



REPORTING BACK ON...

The public forum on the needs of older adults

3 March 2010



COMMUNITY SERVICES
Upper Hutt City Council

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Background

In 2006 Community Services, Upper Hutt City Council, developed a community consultation model called SHAW (Safety, Health and Wellbeing). SHAW involves facilitating regular community forums on topics of focus to identify and address areas of need within the community. The following areas were selected based on recent research of the social and cultural issues affecting the Upper Hutt Community: youth, older adults, migrants and refugees, families/whanau, crime prevention, and the disability sector. Community Services has had older adults as a priority area since 2006, with the aim of focussing on Positive Ageing to align with national social development strategies. Upper Hutt City Council holds regular forums for each focus area. One of the forums in each area is an annual public forum to identify local needs; the remaining forums are for community groups and agencies working within these focus areas and interested individuals, to better determine the needs of the community and appropriate responses to those needs.

The 2010 SHAW public forum on the needs of older people in Upper Hutt was held on 3 March 2010. This was the sixth annual SHAW public forum held for older people.

2009 Public Forum on the needs of older adults

The previous year's public forum on the needs of Upper Hutt older people discussed the topics of home help, safety and financial security.

In 2009, discussion groups felt that the level of home help funded by the government and provided through the Hutt Valley District Health Board was satisfactory and all groups offered information on how it could be improved. Concerns mostly fell into five areas: lack of information, the age criteria, provider difficulties, individual process and how home help related to "ageing in place" policies. Informal community based arrangements were also noted as supportive.

Safety arose as a theme throughout the 2009 forum, not only in the section on safety. Crime, the proximity to the prison, home security, young people, intimidation, and road and pedestrian safety were all discussed as safety concerns. The "Be Safe, Stay Well" community safety booklet as outlined in the recommendations section, is one solution to this issue; providing people with information about how to stay safe and where to go for help on specific safety issues.

Issues arising about financial security included investments and banking, sales scams, and going into residential care. Discussions mostly focused on increasing ways to access information about these issues. Information about financial issues and support for carers has been circulated and added to the Community Services website at www.upperhuttcity.com.

Other issues that were discussed in 2009 included the importance of neighbourhood connections, physical accessibility, access to transport and access to information spanning a number of issues.

The full report from 2009 is available at www.upperhuttcity.com or by contacting Community Services on (04) 5272794.

Some of these themes also emerged in the 2010 forum. This will be taken into

consideration when assessing the findings from this 2010 forum.

2010 Public Forum on the needs of older adults

This report outlines the issues raised at the 2010 forum and provides recommendations and suggested actions in response to these issues. The report is divided into three sections. The first section outlines the approach used to engage with the community and the selection of the focus issues. The second section outlines the main findings of the forum. The final section provides recommendations and proposed actions for Community Services, Upper Hutt City Council in response to issues raised at the forum.

Approach

This year the forum was held in the same format as 2009. There were three speakers presenting on the focus topics, followed by facilitated discussion groups for attendees.

Goody bags were given away to all participants as an incentive to attend the forum. The free goody bags included pertinent community information as well as a "lucky dip prize," such as Upper Hutt Library vouchers, café vouchers and H2O Xtream vouchers. There was also a raffle prize draw for a \$100 voucher for any Upper Hutt shop of choice. Each participant was entered into the draw and the raffle was drawn at the end of the forum.

Approximately 25 people attended the forum. This was considerably less than the previous year, which had a record high of approximately 80 attendees. This low number is reflected in the extent of discussion.

Promotion of the forum was through an advertisement in the public notices on 17 February and editorial coverage on 24 February in the Upper Hutt Leader. There were also a significant number of posters and flyers in the central business district and various suburbs of Upper Hutt. Information about the forum was also promoted through service providers and community groups working with older people, including targeted letters to church groups and rest homes.

The level of attendance suggests that either "forum fatigue" has set in and people feel that they do not have much more to contribute, or the topics seemed less relevant than previous years. It could equally be the case that the community feels Council is performing well in this area so there is no pressing need to engage in this way. The 2008 Survey has provided some additional evidence that supports the work undertaken by Council in this area, and it may be more appropriate to hold public forums every two years, in order for reasonable action to be taken on the issues already raised.

The presentations were as follows:

Social wellbeing

Judith Davey, Associate Professor, Institute of Policy Studies, Victoria University

Issues arising from the 2008 Survey of Upper Hutt Older People

Lillian Fougere, Acting Senior Advisor, Community Development, Upper Hutt City Council

A culture of safety

Barry Hislop, Injury Prevention Consultant, Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)

After each information presentation, attendees were divided into break-out groups to discuss issues relating to the presentation. An Upper Hutt City Council officer acting as a facilitator/scribe was appointed to each group. A series of questions guided the discussions. Full notes from the discussion groups can be found in the appendix.

The questions were:

Social and emotional isolation

1. What is the impact of social and emotional isolation on the community?

2. Who are the risk groups?
3. When thinking about social and emotional isolation, what differences and/or similarities have you observed, or feel there might be, between older adults living independently and those living in residential care?
4. In what ways could social connections be enhanced between an isolated older person and their wider community?
5. How easy is it for older adults to access information about where and how to seek help, should they be experiencing social or emotional isolation?
6. Who determines if an older person is socially or emotionally isolated – the person themselves, or those observing? If an older person is deemed by others to be socially or emotionally isolated, is it a problem if the person is quite happy with their living circumstances?

Key issues arising from the 2008 Upper Survey of Older Adults

1. What from the survey most stands out to you (either positively or negatively)? You can also look at the summary of the Results of the 2008 Survey for Upper Hutt Older People in your goodie bag. As a group, decide on one or two of these issues to look at for the following questions:
 - Who are the risk groups for this issue?
 - What are the impacts on the wider community?
 - What are the solutions that you as an older person could be part of?
 - What are the solutions that Upper Hutt City Council could be part of?
2. From the respondents that completed the survey, only 19% feel very confident/financially secure for retirement. What are ways that would make you as an older person feel more financially secure for retirement? What information would be useful?
3. The survey found that only 16% of respondents were able to get out and about as much as they would like. What do you think the barriers are to this? What are ways around these barriers?

