

CHANGING TIMES, CHANGING NEEDS

Needs Analysis Project Of Older People In North East Inner City Of Dublin



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NEEDS ANALYSIS PROJECT OF OLDER PEOPLE IN NORTH EAST INNER CITY OF DUBLIN

Views of Older People living in the North East Inner City about their quality of life, about the services being provided to them and about ways in which the lives of older people could be improved.

> Compiled by Stephen Rourke Produced by Inner City Organisations Network Printed and Designed by Brunswick Press, April 2008



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Needs Analysis Project of Older People in North East Inner City Of Dublin

FINAL REPORT

STEPHEN ROURKE APRIL 2008

FOREWORD

Inner City Organisations Network (ICON) is an amalgam of community based projects, organisations and individuals within the North East Inner City of Dublin. ICON creates opportunities for groups and individuals to come together to discuss issues of common interest or concern and, when considered appropriate, to lobby for positive action and to set up projects and initiatives around the expressed needs and concerns of local people.

In recent years ICON has become increasingly conscious and aware of the circumstances of older people living in the North East Inner City. Older people have always been the bedrock and the foundation of our society and, on the basis of the contributions which they have made to their own families and to local communities, we clearly recognise the need to cherish and to support older people as they become less independent, more vulnerable/frail and are more likely to fall into poor health.

ICON is concerned that older people are not being afforded the type of priority which they deserve or need within the many exciting developments which are taking place within the North East Inner City of Dublin. Whilst facilities and services are being put into place for children and young people and whilst the Docklands can be a vibrant location in which to live and to work for young and middle aged people, ICON is concerned that a similar emphasis and focus is not being placed on the needs and requirements of older people living in the North East Inner City.

On the basis of our analysis and the outcomes of the Needs Analysis Project of Older People Living in the North East Inner City it is evident that the circumstances of older people in this part of Dublin are more vulnerable and more isolated than in any previous generation. More older people are being uprooted from their traditional homes (because of redevelopment taking place in their area) and older people are becoming increasingly marginalised and lonely as the numbers of other older people decline within their area (the percentage of older people in the North East Inner City has decreased dramatically from 13.3% of the overall population in 1991 to just 6.5% of the overall population in 2006).

In addition to these worrying demographic outcomes it is also apparent that older people have been affected by the violence and by the drugs crisis that has impacted upon various areas of the North East Inner City over the last number of years. Many older people are afraid to leave their homes and no longer go to community events and social activities which are taking place in the evenings and at night-times. There are also older people whose children have died through drugs or who are seriously ill as a result of drugs. In many of these circumstances, the grandparent(s) are now the primary carers of their grandchild(ren).

It is considered that the needs and circumstances of older people living in the North East Inner City have changed significantly over the last 20 years. In order to capture and to reflect the true nature and extent of these changes, ICON felt that it was important to commission a piece of action research which would involve extensive consultations with older people. It was anticipated that these extensive consultations would serve to indicate the levels of contentment and happiness of older people, the needs of older people and the types of services and supports which should be improved or put in place in order to improve the quality of life for older people living in the North East Inner City.

The need to consult widely and directly with older people formed the basis for the Needs Analysis Project of Older People Living in the North East Inner City. Funding for this project was secured from the Dormant Accounts Fund, a project co-ordinator was appointed, an Advisory Group for the project was set up and a team of local researchers was put in place to conduct door-to-door interviews with as many older people as possible who are living in the North East Inner City. These interviews took place between June 2007 and December 2007.

ICON is delighted with the outcomes from the needs analysis project. Out of the 1,495 people aged over 65 and over who are living in the North East Inner City, it is estimated that 556 (37.2%) of these people contributed their views and opinions about what it is like to live in the North East Inner City and their ideas and suggestions about ways in which the lives of older people could be improved and enhanced. The level of participation in the project from older people is a clear demonstration of their desire and their interest in making their views known to agencies and organisations which have some level of responsibility for the delivery of services to older people.

In addition to the high level of participation in the needs analysis project ICON is also pleased with the particular recommendations and action points which are contained in this report on the needs analysis project. If implemented, these recommendations and action points have the potential to significantly enhance the quality of life for older people living in the North East Inner City and to seriously address issues relating to accommodation, social isolation, personal safety, local health services, local transport, and access to services and facilities.

The outcomes from the needs analysis project, as set out in this report, provide a very strong evidential basis for the various recommendations to be progressed and implemented by relevant statutory agencies and voluntary organisations. Many of these recommendations will not require a large financial contribution – they are either low cost or will involve some refocusing of existing services. In this context it is hoped that the recommendations contained in the report (based on the views of 556 of older people living in the North East Inner City) will be taken seriously and progressed by relevant statutory agencies and voluntary organisations.

On behalf of ICON, I would like to express our appreciation and thanks to all of the people who have been involved in the Needs Analysis Project of Older People Living in the North East Inner City. The development of the project has been a collective effort involving a large number of agencies and organisations (who participated in the Advisory Group, who proposed questions for the questionnaire, who provided funding for the needs analysis project) and a large number of local residents living in the North East Inner City (who supported the project, who became local researchers, who completed the questionnaires).

In particular I would like to thank the research team who played a key role in the needs analysis project. This research team comprised Stephen Rourke, the project co-ordinator, who guided and supported this initiative; Sian Muldowney from ICON and the group of 11 local researchers. All of these local researchers lived in the North East Inner City and the majority were over the age of 50.

There can be little doubt that one of the main reasons for the high number of completed questionnaires relates to the skills of the local researchers and the fact that being older people themselves they were more likely to get older people to complete the questionnaires. The active involvement of older people as local researchers is one of the most positive and exciting aspects of the needs analysis project.

Finally, ICON would like to thank the Dormant Accounts Fund for providing the financial assistance which was required to undertake the Needs Analysis Project of Older People Living in the North East Inner City. This financial assistance enabled us to put the project in place and to consult with nearly half of the overall population of older people living in the North East Inner City. We are confident that the grant received from the Dormant Accounts Fund towards the needs analysis project will result in a much clearer understanding of the needs and circumstances of older people and, hopefully, improvements in service provision to older people from relevant statutory agencies and voluntary organisations.

ICON is hopeful that the recommendations contained in this report on the Needs Analysis Project of Older People Living in the North East Inner City will be progressed and implemented over the next number of years. They are based directly on the expressed views, opinions and ideas of older people. They have the potential to significantly improve the quality of life for older people (especially if they are implemented in a co-ordinated and integrated manner). They are achievable and attainable, and many can be progressed for fairly small amounts of money. They will ease the process of transition and change being experienced by many older people.

In overall terms, the implementation of the recommendations would be a real demonstration of the extent to which older people in the North East Inner City are recognised and appreciated, and the extent to which their views and opinions are valued and respected.

Seanie Lambe

Chairperson

Inner City Organisations Network

Seanie Lambe

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Women at Bingo, Lourdes Day Care Centre

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

Inner City Organisations Network (ICON) is a network of community based projects, organisations and individuals within the North East Inner City of Dublin. A primary focus of ICON is to create a forum for discussion and local policy-making on issues and concerns identified by local residents and groups. ICON is also involved in setting up initiatives and projects which respond to these issues and concerns and in trying to ensure that there is a strong community input into major infrastructural developments within the North East Inner City (e.g. Dublin Docklands Development Authority, new Primary Health Care Facility at Summerhill).

Since its establishment in 1993, ICON has worked closely with a range of statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and community based groups which are providing services and supports to older people living in the North East Inner City. Through these linkages ICON has become aware of the extent to which many older people are feeling increasingly vulnerable and isolated as a result of the significant redevelopment and regeneration activities which are taking place in a number of locations across the North East Inner City.

Local communities have witnessed substantial changes in recent years (e.g. demolition of flats complexes, de-tenanting, building of new houses and facilities) and these changes have had a destabilising and unsettling impact on many older people in the North East Inner City.

In addition to comments expressed at meetings and anecdotal information picked up by local workers, ICON felt that it was important to conduct more detailed and extensive consultations with older people in the North East Inner City. This type of consultative process would help to identify and clarify the particular needs and requirements of older people and would assist in ensuring that the various services and supports being put in place by relevant agencies and organisations are based on the real, expressed needs of older people. It was anticipated that the outcomes and recommendations which would emerge from this extensive consultation process would be of significant interest and benefit to a wide range of service providers.

In relation to the issues of methodology and approach, ICON decided that in order to achieve its objective of a maximum level of participation from older people it would engage in door-to-door interviews and consultations with older people living in the North East Inner City. Only a small percentage of older people would normally turn up at community meetings and it was decided that the best approach would be to use local researchers to conduct interviews with older people in their own homes or in other places where the older people meet and socialise (e.g. in the pub, local community facilities, at social outings and events). This strategy succeeded in engaging with 556 (37.2%) of older people living in the North East Inner City.

1.2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The objectives and terms of reference for the Needs Analysis Project on Older People are as follows:

- ☐ To quantify the number of older people living in the North East Inner City
- ☐ To assess the extent to which older people living in the North East Inner City are accessing relevant services and supports



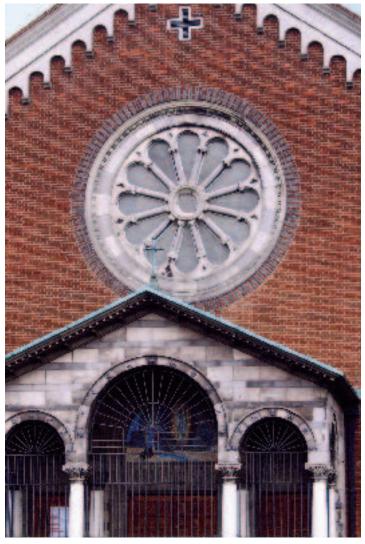
Some members of the research team

- □ To identify the outstanding gaps in provision and the ways in which these gaps might most effectively be met/ delivered
- □ To determine the ways in which the quality of life of older people might be improved and enhanced over the next ten year period
- ☐ To provide a meaningful and honest account of the living conditions and life circumstances of older people living in the North East Inner City
- □ To put together a range of policy and service delivery recommendations which will serve to influence the priorities and policies of relevant statutory and voluntary agencies which provide services to older people

1.3. KEY DEVELOPMENTS, FEBRUARY 2007 – FEBRUARY 2008

- ☐ In early 2007, ICON received notification from the Dormant Accounts Fund that funding had been approved to ICON for a Needs Analysis Project of Older People Living in the North East Inner City of Dublin.
- ☐ In March 2007 a number of consultants and researchers were invited to tender for the contract of managing and co-ordinating the needs analysis project.
- □ Stephen Rourke was recruited in April 2007 as project co-ordinator for the needs analysis project to help devise the questionnaire to be used, to train and support the team of local researchers, to process and analyse the completed questionnaires, to compile the final research report.

- □ In April 2007, it was decided that the majority of the research team should be local residents and, where possible, should be older people themselves they were more likely to get other older people to complete the questionnaire rather than young people who might not be known to older people living in the North East Inner City.
- □ Information meetings about the needs analysis project took place in April May 2007. The purpose of these meetings was to explain the reasons why the research was being undertaken and to recruit older people living in the North East Inner City onto the research team for the project.
- An Advisory Group was set up to provide advice and guidance on various aspects of the research project. The first meeting of the Advisory Group took place on 28th May 2007 in the North Star Hotel. This Advisory Group was an extension of the Old Folks Research Committee which had already been set up by ICON.
- The first meeting of the research team (project co-ordinator, Co-ordinator of ICON and local researchers) also took place on 28th May 2007 in the North Star Hotel. At this meeting, the background and context for the needs analysis project was outlined and main duties and responsibilities for the local researchers were detailed.
- □ The research team, the Advisory Group and other service providers made significant inputs into the design and contents of the questionnaire which was used with older people. The final agreed questionnaire contained a total of 42 questions a number of these questions were submitted and suggested by agencies interested in finding out how they could deliver improved services to older people living in the North East Inner City.
- □ The research team of the project coordinator, ICON Co-ordinator and the 11 local researchers met on a regular basis between May 2007 and December 2007 to discuss the progression of the project, to receive updates on completed questionnaires, to deal with any problems or difficulties which arose and to discuss the main outcomes which were emerging from the project. Since the establishment of the project, the research team met on seven occasions. In addition the broader Advisory Group met on four occasions.



Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Sean Mac Dermot Street

- An Information Note on the research project was drawn up and this Information Note was circulated to the older persons in advance of the visit by the researcher to complete the questionnaire. The Information Note provided re-assurance about the purpose of the overall research project and about the confidential nature of the information received.
- A listing of contact details for a range of statutory and voluntary sector services was drawn up and distributed to older people in the North East Inner City. This listing provided older people with the information required to make contact with these services.
- □ The fieldwork for the needs analysis project took place between June 2007 and December 2007. The researchers succeeded in helping to fill in and to gather a total of 468 completed questionnaires from older people living in the North East Inner City. These 468 completed questionnaires represented the views of 556 older people living in the North East Inner City i.e. 37.2% of all older people in the North East Inner City¹.
- Focus group meetings took place during 2007 and these meetings provided further insights and views about the needs and circumstances of older people living in the North East Inner City.
- ☐ In January February 2008 Stephen Rourke collated and analysed information from the 468 completed questionnaires and from the various meetings which had taken place during 2007
- A meeting to discuss and to refine the outcomes and recommendations from the needs analysis project took place in Isaacs Hotel on 25th February 2008.

1.4. STRUCTURE OF REPORT

This introductory section of the report will be followed by a demographic profile of older people living in the North East Inner City (Section 2). Section 3 of the report will detail the results of the 468 completed questionnaires. Section 4 will consider the main outcomes and conclusions from the needs analysis project. The final section of the report (Section 5) will set out a range of recommendations which have been directly informed by the views, opinions and ideas of older people (as expressed in the 468 completed questionnaires and the various group meetings).

^{1.} The 556 respondents comprised 380 households with one older person and 88 households with two older persons (generally husband and wife).

2. OLDER PEOPLE IN NORTH EAST INNER CITY OF DUBLIN

2.1. NORTH EAST INNER CITY

The boundaries of the North East Inner City, in relation to the needs analysis project of older people, are as follows: North Wall Quay, Custom House Quay, Amiens Street, Talbot Street, Marlborough Street, North Great Georges Street, Temple Street, Dorset Street Lower, Drumcondra Road Lower, Clonliffe Road, Poplar Road, North Strand Road, Seville Place, Sherriff Street Upper.



Royal Canal

There are six Electoral Divisions in the area covered by the Needs Analysis Project of Older People Living in the North East Inner City. These Electoral Divisions, and the main places/communities which they incorporate, are as follows:

- Ballybough A (Annesley Avenue, Ballybough Road, Ballybough House, Clonliffe Avenue/Road, Croke Villas, North Strand Road, Poplar Road, Portland Row, Summerhill Parade).
- Ballybough B (North Circular Road, Drumcondra Road Lower, Fitzroy Avenue, Jones Road, Russell Avenue, Portland Place, Sherrard Street Lower, Brendan Behan Court, Belvedere Place).
- Mountjoy A (Amiens Street, Buckingham Street, Foley Street, Gardiner Street Lower, Liberty House, Sean McDermott Street Lower, Summerhill, Killarney Street, Railway Street).
- Mountjoy B (North Circular Road, Fitzgibbon Street, Matt Talbot Court, Summerhill, Gardiner Street, Mountjoy Square, Sean O'Casey Avenue).

- North Dock C (Commons Street, Mayor Street, Oriel Street, Seville Place, Sherriff Street Lower, St. Lawrence O'Toole Court, Emerald Street, Coburg Place, Ferrymans Crossing).
- Rotunda A (Alfie Byrne House, Gardiner Street, Grenville Street, Hardwicke Street, Hill Street, Parnell Street, Avondale House, North Great Georges Street).



The Buildings

2.2. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The total population of the six Electoral Divisions in the North East Inner City (as set out in the 2006 Census of Population) and the proportion of older people within each of these Electoral Divisions, is as follows:

Electoral Division	Total Population	Aged 65-74	Aged 75-84	Aged 85+	Total Aged 65+
Ballybough A	3,624	217 (6.0%)	140 (3.9%)	27 (0.7%)	384 (10.6%)
Ballybough B	3,215	150 (4.7%)	104 (3.2%)	22 (0.7%)	276 (8.6%)
Mountjoy A	3,760	147 (3.9%)	80 (2.1%)	19 (0.5%)	246 (6.5%)
Mountjoy B	3,446	91 (2.6%)	67 (1.9%)	36 (1.1%)	194 (5.6%)
North Dock C	4,179	118 (2.8%)	54 (1.3%)	6 (0.2%)	178 (4.3%)
Rotunda A	4,672	131 (2.8%)	76 (1.6%)	10 (0.2%)	217 (4.6%)
Totals	22,896	854 (3.7%)	521 (2.3%)	120 (0.5%)	1495 (6.5%)

The proportion of older people aged 65 and over living in the North East Inner City is 6.5% of the overall population. This figure is substantially less than the comparative figures for Dublin City (12.7%) and for the Republic of Ireland (11.0%). Whilst approximately one in every nine people living in the Republic of Ireland is aged 65 and over, this number rises to one in every 15 people living in the North East Inner City of Dublin. Therefore the proportion of older people in the North East Inner City is far smaller than in other areas.

This outcome from the 2006 Census of Population is directly related to the isolation and loneliness being experienced by many older people who participated in the needs analysis project. In simple terms, there are proportionally fewer older people living in local communities in the North East Inner City than in most other communities in Ireland.

This sense of isolation and increased vulnerability has been exacerbated by the substantial changes which have taken place in the local community landscape over the last 10 – 15 year period – whilst many of these changes have been positive and beneficial (e.g. new housing, new facilities), the pace of change and the disruption and upheaval caused by change has been unsettling and somewhat frightening for many older people living in the North East Inner City.

It is evident that the proportion of older people in the North East Inner City has declined significantly over the last 10 – 15 year period. Up until the early 1990s the percentage of older people in the North East Inner City was fairly similar to the national average. It is only in recent years that the proportion of older people in the North East Inner City has gone into a sharp decline. The comparative figures for the North East Inner City, for Dublin City and for the State between 2002 and 2006 is as follows:

	Total Population 2002	Total Population 2006	Percentage Change	Older Persons Population 2002	Older Persons Population 2006	Percentage Change
Ballybough A	3,368	3,624	+7.6%	421	384	-8.8%
Ballybough B	3,009	3,215	+6.8%	278	276	-0.7%
Mountjoy A	3,242	3,760	+16.0%	238	246	+3.4%
Mountjoy B	2,725	3,446	+26.5%	191	194	+1.6%
North Dock C	3,568	4,179	+17.1%	150	178	+18.7%
Rotunda A	4,199	4,672	+11.3%	221	217	-1.8%
North East Inner City	20,111	22,896	+13.8%	1,499	1,495	-0.3%
Dublin City	495,781	506,211	+2.1%	63,507	64,246	+1.2%
National	3,917,203	4,239,848	+8.2%	436,001	467,926	+7.3%

Therefore whilst the overall population of the North East Inner City has increased by 2,785 people between 2002 and 2006, the number of older people aged 65 and over has decreased by four people in this four year period. The net result of this demographic shift is that the proportion of older people living in the North East

Inner City has decreased from 7.5% in 2002 to 6.5% in 2006. Whilst the overall population of the North East Inner City witnessed a population increase of nearly 14% between 2002 and 2006 the population of older people decreased by 0.3% within this same four year period.

The demographic shift in the composition of the population within the North East Inner City is not reflective of trends and patterns at the regional and national levels. These trends and patterns indicate that in the large majority of other places in Ireland there is an increase in the actual number of older people and an increase in the proportion or percentage of older people within the overall population. In Dublin City the number of older people increased by 1.2% between 2002 and 2006 whilst the comparative figure for the State was an increase of 7.3%. By contrast the number of older people in the North East Inner City decreased by 0.3%.

The decrease in the number of older people living in the North East Inner City between 2002 and 2006 follows a pattern that has been evident within the area since the early 1990s. In a similar way to the population out-turns between 2002 and 2006, the comparative Census figures for 1991 and 1996 would indicate that the trend of a declining older population has been ongoing for at least 15 years in the North East Inner City. This trend, and the way in which it contrasts with what has happened at the national and regional levels, is illustrated in the following table:



Brendan Behan Court

	1991		1996		2002		2006	
	Number	% of population						
Ballybough A	554	15.5%	508	14.2%	421	12.5%	384	10.6%
Ballybough B	373	15.1%	359	14.0%	278	9.2%	276	8.6%
Mountjoy A	362	12.1%	289	9.3%	238	7.3%	246	6.5%
Mountjoy B	250	15.1%	215	10.8%	191	7.0%	194	5.6%
North Dock C	170	7.3%	158	6.6%	150	4.2%	178	4.3%
Rotunda A	260	14.2%	215	8.5%	221	5.3%	217	4.6%
North East Inner City	1,969	13.3%	1,744	10.8%	1,499	7.5%	1,495	6.5%
Dublin City	61,336	12.8%	62,394	13.1%	63,507	12.8%	64,268	12.7%
National	402,900	11.4%	413,882	11.4%	436,001	11.1%	467,926	11.0%

There has been a substantial decrease in the number of older people living in the North East Inner City in the period from 1991 to 2006. In this 15 year period the overall population of the North East Inner City has increased from 14,848 people in 1991 to 22,896 in 2006 – this represents a remarkable increase of 54% in the local population between 1991 and 2006. In the same 15 year period, however, the number of older people has decreased from 1,969 to 1,495 (a fall of 24.1% in the population of older people). In 1991 older people in the North East Inner City accounted for 13.3% of the local population – by 2006 this percentage of older people was less than half of this figure (i.e. 6.5%).

In overall terms, there are 474 fewer older people living in the North East Inner City in 2006 than there were in 1991. In certain Electoral Divisions the difference in the population of older people is particularly stark. In Ballybough A (which includes Ballybough, Clonliffe Avenue/Road, Croke Villas) the number of older people has decreased by over 30% (from 554 in 1991 to only 384 in 2006). In a similar way the proportion of older people in Mountjoy B (which includes Summerhill, Gardiner Street, Mountjoy Square) has decreased from 15.1% to 5.6% of the overall population and the proportion of older people in Rotunda A (which includes Alfie Byrne House, Hill Street, Hardwicke Street) has decreased from 14.2% to 4.6%.

These represent substantial falls in the number of older people living in certain communities in the North East Inner City and, on the basis of the responses to the needs analysis questionnaire, makes it more isolated, more vulnerable and more lonely for the older people who continue to live within these communities. The percentage of older people in some of Electoral Divisions in the North East Inner City has now dropped to less than 5% of the overall population. This is not considered to be a positive or sustainable development and it is important that strategies are put in place to reverse the noticeable and worrying pattern of population decline amongst older people living in the North East Inner City.

