smaller charities that are making a real impact on alleviating loneliness and isolation.

## 7. Digital participation

The increase in the use of digital technology has become for many a way of life. Stakeholders across all sectors are expecting transactions to be conducted online. Many older people find digital participation a challenge. There are some excellent examples of good practice, but this needs to be replicated.

It is recommended that all stakeholders consider what support can be given to older people to engage them in a positive way, making digital participation an enjoyable experience.

The key messages from the conference were:

- Listen, hear and act on what older people say is important to them;
- Involve older people in taking forward suggestions, and
- Learn from what works and replicate it.

## 4. Personal reflections of the opening speakers

The conference began with presentations from John Aldridge OBE, DL who chaired the conference, and Liz Mandeville, Chair of the East Midlands Later Life Forum. Both gave a personal reflection of their lived experience and set the scene for the presentations and discussions during the day.



### Opening Remarks, Conference Chair - John Aldridge OBE, DL

John Aldridge, OBE, DL, was the 'Chair' for the day. He opened the Conference by stating that so often in our lives, we are so busy that we "can't see the wood for the trees" and he said that this Conference would give us a different perspective.

Preparing for retirement was a major change in John's life. So often, pre-retirement courses have been discontinued because of the 'austerity cuts' of recent times, which is an adverse and short-sighted policy because those who are retiring from a working life are now more likely to be unprepared.

John reminded the attendees that they must not waste life experiences as they have much to offer. He said, "do not undersell yourselves because this can lead to a loss of confidence in coping with a life which is so different to that when you went out to work each day"

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### Introduction By Liz Mandeville, Chair Of East Midlands Later Life Forum

Liz, as Chair and founder member of East Midlands Later Life Forum welcomed delegates representing the public, private, voluntary and community sectors and older people across the East Midlands.

She felt that we all have one thing in common - we will all age, and whether we are 30+ or 90+ we all want a future to look forward to, one that will give us the quality of life

that we hope for. We all have hopes and fears about growing older, and yet we do not appear to plan for our older age. Old age and dependency always seems to be what happens to someone else, not ourselves.

Liz outlined the role of the East Midlands Later Life Forum as a strategic partnership led and managed by older people across the East Midlands, one of nine similar Forums

in England supported by the Department for Work and Pensions. It has a key role to bring partners together with older people to respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing society. (Since the Conference, the Department for Work and Pensions ceased funding for the Forums on Age from 1st April 2016 but has provided Transitional Funding to assist the Forums becoming fully independent and forming a new National Age Network).

Liz felt that the landscape for an ageing society has changed immensely in the last three years, and outlined a few differences in 2015.

**We live in a different world which necessitates an ever increasing demand for us to use *digital technology*. Everything seems to be online! She asked delegates how many had a mobile phone, computer or an iPad? Most people in the room put their hands up! She believed that older people need to feel confident in using modern technology. She also believed that the incidence of scams were more prevalent, particularly for older people.**

***Relieving Loneliness and Isolation* is a challenge for us all, with its far reaching effects on our physical and mental health. The extended family is far more mobile and may live far away. Liz cited the recent article about the elderly couple who phoned 999 to say they were lonely. The Police responded and went round and had a cup of tea with them.**

**Older people are still perceived as the “demographic time bomb” or a burden on society, but can and are a *part of the solution to create positive ageing*. Older people make a huge contribution to the**

**communities in which we live, as volunteers and carers of families and friends, working across the generations and supporting local groups where people can meet and maintain a social life.**

***Public Services* have to balance needs with available resources. The voluntary sector and private sector are increasingly essential partners in local service delivery.**

**There is *devolution from Central Government, and Councils coming together to form super Councils*. What will this mean for older people?**

Liz hoped that the conference would provide information, ideas and inspiration and enable us to work together to better understand what it means to enjoy positive ageing and make it a reality in the years to come.

*By listening to the direct voices of older people and working together in partnership we can make a difference.*



# 5. Key Note Speech - **Lord Geoffrey Filkin**, Chair of the Centre for Ageing Better



Lord Filkin gave an outline of his presentation and said that later life can be a time for happiness as well as misery.

## **He asked, are we ready for ageing?**

A House of Lords report published said that we are not ready for ageing. Government have not gripped the significance or benefits of an ageing society. He said that it requires big shifts in our attitudes and how we plan and prepare, to enable us to realise that what we do before we are older affects our later life.

Age profile has increased and people are living longer now, meaning longer in retirement and being more active. Lord Filkin said that the authorities can't seem to get their heads around this. We know how many 85yr olds we have now, and we also know that this will increase by 40% in 10 years' time.

## **What makes for a better later life?**

A lot of time has been spent researching this and a report will be published soon which will show that having good enough health; enough money to get by and do the things we want to do, such as visiting friends and family, helps. Also to be able to live in a home and neighbourhood good for later life, and to have relationships; meaning and purpose, are also very important.

Lord Filkin said that unfortunately, inequalities are significant in later life, and that certain groups and parts of the country get chronic long term conditions much earlier than others, which limits their life.

## **Who may be at risk in the future?**

Those who are unable to save enough and maintain employability; those who are socially isolated; those who do not have healthy lifestyles and who cannot get the care and support they need for their long term conditions. Lord Filkin said that it is a challenge for society to reduce these risks for better later lives.

## **An Agenda for Ageing Better**

Lord Filkin said, as individuals there needs to be a shift in attitudes, and we need more advice on what works to help us make the changes in our attitudes and behaviours. Older people themselves need to have a stronger voice and be listened to.