Staying safe and general questions

1. What makes you feel safe in your home?
2. We know what makes older people feel unsafe at times (for example, a knock at the door by a stranger, night-time, media reports about crime or being alone). Bearing this in mind, what could be ways for older people to feel even safer when these situations happen?
3. If you felt you needed to, would there be someone you know well that you could call on (for example, neighbours, friends or family)? Would you know who to call if none of these people were available?
4. What projects do you think the council could be involved in that would make you feel safer in your community?
5. Have you noticed any changes (positive/negative) in the last 12 months on issues affecting older people in Upper Hutt?
6. What agencies/groups are the easiest to access and work with and why?
7. What do you think are the 3 biggest issues facing older people in Upper Hutt?

Final question:

If you could change one thing in Upper Hutt for older people/seniors, what would it be? Please decide on one thing as a group and we will get you to report back to everyone in the room (in one or two sentences!).

Main Findings

Social and emotional isolation

1. What is the impact of social and emotional isolation on the community?

Attendees at the forum had a wide range of answers to this question. Some said it impacted most on the individual and the individual's health, while others said it also impacted their families and those who are associated with them.

There were significant and numerous comments about how it is difficult to engage or find out more about those who are socially isolated. Even if a person is unhappy and isolated, it was felt it takes a certain personal responsibility to access help. People who are experiencing isolation may not wish to tell someone about it, feeling that they are "past it" or that people are too busy to care.

2. Who are the risk groups?

Specific risk groups listed were people with health problems, those on a low-income, people living alone or with limited family in the vicinity, people who care for their partners (who may be disabled or less mobile), people whose partners are living in rest-homes, people with little access to transport, and elderly men.

One group had significant discussion around the cuts to home help by the District Health Board (DHB). These cuts may reduce the amount of hours of care in certain situations, therefore reducing the amount of social interaction an older person may have with their home help assistant.

3. When thinking about social and emotional isolation, what differences and/or similarities have you observed, or feel there might be, between older adults living independently and those living in residential care?

There were very different responses to this question.

One group felt strongly that people move to rest homes when more severe health issues arise, meaning that those living independently in the community are more likely to be able to get out and about. The same group stated that residential care should be included as part of the community, not as separate institutions.

Conversely, one group felt that networks and services were more available in residential care.

Staffing in residential care arose as an area of concern. One group noted that people living in residential care can feel lonely with staff changes if they have become close to certain staff. Two groups expressed that some language barriers with staff who have English as a second language can be difficult for older people.

4. In what ways could social connections be enhanced between an isolated older person and their wider community?

All groups mentioned that having access to social groups and activity groups is key to enhancing social connections. Specific groups named were Probus, the widows group and SuperGrans, but it was felt that participating in any social activity or group was beneficial.

An “adopt a grandparent” programme was suggested as a project. This was also a suggestion at the 2009 forum, where it was discussed that some older people have become “orphan parents” due to children and family moving away. Not only could this enhance social connections, but it would be an opportunity for young people to learn skills from older people, and increase intergenerational awareness.

Further suggestions on how to enhance these social connections included having dedicated visiting officers, keeping activities at a low cost for participants, and encouraging membership of clubs or activity programmes.

Suggested promotion of such activities could be extended in the Upper Hutt Leader, and through Council’s rates letters, which were also two suggestions raised in the 2009 forum. It was noted that information could also be better distributed through Work and Income.

Transport was also noted as an issue for being able to attend such activities.

5. How easy is it for older adults to access information about where and how to seek help, should they be experiencing social or emotional isolation?

One group felt that it was easy to access this information.

Three of the groups mentioned the Citizens Advice Bureau as a place to source this information. Other places mentioned were A-Z Upper Hutt, the internet, medical centres and the Upper Hutt Leader.

One group expressed that internet use is growing amongst older people. However, another group felt that frequent references to websites created difficulties for older people who may not have the computer skills to therefore access further information about organisations.

A suggestion was made that Work and Income have an officer available specifically to work with older people in going through their application and benefit entitlements, as it is a complicated process that may be new to them.

6. Who determines if an older person is socially or emotionally isolated – the person themselves, or those observing? If an older person is deemed by others to be socially or emotionally isolated, is it a problem if the person is quite happy with their living circumstances?

Three of the groups expressed that it is the individual who determines whether or not they are socially or emotionally isolated. One group emphasised what the individual’s story is and finding ways of expressing these stories.

The role of doctors in recognising or addressing isolation was queried. This same group emphasised the need to work with different cultures and ethnic groups.

It was noted that a simple “hello” from a stranger can make a big difference for someone who is feeling isolated.

Key issues arising from the 2008 Upper Survey of Older Adults

- 1. What from the survey most stands out to you (either positively or negatively)? You can also look at the summary of the Results of the 2008 Survey for Upper Hutt Older People in your goodie bag.**

As a group, decide on one or two of these issues to look at for the following questions:

- **Who are the risk groups for this issue?**
- **What are the impacts on the wider community?**
- **What are the solutions that you as an older person could be part of?**
- **What are the solutions that Upper Hutt City Council could be part of?**

Responses to this section varied considerably and did not necessarily follow the suggested questions.

Group one listed a number of issues. The first issue raised was how to enhance green spaces and native birds in Upper Hutt, as this is one of the reasons people enjoy living in Upper Hutt.

Another area they discussed was around housing, including a suggestion that houses have sensible design and modifications so as to be accessible for older people in the future. A project that could follow from this suggestion could be to provide more information about "lifetime design" to developers and those interested in applying for building consents. Lifetime design includes additions to a home that a person may like to consider that make life easier for older people and people with disabilities.

This group also felt that sections are becoming smaller, but this could pose an opportunity for more community gardens to be created. Upper Hutt City Council's TOP Trentham project was noted as a great project that the group would like to see repeated elsewhere.

Group one also discussed government documents, in that the language used could be more simple or readable, and that policy did not necessarily seem to translate into action at a local level (for example with DHB funding).

Group two chose to focus on the methodology of the survey. They felt that there may be members of the community that would have been reluctant to complete the survey, leading to disproportionate representation. Suggestions for this issue were to increase participation of the survey with various ethnic groups and people reluctant to read text, include the survey with letters about council rates, undertake the survey in the streets and include it in the Upper Hutt Leader as a two page spread.

