



# Making Throckley a good place to grow old

26 March 2013



Part of Newcastle's Age Friendly City Programme

# Introduction

We would like to thank those who helped organise the event, those who helped on the day and those who attended on the day. The event was well attended on a week of heavy snow and very cold temperatures this was down to the commitment and dedication of the people who run the Throckley Community hall and their links with many of the local residents, the event was also very friendly and everyone was full of energy and enthusiasm which appeared to be how the Community Hall always feels.



## Purpose of the Event

The event was planned as a first step to begin a conversation with local people to think about what it is like to live, work and grow older in the Throckley area. This event is one of a number of activities in the area that involves bringing people together, thinking and discussing some key areas. The information from the event is planned to be used to inform a number of developments.

- First step in bringing people together in the area to think about what it means to live in Throckley and how as people get older they can continue to be active and how the resources in Throckley can better support its community.
- Bridging the Gap looking at how older isolated people can become more connected.
- Planned housing development focusing on suitable housing for older people including the development of a dementia care facility.
- To provide information in the development of know your patch.

## Planning for the Event

A brief idea for the event was discussed with three of the people who run the community centre, 1 member of the Elders Council, 1 member of the QOLP and 1 person from the Wellbeing for Life team; this was then developed into the structure of the session.

## Publicity for the Event

Information was given to every person who dropped in to the two formal consultation events that were lead by the City Council Fairer Housing Unit. Other information was circulated from the list of people on the Elders Council database. The majority of information distributed by the people from the Throckley Community Centre and this included leaflet posting to areas where they were aware the housing was for older residents.



# Event and Outcomes

## Attendance

The session was attended by 41 people who signed in and then approximately 8-10 people came part way through the event. The event was in the main attended by those over 50 but there were a group of younger people who attended.

## Session 1 – What is it like to grow older in Throckley?

This exercise required people to complete a diary of a day in their life, giving a flavour of the things people do, places they go and what makes life good and what are the challenges. Completed by 38 people.

## Session 2 – Places to go people to see

People were invited individually or as a table to draw a map showing the places they go and how they got there. They were then asked to star rate the places, gold being a great welcoming place with lots to do, silver being somewhere that is okay but could do with little improvements, and red being somewhere that is very run down or the service needs a great deal of improvement.

## Session 3 – What do we have to offer?

On a large map select the images that are really important, write on post it, why it is important or any other comments.

## Session 4 – What do older people do to make Throckley a good place to live and grow old?

People were invited to write on a sheet of paper with a person in the middle and write on all the people they have connections with, putting those people they know well closest to the person.

## What We Shared and Learned

### What keeps people busy?

We learned that many of the people in attendance relied on local resources in particular 89% made good use of the community centre and a number of specific activities were mentioned computer course, coffee mornings, bingo, slimming world, line dancing. It appears that the success of the community centre. Most people met others during the course of the day either meeting friends to go shopping or hospital appointments or at the community centre activities. Other community facilities in neighbouring localities being used such as the Grange, Lemington Centre and swimming pool were also referred to. There were a number of people who go to Newcastle to shop, meet friends and have coffee or lunch 18%.

Many of the people indicated that evening was a time when they were alone 73% of people said that they spent most evenings alone watching TV, knitting and reading. Of those people who responded to what they did in the evening, 13% of people stayed in to look after their children and the 14% of people who reported going out in the evening went to the local club for a drink, line dancing or were attending events at the local church. A number of people stated that they did not wish to be alone at night and would have liked something to do and 21% said it was having an effect on their mental wellbeing stating they felt depressed.



## Supporting each other – who are our networks?

We learned that many people who attended supported others with 23% of people supporting older relatives and neighbours but there was also a high level of support to Grandchildren at 16%. Whilst in contrast the younger people who attended referred to supporting their children and visiting parents. From what you told us it was clear that many of the people who attended the session were



already connected and had a number of social networks with 84% of people saying they spent time with others during the day they recorded. The mapping of support networks confirmed that many people 21% received phone calls or visits from family members, usually in an evening to check on their wellbeing.

Most people recorded a range of family, neighbours and friends as being part of their social connections. There were two ways people recorded this information one group named all their contacts and the other referred to them as collectives such as 'friends' or 'family'. A number of people 37 % recorded they had little or few connections this was due to bereavement of family members, lost contact with work colleagues or were newer to the area. A number of people referred to acquaintances people they knew from activities such as dog walking or builders.

12% of people mentioned doing voluntary work particularly at the community centre.