## **Better later lives cannot be achieved just by the state**

Lord Filkin said that community action, particularly to support the frail and ill is required to provide help for older people. He also said that the private sector need better products and services to realise the growth opportunities from the "silver society"

## **What can we do ourselves?**

What we do before we are old greatly influences later well-being. Planning; preparation; building relationships and having meaning in our lives are all very important and helps us build resilience to face major life changes. Change is not easy and there needs to be a behavioural change before reaching retirement.

## **Care for Ageing**

Lord Filkin said that social care is in crisis and need is growing very rapidly, but public funding has been reduced. The social care market is shrinking, and there are serious concerns about care quality, workforce skills and supply. He said that many more people will have long term conditions or will become frail, which increases demand for services.

Lord Filkin said that we need commitment to transform social care and we need to build the workforce numbers and skills; produce more domiciliary care and care homes; help those who

cannot pay for themselves; support carers and families better, and build community responses to support informal care.

### Health for Ageing

The NHS 5 year plan came into force last year with three objectives – funding; service reconfiguration, and prevention. This is 13 years after the Wanless Report in 2002 which said that it was vital to engage people in living healthier lives for sustainable and better later lives. Thirteen years after Wanless little has been done to address this.

### What action is needed?

Lord Filkin said that preventing illness and expanding community action to provide support for others are both essential, as well as taking personal responsibility to relieve the burden on the

NHS. He said that change needs to happen on a national and local level, and that funding should be for service change and prevention, and not to prop up the old system.

Lord Filkin said that Government leadership is vital to affirm the benefits of longer lives; give leadership to the agenda for change; transform health and care systems for an ageing society; address housing supply failures for old and young; and maximise the benefits of the older economy; and longer working.

*Lord Filkin ended his very interesting and thought provoking presentation by asking ‘how can we all work to realise better longer lives?’*

### Q. It is different in many parts of Europe, but when does ‘old age’ begin?

A. The glib answer of course is ‘five years older than I am now’, but parameters are changing all the time and it is in ourselves that we need to challenge the perceptions of old age. There are different strata, but really we are all the same – we have the same aims, ideals of health, wealth and relations, but of course there are different lifestyles to take into consideration.

### Q. What is enough finance, and what is loneliness?

A. The response was that the Office for National Statistics can give forecasts etc., but these are not really accurate. We need to ‘un-package’ and set a definition of ‘enough’ for it is how each individual perceives enough for themselves, and this cannot be ordered by government – let us say ‘enough to get by on’ Loneliness reduces the quality of life, and unfortunately there is no right answer as to how to eliminate this. Most certainly our Health and Social Care Services cannot cope with this issue.

### Q. Where is the evidence that the voice of older people is being heard?

A. Lord Filkin’s response was emphatic in that national and local government need to listen to older people and take on board what is said. Older people have experience, an issue which needs to be addressed, for other countries do better and we need to adopt their attitude.

### Q. In which direction is Health and Social Care going?

A. The answer is simply ‘don’t know’, but whatever way, older people must be more articulate in getting their thoughts and opinions over to the authorities. We must not ‘sit on our hands’ but get stuck in.

### Q. What about the Voluntary Sector?

A. Local Authorities and Central Government do not recognise the work which is being done by the voluntary sector, especially when it comes to the smaller organisations. We need to get the authorities to take this seriously and engage, not only with older people, but also with those who help and support them, i.e. the voluntary sector.

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## 6. Conference Speakers



### **Guy Robertson, Director of Positive Ageing Associates.**

Guy spoke first about what is meant by the term 'age friendly'. According to the World Health Organisations, an 'Age Friendly City' is a city that encourages active ageing by optimising opportunities for older people in particular. If you get things right for older people, then you get things right for a whole lot more, i.e. mothers, children, workers etc., Items such as the provision of adequate housing, transport, outdoor space and buildings, community support and health services, communication and information, civic participation, respect and social inclusion – these are the vital ingredients in the search for positive ageing.

A quantitate questions was “how much do older people cost the country”? To which the answer is “nothing”! In fact older people

made a net contribution of £45 billion plus in 2010, and this should rise to £77 billion by 2020. It is up to everyone to make these facts known and acknowledged.

The private sector needs to appreciate this as well as local authorities. Housing equity could even stimulate the economy.

With regard to the Public Health Agenda – local authorities need to get their act together and encourage older people to remain 'active' and for longer. Items which need to be borne in mind are road safety, fire prevention, adequate nutrition, dementia, loneliness and housing, and especially heating in the winter months. With regard to loneliness, the remedy must be strategic, holistic, and undertaken in partnership.

So what is 'positive ageing'? It is not about pretending that all is fine, nor about physical exercise and diet, nor even financial planning, it is how you respond that is important and it challenges the negative narrative. We must adopt the idea of “adventure before dementia”! It's important to remember that only 4% of older people actually live in care homes. Positive Ageing is within our own control, for it means lifestyle and attitude are the most important things to have.

**Q. The figures quoted are encouraging and revealing, but what influence do older people really have?**

A. Their importance to the economy and other factors need to be recognised by local authorities, for older people do have a place and most importantly, they have a positive contribution to make to society.

**Q. Having regard to the Public Health agenda, what are your thoughts about older people and sexual relations?**

A. The response obviously was that Guy was not an expert in this matter, but there is a need to reclaim the attitude that older people are able to live life to the full.

**Q. Do marriage and/or partnerships contribute to the wellbeing of older people?**

A. The simple answer is yes, but a fact which is not really appreciated is that divorce is increasing for those aged over 60.