The number of respondents to the survey in the target age group was 507, representing 10.5% of this population. This is a significant percentage, leading Community Services to believe that the results of the survey provide a fair representation of older people in Upper Hutt. Group four also stated that there was good representation through the survey.

Group three raised a few different concerns. They felt it would be beneficial to capture stories of older people in Upper Hutt to add to a recorded history of Upper Hutt. They commented that they liked living in Upper Hutt, particularly with Upper Hutt's parks. They would like to see lower rental prices for the Hapai Club, because a more affordable space would mean that seniors groups would be able to meet more often.

Group four mostly concentrated on social connectedness. They felt that the 85% of those who have contact with family or close friends on a regular basis (once a week or more), may not be getting the personal contact they need. This contact may be simply phone communication which cannot reach the same personal depth as spending significant time with someone. They suggested that it is difficult to figure out who the risk groups are,

as they are isolated and it is difficult to gather more information about them. They highlighted the benefits of facilities such as the Upper Hutt Library, where one can spend all day in a warm environment and meet people.

The variety of issues chosen for the discussions in this question suggests that there is no one priority for older people in Upper Hutt, rather that there is a set of complex issues that may interconnect.

2. From the respondents that completed the survey, only 19% feel very confident/financially secure for retirement. What are ways that would make you as an older person feel more financially secure for retirement? What information would be useful?

One group felt that it isn't always possible to plan for the future by accumulating one's savings because there are unexpected urgent costs such as illness. Another group thought that healthcare was under-funded, and were also concerned about recent cases of needs assessments being undertaken by phone.

Concerns about housing arose in one group. They felt that a couple may be hesitant for one partner to go into a residential home, particularly if they are concerned about entitlements to their house or other possessions. They also commented that some older people are paying rent or large mortgages. They suggested that there could be more accessible information or advice about how to sell a house, or indeed selling a house to buy a smaller house.

Two groups mentioned that increasing promotion of the rates rebate for people on lower incomes would be useful. Further suggestions included using green money or bartering more, promoting the use of tools on the "Sorted" website, and budgeting advice targeted at seniors. One group commented that Work and Income are improving their service.

These suggestions align with the 2009 forum findings, where a need was highlighted for more accessible information about tenancy rights in residential care, how to avoid sales scams, and financial matters such as wills, trusts and powers of attorney.

3. The survey found that only 16% of respondents were able to get out and about as much as they would like. What do you think the barriers are to this? What are ways around these barriers?

Three of the four groups cited transport as the main barrier. They felt that the cost of taxis was too high even with the use of Total Mobility taxi chits.

With public transport, they noted that it was difficult to find out when the kneeling busses run and that there is limited public transport in the evenings. One group also noted that the 3 pm end time for free public transport for Gold Card users was difficult, but another group felt that the Gold Card had eased transport issues.

There was a comment that the free monthly service visiting the cemetery was appreciated.

Health, physical ability, bad weather and money were only mentioned by one group in brief.

No solutions were explicitly stated, but it could be that circulating more information about accessible transport would be one solution, as well as working with any informal community-based visiting service or carer support around providing transport.

Staying safe and general questions

1. **What makes you feel safe in your home?**
2. **We know what makes older people feel unsafe at times (for example, a knock at the door by a stranger, night-time, media reports about crime or being alone). Bearing this in mind, what could be ways for older people to feel even safer when these situations happen?**

Responses to the first two questions in this section overlapped considerably. They have therefore been considered together.

All groups stated that having securely locked doors and windows made them feel safer at home. All of the groups affirmed that having caring neighbours or neighbourhood connections added to a sense of security.

Two of the groups commented about the police. One said that the police have responded well when called. The other expressed that the community constables would provide reassurance if they were to visit homes as an information visit (rather than in an emergency). However, this does not appear to be the most effective long-term solution for the safety issues raised during the forum.

One group emphasised that certain personal skills and attitudes are key to feeling safe. This group also noted that "Home Instead Senior Care" provides a service to check on people regularly.

Another group noted that sales people can be intimidating or invasive.

Other factors contributing to feeling safe included having security alarms, medical alarms or dogs (or visible signs about these things), and not answering the door at night.

3. **If you felt you needed to, would there be someone you know well that you could call on (for example, neighbours, friends or family)? Would you know who to call if none of these people were available?**

Only one group answered the first part of the question, that they had a neighbourhood connection. Two groups said they would call police. One member of a group noted that if their burglar alarm goes off, security people automatically come.

4. **What projects do you think the council could be involved in that would make you feel safer in your community?**

One group recommended that an information pack about safety be included in the rates letters. In mid 2010, Community Services, Upper Hutt City Council, will be distributing a community safety kit called "Be Safe, Stay Well". More information on this kit can be found on page 13 in the recommendations section.

Another group noted factors relating to physical safety, such as making footpaths more even, improving curbs in areas of Upper Hutt outside of the CBD and increasing street lighting.

This same group felt that there was lack of community constable presence in Upper Hutt streets, and a lack of people reporting graffiti or vandalism. Another group highlighted noise disturbances as one aspect of safety.

One group questioned the efficacy of CCTV cameras specifically regarding positioning of the cameras and monitoring. They also noted the importance of urban design, including decreasing car parking over time and increasing pedestrian use of spaces.

5. Have you noticed any changes (positive/negative) in the last 12 months on issues affecting older people in Upper Hutt?

A wide range of points was raised with this question.

Among the negative changes listed was the poor placement of shops in the CBD (including vacant shops on Main Street and poor placement of the Mall). It was felt that more graffiti in Upper Hutt was also a negative change.

It was also noted that some pedestrian crossings need repainting.

Positive changes to the CBD over the last 12 months included better lighting and seating, having more CCTV cameras, having an increased police presence, and a decrease in skateboarders.

6. What agencies/groups are the easiest to access and work with and why?

Only two of the groups answered this question, and both noted the CAB, iSITE Visitor Centre and Upper Hutt City Council. One of these groups also noted the Upper Hutt Library, H2O Xtream and the MPs office.

7. What do you think are the 3 biggest issues facing older people in Upper Hutt?

There were a variety of responses to this question. One group expressed that attitudes to ageing by both older people and younger people, while another group simply stated "getting old."