In relation to the demographic profile of older people in the North East Inner City it is evident that there is a significantly larger number of older women than older men living in the area. Of the 1,495 people aged 65 and over in the North East Inner City, 846 are women and 649 are men. This type of breakdown between men and women aged 65 and over is not substantially different from comparative regional and national figures:

Persons aged 65 and over in North East Inner City				
	Male	Female		
Ballybough A	159 (41.4%)	225 (58.6%)		
Ballybough B	119 (43.1%)	157 (56.9%)		
Mountjoy A	98 (39.8%)	148 (60.2%)		
Mountjoy B	81 (41.8%)	113 (58.2%)		
North Dock C	80 (44.9%)	98 (55.1%)		
Rotunda A	112 (51.6%)	105 (48.4%)		
North East Inner City	649 (43.4%)	846 (56.6%)		
Dublin City	25,985 (40.4%)	38,283 (59.6%)		
National	207,095 (44.3%)	260,831 (55.7%)		

These figures reflect the fact that there are a significantly higher number of women aged 65 and over than men aged 65 and over. This raises particular issues about the isolation and loneliness of older people who have been bereaved or separated from their partners, issues which recurred on an ongoing basis during the needs analysis project. In overall terms it is estimated that 65.2% of older people living in the North East Inner City are single, separated divorced or widowed and that 34.8% are living with their husband/wife. This serves to further re-enforce the importance of addressing issues relating to loneliness and social isolation.

Marital Status of Older Men Living in the North East Inner City						
	Married	Single	Separated/ Divorced	Widowed	Total	
Ballybough A	75 (47.2%)	40 (25.2%)	21 (13.2%)	23 (14.4%)	159 (100%)	
Ballybough B	57 (47.9%)	35 (29.4%)	5 (4.2%)	22 (18.5%)	119 (100%)	
Mountjoy A	28 (28.6%)	36 (36.7%)	12 (12.2%)	22 (22.5%)	98 (100%)	
Mountjoy B	29 (35.8%)	21 (38.3%)	5 (6.2%)	16 (19.7%)	81 (100%)	
North Dock C	39 (48.9%)	21 (26.2%)	5 (6.2%)	15 (18.7%)	80 (100%)	
Rotunda A	43 (38.4%)	42 (37.5%)	10 (8.9%)	17 (15.2%)	112 (100%)	
North East Inner City	271 (41.8%)	205 (31.6%)	58 (8.9%)	115 (17.7%)	649 (100%)	

Marital Status of Older Women Living in the North East Inner City						
	Married	Single	Separated/ Divorced	Widowed	Total	
Ballybough A	69 (30.7%)	48 (21.3%)	9 (4.0%)	99 (44.0%)	225 (100%)	
Ballybough B	44 (28.0%)	43 (27.4%)	3 (1.9%)	67 (42.7%)	157 (100%)	
Mountjoy A	36 (24.3%)	48 (32.4%)	8 (5.4%)	56 (37.9%)	148 (100%)	
Mountjoy B	31 (27.4%)	50 (44.2%)	2 (1.8%)	30 (26.6%)	113 (100%)	
North Dock C	36 (36.7%)	14 (14.3%)	5 (5.1%)	43 (43.9%)	98 (100%)	
Rotunda A	34 (32.4%)	41 (39.0%)	7 (6.7%)	23 (21.9%)	105 (100%)	
North East Inner City	250 (29.6%)	244 (28.8%)	34 (4.0%)	318 (37.6%)	846 (100%)	

Marital Status of Older Men and Women Living in North East Inner City						
	Married	Single	Separated/ Divorced	Widowed	Total	
Ballybough A	144 (37.5%)	88 (22.9%)	30 (7.8%)	122 (31.8%)	384 (100%)	
Ballybough B	101 (36.6%)	78 (28.3%)	8 (2.9%)	89 (32.2%)	276 (100%)	
Mountjoy A	64 (26.0%)	84 (34.1%)	21 (8.1%)	78 (31.8%)	246 (100%)	
Mountjoy B	60 (30.9%)	81 (41.8%)	7 (3.6%)	46 (23.7%)	194 (100%)	
North Dock C	75 (42.1%)	35 (19.7%)	10 (5.6%)	58 (32.6%)	178 (100%)	
Rotunda A	77 (35.5%)	83 (38.2%)	17 (7.8%)	40 (18.5%)	217 (100%)	
North East Inner City	521 (34.8%)	449 (30.0%)	92 (6.2%)	433 (29.9%)	1,495 (100%)	



Lourdes Day Care Centre

2.3. FUTURE DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

It is anticipated that the population of the Republic of Ireland will increase from approximately 4,239,848 in 2006 to 4,922,000 in 2025 and 5,478,000 in 2050 (European Commission Green Paper on Population Change, 2005). It is also anticipated that the proportion of people aged 65 and over will increase from 11.0% in 2006 to 16.5% in 2025 and 26.2% in 2050. This compares to comparative figures for the entire European Union of 16.4% of the population aged 65 and over in 2006, 22.8% within this age category in 2025 and 29.9% in 2050 (European Commission Green Paper on Population Change).

Further projections by the Department of Health and Children anticipate that by 2031 the number of older people in the Republic of Ireland will almost have doubled to between 837,000 and 858,000 people, figures which will represent between 18% and 21% of the overall population of the country.

In relation to the North East Inner City it is worrying to note that the pattern of population increase amongst older people which is evident in other parts of Ireland and in other countries of Europe is not being replicated in this area of Dublin. There are nearly 500 fewer older people living in the North East Inner City in 2006 than there was in 1991 and the proportion of older people has declined from 13.3% of the overall population in 1991 to just 6.5% of the overall population in 2006.

There is real concern that this pattern of population decline amongst older people in the North East Inner City will become an ongoing and virtually unstoppable trend in future years. As areas like the Docklands, North Strand, Gardiner Street, Mountjoy Square and the streets around Croke Park become more popular and more and more fashionable it is likely that more young people and young families will want to move into the North East Inner City.

Unless urgent remedial action is taken this trend will result in a further erosion of the number of older people living in the area and a repeat of the situation in some Electoral Divisions in the North East Inner City where the proportion of older people is only about 4% or only 1 in 25 of the local population (compared to a national figure of 11% which is around 1 in 9 of the population of the country).

There is a real danger that there will be virtually no older people living in many parts of the North East Inner City unless the appropriate measures are put in place to enable older people to remain living in the area and to encourage other older people to move into the North East Inner City. These measures include actions and initiatives such as the construction of more sheltered housing, the development of more nursing homes, the availability of accessible and affordable transport, the provision of more Homecare Packages, ongoing support for existing Day Centres and the establishment of new Day Centres, ongoing development of social activities and community events for older people living in the North East Inner City.



Brendan Behan Court

3. OUTCOMES FROM NEEDS ANALYSIS PROJECT

3.1. PROFILE OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS

The main research instrument used during the Needs Analysis Project on Older People Living in the North East Inner City was a questionnaire which contained 42 questions and which was applied by a team of local researchers. A total of 468 households completed the survey questionnaires and it is estimated that these 468 households comprised 556 older people aged 65 and over (i.e. 380 single/widowed older people and 88 couples/176 married older people). This total of 556 questionnaire respondents represents 37.2% of all older people living in the North East Inner City.

There was a good geographical spread of questionnaire respondents across the North East Inner City with many of the local researchers living in areas with relatively large numbers of older people. It is apparent that one of the main reasons why a large number of older people agreed to complete a fairly detailed questionnaire related to the fact that the local researchers who applied the questionnaire were well known to many older people living in the North East Inner City area.

It is considered that the overall composition of the households and streets/roads where the questionnaires were completed is representative of the overall geographical configuration of the North East Inner City (and especially those streets, roads and avenues where most of the older people live).



Party in Donabate

Other notable features of the profile of the questionnaire respondents include the following:

- 220 of the respondents are male (e.g. 39.6%) and 336 of the respondents are female (e.g. 60.4%). This is a clear reflection of the fact that there are more older women than older men living in the North East Inner City and of the greater interest and willingness of women to participate in the research project
- □ There is a fairly good range of age groups within the profile of questionnaire respondents. Of the total of 556, 275 are aged 65 to 74 (49.5%), 251 are aged 75 to 84 (45.1%) and 30 are aged 85 and over (5.4%)
- ☐ The questionnaire respondents have generally been living in the North East Inner City for a long period of time:

Time living in the North East Inner City	Numbers
1 – 10 years	67 (14.3%)
11 – 20 years	47 (10.0%)
21 – 30 years	48 (10.3%)
31 – 40 years	98 (20.9%)
41 – 50 years	12 (2.6%)
51 years and over	196 (41.9%)
Total	468 completed questionnaires

On the basis of these figures it is evident that the North East Inner City is a fairly settled area with 306 (65.4%) of the questionnaire respondents having lived in the area for over 30 years. It is also evident however that some parts of the North East Inner City are more settled (e.g. roads off North Circular Road, around Clonliffe Road and Seville Place, some of the flats complexes) than other areas which have witnessed more upheaval and change (as a result of redevelopment and regeneration).

It is also important to note that nearly a quarter of the elderly population have been living in the North East Inner City for less than 20 years and it is considered important that these people are fully integrated into local communities in the North East Inner City.



Party in Donabate



St Lawrence O'Toole Day Care Centre

3.2. RESPONSES TO KEY QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

Do you like living in the area?

Yes	442 (94.4%)
No	26 (5.6%)
Total	468 (100%)

Analysis of responses

It is apparent that the vast majority of older people who completed the questionnaire like living in the North East Inner City. Most of them have lived in the area for a long period of time and have a strong affinity with their community and with their neighbours and friends which they have around them. Whilst recognising the changes and some of the disruption which has taken place in some areas in recent times, they are very pleased and happy to be living in their own community in the North East Inner City.

Many questionnaire respondents also said the community in which they now live is very different to the community which existed 20 - 30 years ago. Older people said they do not feel as safe as they used to, that they are often afraid to go out of their houses, that they feel threatened by some of the violence, aggression and drug dealing that is taking place in some communities. Other older people are unhappy about the ways in which older people are being moved from their traditional home to a new home in a new environment (so as to enable new development to take place).

Whilst older people in the North East Inner City expressed concern about these issues it is also encouraging that nearly 95% of questionnaire respondents feel good about living in their community within the North East Inner City. It is evident that the good points about living in the North East Inner City far outweigh some of the more negative points about living in the North East Inner City.



Killarney Court

What are the best things about living in the area?

Best things about living in area	Number
Good neighbours and friends	314
Close to local amenities	86
Close to City Centre of Dublin	74
Handy for public transport	46
Strong community spirit	44
Close to hospital	42
Living close to family members	34
Quiet and trouble free	30
Others	39
Total	709

Direct quotes

'Fantastic neighbours and friends in the area'

'Very handy to town and amenities'

'Great community spirit although with so many old neighbours dying I'm afraid that we will all be gone soon'

'I love it as I was born and bred in this area'

'Meet loads of my friends in the local pub'

'It's home to us'

'Great people and I get on well around here'

'Good community spirit, we all stick together'

'Lived here all my life and I love the area'

'Close community at Brendan Behan Court'

'Within walking distance of town'

'Having your freedom and some friends'

'I never lived anywhere else, I would not like to live anywhere else. This is where I've lived all my life'

'Not too far away from Day Care Centre where I get my dinner 5 days a week'

'I love where I live, Gerry Fay's shop is across the road and I'm near to the city centre'

'Goodness and hospitality of local people and their willingness to assist'

'If you paid me I wouldn't live anywhere else'

'Everybody is very obliging and there's no trouble anywhere'

'Got involved in local old folks club'

'Nice chapel in the area and the priest is very good' (Coburg Place.)

'At our age I think we moan too much. We have good heath, benefits and many extras'

'I'm living here a long time and I'm happy except for the drugs problem but I don't think I'd like to live anywhere else.