**Q. What about end of life care?**

A. This definitely needs improving, but the hospice movement, whilst being good at cancer care, does need to be extended. For the individual, make the most of life and appreciate that death is inevitable.

**Q. What are your thoughts about 'care' following bereavement?**

A. There is not much provision made for bereavement and the Mental Health Services need to be aware and to improve the support available to older people in particular.



**Sharan Jones, Health and Wellbeing Manager, Nottingham City Council**

Sharan is responsible for the implementation of Nottingham as an 'Age Friendly City'. The action is driven by older people themselves. Sharan repeated the theme of Lord Filkin in that the voice of older people must be heard.

Sharan spoke about the Nottingham's Older Citizens Charter which was developed via a steering group which reports back to the Health & Wellbeing Board. The World Health Organisation have granted status to Nottingham as an 'Age Friendly City' and advised that concentration must be given

to ending loneliness where ever possible, and to communicate with all parties. The response has been that different initiatives are being set up and guidance notes are sent to all involved, i.e. community groups, faith groups, academic partners, statutory bodies, and to others from the voluntary sector, such as Age Action Alliance. The aim is to provide opportunities for older people themselves to shape their neighbourhoods, and to encourage a feeling of 'belonging' thus reducing the stigma and discrimination of being an 'older person'

Sharan acknowledged that the Council couldn't do everything in the Charter all at once, so they have picked out particular points to support, including reducing loneliness; influencing behaviour change; providing an opportunity for older people to shape their neighbourhoods; encourage a feeling of belonging; support to remain independent and self-care; generate increased business in local areas, and raise awareness of needs.

This year Nottingham City has launched a 'Take a seat' campaign where older people had a sit-in in the Old Market Square to bring attention to the lack of facilities, i.e. seating, toilets etc. with a free fold up chair given to shops who didn't have enough room for one to be available all the time. Companies who support the campaign are listed on the Council's website.

Sharan went on to talk of intergenerational activities and trying to link up the young with the old and said that barriers must be broken down and that older people need to be receptive to these measures. A video was shown highlighting the vibrancy of Nottingham, yet mentioning that they were pockets of pensioner poverty which needed to

be eradicated. Partnership is the way forward and everyone, young and old, must be ready for change.

Arts and older people in care – applied to the arts foundation for money to do work in care homes. People in care homes with dementia have been introduced to iPads and with adaptations, are able to use and enjoy them.

Age Friendly Nottingham is a success because it is being driven by older people themselves, but also has political support as well. It is not being done to people, but with people and integrating services, community centres and housing. Nottingham City still has a long way to go, but it is doing it because it is the right way to go.

**Q. Neighbourhoods need to take control and extend this to younger people too. How can this be achieved?**

A. Working with a diverse group is never going to be easy, but we must think 'intergenerational' in setting up Age Friendly Neighbourhoods. There is no statutory funding available, so there is a limitation at present to what can be achieved, but we must not be disheartened, but continue step by step to improve the situation in whatever way we can.

**Q. How do you promote an end to loneliness?**

A. Friendship groups are one answer, and by taking small initiatives in different areas we can achieve a positive result. An example is the 'Looking After Each Other' programme set up in some neighbourhoods. We need to extend this work to cover the whole City, but again, lack of funding is making this difficult. The Charter is a positive response and is encouraging – other cities could adopt this format and follow suit.

**Q. Are there still issues with safety in the City centre at night?**

A. The response was that there was an awareness of the concerns of older people in this respect. The police and other authorities are talking to older people about this – perhaps we need more specific events with emphasis placed in the intergenerational aspect.

**Q. What about access for not only older people, but for those who are disabled?**

A. This is being done by all parties reporting back where there are problems, but again it comes back to the problem of funding (or lack of it) although retail shops are being advised if there are problems and most of now carrying out adaptations, including chairs or seats where appropriate.

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# 7. Round Table Discussions

*This section of the report is a summary from ten round table discussions. Delegates were asked to consider two key questions and a third optional question. The discussions were lively, thought provoking and have framed the themes for the report.*

## 7.1 What is meant by ‘ageing positively’?

.....  
*“We all age at different rates, so what we can achieve and give to others will vary between individuals.”*  
.....

.....  
*“it is your attitude to ageing that is important whatever age you are.”*  
.....

### Ageing positively

Ageing positively was seen as being able and allowed to be who and what you want to be and being responsible for our own lives.

### Maintaining good health

Maintaining good health was seen as vital to positive ageing and achieving better health was a challenge for us individually, for the policy makers, commissioners and providers of health care. Being active, eating well and sleeping well and having a balance in life can be allied to this.

### Good mental attitude to ageing

Having a good mental attitude to ageing was perceived as looking upon retirement as an opportunity, and a time to learn new things.

### Financial stability

Having enough money to live on (financial stability). None of us know whether we will

need care services in later life and there was a nervousness regarding the possibility of funding for care as we age.

### Suitable accommodation

Living in housing that is suitable for our needs was seen as being able to have adaptations to homes in order that we can continue to live in our home and community. It still is a challenge to persuade builders to build homes for life and the planners need to consider this in future.

### Building new friendships and activities

When people retire, they lose social contacts and relationships and building new friendships and taking on new activities was seen as an important factor in helping us age positively

### Volunteering

Volunteering and participation in our local communities was seen as a contributing factor to positive ageing.

### Resilience to manage major life changes

Resilience to manage major life changes. Things can happen that are not about your own health, e.g. the death of a partner leaves a hole and can adversely affect your quality of life; resilience around you is important, e.g. living in a supportive community.

