

LEITH & PORTOBELLO NEECAG (North East Edinburgh Elderly Care Action Groups)

*“Very pleased to be a member of NEECAG – I find it always welcoming and very helpful.
There is very informative speakers and excellent venue”*

NEECAG was formed in 1995. The main purpose is to give older people the opportunity to discuss Health & Community Care issues in a more organised way and to make their views known to the relevant bodies and to improve services for older people in Leith and Portobello areas through increased consultation and involvement of older people and their carers. NEECAG is the only service which provides a ‘voice’ for local older people to express their unmet needs/concerns and contribute to their resolution. NEECAG is primarily concerned with reducing health and social care inequalities and development of preventative strategies which enable older people and their carers to remain in their own homes and active within their local communities, for as long as possible.

PDP Management, Staff, Volunteers:

PDP provided management support to the Joint NEECAG management committee and groups and undertook specific work as required in relation to funding and joint working throughout 2022/23.

We would like to say thanks to Mary O Connell (Leith NEECAG) and Margaretann Farquharson (Portobello NEECAG) and our fantastic team of volunteers for their help and support. Margaretann Farquhartson (Lead PDP Worker of Portobello NEECAG) has been off since May-Dec 2022 and everyone is delighted to have Margaretann return back to the group.

Membership of NEECAG

As of March 2023, there are over 230 NEECAG members, made up of older people living in North East Edinburgh.

We are saddening of the passing of James Anderson (Chairperson), Jean Budge and Walter Dods during 2022/23. They will be sadly missed by all.

Key Achievements of 2022/23

During 2022-23, we offered a hybrid service of activities provided during the pandemic and pre-pandemic. These included 2 monthly meetings (Leith & Portobello), quarterly activity packs and newsletters posted to members, befriending (in-person/ telephone), digital lessons, practical help and support.

We also received and made individual referrals to relevant statutory and voluntary service providers. This helps prevent unnecessary hospital admissions and helps to create a more sustainable, healthy, community of older people, who are able to contribute to the prevention/promotion of healthy lifestyles as well as improving the mental health and wellbeing of local older people and their carers.

NEECAG Meetings

2 NEECAG Groups of older people meet on a monthly basis – one in Leith and the other in Portobello, with the minutes of the meetings posted out to those who could not attend (230 members).

PORTOBELLO NEECAG			LEITH NEECAG		
Date	Topic	No of Attendees	Date	Topic	No of Attendees
26 th April	Care and Repair	6	6 th April	Home Energy Scotland	7
31 st May	H&SC Strategy for Older People	5	4 th May	Care and Repair	10
June	No Meeting		1 st June	H&SC Strategy for Older People	11
28 th July	Police Scotland	11	6 th July	Leith Community Growers	14
30 th Aug	Solicitors for older people	14	3 rd Aug	Deidre Brock MP	15
27 th Sept	Age Scotland Social Security for those over pension age	11	7 th Sept	Solicitors for older people	22
27 th Oct	Police Scotland survey	10	5 th Oct	Leith AGM and Older Adult Week Celebration	10
24 th Nov	AGM	7	2 nd Nov	Age Scotland – Social benefits for those over pension age	14
Dec	NEECAG Christmas Party	30 older people, 30 children, and 10 Volunteers	Dec	NEECAG Christmas Party	30 older people, 30 children, and 10 Volunteers
Jan	NEECAG New Year Party	30-40 OP and 10 Volunteers	Jan	NEECAG New Year Party	30-40 OP and 10 Volunteers
Feb	Edinburgh Community Food	12	1 st Feb	Edinburgh Community Food	12
30 th Mar	Cares Rights by Age Scotland	12	1 st Mar	Leith NEECAG Evaluation & Planning Session	12

OUTCOMES OF NEECAG OLDER PEOPLE'S FORUMS WORK INCLUDED:

- **Sustain physical or mental health.**

A range of Speakers/ topics at the in-person meetings promoted healthy lifestyles to improve/ sustain physical mental health and wellbeing. These included Eating Well for Older People by Edinburgh Community Food, Staying Warm/ being energy efficient by Home Energy Scotland and information about rail handles/ free fire alarm installations by Care and Repair and Workshop on how to be more resilient in later years.

Articles/ booklets in the quarterly newsletters/ activities packed included Information/ support for people with long-term health conditions, such as diabetes; mental health emergency phone numbers, booklets on Pharmacy First, etc.

- **Have their voices heard**

Every year NEECAG members are consulted on what speakers/ topics they would like invited to the meetings, which then PDP tries to organise for meetings. Between Apr22-Mar23, we offered a range of sessions to ensure the voice of older people are heard including Deidre Brock MP for Edinburgh North & Leith attended a Leith NEECAG. Age Scotland provided talks on Carers Rights and Social Security for those over pension Age.

NEECAG members also participated in H&SC Strategy for Older People and Police Scotland Survey.

In PDP Newsletter, contact details for local MPs, MSPs and Councilors were included with a description of each of their roles/ remits. Information was provided on SOPA (Scottish Older People's Assembly)

NEECAG members were also invited to partake in PDP Participatory Action Research – local consultation work/community participative research, using a range of methodologies, to identify unmet needs of older people, including BAME community members in Leith and NE Edinburgh, to help raise awareness of their concerns/issues and help them to develop solutions

“I like to air my views and give my opinion”

- **Promoting safety.**

As requested by Portobello NEECAG members, Police Scotland were invited and attended a meeting to discuss community safety issues raised by members. Additionally, when Care and Repair spoke at the NEECAG meetings, they offered advice on how to stay safe at home. In PDP quarterly Newsletter/ Activities Packs, there were articles/ booklets on Crime Stoppers, Safe at home by Age Scotland and Free Fire alarm installation by Care & Repair, etc

- **Addressing the Cost of Living Crisis**

During the reporting period there was a greater need to offer advice/ support to members re Cost of Living Crisis.

Talks included: Social Security by Age Scotland (inc info on attendance allowance, carers allowance, winter fuel payment), Energy Efficiency by Home Energy Scotland, Legal Aid by Solicitors for Older People (when discussing Wills, Power of Attorney, etc).

Articles in PDP Newsletters/ Activity Packs included Pension Credits, low-cost recipes, Worried about Money Leaflet, etc

- **Capacity Building:**

Ensuring older people have a say as to what they need to partake in their local community and feel valued as a citizen. The NEECAG meetings provide the space for people to have an opportunity to share their issues and concerns, and to offer advice and peer support.

At NEECAG meetings and PDP Newsletter/ Activity Pack information is provided on local groups/ services e.g. GameChanger Digital Classes at Hibs Stadium, Ageing Well Programme, Manderston Court Social Activities, A Cost of living event hosted by local MP/ MSP, etc.

- **Reduced Social Isolation**

All members have acknowledged attending the meetings offers an opportunity to meet other people and *“have an afternoon out”*.

During 2022/23, we held 3 social events for members – an intergenerational Christmas Party with children from a local school, “Beat the Winter Blues” New Year Event and an Older People’s Week Celebration Event.

‘Very helpful event - everything was perfect, carry on with the help you give to so many people’



“Beat the Winter Blues” Event



Portobello NEECAG AGM



What did you enjoy most at Intergeneration Xmas Party?

‘liked the singing from the children and the companionship’

‘meeting old friends and new!’

‘in a million different ways’

‘it’s a pleasure to be part of the company’

‘Drinks, food, quizzes, company, organisation’