'I love the place as I was born and bred here over 70 years ago'

'I just trust in God and hope for the best'



Seville Place

Analysis of responses

Responses to this question would indicate that the two best features of living in the North East Inner City relate to the existence of good neighbours, friends and family (total of 358 responses) and proximity to local amenities and to the City Centre of Dublin (total of 202 responses). These positive aspects of living in the North East Inner City obviously present strong and compelling reasons as to why the large majority of older people want to remain living in the Inner City and do not wish to be relocated outside of the Inner City of Dublin.

The responses to the questionnaire also reflected the strong community spirit which exists within many parts of the North East Inner City. Although some older people did say that community spirit had diminished significantly in recent years as a result of changes and population movement which had taken place in their community, there is still a sense that community spirit and community solidarity (people looking out for each other, people pulling together) is still very strong in many Inner City communities.

Questionnaire respondents considered it to be most important to retain and sustain community spirit through organising social evenings, through organising transport to take older people to community events, through ensuring that older people are safe and secure in their own homes (and are not afraid to go out of their homes).



Party at Donabate

What are the worst things about living in the area?

Worst things about living in area	Number
Cars getting robbed and/or burnt	136
Criminal activity	107
Drug dealing	83
Anti-social behaviour	66
Gangs from other areas	55
Underage drinking	49
Matchdays at Croke Park	48
Poor bus service	43
Gangs hanging around	41
Out of control children and young people	36
Others	34
Total	698

Direct quotes

'Seeing youth being destroyed by drugs is horrible'

'Too much drugs and drinking amongst the youth of the area'

'I'm afraid of getting mugged at night so I don't go out much'

'Anti-social behaviour of young boys and girls alike'

'Too many young kids let loose with no parental supervision'

'Bus service 123 is appalling'

'Drugs, drugs – that's my only complaint'

'Desperate crime and drug problems'

'Drug clinic beside us in Amiens Street is very frightening'

'Match days are a nuisance with all the traffic around'

'Only feel safe if I'm picked up and collected by car'

'Lack of resources for our young people'

'Football matches are desperate – can't get in or out of the house'

'To know there's still drug dealing going on'

'The drugs are affecting everyone but everyone is too scared to say anything'

'The youth are getting out of hand. They spilt a can of white paint on footpath and vandalised my car six times'

'Heavy vehicles on their way to the Port all through the night'

'The fear of being flooded and the terrible inconvenience trying to get back to normal'

'Very isolated in the Steelworks'

'I'd move back to Fr. Scully House in the morning if I could'

'Cars go way too fast in this area'

'It would be great to see no cars and lorries in the road near where my grandchildren play. Put them all in the Port Tunnel'

'Stop strangers parking outside our house – it's hard enough to get in and out (Coburg Place)'

'Dublin City Council need to do more about people just dumping their cars in the local area'

'So little to do at the weekends so I hate them'

'Too many neighbours are dead or moved away. The new people are all at work and don't seem interested in the area'

'Ongoing problem with litter dumping at the rear of Sean O'Casey'

'I like it here but hate the fact that landlords are turning houses into loads of flats and then renting them out to people who have no real interest in the area'

'I like the area but I'm afraid of being attacked or mugged'

'No respect from the youth nowadays. All you get is abuse and curses'

'Since the regeneration of Croke Park it has become very difficult to get in and out of the house especially with all the matches and concerts that are on nowadays'

'Loneliness is my greatest problem. Feeling unable to answer the door after 7 o'clock in the evenings or at the weekends'

'Illegal parking is a big problem and nothing is done about it'

'I like the area but I'm afraid of being attacked or mugged'

'I don't like all those bedsits. You never get to know your neighbours'

'Have to depend on word of mouth to hear about services available'

'Feel trapped on match days. Can't even call a taxi to the house or gardaí won't let them up Clonliffe Road'

'Very worried about boardwalk built at back of homes along the canal. Neighbour has had her windows broken (Tolka Rd.).'

'Don't go out much, too afraid, prefer to just stay in the house.'

Analysis of responses

The North East Inner City is comprised of a number of different communities with different needs and different circumstances. These different needs and circumstances are clearly reflected in the answers to this question – for some people there are problems with traffic congestion outside their houses, for others there are fears of being flooded, for others it is about being moved out of their flats in Fr. Scully House to enable redevelopment to take place within their community. Therefore it is evident that there has to be local responses to local needs and concerns within certain communities in the North East Inner City.

However, it is also evident that there is one major issue which has affected every community in the North East Inner City and which generated, by some distance, the greatest number of responses to this question concerning negative aspects of living in the North East Inner City. This issue concerned the levels of criminal activity, anti-social behaviour, drug taking, drug dealing, teenage drinking and violence within the area. This has had a very unsettling and unnerving impact on older people living in the North East Inner City.

Rather than older people being in some way immune from the criminal/anti-social activities of younger people, it is clear that older people are becoming more frightened, more nervous, more vulnerable and more isolated (afraid to go out of their houses) as a direct result of these activities.



Sean Tracey House

What are your living arrangements?

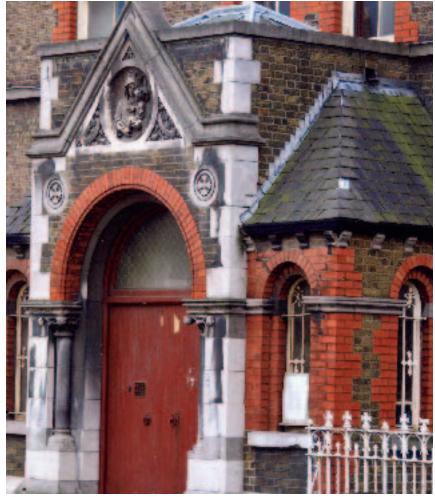
Living arrangements	Numbers
Living alone	344 (73.5%)
Living with spouse	88 (18.8%)
Living with children	21 (4.5%)
Other	15 (3.2%)
Total	468 (100%)

Analysis of responses

Nearly three quarters of the older people who completed the survey questionnaires live by themselves. This is a higher figure than the outcomes from the 2006 Census of Population which indicate that 65.2% of older people living in the North East Inner City are single, separated or widowed (and, therefore, more likely to be living by themselves). The survey results are also a reflection of the fact that many interviews took place with older people who are living in housing complexes which are reserved for older people living by themselves.

The high number of older people living by themselves in the North East Inner City presents challenges for service providers from both the statutory and voluntary sectors. These challenges include the need for socialisation and companionship, the need for regular meals and looking after dietary/nutritional requirements, the need to check on the well-being of older people living alone, the need to ensure that older people are accessing the healthcare services which they require.

For older people living alone, without the ongoing presence of another person in the house who makes sure that they are looking after themselves, it is more likely that their various needs will not be met. Therefore, it seems that there should be a particular priority on the needs and circumstances of people who are living by themselves in the North East Inner City.



Convent Sean MacDermot Street

Do you have any illnesses?

Yes	172 (36.8%)
No	296 (63.2%)
Arthritis	32
Heart condition	27
Blood Pressure	23
Diabetes	21
Depression	19
Asthma	17
Angina	15
Osteoporosis	13
Cholesterol Problems	11
Stroke	9
Cancer	9
Bronchial Condition	7
Others	12
Total	215

Analysis of responses

In analysing the responses to this question it is evident that there is a clear link between illnesses and age, with a far higher proportion of illnesses in the older people aged 75 and over compared to older people in the 65 – 74 age category. Many of the respondents referred to the desirability of setting up some type of health facility within the North East Inner City which would have a particular focus on the ailments and illnesses of older people. In addition to helping people with arthritis, heart conditions and blood pressure this health facility might also deal with minor injuries, falls and bruises which become more prevalent in older age.

It is recognised that the Primary Health Care Facility to be set up in Summerhill by the Health Service Executive will provide a range of health care services to local residents in the North East Inner City. A large percentage of older people who participated in the needs analysis survey did not know about the new proposed facility in Summerhill. When informed about this facility they felt that it is important that there should be a clear and specific focus on the health care needs of older people.

In addition there was a sense that the new facility will not be accessible to all communities within the North East Inner City (unless direct transport is provided); and that there might be a need to look at setting up Minor Injuries Units or satellite clinics in a number of locations across the North East Inner City.

Do you have any mobility problems or difficulties in moving around?

Yes	105 (22.4%)
No	363 (77.6%)

Direct quotes

'Have to use a wheelchair so it's not easy'

'I'm on a walking frame'

'I'm on a walking stick now all of the time'

'I'm not able to walk well because of my circulation'

'Am crippled with arthritis and can't get about'

'Yes I'm on a Zimmer frame now'

'Can't walk much anymore'

'Sometimes I can't get around'

'Can't move around sometimes on account of my osteoporosis'

'Because of my polio I have problems in walking'

'Yes due to hip and infected leg I have to use crutches a lot'

'Due to osteoporosis and stiff leg I have to use crutches a lot'

'I'm stiff a lot of the time'

'Terribly bad legs'

'Mobility is bad and I have to use an oxygen tank quite a bit'

Analysis of responses

A large proportion of the questionnaire respondents stated that they have no particular mobility problems and are more than capable of moving around without any additional assistance from a wheelchair or walking frame. However, many of the respondents did say that although they were able to walk short distances (e.g. about the house, to the neighbours) they found it increasingly difficult to walk longer distances (e.g. to places located outside of their area). These people said that it would be very useful to have some type of local community transport service which would take them to places such as shopping centres, for day trips and social visits, to the hospital or doctor.

It is considered important to develop new accommodation units and complexes within the North East Inner City which will accommodate the particular needs of older people with mobility problems. A number of questionnaire respondents said that they have only developed mobility/walking problems in recent years and that they are no longer able to get around the place where they live as easily as they used to be able to (e.g. they might live on the second floor of a flats complex, their house or flat might not be disability friendly).

In this context there is a clear need to develop new accessible accommodation for older people, to re-house older people for whom their existing accommodation is no longer accessible and to adapt the houses of disabled people so as to ensure that they can remain living in their own homes (e.g. through the installation of chair lifts on the stairways).

Do you know about the following services?

Name of service	Yes	No	No response
Public Health Nurse	320 (68.4%)	142 (30.3%)	6 (1.3%)
Occupational Therapy	162 (34.6%)	298 (63.7%)	8 (1.7%)
Physiotherapy Services	160 (34.2%)	301 (64.3%)	7 (1.5%)
Home Help Services	270 (57.7%)	190 (60.6%)	8 (1.7%)
Respite Care Services	137 (29.3%)	322 (68.8%)	9 (1.9%)
Senior Helpline Listening Service	164 (35.0%)	296 (63.3%)	8 (1.7%)
Dental, Hearing and Sight Services	149 (31.8%)	311 (66.5%)	8 (1.7%)
Medical and Surgical Appliances Scheme	131 (30.0%)	327 (67.9%)	10 (2.1%)
Home Improvements Scheme (Eastern Community Works)	147 (31.4%)	312 (66.7%)	9 (1.9%)
Home Improvements Scheme (Care and Repair – Age Action)	106 (22.6%)	351 (75.1%)	11 (2.3%)
Draught/Insulation Scheme	147 (31.4%)	310 (66.3%)	11 (2.3%)
Meals on Wheels	289 (61.8%)	171 (36.5%)	8 (1.7%)
Volunteer Visitors	139 (29.7%)	311 (66.5%)	18 (3.8%)

Analysis of responses

There is a poor level of public awareness and understanding about a range of services being provided to older people by various statutory agencies and voluntary organisations. When asked about whether they know about different services, older people in the North East Inner City said that they were unaware of what most of these services do. In fact, there are only 3 services out of the 13 listed in the questionnaire which had more than a 50% recognition rate amongst older people who participated in the needs analysis project – these services are public health nurses, home help services and meals on wheels.

It is clear that there is a need to provide more information to older people about the services being provided by relevant agencies and organisations, and to ensure that these services can be accessed fairly quickly when older people wish to access them (a number of survey respondents said that they knew of the existence of the particular services but that the waiting time to link into these services was so long that these services became irrelevant to their own needs).