Other big issues were the increasing cost of food, anti-social behaviour, and the increasing size of Rimutaka Prison with ripple effects in the Upper Hutt community.

Final question: If you could change one thing in Upper Hutt for older people/seniors, what would it be?

Please decide on one thing as a group and we will get you to report back to everyone in the room (in one or two sentences!).

Three of the groups expressed they would like to see more activities for older people on a regular basis, using a space such as the Hapai Club. One suggestion was to hold a seniors celebration ball.

Other suggestions were free 24 hour transport for older people, leading to more community connectedness and an after-hours medical service in Upper Hutt. It is questionable as to who would take ownership of and provide resources for both of these suggestions.

Overarching themes

Overarching themes that presented across a variety of subject areas and discussion groups are outlined below.

Transport

Affordability and adequacy of transport, especially public transport, was a common theme in this forum as well as previous forums.

Access to transport to attend groups and club activities was seen as an important factor in combating isolation. Better support for older people requiring transport assistance to the hospital for appointments at times when the gold card was unavailable was also suggested.

Recreational activities

In general, attendees at the forum felt there needed to be more information circulated about events, activities and membership groups for older people. The cost of venues, specifically the Hapai Club, was seen as too high for groups to regularly run free or low cost activities for older people.

Health

Health was noted as an issue throughout the forum. In relation to social and emotional isolation, health issues were listed as both a cause and a result of becoming socially or emotionally isolated. Health concerns were also raised as a barrier in being able to “get out and about”, and therefore community participation.

Concern about the decrease in funding for health care and home help was mentioned. There was also alarm regarding recent needs assessments for carer support and home help being undertaken over the phone.

Information

Information has been a consistent theme across previous forums. While in previous years, the need for more information was recorded across a wide variety of topics and issues; comments at this year’s forum focused solely on the discussion topics, such as transport, financial issues and social wellbeing. There was an emphasis on the need for information to be readily available from public spaces such as existing media outlets such as the Upper Hutt Leader. Comments highlighted the power of information to maintain older people’s independence and knowledge for decision making.

Recommendations and Proposed Actions for Community Services, Upper Hutt City Council

This report will be circulated around the Seniors Action Forum (SAF), relevant agencies and groups, areas within Council, and to the participants who indicated an interest in receiving the findings.

Specific areas for action from this report as well as the findings from the 2008 Survey for Upper Hutt Older People will be investigated with members of SAF.

There are some points that were raised in the forum where work is already underway or is planned. Some of these are outlined below. Possible new initiatives as a result of the issues raised by attendees at the forum are listed for further discussion through SAF.

Community Information

Community Services has developed community information sheets on relevant topics for older people in Upper Hutt. The information sheets are available in branded information stands placed in public venues in the city as well as www.upperhuttcity.com under the Community Services, community information sheets page.

Current information sheets specifically targeted to older people include "Health Services for Older People" and "Managing your Finances in Retirement". There is a wide range of other information sheets available that may also be relevant to older people. For example, the Disability Community Information Sheets such as "Making Life Easier – Equipment and Transport Options if you have a Disability".

Community Services will continue to expand the range of community information sheets in response to the needs of the community and plans to increase the number of brochure stands available in the city. Community Services will also review the quality, accessibility and value of the current community information sheets.

Recommendations for further information to be available regarding specific topics discussed at the forum are listed below in their topic area.

Given feedback from this forum, information coordinated by Community Services will continue to be provided in both hardcopy and on the internet to ensure access for everyone with a variety of computer skills.

Regular emails with news and opportunities relevant to older people or agencies working with older people are emailed to SAF. It is expected that this information is passed on to older people who may be interested.

Social and Emotional Isolation

A guide on "60 activities for over 60 year olds" is currently being developed, including a number of low cost or free activities for older adults in Upper Hutt. This may include membership groups for older people in Upper Hutt. This is a strengths based approach to addressing social and emotional isolation by encouraging community participation and social interaction for older people. It will be widely circulated once printed.

Community Services is also working on a collaborative project with Age Concern Wellington, Mission for Seniors and Wesley Community Action around addressing the needs of older adults who may be experiencing social and emotional isolation. This project is funding dependent.

Safety

Community Information is a key way of addressing safety by giving people access to information about services available.

In addition to the proposed actions highlighted under Community Information, Community Services will work with Age Concern Wellington and other community agencies to examine ways of addressing issues of elder abuse, including intimidation and abuse by sales and trades people.

A neighbourhood safety information kit called "Be Safe, Stay Well" has been developed as part of the Upper Hutt Community Safety Strategy. Five thousand copies will be distributed throughout the community. "Be Safe, Stay Well" has tested guidelines on what to do and how to manage certain situations in order to be safe and stay healthy and well.

"Be Safe, Stay Well" covers the topics residents have told us they want to know more about such as personal safety, home safety, safety in public places, family safety and tips on being and staying healthy. It also highlights where to get detailed information by telephone, internet and in print, and where to go for more help. There is a pocket in the back cover of the booklet to keep pamphlets collected as information is gathered on topics of particular interest to the reader.

In addition to the circulation of information, Community Services will be initiating a programme of self-defence workshops for people with differing mobility needs. This programme was a recommendation from the 2009 forum; however, re-prioritising in 2009/2010 meant that this project had to be postponed. It will be a priority early in 2010/2011.

The self-defence workshops will focus on a variety of ways to keep oneself safe including verbal self-defence, how to call for help and increasing confidence in public spaces and potentially intimidating situations.

Transport

Comments relating to pedestrian and road safety as well as other roading concerns have been referred to the Upper Hutt City Council Roading Department for follow up.

It will be explored whether a map of disability car parks in Upper Hutt can be available on Upper Hutt City Council's website.

A flyer about accessibility on public transport in the Wellington Region has been produced by Greater Wellington Regional Council. Community Services will explore ways of assisting in further circulating this flyer.

Information regarding the free monthly service to visit the Upper Hutt cemetery may also be circulated further.

Financial Matters and Housing

Community Services will explore ways of disseminating targeted financial advice for seniors, including budgeting information, notice of the rates rebates available for lower income earners, and advice on house sales and other housing related issues when moving into residential care.

Access to information about superannuation entitlements for older people is an issue and may need further promotion. A suggestion was made that Work and Income have an officer available specifically to work with older people; Community Services will investigate this suggestion.