## 7.2 What is required to achieve positive ageing?

There was an overwhelming consensus that there needs to be early planning for ageing in later life and this was a recurring theme throughout the conference. Some ideas for action were put forward which are included in the section of the report outlining the themes running through the day.

### Living in a supportive community

Living independently for as long as possible but being able to access support when needed and knowing where to go for information and advice. It was considered important to have good support systems especially for frail older people. Befriending schemes were seen as valuable and accompanying people to activities outside the home was seen as a way of leading people towards independence. There was a concern that services are becoming fragmented and people need to know what is available. The commissioning of local services and the support of local voluntary and community sector providers was acknowledged as a priority during the Conference.

One suggestion was the introduction of social prescribing which is a similar idea to exercise on prescription. It was also suggested that local community co-ordinators or navigators would help with signposting people to support networks. Good Neighbour Schemes and looking after each other in communities was another positive example.



### Older people's involvement in their communities?

Suggestions included:

- Listen to local voices – local government and others;
- Carry out reviews and surveys. Local people know what they want. Give feedback
- Minority groups, these are often spread across an area. African-Caribbean community, can be smaller and can be separated. Have to build trust, don't want to be seen as 'needy', have to go slowly
- Help people to maintain confidence;
- Having transport door to door encourages participation;
- Cessation of bus routes seriously affect people's ability to socialise;
- Local activities are very important' ;
- Community Centres can bring people together;
- Tell people what exists, e.g. First Contact ;
- Signpost people to services and activities.

### Digital participation

Digital participation was seen as central to achieving positive ageing. We live in an increasingly digital world and communication methods are changing. Some delegates felt that there is an increasing lack of personal contact and many providers of services expect interactions to be done via the internet. More needs to be done to ensure that older people can participate and maximise the benefits that can be gained from using mobile phones, iPads, Tablets and computers.

### Easy access to information

Delegates felt easy access to information was important to enable people to dip in and out of services as needs change. It was considered necessary to have the right support at the right time, for example 'First Contact' schemes and to have 'joined up' services that 'talk to each other'.

### Advocacy services

Advocacy services were regarded as vital to enable people to have a good quality of life and particularly to have a positive experience of ageing. Many people find it difficult to navigate their way around services and support, especially at times of crisis. This is linked to how people manage major life changes, many of which we do not foresee in our younger years, and, even as we age we do not see these on the horizon.

### Financial stability

Financial stability with enough money to live well on can improve health and well-being, enabling people to manage day to day, and make the most of new hobbies and activities. It also enables people to remain independent and have a positive attitude.

### Feeling valued in work

Feeling valued in work especially as one ages and using the skills, experience and knowledge gained through a lifetime in employment. There has been a rise in redundancy during this period of austerity and cuts in public services. Employers lose a vast amount of knowledge and expertise when mature workers are made redundant or retire. Flexible working arrangements need to be considered to support employees who have caring responsibilities.

## 7.3 Looking to the future. How will people's lives change over the next ten years?

*"People will age but will not consider themselves old."*

### Numbers of older people

It was felt that the sheer numbers of older people will present both a challenge and an opportunity. There will be a greater number of older people than younger people in society which will shift the balance. Society is changing. The changing patterns of family life and people working longer will affect how we manage later life in the years to come.

### Technological advances

It was felt that in the next ten years there will be technological advances, both in terms of **communication** methods and also in practical applications such as **assistive technology**. There will be less face to face interaction and a greater emphasis on conducting business and life 'online'

Technology is being under-utilised by older people at the moment, but at the same time as technology takes hold, some people who are unable to use it will be disadvantaged – how can they be helped?

There will be advances in medical technology and the way that Health Services are provided will be different, with consultations online.

### Centre for Ageing Better

It was hoped that the Centre for Ageing Better, with its funding over a ten year period, will be able to gather evidence of what works in local areas and be able to introduce new initiatives where there are gaps, and scale up what is seen to have benefit to an ageing society and work well.

### Local Community support and voluntary action

Community hubs based on technology will be more prevalent and utilising facilities such as Skype and Facetime will be used to transact business across all sectors of the community. Older people will be at the heart of Community Hubs, which will provide local support in a relaxed friendly environment. These may develop into all age community hubs. It was hoped that community spirit will evolve in a positive way.

However **“one size doesn't fit all”** and policy makers, commissioners and providers need to ensure that face to face contact still exists and that services are appropriate to needs.

There will be a greater emphasis on local voluntary action to provide support as services offered by the Public Sector will decrease. Some felt that there will be an increase in retirement groups. It was hoped that there will be more inter-generational activity and greater co-operation between the generations.

Concerns were expressed about volunteering ten years' hence. There are costs associated with volunteering and there was a concern about where the resources to support this will come from, both in terms of financial support but more importantly, in terms of volunteers. People will be working longer and remaining in work through necessity.

### Older people as carers of family & friends

More retirees will be required to look after each other, often acting as carers. There will be a need for more respite services for carers. Older people who are grandparents will have an increasing role in offering time and expertise to younger people.

### From generation to generation

The generation moving into older age are likely to have higher expectations of what they want to enable them to age positively. There is however a risk that those who will be without decent pensions from employment or unable to save sufficiently will be disadvantaged. Their resilience to cope with major life changes may be eroded and they may be unable to get help and support. People will be working well into later life and the nature of retirement will change.

We currently have 'Generation Rent' because many young people cannot afford to save to buy a home of their own. This will need attention and the impact of this for the future must be considered, where will the funding come from if people are living in rented properties when the younger generation retire?