There is a clear need for the Health Service Executive to promote its services more widely. There is a low level of recognition in relation to a number of services being provided either directly or indirectly by the Health Service Executive.

Do you need chiropody services?

Yes	166 (35.5%)
No	290 (62.0%)
No response	12 (2.5%)

Have you any difficulty accessing chiropody services?

Yes	112 (26.9%)
No	344 (73.6%)
No response	12 (2.5%)

Analysis of responses

There is a clear demand for additional chiropody services from older people living in the North East Inner City. Over one in three of the survey respondents said that they would benefit from chiropody services. However, it is evident that the chiropody needs of many older people are not being met at present. Whilst 166 respondents said that they needed chiropody, a total of 112 people said that they had difficulty in accessing chiropody at an affordable price. Therefore the provision of chiropody services is a significant problem for nearly 70% of the people who need these services i.e. 112 out of 166 older people.

Survey respondents felt that chiropody services should be one of the core services provided to older people in the Primary Health Care Facility which is due to open in Summerhill. The availability of chiropody in this facility would be strongly welcomed by older people and help to ensure that the facility is providing services which are relevant and vital to their needs. It was also pointed out that the facility in Summerhill will not be accessible to many older people in the North East Inner City (it will not be close to where they live) and that it will also be necessary to provide affordable chiropody at other locations in the North East Inner City.



Exercise Classes

What are the services being provided to you?

Services Being Provided	Numbers
Public Health Nurse	79 (16.9% of respondents)
Meals on Wheels	77 (16.5% of respondents)
Home Help	67 (14.3% of respondents)
Chiropody	63 (13.5% of respondents)
Pastoral/Church care	46 (9.8% of respondents
Social Worker	27 (5.8% of respondents)
Others	29 (6.2% of respondents)

Analysis of responses

There is a reasonable take up of services being provided to older people in the North East Inner City. It is important to remember that not all older people need to access these services. Many older people are still very independent and do not need regular visits from public health nurses or home helps. For those older people who might require these types of services it seems that there is no significant delay in responding to requests for assistance. Many older people commented upon the fact that their requests were dealt with in a fairly speedy manner and that, in a large number of situations, their requests for assistance/support were successful.

It is evident that, in many situations, older people were referred to various services by doctors, by people working in Daycare Centres, by community workers and by other concerned individuals who are working in the North East Inner City. There is some worry that there are other older people who do not present themselves and who could benefit from services such as home helps, public health nurses and meals services.

However they are not linked up to these services because they do not know about the services and the services do not know about them. In this context there is a need for relevant service providers to become more pro-active in seeking out and identifying older people who could most benefit from their services.



Exercise Classes

How good are the services being provided to older people in the North East Inner City?

Service	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
Public Health Nurse	168	7	0	293
Social Worker	36	8	0	424
Occupational Therapy	34	10	0	424
Home Help Service	117	8	0	343
Respite Care Service	57	4	0	407
Meals on Wheels	154	8	0	306

Analysis of responses

There is a high level of satisfaction with the quality of many services being provided to older people in the North East Inner City – the large majority of older people who use the services listed in this question or who know about the ways in which these services are delivered felt that the services are of a good quality. There is a strong sense that services such as home helps, public health nurses, occupational therapy and chiropody are very important to older people and that if they are delivered in a co-ordinated manner they can make a big difference to the quality of life of older people and to the capacity of older people to remain living in their own homes.

Many older people are grateful and appreciative for the services which are being provided to them and there were positive comments in the needs analysis survey about the kindness of the people delivering these services. There was a view that many more older people in the North East Inner City could benefit from services such as public health nurses, home helps, social workers and meals on wheels, and that perhaps these people are not putting themselves forward for services because they do not consider themselves to be old enough or deserving/needy enough.



Dublin City Council Area Office

Do you know about the following benefits and entitlements?

Benefit/Entitlement	Yes	No
State Pension	468 (100%)	0 (0%)
Free Electricity/Gas Units	464 (99.1%)	4 (0.9%)
Medical Card	454 (97.0%)	14 (3.0%)
Free Telephone Rental	460 (98.3%)	8 (1.7%)
Fuel Allowance	443 (94.7%)	25 (5.3%)
Free Television Licence	441 (94.2%)	27 (5.8%)
Free Transport	452 (96.6%)	16 (3.4%)
Carers Allowance	115 (24.6%)	353 (75.4%)

Analysis of responses

There is a high level of awareness and knowledge about the various benefits and entitlements which are available to older people. Of the eight benefits and entitlements set out in this question, seven are known to over 94% of survey respondents. This is a positive response and is a clear indication that most older people in the North East Inner City are receiving the benefits to which they are entitled. There is, however, a need to create some more awareness about the carer's allowance. Fewer than a quarter of the survey respondents knew about this allowance and there is a need to provide information about who is eligible for the carer's allowance and about the process for accessing this particular allowance.

A number of survey respondents also referred to the Living Alone Allowance and to the fact that this allowance is not high enough to cover the costs being incurred by older people living by themselves. These older people have to pay household bills and other outgoings in the same way as households with two or more people (where the bills are shared amongst a few people). Older people said that they curtailed their usage of utilities like electricity and gas on account of the costs involved, and that if the Living Alone Allowance was higher they would be able to use more electricity and gas (for heating and cooking). The Living Alone Allowance of €7.70 per week has not been increased for nearly 10 years.



Summerhill Court

Would you be interested in any of the following?

Activity	Yes	No
Meals Service	236 (50.4%)	232 (49.6%)
Swimming	88 (18.8%)	380 (81.2%)
Bingo	232 (49.6%)	236 (50.4%)
Shopping Trips	208 (44.4%)	260 (55.6%)
Dancing	125 (26.7%)	343 (73.3%)
Going to Library	136 (27.1%)	332 (70.9%)
Outings	292 (62.4%)	176 (37.6%)
Computers	50 (10.7%)	418 (89.3%)
Reminiscing	193 (41.2%)	275 (58.8%)
Prayer services/Retreats	118 (25.2%)	350 (74.8%)
Massage	105 (22.4%)	363 (77.6%)
Cultural Activities (e.g. theatre, cinema)	119 (25.4%)	349 (74.6%)
Church Radio Link	83 (17.7%)	385 (82.3%)

Analysis of responses

There is a reasonable level of interest in virtually all of the activities set out in this question, with the exceptions of swimming and computers. This would suggest that older people in the North East Inner City would welcome the opportunity to become more involved in more activities – if the activities were organised in local facilities/buildings and, if necessary, transport was provided to and from the venues or facilities where the activities are taking place. The outcomes from the needs analysis survey would indicate that there are many older people in the North East Inner City who are not currently involved in social or recreational activities but who could be persuaded and would be interested in becoming involved in these activities.

In relation to the types of activities which would be of most interest or appeal to older people in the North East Inner City, the outcomes from the needs analysis survey would indicate that social outings, meals services and bingo are the preferred options for older people. There are already existing organisations and groups providing these services and organising these activities. A key challenge is to build up the capacity, resources and funding of these organisations and groups so as to enable them to provide a more extensive service to a larger number of older people who are living in the North East Inner City of Dublin.

Do you know that a new Primary Health Care Facility is to be built in Summerhill?

Yes	288 (61.5%)
No	180 (38.5%)

Are there specific services you would like to see in the new Primary Health Care Facility?

Name of Service	Numbers
Chiropody	83
Minor Injuries Unit (for bruises and falls)	58
Aftercare for people coming out of hospital	46
Information about how to access health services	42
Physiotherapy services	42
Sight/Ophthalmic services	38
Occupational therapy services	36
Hearing/Aural services	35
Dentist	33
x-Rays and Scans	31
Womens clinic	28
Social work services	27
Alzheimers/Dementia unit (for advice and information)	22
Others	36

Direct quotes

'Never knew they were building a health centre. Have they started it yet? If not I'll probably be dead before they begin it'

Analysis of responses

There seems to be a growing public awareness of the fact that a Primary Health Care Facility is to be developed at Summerhill. Awareness of the emergence of this facility is most acute amongst older people who live close to the proposed location for the facility. There is limited awareness of the proposals for the facility, for example, in the areas around Clonliffe and Seville Place – indeed, older people living in areas of the North East Inner City which are farthest away from Summerhill said that the facility in Summerhill would not be accessible or convenient for them (unless direct transport was provided to the new facility).

Older people in the North East Inner City are generally looking forward to the new facility to be developed at Summerhill. Many of the older people said that it will be great to have a number of relevant health care services located in the new complex. They hope that the existence of the major proposed facility in Summerhill will enable them to link into health care services on a more regular basis and that their health needs will be dealt with in a speedy and expeditious manner. Many older people said that they are more likely to access services such as sight/ophthalmic services and hearing/aural services when these services are available closer to where they live (i.e. in the Summerhill facility).

Older people are very interested in the types of services which will be incorporated into the health care facility in Summerhill. Whilst many are aware that the facility is being developed, they have little or no information about the services to be provided in the new facility. In the opinion of older people it should be a significant multi-purpose facility and many older people said it should include a minor injuries unit (where, for example, older people can get bandaged and cared for following minor falls or bruises) and an aftercare facility for coming out of hospital. Both of these services would take some pressure off hospitals and enable older people to be looked after in a relaxed community setting.



Party at Donabate Paddy Behan

To what extent are your transport needs being met?

Completely	30 (6.4%)
Partially	297 (63.5%)
Not at all	141 (30.1%)

Would you require transport to attend the activities you are interested in?

Yes	320 (68.4%)
No	168 (31.6%)

Direct quotes

'Bus service in Jones Road is dreadful'

'Bus route to Brendan Behan Court'

'Bus full coming from terminus in morning. I can never get a bus at Summerhill'

'No bus facility for older people who want to go to town. Have to walk to Dorset Street'

'No facility to get to doctor or Health Centre'

'My daughter has a car and takes care of my transport needs'

'A small mini-bus would be a great idea for hospital visits'

'Put down ramps for aged as we find it hard to get on'

'Lourdes Day Centre provides my transport'

'Don't need improvements – have a mobility scooter'

'I'd like the occasional taxi when I need one'

'We need big trucks taken off the road (Coburg Place) and more signposts along Seville Place'

'Could do with more bus stops in the Seville Place area'

'Badly need a bus stop in Seville Place'

'Bring the Luas down along Amiens Street as the older people of the complex find it difficult to get to Connolly Station'

Analysis of responses

There is a fairly high level of dissatisfaction with public transport services which operate in the North East Inner City. Only 6.4% of the survey respondents said that their transport needs are being completely met whilst 30.1% of the respondents said that their transport needs are not being met at all. It is also evident that local factors apply in different communities across the North East Inner City – for example there are particular issues about the availability of public transport in Clonliffe Road, in Seville Place and about the location of bus stops and the existence of bus shelters in different locations within the North East Inner City.

It is also evident that the transport needs of older people in the North East Inner City will never be completely met through public transport provided by Dublin Bus. Many of the places which older people wish to go to (e.g. doctors, hospital, community centres, daycare centres, shopping centres, post office) are not served by bus routes operated by Dublin Bus. Yet at the same time older people require some type of affordable and perhaps accessible transport to enable them to get to their preferred location.

The availability of transport is quite critical for older people. This comment is not only based on the distance some older people might need to travel but also on a real concern that many older people have about walking anywhere within the North East Inner City, especially in the evenings and night-times (for fear of being attacked or harassed).

In the context of the localised and specific transport needs of older people (which cannot be met by a scheduled public bus service) some consideration should be given to the development of a community transport service (through perhaps utilising some of the minibuses which are operated by various groups and organisations in the North East Inner City).