Community Services will explore ways to provide more information about "lifetime design" to developers and those interested in applying for building consents. Lifetime design covers information about additions to a home that a person may like to consider that make life easier for older people and people with disabilities.

Neighbourhood Connections

All groups answered that having neighbourhood connections added to their sense of safety. Community Services will continue to work on encouraging neighbourhood connections in various ways.

Community Services is running a pilot project in an area of Trentham that aims to strengthen neighbourhood connections and increase residents safety and wellbeing. A key focus of the project is to encourage resident participation and getting to know the people in your neighbourhood. It is hoped that this initiative will be replicated in other areas of Upper Hutt in the future and could be used to address many of the issues from this report relating to neighbourhood connections.

Celebrating Older People

Community Services may explore coordinating an intergenerational activity for Seniors Week in October 2010 by running a competition for school students to interview an older person and submit it in writing.

2010 Public Forum on Disability Needs in Upper Hutt

A public forum on disability needs in Upper Hutt was also held in the first week of March 2010. There were similarities with some of the findings from that forum and the 2010 public forum on the needs of older people in Upper Hutt. Findings from both reports have been looked at collectively to identify possible areas of cross-over and opportunities for collaborative initiatives arising from the forums.

Appendix: discussion notes from the break-out groups

Discussion Group 1

Social and emotional isolation

1. What is the impact of social and emotional isolation on the community?
 - Impact on families and those who are associated with them.
 - Lack of understanding
 - Ability to engage
 - Do not live in same cities/communities
 - How do we provide services
 - People from own negative communities, e.g., crime wave/different values in community
 - How do we know what needs are because can't reach them.
 - Difficulties of running/accessing needs from a far
 - Can we impact on that group?
 - No impact until someone is wanting to get involved ie: alone and ok, what would be impact if someone got involved
 - Personal responsibility through to happy

2. Who are the risk groups?
 - Those with health problems
 - Change of circumstances
 - go with the flow - let things go- not complaining. Those who are happy being alone for some of the time.
 - Memory issue
 - Making do with what they have
 - comfort zone - getting out
 - Used to be an active person.
 - Extenuating circumstances, for example a couple: Where one might need more care than the other. Day to day tasks. Day to day living. Lots of discussion about this situation.
 - Family circumstances - less contact with grandparents or older people.

3. When thinking about social and emotional isolation, what differences and/or similarities have you observed, or feel there might be, between older adults living independently and those living in residential care?

No response.

4. In what ways could social connections be enhanced between an isolated older person and their wider community?
 - Groups like Probus
 - Challenge of how far do you go Eg: widows group
 - Dedicated visiting officers
 - Lots of organisations

5. How easy is it for older adults to access information about where and how to seek help, should they be experiencing social or emotional isolation?
 - Through CAB
 - A-Z Upper Hutt
 - Internet is a growing connection for older folk plus social marketing sites. Texts.
 - Street Hello Example
 - Visit Neighbourhood connections

6. Who determines if an older person is socially or emotionally isolated – the person themselves, or those observing? If an older person is deemed by others to be socially or emotionally isolated, is it a problem if the person is quite happy with their living circumstances?

-Some need support and some don't - want to support all in the same way

-What is the individual story?

-Story telling

- what is the actual need

-Differences in upbringing/culture

-Probus is taking down stories which have often not come through families etc

IDEAS:

-Adopt a grandparent/Neighbourhood- there are some

Eg: Upper Hutt schools, Super Gran

-Need to connect/co-ordinate

Key issues arising from the 2008 Upper Survey of Older Adults

1. What from the survey most stands out to you (either positively or negatively)? You can also look at the summary of the Results of the 2008 Survey for Upper Hutt Older People in your goodie bag.

As a group, decide on one or two of these issues to look at for the following questions:

- Who are the risk groups for this issue?
- What are the impacts on the wider community?
- What are the solutions that you as an older person could be part of?
- What are the solutions that Upper Hutt City Council could be part of?

Parking at the Hapai – council could perhaps be designated for.

- Omission of the tie in between social and environment – e.g. sustainability (of questions).

- Need to tie all in e.g. degradation of CBD.

- Loneliness was high – 1/3 alone 15 hours per day.

- Live because love to see the birds and hear the birds

- Real passion is because of that connection thus want to see resources put into this part – birds.

Solutions:

- important that planning and urban design caters for mobility etc.

- Issue of bollards – grey colour

- Buses access

- Impermeable surfaces

- No water tanks/sustainable measures for new industry etc

- Skills of older people could be useful

- ACE programme

- TOP project has been great – more like that

- House – Sensible design/modifications now

- Hot water 55 degrees now – regulate early

- Communal housing starting to become more popular.

- Lower economic level

- Nothing around has stayed constant – all around has been changed.

- ¾ to ¼ acres sections are small

- Community garden in the back of sections?

- Ageing + care policy of government – government needs to regulate

- At local level, money not always being made available as per govt policy, e.g. DHB

- Write policy in plain English – doing not talking, is a feature of this generations

- Make resources available to helpd but not hard to use e.g. too many hoops.

2. From the respondents that completed the survey, only 19% feel very confident/financially secure for retirement. What are ways that would make you as an older person feel more financially secure for retirement? What information would be useful?

- If couple are concerned that if one needs to go into care, they will lose the house/or everything. Information needs to be clarified about entitlements/how it works.
- Those who do not own home, paying rent.
- Those who still paying large mortgages at older age
- Reality that if have to downscale, it is ok/not life or death.
- Issue of phone assessment
- Family responsibility – push to help more at that end, rather than always expecting government help.
- Idea of wellness = change
- away from just financial
- ability to able to go for swim in river
- disgusted at CBD
- Emotional and social intelligence
- Housing – information/advice about how to sell house, what happens if money.
- Very vulnerable concerns – pride don't want to support
- Trends might change!
- People getting together to buy/rent houses
- Upper Hutt will be new age of elegance
- Organisations, e.g. councils, issue of lack of connection between older people and council – real and perceived
- Agencies be contracted to do certain jobs; not others like cleaning – can't do windows
- Health funding – under-resourced/difficulties in accounting/outcomes
- Organisations in Upper Hutt – getting together and talking about responsibilities/connectedness/wider view/roles
- Importance of Cossie Club as pivotal to all this – returning to the more community service role
- 28 churches, ministers
- Overarching principle – safe city
- Social and ecological
- Information overlooked, but not consolidated. Coordinated. E.g. If health issue in 24 hour period would know what to do = answer = no.
- Did not call ambulance because did not want to disturb or did not think of it. Understanding how it works, not wanting to call because fear that might not return to own home again or that worried about clothes
- Green money, currency, barter
- Calculations of where at in the world – sorted.org.nz – what can do with that
- Career and money are two different parts
- Life/family – education – career – money – COMMUNITY SHARING = vision and values

3. The survey found that only 16% of respondents were able to get out and about as much as they would like. What do you think the barriers are to this? What are ways around these barriers?

