

Bristol Older People's Forum

Campaign meeting of 20th September 2012 at the Broadmead Baptist Church.

1. Apologies for Absence.

1.1. Ruth Bailey, Elaine Hutton, Phyllis Watkins, Chris and Alan Pratley

2. Speakers: Centre for Sustainable Energy: presentation of their over 50s project

The Chair introduced the speakers, Jess and Tom, who presented CSE's project on fuel poverty and the over 50s, in Bristol.

Founded 1979, the Centre works to reduce fuel poverty and reduce energy use, to tackle Climate Change. They work by delivering advice and information to individuals and households in the former Avon region.

Definition of fuel poverty:

People with a higher than average fuel consumption which, were they to pay their bills in full, would leave them below the poverty line - that is, with significantly less money than is the Government recognises as the minimum needed for bare survival. Between 45 and 60 thousand households are in fuel poverty for every 1 million. Generally people spend more time at home if they are older, disabled or ill. Tom showed the meeting a map of Bristol, showing areas of above average number of households in fuel poverty.

Jess then introduced a project about to launch and explained how BOPF members can help. The project has secured funding for 3 years from the National Lottery in the SW, to cover S. Glos, Bristol, N. Somerset and B&NES. CSE are seeking to work in partnership with various groups in the Voluntary and Community Sector, to deliver the advice and support CSE have to offer to the most vulnerable people in the locality. The work would entail recruiting volunteers to promote the project and deliver training to other volunteers and to other VCS organisations.

Why target people over 50s?

In the years of advising people about fuel poverty and how to keep warm in winter, CSE has identified various groups as being at greater risk of suffering fuel poverty and therefore illness and hardship, during the winter months. The Charity has projects for families with young children, but recognises that older people are statistically at greater risk of experiencing fuel poverty. Over 1000 self-referrals that came from libraries and other sources were by people over 50.

People over 50 who are not join in community activities and seldom have visitors in their homes are more likely to suffer progressively deteriorating conditions that go unnoticed; they are also less likely to seek help. Consequently CSE has develop the volunteering project to reach out to them in their homes, through day centres, churches, community centres and other venues.

Format of the Project.

- Staff at CSE are going to be fully trained, as will employees of other organisations and volunteers.
- A helpline will be set up, alongside email and postal contacts.
- Once individuals have been identified, who wish to receive advice and visits arranged, which will be carried out by 2 trained advisors.
- They will offer help with monitoring gas and electricity bills, setting thermostats, getting a better deal from their supplier or switching to one offering better rates, applying to local charities and government funding for home improvements to make their homes warmer and dryer.

Who can you send to us?

People over 50 who are

- in debt with electricity or gas
- struggling to pay their heating bills
- afraid to use their heating because of costs
- not using their thermostat programmers because they were shown how
- on low income, benefits, keymetres or paying by direct payment
- suffering from a health condition that is made worse by cold and damp
- living in a cold and damp home

The team distributed two sets of cards, one with a Freefone number and other contact details and the other a simple thermometer for people to check the temperature in their homes). The helpline is not yet set-up for the deaf or hard of hearing, but hopefully will be, soon.

Various points and questions were put, from the floor and included

- **translation of material and interpreting** for advisers, into community languages, and **culturally-sensitive gender-appropriate advisors**. CSE are developing procedures to ensure that home visits conform to the highest standards of accessibility, including cultural and linguistic. Thus far the information has been made available in Somali. Requests were issued for material in Hindi, Punjabi, Polish and all other community languages, as well as large print. CSE will try their best, within the constraints of funding available, to ensure they can communicate with clients, including people with learning difficulties.
- **objections to the stereotyping of older people** in the cartoons, which portrayed them as incompetent and helpless. Tom thanked members for the feedback and reassured them he would take their comments back to the team.
- **heavy curtains for draughtproofing**, as in Scandinavian Countries. Tom explained that CSE work closely with Care and Repair, who can give small grants for items like curtains. Age UK can help with this kind of immediate, small scale, but effective help.
- **contractor's poor workmanship** leaving damages. Tom explained that CSE projects in Somerset, *Warm Streets* and in Bristol, called *BEE*, are Council-endorsed and contractor's work standards are checked. The schemes apply to homeowners who qualify, as well as tenants.
- **houses with solid walls**, which are much more expensive to insulate, and was told that there is a project in East Somerset that offers help with solid home insulation. There is also a new project, the Green Deal, which will compel utility companies to carry out work, and new-builds a obliged to comply.
- **enrolling as a volunteer**, online – one member tried but did not hear back, the team promised to take his name after the meeting.
- **roof-mounted solar panels**. The CSE team explained that there are the two types, solar photovoltaics, which converts sunlight into electricity, and solar thermal, which uses the sun's heat to heat water, which is stored and used in central heating and domestic hot water.
- **Feed-in Tariffs (FiTs)** The government offers a subsidy for energy produced by these two methods. On average Payback is over 9 years, possibly less, if the home is well insulated.
- **The new Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI)**, encourages householders and social landlords to burn biomass, wood chip or wood pellets in central heating boilers. For woodburning stoves customers must be careful that the stove they buy is compliant with smoke clear zone legislation. To find out more contact CSE. The team distributed cards with their ocontact details

The Chair thanked Tom and Jess for their very informative presentation and promised we would promote the project, encourage members to volunteer and generally keep in touch.