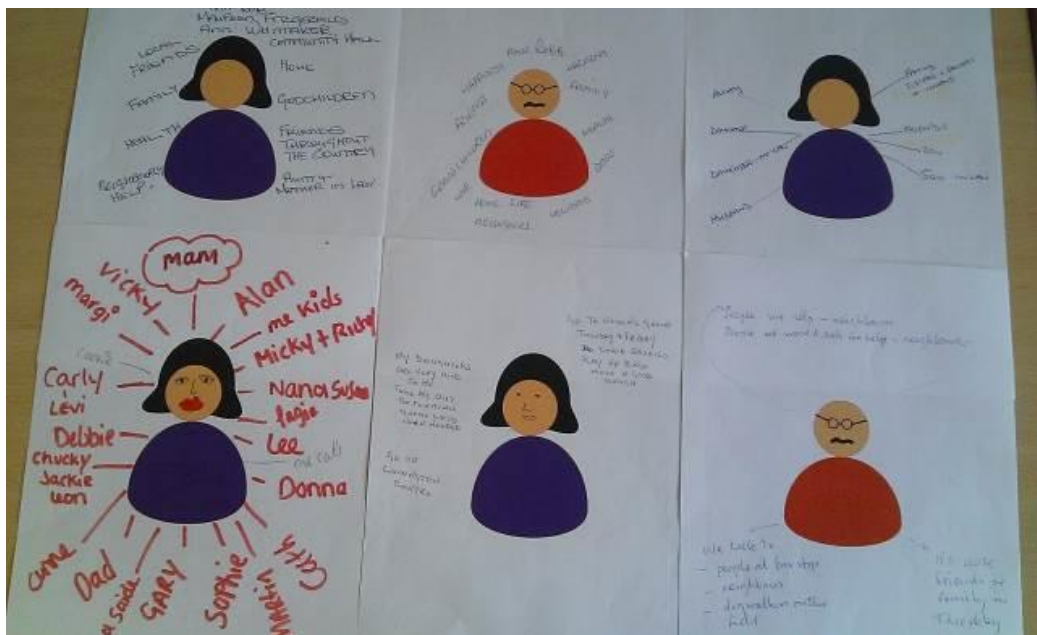


## How people get around

Of those attending the majority 91% walk to local venues and used public transport to get out and about further. There were a few people 10% who mentioned using a car either giving lifts to others or receiving lifts or used it to take children to school. There were a few people who referenced using taxis in an evening to go to social club. A number of people identified the difficulty in getting to some of the place across the city and the lack of connecting bus services e.g.



the metro centre is only a short distance away but requires two bus journeys and connections are not reliable requiring many longer journey necessitating going into the centre of Newcastle first. There were also comments regarding the difficulty for some people in getting shopping as none of the retailers in the area offered a home delivery service resulting in people requiring the support of others to do the weekly shop.





## Resources in Throckley - what is valued what is not

The table below shows the resources that people who attended the session value in their area and those things that they think could be better. This information has been collated from 28 maps completed on the day; maps were individual or a shared effort of two or sometimes more people. There was no limit to the number of stars people could put on the map and 2 maps had no stars at all.

Place	Times Mentioned	Gold Stars	Silver Stars	Red Stars
Doctor	11	0	7	5
Sainsbury's	20	2	6	9
My Home	14	10	0	2
My Family ( <i>some mentioned more than one family member</i> )	18	8	2	1
The Grange	8		3	2
The Community Hall	25	22 ( <i>one person gave it 2 gold stars</i> )	3	1 ( <i>one person gave a gold and a red star</i> )
Church ( <i>there are 2 mentioned</i> )	7	4	0	0
Pubs ( <i>there are 4 mentioned</i> )	11	8	2	1
Clubs ( <i>there are 3 mentioned</i> )	5	3	1	0
School ( <i>there are 3 schools</i> )	12	1	4	4
Park/Country Park/Denes	16	8	6	0
Hairdresser	5	2	2	0
Friends ( <i>people named by first name</i> )	4	4	0	0
Newburn Parish Hall	4	2	1	
Places mentioned beyond immediate area e.g. Berwick; Hexham	8	2	1	1
Bus Stops	14	1	2	1





Other places mentioned but with no star rating:  
 Asda (2), Chemist (2), Post Office (2), Play Group (1), Butcher (1), Rowing Club (1), Leisure Centre (1).

The place mentioned most and valued most by the number of gold stars was the Community Hall showing

that this is a resource valued by a wide range of people but we need to keep in mind that many of the people who attended the session use the Community Hall regularly.

There was also a collective map completed which showed where people lived in the area and the resources that people used, alongside this people also identified what they felt was missing from the area and suggested a local greengrocers, bakers, more things for young people to do, road sweepers and fast speed broadband. They also identified what they have in the area that could be improved on and suggestions included more community clean ups, improvements in park facilities and a concern over the loss of the ranger services and the impact this may have on the Dene and Riverside Park, also the potential impact on the area if the new housing developments go ahead e.g. traffic and centre of village.



## Observations:

- People from a wide age range became engaged in thinking about the area and what it means to them, what they spend time on and with whom. The Community Hall and its range of intergenerational activities offer a valuable resource to the area and provides a place where people are welcomed and make connections.
- By working with this community organisation to plan the event we were able to reach substantial groups of people but recognise that those who attended in the main had existing links highlighting the need to broaden the engagement to ensure different perspectives are captured and wider group of people are engaged.
- Methods used actively engaged people in the discussion, some for the first time, regarding issues. It also gave people the opportunity to reflect on their own networks and what they valued about the area where they live and the resources that are important to their day to day wellbeing.
- It gave some people the opportunity to hear about other things that are going on in the area that they did not know about and the session resulted in some people who were new to the area meeting others.

## Next Steps

We will share the information gathered from the event with those leads for the areas identified at the beginning of the report.

We would like to continue the conversation around growing older in Throckley and look at what action can be taken to make a difference, if you would like to be involved then please get in touch with us.



## **Elders Council of Newcastle**

Room 2.38, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Biomedical Research Building  
Campus for Ageing and Vitality  
Nuns Moor Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE4 5PL

Tel.           0191 208 2701  
Fax.           0191 208 2705  
Email         [info@qualityoflife.org.uk](mailto:info@qualityoflife.org.uk)  
Website      [www.elderscouncil.org.uk](http://www.elderscouncil.org.uk)