No response.

Staying safe and general questions

1. What makes you feel safe in your home?

- Locked doors
- security lighting
- Ok with all open, being open eg: windows
- Great neighbours
- Attitude to being safe feeling ok, not being attached to possessions.

- Personal skills- dealing with anger
- Personal development
- Something heavy by bed- throw through window

2. We know what makes older people feel unsafe at times (for example, a knock at the door by a stranger, nighttime, media reports about crime or being alone). Bearing this in mind, what could be ways for older people to feel even safer when these situations happen?

- Having connections in the neighbourhood, neighbourhood watch
- Home instead- service to "check in" on people regularly, for example with their fridge
- Police community constables, can they visit for security/reassurance?
- Door and chains
- Signs re: alarms/deterrents
- Dog sign

3. If you felt you needed to, would there be someone you know well that you could call on (for example, neighbours, friends or family)? Would you know who to call if none of these people were available?

- Yes Neighbourhood connection
- Bake a cake

4. What projects do you think the council could be involved in that would make you feel safer in your community?

- CBD Urban design regarding safety and Resource management
- Safer Community Project
- CCTV- are they useful/used in the right place. Are they on? Working correctly? Are there people to man?
- CCTV not always the answer as they can't go everywhere
- Big buildings, no windows, good seating that can get out of quickly.
- Trees being better designed
- Cars giving way to pedestrians
- Less car parking gradually
- Retailers being forced to rent etc, High vacancies being discouraged

5. Have you noticed any changes (positive/negative) in the last 12 months on issues affecting older people in Upper Hutt?

- Deterioration of CBD like poorer state. Mall very poor/wrong place. Design again.
- Police officer/Community constable walking around is positive.
- Skateboarders moving out of town

6. What agencies/groups are the easiest to access and work with and why?

No response.

7. What do you think are the 3 biggest issues facing older people in Upper Hutt?

No response.

Final question: If you could change one thing in Upper Hutt for older people/seniors, what would it be? Please decide on one thing as a group and we will get you to report back to everyone in the room (in one or two sentences!).

- One change for free transport over whole 24hrs would get older folk off road
- Then older folk stay in community and stay working in community
- Workplace safety, e.g. Voluntary people going into homes without systems and protection.
- After hours medical service.

Discussion Group 2

Social and emotional isolation

1. What is the impact of social and emotional isolation on the community?

It's the individual it has the impact on

It has an impact on their health

2. Who are the risk groups?

-Accessibility, low-income, health issues, people who live alone, people who have limited family.

3. When thinking about social and emotional isolation, what differences and/or similarities have you observed, or feel there might be, between older adults living independently and those living in residential care?

-Differences - Networks/available services in residential care

-Similarities - Personality comes out in both

4. In what ways could social connections be enhanced between an isolated older person and their wider community?

-Create programmes they can come along to

-Keeping activities low cost

-Connections - memberships of service clubs.

5. How easy is it for older adults to access information about where and how to seek help, should they be experiencing social or emotional isolation?

-Easy to access

6. Who determines if an older person is socially or emotionally isolated – the person themselves, or those observing? If an older person is deemed by others to be socially or emotionally isolated, is it a problem if the person is quite happy with their living circumstances?

No response.

Further comments:

-How well known is taxi chits?

-CAB very helpful

-Difficult to shift attitude

-Additional doctor responsibility?

-Lets account for culture/migrants/refugees

Key issues arising from the 2008 Upper Survey of Older Adults

1. What from the survey most stands out to you (either positively or negatively)? You can also look at the summary of the Results of the 2008 Survey for Upper Hutt Older People in your goodie bag.

As a group, decide on one or two of these issues to look at for the following questions:

- Who are the risk groups for this issue?
- What are the impacts on the wider community?
- What are the solutions that you as an older person could be part of?
- What are the solutions that Upper Hutt City Council could be part of?

-Viability of the survey

Perhaps ethnic groups missed out, people reluctant to read missed out

Don't get a true reading

Could test the survey on a select group to comment to encourage others to participate

Opportunity to test samples and forums

Find a better way of informing/getting survey to more people

-Solutions - make it an additional piece of mail with rates, street surveys, 60s and up presentation meetings, Leader two page spread

2. From the respondents that completed the survey, only 19% feel very confident/financially secure for retirement. What are ways that would make you as an older person feel more financially secure for retirement? What information would be useful?

-Cheaper rates, raise threshold

Are people aware of rates rebate?

3. The survey found that only 16% of respondents were able to get out and about as much as they would like. What do you think the barriers are to this? What are ways around these barriers?

-Physical ability

-Health

-transport

-location; where they live

- money

-Let people know about taxi chits

-Let people know about budgeting help

-Possible addition: what are those barriers

-Smaller bites info

-Cultural information

Staying safe and general questions

1. What makes you feel safe in your home?

-Security alarms

-Security lights/Doors

-Neighbourhood Support

-Medical alarms

-Don't answer door at night

2. We know what makes older people feel unsafe at times (for example, a knock at the door by a stranger, nighttime, media reports about crime or being alone). Bearing this in mind, what could be ways for older people to feel even safer when these situations happen?

-Have a peephole or safety chain

-Increased visibility

-Neighbourhood

-Good lighting

3. If you felt you needed to, would there be someone you know well that you could call on (for example, neighbours, friends or family)? Would you know who to call if none of these people were available?

-Police

4. What projects do you think the council could be involved in that would make you feel safer in your community?

-Look into noise control

-Noise is a factor with safety

-Cost free advice for safety

-Info pack out with rates demand.