SEE ACTION 2.0 (last page)

CAMPAIGN MEETING

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting (19th July 2012 – attached)

3.1. Passed and adopted

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes (items not already on this agenda only).

4.1. The chair spoke on the current campaigns, making reference to the Open Forum meeting of 3rd September and reports to be presented later.

Members were also reminded about four important consultations:

- 4.2. Changes in Council Tax Benefit
- 4.3. Changes in the Social Fund arrangements
- 4.4. The 20 miles an hour speed limit

4.5. Safer Bristol Hate Crime Support Services, Commissioning Plan

4.6. Neighbourhood Reps were going to ask their NP to consider including Fuel Poverty in their work

5. Progress on Campaign Targets for 2012 -13 as set out by members at the AGM (distributed with the Draft Action Plans)

6. Analysis of Bus Pass responses.

Dr. Di Parkin then presented the survey on the value of the bus pass to older people. (See separate report) and members attending the meeting reported their experiences (see Appendix)

Bus surveys to be handed to Toni during the break.

Bus Pass Survey.

Members attending the meeting reported their experiences of Bus Travel:

- drivers driving off before passengers are seated - First Bus claim it's up to drivers' discretion whether to drive off before all passengers are seated
- drivers leaving wheelchairs behind - First bus claim this too is up to drivers' discretion, whether to ask passengers to fold their buggies to let a wheelchair in
- some buses not issuing ticket to Bus Pass holders, making it difficult to document the journey
- (mostly younger) people congregating at the entrance and blocking it, creating a hazard and declining to move forcing other passengers to squeeze past them or ask them to move
- passengers getting up before the bus has stopped. - It was felt that signs should to advise passengers to remain seated until the bus has stopped.
- bus timetables changes mean that on some routes the pass is not valid until 10:25, weekdays, which used to be 10:08, but on weekends it has remained at 8 minutes past 10.

SEE ACTION 6.0 (last page)

7. Analysis of GP surgeries survey responses.

Dr. Angela Auset presented her report of the survey of our members in respect of their feelings and experiences of using their doctors surgeries. (See separate report)

- 109 replies were received from members, to the Newsletter survey
- 9 replies have been returned by GP surgeries, to the letter sent out by Rosie

She related her report's many facts, but these did not begin to describe the difference of experience. There is a distinct lack of uniformity in service standards.

GP's surgeries survey.

Issues reported included:

- While one member's GPs is very brief and dismissive, his wife's practice is proactive and thorough.
- In some surgeries the receptionist is encouraged to ask whether a patient really does need to see a doctor or whether a telephone consultation would suffice. Some even give out medical advice though not medically qualified.
- In some surgeries patients sometimes have a long wait even when they are the first appointment.
- GP surgeries are using practice funds for interpreters for consultations with Somali patients yet, in spite of receiving additional funding for providing services for older people, many do not appear to spend these on measures that improve accessibility to health care services for the over 55s.

The Chair and the meeting thanked both Di and Angela for their very valuable and important work. The Chair then suggested that an ad-hoc Working Group would be the best way to take forward the findings of the GP surgeries report and translate it, with members' suggestions, into a Best Practice handbook to send out to all surgeries - Di Parkin, Angela Auset and Judith Barnhurst volunteered to form the GP Working Group. The Chair thanked them for their continued and expert support of this important project.

SEE ACTION 7.0 (last page)

8. National Campaign Update

9. Any Other Campaign Business

9.1. Hate Crime against the elderly.

The issue of Hate Crime was briefly raised. Safer Bristol are holding a consultation on the Hate Crime Support Services Commissioning Plan, but the draft paper (July 2012) makes no mention of hate crimes against the elderly as this is not considered a target group, and therefore excluded.

Toni raised this at the Joint Equalities' Forum, on 18th September, which has rejected this view and propose to issue a joint statement to this effect. There is also a petition, started by an Ex policeman. Toni will circulate the link.

SEE ACTION 9.0 (below)

10. Next meetings (ALL at Broadmead Baptist Church, 10:30 – 12:30)

- MC meeting: **11th October 2012**,
- Open Forum: **8th November 2012**
- Campaign: **22nd November 2012**

SEE ACTION 10.0 (below)

Meeting closed at 12:45.

ACTIONS AND DECISIONS			
section	description	who	by when
2.0	Toni to include information about the project in the next Newsletter.	Toni	11/10/12*
6.0	Toni to Ask equalities and DEF to ask what DDA rules are and write to First Bus, Wessex Connect and A Bus on behalf of the Forum, requesting a reply in writing and pointing out their liability for injury and disproportionate effect of a fall on older people	Toni	11/10/12
7.0	Working Group to meet and identify Best Practice out of the responses received Compile it into a "wish list" Best Practice Toni to distribute to GOPs surgeries.	GPs Working Group	tbc
9.0	Toni to disseminate the Safer Bristol consultation paper on the Hate Crime Support Services Commissioning Plan and the link to the petition to make classified Age-related crime as Hate Crime	Toni	11/10/12
10.0	Toni to find the cost of the largest hall and ask Yolanda whether we can afford it; if so, book it instead of the small one. Make out more badges for members	Toni	11/10/12

*MC meeting.