Macushla Ballroom

Are there any days during the week when you do not have any contact with neighbours/friends?

Yes	195 (41.7%)
No	273 (58.3%)

If there are days during the week when you do not have contact with any neighbours/friends how many days does this involve?

Days per week	Number
1	62
2	47
3	29
4	14
5	16
6	10
7	17

Analysis of responses

The responses to this question would suggest that there are fairly high levels of social isolation amongst older people in the North East Inner City. This statement is partly based on the comments received by the local researchers when they were carrying out the interviews – many older people said they were lonely, they spent nearly all of their time in their own house/flat and that they rarely meet up with other people. A number of these older people said that their feelings of loneliness and isolation had become worse in recent years as other old neighbours had died or moved out of their homes and perhaps as they themselves had been rehoused to enable redevelopment to take place.

The sense of social isolation amongst older people in the North East Inner City is also reflected in the fact that over 40% of survey respondents experience going through days on a regular weekly basis without having any contact with friends, relatives or neighbours. The percentage figure for those older people living alone is even higher – if one takes the respondents who do not have contact with anybody for one or more days each week (i.e. 195) as a percentage of survey respondents who live alone (i.e. 271) this works out at a figure of 72%

It is a cause of particular concern that there are 91 older people (19.4% of the survey population) involved in the survey who do not have contact with anybody else for three or more days each week. In effect this means that for half of the week or more they do not meet any other person or do not have any other form of human contact. It is considered important to develop measures which provide more opportunities for people to socialise and to meet with each other within various community settings.

It is also necessary to develop mechanisms through which there is regular daily contact with older people living alone (through initiatives like the Good Morning/Friendly Call service and through neighbours or

wardens checking out that older people living by themselves are alright). There are a significant number of older people who could benefit from these services and supports – in addition to the 91 survey respondents who do not have contact with anybody else for three or more days each week there are many other older people who are in a similar situation (many of the more isolated and vulnerable older people did not want to be involved in the needs analysis survey and did not wish to be interviewed by local researchers).

QUESTION 16

Would you like someone to visit you or to phone you on a regular basis?

Yes	42 (6.7%)
No	426 (93.3%)

Direct quotes

'I'm lonely and I hardly ever get any visitors'

Analysis of responses

There is only a relatively small number of older people in the North East Inner City who would like someone to visit them or to phone them (e.g. through the Good Morning/Friendly Call service) on a regular basis. Yet, at the same time, there is a clear sense from other questions asked in the needs analysis survey that many older people are feeling isolated and lonely and that they would really welcome the opportunities to meet with other older people. In relation to the idea of a volunteer befriender or being connected to the Good Morning/Friendly Call service it seems that the problem concerns older people being unsure or uncertain about developing contact and relationships with people whom they do not know.

Older people in the North East Inner City would be a lot more comfortable with the notion of being visited or contacted by a local person with whom they are familiar. The experience of the local researchers who undertook the needs analysis survey would suggest that these are the type of people who could gain the confidence and trust of older people in the North East Inner City – they are local, they are fairly well known, they have good listening skills, they have a caring and sensitive approach.

The outcomes of the interviews carried out during the needs analysis survey would indicate that there is some merit in exploring the possibility of setting up a local befriending and visitation service within local communities in the North East Inner City. This service would involve local volunteers developing contacts with older people who are living by themselves and making regular visits or phone calls to the older person (thereby helping to ensure that they are alright and have not had an accident).

Do you feel safe living in your area?

Yes	273 (58.3%)
No	195 (41.7%)

How do you think your area could be made safer?

Tackle the drugs problem	158
More visible garda presence	132
More gardaí at night-time and weekends	112
Parents to take more control of their children	94
Stop sale of alcohol to teenagers/minors	82
Break up gangs of young people	73
Better street lighting	67
More traffic calming measures to stop joyriding and speeding cars	52
More Close Circuit Television (CCTV) systems	40
Others	51

Direct quotes

'A lot more gardaí in the area'

'Need to have gardaí walking around the area at night-time'

'Get rid of all the thugs and vandals'

'If the drug situation was improved'

'Proper policing'

'A lot more security to be put in place'

'It would help if some parents could sort out their kids'

'Put down more speed ramps'

'Weekend wardens to ensure our safety'

'Cameras well placed at the perimeter of Buckingham Street with Sean McDermott Street and Killarney Street'

'Keep back and front gates locked and supply keys to residents (Russell Street, Brendan Behan Court)'

'Better public lighting'

'More gardaí in the area and for them to come out when called'

'Get rid of all the drug dealers'

'Something needs to be done to the footpath under the bridge as it is very slippery and needs to be lit up'

'Christian Brothers School back wall should be made safer'

'Lighting on Lower Oriel Street'

'It would be great if there were clubs for the youth. I feel afraid when I walk past them'

'Feel a lot safer when the police come in and walk around the complex'

'I wish the police would drop in and chat and update us on what's going on'

'If only we had more police I'd feel a lot safer'

'Can't say I feel safe like I used to in the old days'

'I don't feel that safe but I'm too old now to move'

Analysis of responses

There is a wide diversity of views about the extent to which older people feel safe living within their own communities. This diversity largely relates to where older people live within the North East Inner City. In areas which have been relatively trouble-free and devoid of problems concerning drugs and violence, the number of older people who feel safe within their own area exceeds 80%. Alternatively, in areas which have experienced serious criminal activity and major drugs problems in recent years there is a far lower feeling of safety and personal security amongst older people (with only 25% of older people feeling safe in these areas).

It is evident that issues relating to personal safety and security are the largest single concern for very many older people living in the North East Inner City. They are content and happy with nearly every other aspect of their life (their home, their family, their friends and neighbours, their proximity to local amenities and the City Centre of Dublin) apart from real worries and concerns about going out into the areas in which they live.

It is recognised that some of these concerns might be a bit exaggerated. However the reality of the situation is that many older people are afraid and nervous, and that it is necessary to put in place measures which will help to build up confidence in older people about the safety of the area in which they live. These measures include more visible garda presence (especially at night-time and weekends), less drug dealing and drug consumption, better control of gangs of young people and more effective steps to control alcohol abuse amongst young people.



Firestation

Has the regeneration and redevelopment taking place in the area affected you?

Yes	236 (50.4%)
No	232 (49.6%)

Direct quotes

'Too much traffic congestion with all them trucks and lorries in the area'

'It's brought pollution and dirt'

'Cut us off from our neighbours'

'I have to walk a lot further now'

'Don't like all the apartments going up at the moment'

'Don't see the neighbours as much'

'Several of the people around me have moved away'

'Noise, dirt and population growth'

'Croke Park on Sundays'

'Too many apartments and new people who don't integrate with the local people'

'Treated like second class citizens by G.A.A.'

'The crowds milling about on match days'

'Too much noise dirt and stress'

'Improved the area'

'A lot less derelict sites'

'Construction noise starts at 7.30 every morning'

'Surrounded by private apartments'

'I am afraid to go for a walk because the footpaths are broken up'

'Our security is threatened'

'I'm used to my flat and do not want to move'

'All the dust and filth is destroying the area'

'No privacy and noise from early morning onwards'

'We like where we are well enough but we miss the flats because we lived in them for 40 years'

'I've a lot of nephews and nieces that can't get jobs in their local area'

'Since I have moved from Fr. Scully I have become confused and disorientated and it frightens me' (James Joyce St.)

'I don't like it here it's too isolated. I want to move back to Fr. Scully House'

'Hate the Millhouse – Steelworks. It's like a deserted village. I lived in Fr. Scully House and never wanted to move. I'm too old for that and I should have been better treated and my needs taken into consideration'

'I feel so isolated because my family can't be housed in the area due to redevelopment'

'I'd like more information from Dublin City Council about redevelopment'

Analysis of responses

It is apparent that some areas of the North East Inner City have been much more affected by regeneration and redevelopment than other areas. Whilst particular areas have had to endure a substantial amount of construction and building work (with a lot of upheaval and disruption to the lives of local residents), other areas have not been affected at all by regeneration and redevelopment programmes. The comments and feedback from older people would suggest that the redevelopment programmes have had a particularly difficult and stressful impact on their quality of life.

This impact can be considered from a number of different perspectives: from the perspective of the older person who has to live in the middle of a construction site, from the perspective of an older person who has to be re-housed to make way for redevelopment to take place, from the perspective of an older person who feels that his/her local community is being torn apart for the sake of regeneration and redevelopment. Whilst older people also recognise some of the benefits and values of regeneration and redevelopment, it is also important to realise that many older people feel overwhelmed and nervous about the pace of change which is taking place within the communities in which they live.



Avondale House

Does the drugs problem in the area affect you?

Yes	354 (75.6%)
No	114 (24.4%)

Direct quotes

'Well Dublin City Council had to board up some of the flats in the complex because drugs had been hidden there'

'I'm stuck here in my house afraid to go out'

'I'm terrified at night-time anywhere'

'Affects me every day as I'm afraid of the dealers'

'All the time I'm afraid to go out'

'Can't get away from it – it's on the streets all the time'

'I worry about grandkids seeing what is going on'

'My son died of drugs'

'Just don't feel safe anymore'

'So much anti-social behaviour around'

'A lot more crime and a lot more break-ins'

'Breaking into old peoples' homes'

'It's there with us all the time'

'I'm living in a quiet street and I see the dealing going on by people who don't live here'

'I'm terrified that my grandkids will start taking drugs'

'Feel nervous going past City Clinic'

'Drug users climbing our back wall at rear of house'

'Having to walk by people who are out of their heads'

'Teenagers using Playcentre in Hill Street to take drugs and alcohol at night'

'When the young take drugs they get real violent'

'Afraid to go out at night'

'Robbers and not being safe going to Post Office or park'

'It upsets the wife and myself'

'Brings more strangers'

'Drug pushers driving too fast in and out in big cars'

'It's frightening seeing young ones out of their heads on drugs'

'Drugs problem affects everyone and there's no getting away from it'

'Neighbours fighting, shootings: it is not nice to see armed guards in the area'

'The hardship it causes all our area'

'Afraid to go out in case someone attacks me'

'Drug centre next door in Amiens Street is hell and has been for 10 years'

'I'm afraid my grandchildren will start using drugs'

'I'm ok because I've got my husband but neighbours on their own are terrified to go out at night'

'I'm a lot more nervous and uptight than I was'

'I hate the fact that my grandchildren know that there are drug dealers on the streets'

'Great if something could be done to help people fight drug addiction'

'No privacy. Drugs are being sold outside my house in open view'

'Help the youth affected by drugs by providing more clinics'

'If the drugs problem isn't sorted there won't be a future for inner city youth'

'More attention needs to be given to solving the drugs problem in this area and I don't think the police are doing anything about it'

Analysis of responses

Older people in the North East Inner City have been affected in a very serious and significant way by the drugs crisis that has engulfed local communities in the North East Inner City of Dublin over the last 25 years. There is a perception that older people are, in some way, immune from the drugs problem – that they are too old to really understand what is taking place in contemporary Ireland. The outcomes from the needs analysis survey clearly debunk and refute this notion. Older people are directly affected by the drugs crisis and it impacts upon their quality of life equally as much as it impacts upon younger people living in the North East Inner City.

The fact that over 75% of older people in the North East Inner City said that they had been affected by the drugs problem and that older people had more to say about the question of drugs than virtually any other question in the questionnaire is a reflection of the extent to which the drugs crisis is impacting upon older people in the North East Inner City.

This impact is a result of factors such as sons and/or daughters dying or being seriously ill through drugs misuse, older people bringing up their grandchildren (due to drug habits of their own children) and a general sense of fear and menace which pervades across those communities most affected by the drugs problem.



Lourdes Day Care Centre

How satisfied are you with the services provided by An Garda Síochána?