5. Have you noticed any changes (positive/negative) in the last 12 months on issues affecting older people in Upper Hutt?

- There is better lighting and seating in the CBD
- CCTV in CBD
- Some pedestrian crossings needing painting

6. What agencies/groups are the easiest to access and work with and why?

- Library
- Fantastic facilities eg: fax to Greek island
- CAB - Central and deals with a huge range of issues, is a little hutt, history
- SITE -Bookings, UHCC data
- Council
- H2O - Lots of things for older people
- Mps office

7. What do you think are the 3 biggest issues facing older people in Upper Hutt?

Anti social behaviour, getting old

Final question: If you could change one thing in Upper Hutt for older people/seniors, what would it be? Please decide on one thing as a group and we will get you to report back to everyone in the room (in one or two sentences!).

- Improved accessibility for all Eg: making things reachable
- Celebrating- a big ball

Discussion Group 3

Social and emotional isolation

1. What is the impact of social and emotional isolation on the community?

- Difficult for elderly with an inability to leave home
- Cutbacks in home help are proving difficult. Miss the social interaction
- Feel the DHB are being too prescriptive and not taking social interaction into account.
- No support for partners at home with husbands/wives in rest homes
- Home alone with few neighbours
- People not knowing what/who are available
- Transport issues, no car, very inaccessible busses. Few lean
- Not having someone to notice how you are each day.

2. Who are the risk groups?

- People with health issues
- feels unsafe around groups of teens

3. When thinking about social and emotional isolation, what differences and/or similarities have you observed, or feel there might be, between older adults living independently and those living in residential care?

- Like village style housing, Kowhai court
- People in residential care can feel lonely with staff changes, many caregivers of different nationalities.

4. In what ways could social connections be enhanced between an isolated older person and their wider community?

-To have parking around places like Hapai club and library also a problem.

5. How easy is it for older adults to access information about where and how to seek help, should they be experiencing social or emotional isolation?

-The info is readily available if you know where to go.

-Find the advertising of www access to organizations difficult

-The leader is the best form of advertising – needs larger font

-Hate answer phones

-Info centre not inviting

-CAB not in town

-Doctors are a good source of info

6. Who determines if an older person is socially or emotionally isolated – the person themselves, or those observing? If an older person is deemed by others to be socially or emotionally isolated, is it a problem if the person is quite happy with their living circumstances?

-the people themselves

Others need to reach out- often a smile and hello makes all the difference.

Key issues arising from the 2008 Upper Survey of Older Adults

1. What from the survey most stands out to you (either positively or negatively)? You can also look at the summary of the Results of the 2008 Survey for Upper Hutt Older People in your goodie bag.

As a group, decide on one or two of these issues to look at for the following questions:

- Who are the risk groups for this issue?
- What are the impacts on the wider community?
- What are the solutions that you as an older person could be part of?
- What are the solutions that Upper Hutt City Council could be part of?

-No historical society in Upper Hutt. Need to capture the stories of today's elderly.

-Upper Hutt is nice and laid back

-Love the parks and trees

-Wouldn't live anywhere else

-CBD is dying

-Feel the differences between the generations.

Council recommendations

-Not happy with the increases in rental for the Hapai club

-For senior groups to meet/socialize often, need affordable venues

2. From the respondents that completed the survey, only 19% feel very confident/financially secure for retirement. What are ways that would make you as an older person feel more financially secure for retirement? What information would be useful?

-WINZ are improving in providing advice

-"Welcome to Upper Hutt" letter advising of rates rebate.

3. The survey found that only 16% of respondents were able to get out and about as much as they would like. What do you think the barriers are to this? What are ways around these barriers?

-The need to rely on others

-Costs of taxis if busses aren't available

-Not knowing when the kneeling busses run

-3pm Curfew for gold card holders (esp hospital appointments)

- Bus timetable to Wellington hospital doesn't co ordinate with appointments
- Really appreciate the free monthly taxi/bus service to the cemetery.

Staying safe and general questions

1. What makes you feel safe in your home?

- Having secure locks and security doors
- Safety catches on windows
- Having dogs

2. We know what makes older people feel unsafe at times (for example, a knock at the door by a stranger, nighttime, media reports about crime or being alone). Bearing this in mind, what could be ways for older people to feel even safer when these situations happen?

- Feel unsafe when stranger visits particularly in the evening
- Police have responded well when called
- Families, neighbours, police
- The info tubes are great and medical alarms

3. If you felt you needed to, would there be someone you know well that you could call on (for example, neighbours, friends or family)? Would you know who to call if none of these people were available?

No response.

4. What projects do you think the council could be involved in that would make you feel safer in your community?

No response.

5. Have you noticed any changes (positive/negative) in the last 12 months on issues affecting older people in Upper Hutt?

No response.

6. What agencies/groups are the easiest to access and work with and why?

No response.

7. What do you think are the 3 biggest issues facing older people in Upper Hutt?

- Attitude to ageing both by the elderly and by younger people
- Costs of food

Final question: If you could change one thing in Upper Hutt for older people/seniors, what would it be? Please decide on one thing as a group and we will get you to report back to everyone in the room (in one or two sentences!).

- Make the city more accessible (see page 292 UH the history)
- Improved communication of information.

Discussion Group 4

Social and emotional isolation

1. What is the impact of social and emotional isolation on the community?

- Some people can cope really well others can't really, symptoms of depression "I wish I could go to sleep"
- Those who are isolated- the community doesn't really know about them much
- Health professionals don't know either
- Might not choose to tell doctor about problems

- Don't really see the people and their problems
- Feel that people don't really want to know
- People are too busy to care
- There should be more publicity about services available
- They think they are "past it"
- Lack of volunteers in the 50/60 group
- People don't want to be involved- want to pass duties to others- often there's nobody
- When you take on a service you have to stick to it
- Games and activities
- Hapai Club - Stigma
- People are isolating themselves by moving into retirement villages, Sommerset

2. Who are the risk groups?

- Those with disabilities that can't get help
- Men sit at home, they are lonely
- Motivation needed
- Don't usually like to get involved don't join groups/clubs
- Used to going out with partners
- Woman seem to cope better than men
- People going into rest homes - not allowed to move around as freely as we think
- Men would just rather stay home
- "New old" may have a different set of views

3. When thinking about social and emotional isolation, what differences and/or similarities have you observed, or feel there might be, between older adults living independently and those living in residential care?