## 7.4 Our fears in the next ten years

*“There was a big fear that the voice of older people will not be listened to and the challenge for all is to consider what role older people will play in shaping society in the future.”*

During discussions delegates were most concerned about:

- a decline in the National Health Service.
- We will find it more difficult to stay healthy
- Obesity across all age groups will present problems for the future
- There will be a crisis in social care provision.
- People worry about care costs and loss of independence;

- There will be a lack of funding over the next ten years. Some felt that currently local authority funding for older people in many instances is not ring fenced.
- There will more closures of Care Homes
- There will be fewer care providers to provide care in people’s own homes to support independence.
- There will be reduced income levels
- Families will become increasingly fragmented
- We will forget the art of conversation due to reliance on I.T. and will have a de-personalised society
- There will be greater numbers of people unemployed due to advances in I.T.

## 7.5 Hopes

**Delegates were challenged to think about what they were most hopeful about for the future**

### Ageing

Many hoped that ageing can still lead to a good quality of life, and having a positive attitude to ageing will be promoted by the media, all organisations and older people themselves. Older people will not be seen as a burden on society but recognised for what they give to society and communities.

### Enhanced relationships across the generations

Enhanced relationships across the generations Hopefully there will be greater links between the generations, young and old and across

families. It was perceived that joint events and greater personal contact will reduce ageism. There will be an increasing role for grandparents and other older people to offer support to younger people. The generation moving into older age may have higher expectations of what they want to enable them to age positively.

A key hope for the future is that young people will realise that planning for older age and for retirement needs preparation which needs to start early. This was a theme throughout the conference, and older people felt that there was much experience that they could share with younger people on this topic.

It was suggested that financial education should start in schools and workplaces.

## Technology

Hopefully we will be more knowledgeable about technology and intergenerational links will be important. Technology will evolve in the next 10 years – the pace of change is rapid. New technology offers many methods of communication and many organisations across all sectors appear to use this for communicating information about their services, goods and products. .

There was a desire for Community Hubs to offer support for I.T. Older people enjoy experiencing a relaxed environment with peers to share experience and to receive support.

## Health

It was envisaged that there will be more medical advances over the next ten years. It was hoped that there will be greater Integration between health and social care.

## Service Provision

It was hoped that small local organisations will be able to fill some of the void as the State – national and local – reduces. However, it was a recurrent theme in the conference that small local organisations need ‘pump priming’, and the challenge is where will this funding come from? It will be important to support local voluntary action.

Delegates expressed the hope that there will be a greater understanding of what it means to live with Dementia and what support Carers need. Hopefully there will be more Dementia Champions



## Communities

Life in communities was again a central theme in the conference and it was hoped that there will be an increase in Age Friendly Cities. The hope is that over the next ten years community spirit will evolve in a positive way.

**Delegates were asked to consider what advice they would give to their younger self based on their lived experience.**

The list is below:

- Invest in friendships and relationships;
- Plan financially and save for the future;
- Don't get into debt;
- Take responsibility for your own health;
- Give something back to society;
- Have the confidence to aim high and do what you want with your career;
- Give of your own time and volunteer;
- Don't assume that the government or local council will look after you;
- Don't stereotype age/culture or disabilities;
- Don't create barriers;
- Help create all age networks in communities, and
- Be true to yourself.

## 7.6 Fears

### Technology

All large organisations should ensure that it is possible to speak person to person. Face to face meetings are invaluable. It becomes far more difficult for older people in particular if services are assessed and accessed over the internet.

### Volunteering

Volunteering costs money and it is uncertain how much local communities will be able to fill the gap in the future. People will be working longer and this may, over time, reduce their inclination/ability to volunteer.

### Loneliness

There is a difference between being alone and loneliness. This needs more investigation.

### Impact on Society

We live in a society where more and more people now are without children which will have a long term effect on society and networks.

Over the next ten years, retirees will be required to look after each other acting as informal carers. There will need to be more respite facilities for carers.



# Key themes emerging from the Conference

## Planning for later life needs to start earlier

This was a crucial message from the Conference and a challenge. It was felt that financial planning was an imperative for the younger generation, including:

- pension and income maximisation;
- planning for retirement, and
- financial planning for Care.

A suggestion was that financial education could be provided in schools, universities, colleges and in workplaces.

- It was felt that Policy Makers need to plan how to support and encourage younger people to plan for the future, especially as young people will be required to work longer before receiving their pensions. In addition younger people need to be resilient to life changes as they age.

## Attitudes to ageing.

*“It is a state of mind, whatever age you are it’s your attitude to ageing that is important”*

*“Attitudes can change as you get older, especially if you believe that society is telling you what it is to be old”.*

The challenge is that media portrayal of ageing still needs to change. Older people are still portrayed as a burden on society and younger and older people are being polarised. It is perceived that older people have disadvantaged younger people with regard to financial provision.

Attitudes to ageing are also reflected in the language that we use to describe long term illness as we age –

*“People don’t suffer from dementia, they live with it”*

Policy makers also need to give out more positive messages about later life. It is important to stress the contribution that older people make to society, local communities and to family life. Many grandparents help families with young children by looking after grandchildren to enable parents to work.

## Major Life Changes and Resilience

*“Ageing is a lifelong process, resilience is not linked to numbers”*

The challenge is how to support people through major life changes and how to measure resilience.

The impact of major life changes affects one’s resilience. e.g.