Very satisfied	40 (8.5%)
Satisfied	246 (52.6%)
Dissatisfied	173 (37.7%)
Very dissatisfied	9 (1.9%)

How do you think that the services of An Garda Síochána could be improved?

More contact with local community	140
Speedier responses to calls	134
More community gardaí in area	121
Gardaí to be friendlier	116
More gardaí	84

Analysis of responses

There is a reasonable level of satisfaction with services being provided by An Garda Síochána with over 60% of survey respondents being either satisfied or very satisfied with An Garda Síochána. There is a strong sense in those parts of the North East Inner City most affected by serious criminal activity that the gardaí are doing a fairly good job in very difficult and stressful circumstances. Older people are pleased to have the protection and support of the gardaí – if it was not for the presence of the gardaí, many older people feel that their area would have been wrecked and destroyed by drug dealers and other criminal elements.

Whilst recognising the fact that the majority of older people in the North East Inner City recognise and value the contributions being made by An Garda Síochána , there still remains the reality that many older people are afraid to walk around their own area (for fear of being attacked or of being harassed and intimidated by gangs). In this context there is a clear need to restore confidence amongst older people in relation to the safety of the areas in which they live.

It is considered that the types of actions set out by older people in response to the question concerning ways in which An Garda Síochána's services might be improved would go some way towards reassuring older people about the safety of the area in which they live. These actions include the development of better relationships with local communities, speedier responses to call-outs and more gardaí walking around local areas.

Were you ever given crime prevention advice?

Yes	21 (4.5%)
No	447 (95.5%)

How should An Garda Síochána provide more information and advice about crime prevention?

Newsletters	138
Leaflets	136
One-to-one advice after a crime	131
Information meetings	115

Analysis of responses

Only a small minority of the older people from the North East Inner City who participated in the needs analysis survey said that they had received crime prevention advice. At the same time many of these older people said that they would welcome information and advice about issues like securing their house and dealing with strangers who knock on their doors or ring their bell. There was a preference for information and advice to be provided to older people in their own homes – some older people do not feel comfortable going to meetings whilst other older people with mobility problems find it difficult to make their way to meetings.

It is recognised that it would not be feasible for gardaí to provide one-to-one advice and information on personal safety/security and crime related issues to every single older person living in the North East Inner City. In this context it is important to recognise that there is a fairly high level of support for the idea of producing newsletters and leaflets as a mechanism for providing information about crime prevention strategies and techniques.

It is suggested that active consideration should be given to the production of leaflets and regular newsletters which will be accessible and readable both in relation to how they are written and how they are produced (large print and following publishing guidelines produced by the National Council for the Blind of Ireland).



Mountjoy Square

Would you be interested in a security pendant or security lock?

Yes	335 (71.6%)
No	133 (28.4%)

Is the cost of maintaining a security pendant or security lock a problem for you?

Yes	325 (69.4%)
No	143 (30.6%)

Analysis of responses

Whilst a significant number of respondents stated that they would be interested in security pendants and security locks, it is evident that the costs involved in procuring and maintaining these security devices has acted as a deterrent to many older people in the North East Inner City. A number of older people stated that they had received security pendants at little or no cost, found them to be both useful and re-assuring but then found the annual maintenance cost to be prohibitive. This resulted in these older people deciding to give up their security pendants on account of the financial cost involved.

On the basis of the interest expressed in security pendants and security locks it is suggested that efforts are made to devise a mechanism through which they could be provided at an affordable price to older people living in the North East Inner City. This might involve older people joining some type of group scheme through which the installation and maintenance costs of pendants/locks could be provided at a reduced fee. This arrangement might also involve the maintenance costs for the security pendant being paid on a quarterly basis.

QUESTION 23

Would you be interested in joining a group and what activities would you like to see in this group?

Yes	286 (61.1%)
No	182 (38.9%)

Direct quotes

'If there were more outings to go on'

'I'd like to see a few cards games for the winter months'

'A social club for us all to meet'

'More activities in the summer months'

'I'd like to see bingo and card games'

'I'd be interested in a knitting or sewing circle'

'Some bowls and darts and a few board games'

'Somewhere to go for a chat and to read the papers'

'I'm too old for all that'

'Old folks parties'

'Cookery classes'

'I like a game of bingo now and again and the oul fella likes darts'

'I suffer from depression so I don't like to go out too much'

'No interest in groups as I attend Lourdes Day Centre who I can't talk highly enough about'

'Need a lot more helpers at outings and old folk's parties'

'I'd like a place where you could go and meet people to have a chat and play a few games'

'I'd like a club in which I could meet old neighbours and friends'

'I'd like to meet a few new people'

Analysis of responses

There is a high level of interest from older people living in the North East Inner City in becoming more involved in local groups and community activities within the area in which they live. It is evident, on the basis of responses to the questionnaire, that many older people are unaware of the activities and events taking place within their own communities and within the wider North East Inner City. It is also apparent that whilst a large number of older people would like to become more involved in local community and social activities, they sometimes do not have the confidence to take the first step and to make themselves known to other people involved in local groups and clubs.

In relation to future activities which might be organised and groups which might be set up, many of the survey respondents did not specify any particular activity which should be put in place. Many older people are fairly open and relaxed about the focus of local groups and local activities – the most important thing is to create opportunities for people to come together whilst the actual activity which takes place when they do come together is of secondary importance.

There is a clear sense from the older people who participated in the needs analysis project that they would like more social and recreational activities and that if they could be transported to these activities, they would attend in fairly large numbers (like the 200 older people from the North East Inner City who attend the old folks parties in Donabate).



Old Pals

Is there any particular thing that could be put in place to enable you to become more involved in local activities and local groups?

Direct quotes

'Loads more outings for the senior citizens'

'Better transport so as I can get to them'

'Good wheelchair facilities'

'Better transport as I'm afraid to go out at night'

'More information about what's happening'

'A flyer with events and classes I can go to'

'I'm already active in my area'

'Decent bus routes'

'Better transport'

'Providing security when returning home'

'Subsidise the cost of the outings'

'No, I panic when I'm in crowd settings'

'No, we're not ones for going out but the son makes sure we have a large bottle of stout to help us get to sleep' 'More funding for activities for the elderly'

Analysis of responses

It is evident that the three main factors which need to be considered in relation to the participation and involvement of older people in local activities and events are (i) the availability of affordable and accessible transport, (ii) ensuring the personal safety and well-being of older people and (iii) the ways in which information about various activities and events is distributed to older people. The comments and feedback from older people would suggest that if some positive progress could be made on these issues, there would be a substantial increase in the number of older people participating in activities which are taking place within local communities.

In relation to transport, there is a clear need for some type of community transport service which would take people from their own homes to the venues or locations where activities are taking place. In relation to personal safety older people need to be reassured that they will not be attacked or mugged when they leave their homes to go to different events or activities (and that their homes will not be broken into when they are away). In relation to the provision of information, it is important that information about local activities and events is distributed directly to older people living in the North East Inner City, and that the form of words used in information notices and flyers can be clearly understood by older people living in the area.



4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The conclusions in this section of the report on the needs analysis project are based on the outcomes from the 468 completed questionnaires, on the 7 meetings of the research teams, on the focus group meetings and on the meetings of the Advisory Group and the service providers. These research activities provided a range of comments and insights into what it is like to be an older person living in the North East Inner City and about the main issues and concerns affecting older people in the area. The conclusions which have emerged from the needs analysis project will be clustered under the following headings:

Decrease in population of older people	Loneliness and social isolation	
Qualities and strengths of older people	Health and well-being	
Community life in the North East Inner City	Social activities and support/advocacy services	
Personal safety and security	Future development	

4.2. DECREASE IN POPULATION OF OLDER PEOPLE

- Earlier references have been made in this report to the fact that there has been a very significant decrease in the numbers of older people living in the North East Inner City of Dublin. In 2006 there was 474 fewer older people living in the North East Inner City than in 1991 (although there has been a general increase in the area's population of 8,048) and the proportion of older people living in the North East Inner City has decreased sharply from 13.3% in 1991 to 6.5% in 2006.
 - On the basis of these population trends and the fact that many of the new housing developments in the North East Inner City are orientated towards young single people and young families it is reasonable to assume that the fairly dramatic decrease in the number of older people living in the North East Inner City will be an ongoing and continuous pattern over the next number of years.
- This is a trend which has to be reversed and there is some concern that the population of older people will continue to fall as older people die and as more and more younger people and newcomers move into the area. This has an unsettling impact on older people as they lose more and more of their older neighbours and the houses of these neighbours are then sold and not retained within the family. There were many references in the survey questionnaires to older people feeling more vulnerable and more isolated as the make-up and the fabric of the local community changes and as there are less familiar faces and families than there might have been 5 or 10 years ago.
- There is an urgent need to halt the trend of population decline amongst older people living in the North East Inner City. It should not be allowed to get to the position where the percentage of older people is less than 5% of the overall population. This is not a positive or sustainable position there needs to be a fairly good spread of residents across the age ranges and, when the percentage of older people dips way below 10% and even 5%, this is a worrying development in relation to long-term sustainability.

Every community needs a critical mass of older people who have strong roots within their local area and who, through their children and grandchildren, perpetuate family and community life within traditional communities like the North East Inner City.

In helping to ensure that the proportion of older people in the North East Inner City does not decrease significantly in future years, it is important that the appropriate types of facilities, services and supports are put in place which will enable older people to remain living in local communities.

These facilities, services and supports include sheltered housing for older people, one-stop-shop medical facilities for older people, ongoing development of social activities and befriending services, the development of new transport arrangements to enable older people to get around the areas in which they live and the areas they need to visit (for medical appointments, to do shopping, to meet friends).

4.3. QUALITIES AND STRENGTHS OF OLDER PEOPLE

- It is apparent that many of the older people who participated in the needs analysis project are generally quite content and happy. They enjoy living in their own communities; they are glad to be so close to facilities such as hospitals, doctors and community/day centres; and, in most cases, they have good friends and neighbours.
 - Many of the older people who participated in the needs analysis project also feel financially more secure (they own their own houses or are paying a fairly small rent to Dublin City Council; they are pleased with the pension increases that have taken place in recent years). Questionnaire respondents said that they had a less stressful and complicated life than younger people growing up today and that they are fairly happy with the way that their lives have worked out.
- ☐ The older people who completed the questionnaires also felt that some aspects of their lives had gone into decline over the last number of years. Many had fallen into ill-health, some were less mobile than they had been in the past, many had been bereaved through the death of their husband/wife, some had lost a son or daughter.
 - In some parts of the North East Inner City it is evident that many older people have been grievously affected by the drugs crisis within their area their son(s)/daughter(s) have died or are seriously ill as a result of drugs, they are looking after grandchild(ren) because of the drug habits of their own children. It is clear that many older people in the North East Inner City are being asked to take on duties and responsibilities which are unfair and unreasonable for them to be taking on at their advanced stage in life.
- □ It needs to be acknowledged that the older people who participated in the needs analysis project are amongst the most positive and optimistic older people living in the North East Inner City. Whilst 37.2% of the older population of the North East Inner City did become involved in the needs analysis project, 62.8% did not participate this involved a combination of older people declining to be interviewed and other older people who could not be contacted.

It is considered important to connect with older people who do not wish to become involved with local consultations or with activities or with events which are taking place within their own local communities. It is only through this type of contact that relevant service providers will gain a real understanding and knowledge of the needs of older people living in the North East Inner City.