Similarities:

- People still feeling isolated in the community
- Seem to die sooner in rest homes 50% within first 3 months
- People go into rest homes when health issues arise
- Healthier older adults living independently
- Cutting down work hours for caregivers not proper assessment by DHB regarding caregivers.
- Services are ok for those who have money
- Support not there in homes
- Less carers in rest homes not trained, language barrier, lack of communication
- Older people are used to dealing with others the same
- Residential care should be a part of the community not isolated from them- no communication

4. In what ways could social connections be enhanced between an isolated older person and their wider community?

- Didn't know about groups and services
- Bad publicity
- Groups want new members
- Want a list of groups available
- Not able to do things you used to do, eg biking, writing/secraterial
- Have to make a major effort to get places, busses not very user friendly
- In the Upper Hutt leader: page of groups and clubs, services available, not in small print
- Get WINZ involved - addresses of all older adults in Upper Hutt
- Rates- Notices for all those owning a house
- Transport getting people to events

5. How easy is it for older adults to access information about where and how to seek help, should they be experiencing social or emotional isolation?

- Some services not being used
- CAB has all the info

-WINZ be made aware- difficult process to get through to deal with people- older adults 1-2 people who look after this group.

6. Who determines if an older person is socially or emotionally isolated – the person themselves, or those observing? If an older person is deemed by others to be socially or emotionally isolated, is it a problem if the person is quite happy with their living circumstances?

-No it's not a problem

-Most cases its others that worry about isolated people

-Concerned neighbours

-Rest homes – people get forgotten

-If happy then should be respected

-Maintenance handyman volunteers?

-Rimutaka fire brigade- very helpful

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- What are the impacts on the wider community?
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- What are the solutions that Upper Hutt City Council could be part of?

-Green spaces- access to bush and parks

-Good sample used in the survey

-37% of those in contact with family daily - may be too high

-Survey in LH had to be persuaded

-Worried about those with no family

-Just phoning is not actual communication, phone contact- not contact

-Depends on the person more of a mechanical thing- not really deep and meaningful.

Who are the risks groups?

-We need to cover who needs help, need to know their names

-Wet days- scooter xx

Solutions

-Part of a church, more for the poorer of the parish

-Older - have a list of those with a problem and someone that follows up on them

-Food bank- Not usually older people that are in need of help-older people know how to "make do".

UHCC

-Most CC have a youth advisor but no one for older adults- never seems to be advertised

-Keeping adults in the loop inform them about activities

-Older adults don't realize they can go to the library sit there all day- heating, people, books. Maybe UHCC could cater to these groups by providing morning tea etc

-Age concern, city mission, Wesley care - involved with UHCC already

-CAT guys (positive feedback) and volunteer resources - Handy man volunteers

2. From the respondents that completed the survey, only 19% feel very confident/financially secure for retirement. What are ways that would make you as an older person feel more financially secure for retirement? What information would be useful?

- Changes of grant and policy
- Can't answer that right now- need to plan for future
- Pension - Some struggle because they indulge, some manage just fine budget, Pension doesn't cover the "high life" preparation for retirement
- Budgeting advice for pensioners
- Money gets spent on unplanned illnesses etc
- Accumulating income isn't always possible

3. The survey found that only 16% of respondents were able to get out and about as much as they would like. What do you think the barriers are to this? What are ways around these barriers?

- 16% is a very low figure of respondents
- Evening-no public transport
- Even if you have a car may still need to walk
- People don't want to commit to helping picking others out
- Don't take scooter out at night - use wheel chair/taxi, but not always available at night also fewer available
- Total mobility vouchers pay half the taxi fares anyway with taxi fares going up \$50-\$100
- Weather
- Older people are restricted a lot by weather etc
- Giving people lifts, making the commitments, offer to help
- People who run coaches to the symphony orchestra
- PCC run outings for older people-usually bus trips, small cost
- Organizing activities for older people
- Gold card has broken lots of barriers
- \$5 card was better but still great

Staying safe and general questions

1. What makes you feel safe in your home?

- Burglar alarm- security locks on windows
- Steps you take for personal security, full security in a complex
- Neighbours who look out for you

2. We know what makes older people feel unsafe at times (for example, a knock at the door by a stranger, nighttime, media reports about crime or being alone). Bearing this in mind, what could be ways for older people to feel even safer when these situations happen?

- Not much control over being frightened – safety door , screen door
- Ask people at night to come around the back
- Door to door sales reps can be bothersome and can be confused
- Fear of burglaries- used by companies to sell house alarms focused on the older adults group
- Can be slightly invasive
- So many scams right now

3. If you felt you needed to, would there be someone you know well that you could call on (for example, neighbours, friends or family)? Would you know who to call if none of these people were available?

- Upper Hutt police
- Fire brigade, they always turn up
- burglar alarm rings up, cell phones, security, Chains

4. What projects do you think the council could be involved in that would make you feel safer in your community?

- Better street lighting down BOTH streets
- Footpaths are very uneven
- Out of CBD curbs are awful
- Graffiti removal - if its not removed vandals gather more there, people are not bothering to report. Don't want to go into those areas – feel intimidated
- If a constable walking around the streets, there is no police pressure in town/lack of

5. Have you noticed any changes (positive/negative) in the last 12 months on issues affecting older people in Upper Hutt?

- Graffiti- negative
- Positive gold card for busses
- Big block of empty shops- dead area now, Smith City, More shops
- More activity wanted

6. What agencies/groups are the easiest to access and work with and why?

- CAB they direct you, tell you good info
- I-site –Very useful- good talks by staff Centre
- UHCC- far more accessible and proactive than HCC

7. What do you think are the 3 biggest issues facing older people in Upper Hutt?

- Ever increasing size of Rimutaka prison 1000pop inmates- from outside the area, families also move down, social problems arise from this

Final question: If you could change one thing in Upper Hutt for older people/seniors, what would it be? Please decide on one thing as a group and we will get you to report back to everyone in the room (in one or two sentences!).

- Nothing happens in the Upper Hutt senior citizens club
- UHCC should do something more noticeable, more activity