- the onset of long term illness e.g. dementia, strokes, heart disease, diabetes;
  - moving house – downsizing, moving into supported accommodation,
  - needing daily support for care at home;
  - loss of mobility, unable to go out;
  - loneliness and isolation;
  - loss of employment;
  - redundancy;
  - retirement;
  - living alone;
  - financial instability and
  - bereavement
- .....

## Communities

The importance of communities was a theme running throughout all the discussions - it's where people live. Whether it is living in a city or a village brings with it a range of challenges and opportunities. The presentations from Sharan Jones and Guy Robertson highlighted some of the positive ways in which some of the challenges are being met. Sharan Jones described how Age Friendly Nottingham demonstrates what can be done to make the City respond to the needs of its older population, and Guy Robertson gave a new dimension to Positive Ageing, dispelling many myths with clear evidence.

Service provision and support for older people happens in the main in local communities. There was a strong case made for the need to support the voluntary and community sectors in local communities and to ensure sustainability. Delegates responded very positively to the need to value the professionalism, skills, knowledge and expertise that the voluntary and community sectors can bring to create a holistic range of services to support health and social care providers.

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## Loneliness and Isolation

It is estimated that over one million older people in Britain are lonely. Conference delegates raised some key issues:-

- Some loneliness is experienced by people living with others. People can feel socially isolated;
  - There is a difference between being alone and loneliness – this needs more investigation and the impact of loneliness needs to be given more consideration and creative solutions found.
  - Befriending schemes, good neighbour schemes, local community activities were valued;
  - The challenge is to find ways to engage with those who are lonely and isolated. Trust and confidence needs to be built up and it takes time to encourage isolated older people to become independent. Local voluntary support is a vital link to alleviate loneliness and isolation and conference delegates felt that funding should be made available for smaller charities that are making a real impact on alleviating loneliness and isolation;
  - Community Co-ordinators were seen as a useful link particularly in rural areas.
  - Lack of transport leads to loneliness and isolation for many older people. More planning of transport infrastructure is needed for ten years hence, particularly in rural areas.
- .....

Delegates responded very positively to the need to value the professionalism, skills, knowledge and expertise of local voluntary and community sector organisations

## Digital participation

In the last three years since our last Positive Ageing Conference, the increase in the use of digital technology has become central to everyday life and many transactions today require us all to be able to manage our lives online.

The challenge appears to be how to engage with older people and listen to what is being said about their concerns in relation to digital participation and learn how positive experiences can be achieved. Support is vital if older people are to be engaged positively and it needs to be enjoyable.

Many service providers, whether it is in banking, utilities, central and local government, GP and hospital health services, leisure activities, transport, holidays and activities all want us to use online facilities.

Perhaps the most important messages from delegates about digital participation were:-

- Listen, hear and act on what older people say is important to them;
- Involve older people in taking forward suggestions;
- Learn from what works and replicate it.





# Going Forward

The investment in time and resources demonstrates the value and impact of hosting the conference. The evaluations, comments and feedback have been very positive and the suggestions for future topics evidence the importance of the agenda and the challenges and opportunities ahead for us all as we age. The topics will certainly give us an agenda for the future.

Hosting the conference is not an end in itself, it's just a beginning. We will be considering what the East Midlands Later Life Forum will do as a result of the themes that emerged on the day, and we will also follow up on the recommendations. We hope you will too, and we will be contacting delegates in the coming months to see what action you have taken as a result of attending the event.

East Midlands Later Life Forum is one of nine similar forums across England, and we are entering a transition. Our objective in the coming months is to be part of setting up a National Forum on Ageing, and we will be determining what a new national partnership might look like. It will be an exciting time for us all and we hope it will enable the direct voices of older people to be listened to and acted upon to make a difference to all our futures.

Our objective in the coming months is to be part of setting up a National Forum on Ageing, and we will be determining what a new national partnership might look like.



## Advancing 'Ageing Positively' (Into The Next Decade) Conference - Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015

### Biographies

#### **Lord Geoffrey Filkin CBE, Chair, Centre for Ageing Better**

Geoffrey Filkin has worked throughout his career to improve public services and to promote the importance of involving and listening to the public. He brings extensive understanding of strategy, policy, innovation and improvement at local and national levels with wide contacts across central and local government, the voluntary and private sectors and in all three political parties. He was a **Chief Executive in local government**, and then **CEO of the Association of District Councils**. He then entered the **Lords and became a government Minister**.

He has wide experience of strategic analysis and creating new think-tanks and charities. He founded and chaired 2020 Public Services Trust and its commission on Public Services in 2020 reported in 2010. He then proposed and chaired the **Lords Select Committee** to investigate the implications of our ageing society. Its highly influential report, **Ready for Ageing**, was published in March 2013.

He now sits on the **cross-benches in the Lords** and is active in ageing policy and practice to help realise the benefits of older lives and more older people, and as the **Chair of the Centre for Ageing Better**. "We want the Centre to make a real difference to the lives of older people, by working with them, harnessing the evidence of what works and

through strong partnerships with other bodies to drive change."

**The Centre for Ageing Better** was awarded a £50m endowment by the Big Lottery Fund in January 2015. The Centre is a key part of the Fund's work to help people to live a healthy and active life in their older age.

**The Centre for Ageing Better** wants to help many more people have a better later life by addressing four fundamental areas where change is needed: better health, better finances; better social life and better places. It aims to be a force for evidence-based change that helps older people live a better life by developing the evidence base about what works to support ageing better; by funding projects that show promise; by helping proven projects to scale and by working with people, communities and organisations to bring about enduring change.

The Centre aims to be a world class What Works Centre, promoting evidence of what makes for a better life in older age, to empower older people, present and future, to continue living fulfilling lives. To ensure it has impact it will also be a 'do-tank', actively promoting its evidence and the wider changes in society needed to help realise healthier happier longer lives.

## Guy Robertson – Director of Positive Ageing Associates

**Positive Ageing Associates** - an organisation specialising in promoting positive approaches to later life at both the personal and organisational level.

Guy has a long career in local and national government. He was Head of the **Ageing Well Programme** (which supported councils to prepare for an ageing society) until its conclusion in 2012. Previously Guy has led work on prevention and early intervention at the Department of Health, within the Older People and Dementia division, and in particular, led the support to the **Partnerships for Older People Projects (POPP) programme**.

Prior to the Department of Health, he worked for a large urban unitary authority as **Head of Strategic Planning** for older and disabled people's services in Adult Social Care and, more recently, as **Strategic Commissioning Manager**. Guy led work on the implementation of various modernisation themes, including joint working between health and social care. This involved improving support for people with complex needs and the development of a corporate approach to raise the quality of life of older people. As well as his significant change management experience Guy also has an academic background, having been a lecturer on local government and social care policy.

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## Sharan Jones - Health and Wellbeing Manager, Nottingham City Council

Based in the Public Health Team of Nottingham City Council, Sharan has wide experience of health and wellbeing policy and partnership development. Currently as the lead for **Age Friendly Nottingham**, her expertise is focused on improving the quality of life and services for Nottingham's older citizens. This involves taking an active role at both strategic and community levels in the city, supported by a strong cross-sector steering group. **Nottingham holds World Health Organisation (WHO) Age Friendly City status** and Sharan works closely with other members of the **UK Age Friendly Cities Network** to drive the agenda forward.

In addition to her enthusiastic support for the older people's agenda, Sharan has responsibility for the **'health and employment/unemployment' work stream in the city**. In view of the increasing retirement age and joining the two strands of responsibility, Sharan aims to improve the quality of pre-retirement training and influence changes to policy to ensure that the health and wellbeing needs of workers as they age are better met.

Sharan sits on the **NICE Local Reference Group** and is a steering group member of the **WHO UK Healthy Cities**.

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## **Conference Chair, John Aldridge OBE, DL**

John is the former **Chairman and Managing Director of the Leicester Mercury Media Group**. He was also a **Director of the Mercury's parent group, Northcliffe Newspapers**. He is a past **President of the Newspaper Society**. He was **Area President** for the newspaper charity "Old Ben" for over 25 years and was awarded their Silver Medal for this work, and was the **Chairman of the Methodist Recorder**, Methodism's national weekly newspaper for 20 years.

John is a **Methodist Local Preacher** and a member of Trinity Methodist Church, Oadby. In 1998 he was a runner up in "The Times" Preacher of the Year Competition and has had several sermons published. He is a **Director of "Zeph's" Café** at Trinity Methodist Church. This is a popular commercial café, open daily, which cost over £400,000 and is a major outreach to the people of Oadby.

John was **President of the Rotary Club of Mumbles (South Wales)** in 1981/2. He was also **President of the Rotary Club of Leicester in 1990/91**, which was the club's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday year. The Club raised £50,000 in the year to fund the first "Bone bank" in the UK. (At Glenfield Hospital) As a result John was made a Paul Harris Fellow.

He is the immediate past **President of the Leicester Philharmonic Choir, a Trustee of the Sir Andrew Martin Trust for Young People**, (A group of people who raised £250,000 to help local young people, in memory of a former Lord Lieutenant), a **Member and past President of the Leicestershire Branch of the Institute of Marketing and a Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute**.

He was appointed a **Deputy Lieutenant of Leicestershire in 1999 and received an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2000**.

A family man, John is married to June and has two children and four grandchildren. His interests also include: playing squash, classic cars, supporting L.C.F.C, calligraphy, travel, music, theatre, (R.S.C. and Little Theatre in particular). He is a member of the National Trust, the Great Glen Gardening Club and a Patron of the National Forest and of the Leicestershire Victoria County History Trust.

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## Elizabeth Mandeville – Chair of the East Midlands Later Life Forum

Elizabeth is currently the **Chair and founder member of the East Midlands Later Life Forum.**

Elizabeth has worked at a local, regional and national level during her career and in a variety of organisations across the Public, Private, Voluntary and Community Sectors. She firmly believes that local communities are at the heart of giving people their quality of life, and her working life and volunteering has always focused on ensuring people have a voice and are engaged in the decisions that affect their lives.

Her working life included 19 years working in a **Shire Local Authority in the Chief Executive's and Social Services Departments.** She gained extensive experience of complex partnership working both at a strategic and operational level in communities.

Elizabeth was also **Programme Manager** for 28 Prevention/Early Intervention schemes. Elizabeth led on engagement of older people and led on the Cabinet Office Programme **"Better Government for Older People"** within Nottinghamshire County Council and during this time was seconded to the National Programme. She wrote the first "whole system" **Strategy for an Ageing Population in Nottinghamshire**, based on extensive involvement of older people and agencies. This was nationally acclaimed as good practice and contributed towards a **Beacon Award for excellence.**

Elizabeth has worked with Central Government Departments on policy development and whole system working

Whilst working in the voluntary sector, Elizabeth set up a Volunteer Bureau; did intergenerational work on volunteering opportunities for young people with The Prince's Trust; set up a network of Village Care Schemes and built partnerships

in the rural coalfield communities after the closure of the collieries.

Elizabeth ended her paid employment in 2011. She is a Trustee of a Nottinghamshire Charity, and a School Governor of a local Primary School in Leicestershire. Elizabeth cared for her husband during his terminal illness and is now building a new life, continuing to volunteer and work with older people and spending valuable time with her two children and two grandchildren.

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## David Jones – Vice Chair of East Midlands Later Life Forum

David is currently **Vice Chair of the East Midlands Later Life Forum.** David has spent half his working life as an **Industrial Photographer** and then spent twenty years with Nottingham University as **Chief Technician in Geology.**

David was a trustee of the pension fund seventeen years, and as an active trade union convener, served as a National Executive Member, President of the East Midlands Region and also Treasurer.

David retired twenty five years ago and continued to help people by becoming very involved with activity on behalf of pensioners. David is currently **Chair of the East Midlands National Pensioners Convention, Chair of the East Midlands Region of Unite Retired Members, and Chair of the local Nottingham Pensioners Action Group.**

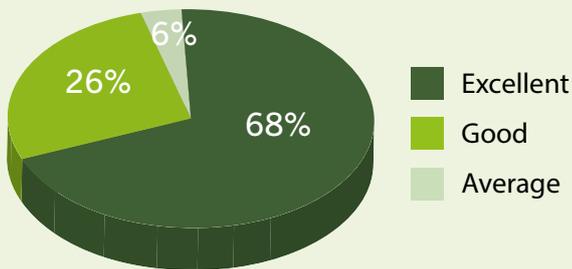
David is married to Pat with three children, six grandchildren and one great grandchild (so far!) David is active with the disability charity SCOPE through having a quadriplegic granddaughter who is the 'apple of grandad's eye'

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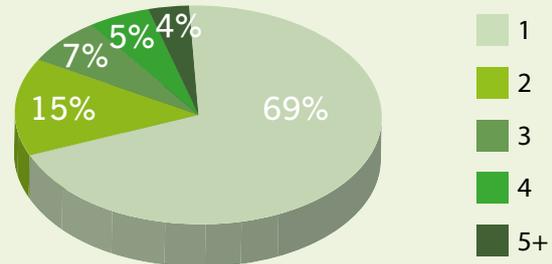
## Analysis of Conference Feedback

There were a total of 84 delegates at the conference and from this we had 57 completed questionnaires (please note that from the completed questionnaires, not every delegate completed every question). The overall rating of Good to Excellent was 94% - a real achievement for everyone involved.

### Overall rating of the day

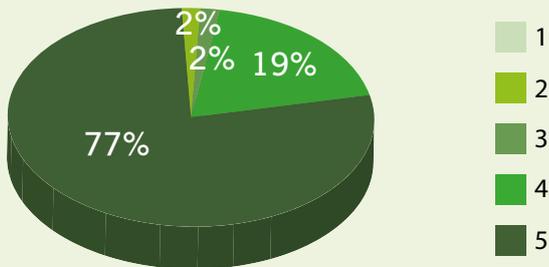


### Events attended

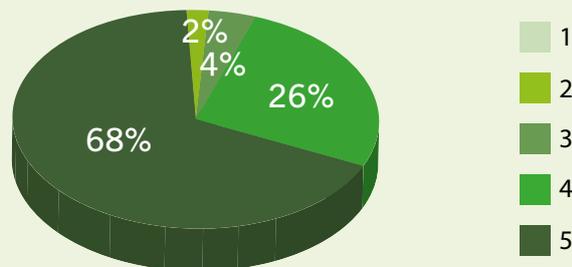


The following show various aspects of the workshops that were rated, 1 (low) through to 5 (high).

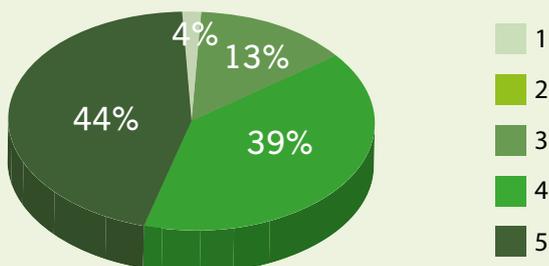
### Relevance to older people



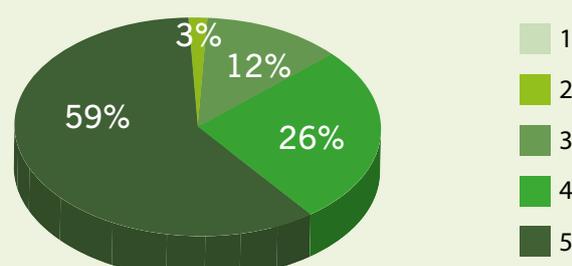
### Speakers knowledge



### Quality of leaflets/Handouts



### Ability to share information





## The East Midlands Later Life Forum

East Midlands Later Life Forum has an extensive network of member organisations and older people from across the East Midlands.

### The EMLLF objectives are to:

- Highlight and disseminate information on the key issues facing the ageing population both nationally and in the East Midlands;
- Champion and challenge the policy makers and service providers in the area;
- Ensure that the voice of older people is reflected at Forum meetings and helps to shape its actions;
- Respond to government consultations to give a perspective from the East Midlands on age and ageing.



If you would like further information or copies of this report, please contact the Chair or Secretariat of EMLLF [chair@eastmidlandslaterlifeforum.org.uk](mailto:chair@eastmidlandslaterlifeforum.org.uk) or [secretariat@eastmidlandslaterlifeforum.org.uk](mailto:secretariat@eastmidlandslaterlifeforum.org.uk)

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