4.4. COMMUNITY LIFE IN THE NORTH EAST INNER CITY

- □ There have been very significant developments taking place in the North East Inner City over the last number of years. The whole redevelopment of the Docklands, the demolition of long-standing flats complexes, the improvements in streetscapes (e.g. Dorset Street, Talbot Street) and the construction of the new Croke Park are examples of the ways in which the character and the appearance of the North East Inner City has changed fairly dramatically over the last 10-15 years.
 - Whilst many of these changes have been welcomed by older people living in the area (more facilities, new housing etc.) it is also evident that some older people are unsettled and a bit frightened by the pace of change which has taken place in recent years.
- Many older people said that the redevelopment of the North East Inner City has had a negative effect on community cohesion and community spirit within local communities. Older people commented upon the fact that they know fewer and fewer of their neighbours and that they feel more vulnerable and more alone than they did in the past. These feelings of isolation and vulnerability are exacerbated by the fact that family members (especially children) are less likely to live in the North East Inner City on account of the price of housing within the area.
 - Some older people have been upset by the upheavals that have taken place in their lives on account of the fact that they have had to be re-housed in order to enable redevelopment to proceed (often re-housed in communities they are not familiar with or do not know).
- Older people who participated in the needs analysis project feel that their needs and requirements have not been prioritised by Government Departments, statutory agencies and other bodies which have been charged with responsibility for redevelopment and regeneration within the North East Inner City. Many older people said that they have never previously been asked for their views and opinions about what they would like to see in their community or about ways in which services to older people could be improved.

To a certain extent older people feel that they have been forgotten about during the redevelopment process, that they have not been consulted and that the sharp decrease in the population of older people in the North East Inner City is indicative of the fact that measures have not been put in place to enable more older people to remain living within the area (e.g. measures like additional nursing homes, more sheltered housing complexes, better health care facilities, greater provision of meals-on-wheels services, local transport arrangements).

4.5. PERSONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY

There were constant references during the completion of the questionnaires and the focus group meetings to the ways in which many parts of the North East Inner City have become more dangerous and more violent in recent years. This has had a huge impact on many older people living in the area. Some who would previously been very confident about walking around the area hardly ever venture outside their own homes. Others live in dread of being mugged or being attacked in their own homes.

The gun crimes, the murders and the drug dealing which has taken place in the North East Inner City have all had an unnerving impact on older people and have made older people a lot more nervous about leaving their own homes and about going out to socialise with friends and neighbours. Although older people are not directly involved in the violence, the feuding and the gangland violence, it is apparent that they have been deeply affected by the increase in criminal and anti-social activity within the North East Inner City. This is reflected in the fact that 41.7% of older people do not feel safe and that 75.6% of older people have been affected by the drugs problem.

□ It is clear that strategies and actions need to be put in place to reassure older people that they are relatively safe within their homes and that, with the right precautions and safety measures, it is alright to walk around the area in which they live.

Confidence building strategies might include more interaction between the gardaí and older people (in community centres, day centres etc.), a more visible garda presence on local streets and speedier responses by the gardaí to complaints and requests for assistance from local residents – there is a perception amongst older people that the gardaí do not always take their complaints or concerns seriously (e.g. in relation to gangs of young people hanging around) and that the gardaí are sometimes far too slow in responding to calls for assistance (arriving long after the crime has been committed).

4.6. LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

☐ The outcomes from the needs analysis project would suggest that there are fairly high levels of loneliness and social isolation amongst older people living in the North East Inner City. In the interviews with local researchers, many older people said that they are lonely and that they do not have much regular contact with other older people.

There is a view that feelings of loneliness and isolation have been exacerbated in recent years by redevelopment (and the erosion of close, tightknit communities) and by the crime and violence which have become a more regular feature of community life in the North East Inner City (older people are more reluctant to go and meet other people because of fears about their personal safety).

There is a clear sense that many older people in the North East Inner City are not coming out, are not turning up at various community events and activities and are fairly withdrawn and removed from the rest of the local community in the North East Inner City. There is a need to try and encourage these older people to become more involved in community and social activities which are taking place in the North East Inner City. The key challenge is to identify the types of activities and projects which will attract the active interest of older people and, then, to encourage the more isolated and vulnerable older people to participate in these activities.

- The situation in the North East Inner City, as evidenced by the results of the needs analysis project, mirrors a number of the key outcomes from the National Council on Ageing and Older People's report on Loneliness and Social Isolation Amongst Older Irish People. This report stated that sudden bereavement, separation, illness and retirement are the biggest loneliness triggers. It concluded that social isolation is also caused by factors such as loss of family contact or family disputes, reduction in day-to-day callers, fear of increased crime levels, negative attitudes towards older people in society, and the collapse or disintegration of traditional communities.
- Some of the social activities organised over the past year for older people in the North East Inner City (e.g. day trips, social evenings) have been very popular and it is reasonable to assume that future activities will be equally as popular with older people. The importance of social interaction is emphasised in the National Council on Ageing and Older People's report on Loneliness and Social Isolation 'A meaningful social network and social interaction appear to be the strongest supports against loneliness and social isolation' (page 4). This is particularly important for older men who, on the basis of the information contained in the completed questionnaires, tend to be more isolated and lonely than older women living in the North East Inner City.

4.7. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- Older people consulted during the research project feel that the HSE and healthcare workers should be more proactive and more directional in the way in which they deal with older people. Rather than older people presenting themselves to doctors and at hospital and rather than older people being referred from one section of the health service to another section of the health service, there is a view that the HSE should be proactively linking up with every older people over a certain age (possibly 75 years of age).
 - The purpose of these contacts would be to develop care plans or health/wellness plans which would aim to ensure that older people could be kept as well as possible for as long as possible.
- Older people feel that this type of focus on prevention rather than cure would be in the best long-term interest of older people and would serve to enhance their quality of life (older people could live longer in fairly good health rather than suffering with an illness or some other medical condition which could have been diagnosed and dealt with at a much earlier stage).
 - This type of preventative approach would also result in significant cost savings for the State it is less expensive to provide health services to a person who is relatively healthy than it is to provide health services to a person who is very ill (cost of hospital care, cost of drugs etc.).
- Older people said that they would like a number of different health functions located within the one facility in the North East Inner City along the lines of what is being proposed in the Government's Primary Healthcare Strategy. They would like doctors, dentists, physiotherapists, social workers, chiropodists and other healthcare workers to be based in this facility it would be a type of one-stop-shop for health related issues.

- Therefore, older people in the North East Inner City are very pleased about the prospect of having a Primary Health Care Facility located at the Mountainview Court site at Summerhill. On account of their age, older people are anxious that this facility should be up-and-running as soon as possible so that they will be able to take maximum advantage of the services to be provided at the facility. Older people also wish that this facility will have a clear and explicit focus on the healthcare needs of the elderly there is some concern that, as with other developments in the North East Inner City, there will be too strong an emphasis on the needs and requirements of younger people.
- Many older people who participated in the needs analysis project felt that there are significant issues which need to be addressed in relation to the mental health and emotional health of older people. Some interviewees said that they themselves suffered from mental ill-health and depression whilst other interviewees said they knew of many older people who were depressed and/or suicidal. There is a sense that the levels of mental ill-health and depression amongst older people are understated and not given the appropriate kind of priority or resources by relevant agencies depression is largely put down to the ageing process and not prioritised because older people do not have long to live.

4.8. SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT/ADVOCACY SERVICES

Older people in the North East Inner City said that they would welcome the opportunity to participate in more social activities and to join groups which have been set up for older people in local communities. It is encouraging that over 60% of older people who completed the questionnaires said that they would be interested in joining a group within the area in which they live.

It is considered that involvement in local groups can play an important role in overcoming loneliness and social isolation and in enabling older people to remain strong and independent (as one survey respondent said 'it is when you lose contact with other people and spend nearly all the time by yourself, it is then that you start to lose the will to live').

It is clear that when the necessary arrangements are put in place (i.e. transport arrangements, good venue/location, interesting activities, affordable cost) older people will turn up in large numbers at activities and outings which are organised for them. This is evidenced by the fact that over 200 older people from the North East Inner City attend social evenings which take place two or three times each year in Donabate and which are organised by a number of community activists who live in the North East Inner City.

Significant ongoing fundraising has to take place in order to be able to subsidise these types of social activities and, on account of the positive benefits which accrue to the participating older people, it is suggested that core multi-annual funding should be made available for the organisation of social activities for older people.

Older people who participated in the needs analysis project referred to the ways in which they would have liked to have been more prepared and informed about their progression into old age. Many of the older people expressed frustration and some level of anger about the impact of ageing on their body and on their mind, and about the fact that they found it increasingly difficult to do things which were

fairly straightforward when they were younger. These older people said that it would have been very useful to have had some type of induction or introduction into old age, a process which would have prepared them for the sort of things which are likely to happen to people as they enter and progress through old age.

Older people also clearly identified the need to keep exercising the body and the mind for as long a period as possible and felt that it was important to organises activities which enable older people to keep fit and healthy (e.g. walking groups) and to stay mentally alert (e.g. discussion groups, forum of older people in the North East Inner City).

Many older people referred to the ways in which their lives could be improved and enhanced if they were able to link into a person who they could talk to, who could do messages for them (especially if the older people had mobility problems) and who could help to ensure that they received the services and entitlements for which they are eligible.

It is apparent that many people in the North East Inner City could benefit from somebody who would visit/befriend, somebody who might also act as an advocate for the older person (helping to fill in forms, writing letters to statutory agencies, making telephone calls on behalf of the older person). Essentially, these befrienders or advocates would be doing things which older people are finding increasingly difficult to do on account of the effect of the ageing process on their body and on their mind.

4.9. CONSULTATIONS WITH OLDER PEOPLE

- Older people who participated in the needs analysis project said that they were very pleased to be involved in the project and that it was the first occasion that they had been asked for their views and opinions about living in the North East Inner City. There is a sense amongst many older people that their views are not taken into account (although they have lived in their area for 60, 70 or 80 years) and that they are not seen as an important part of the future of the North East Inner City as one interviewee said 'all of the talk and all of the advertising is about young people and young families there is nothing at all about the needs of older people'.
- There is a fairly strong sense that the views and ideas of older people should be treated with the same respect as the views and ideas of younger people and should not be disregarded or dismissed just because they come from an older person. Older people involved in the research project also felt quite strongly about the fact that they should be more directly involved in discussions and decisions which impact upon the services and supports which are being provided for them. A number of older people said that major decisions (in relation to issues like accommodation/housing, healthcare) were being made 'for them' rather than in consultation 'with them'.
- Older people feel that, in relation to some services, they are discriminated against on account of their age. There were references by some of the questionnaire respondents to surgical operations which they needed and which they felt could have taken place much quicker and have been given more urgency if they had been younger. There were also references in the questionnaires to the difficulties in being

prioritised for Breast Screening after the age of 65 and to a perception that older people might not be in need of bereavement counselling (although they might just have lost a partner of 50 years).

4.10. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

- There is a good degree of consensus amongst older people living in the North East Inner City about the facilities and services which need to be put in place in order to make their lives happier, more fulfilled and more secure. There was also a significant amount of agreement about the key issues which need to be addressed in relation to the provision of services for older people.
 - These issues and services are the overall safety and security of the North East Inner City (and making it a safer place to live in for older people); the provision of more appropriate housing and accommodation for older people (e.g. supported housing complexes, nursing homes); the establishment of multi-purpose health care units and facilities (such as the one to be built at Summerhill); the provision of transport to enable older people to get to appointments and to participate in community activities; and the organisation of more social activities, outings and events which will be affordable and accessible and which will enable older people to meet with other older people living in the North East Inner City.
- In providing practical responses to these issues, it is evident that many of these responses will not require complex, high-cost solutions. The organisation of social activities for older people, more regular garda patrols around locations where there are a fairly high proportion of older people and greater co-ordination between the various community minibuses which already operate in the North East Inner City are not hugely expensive expenditure items. Yet, at the same time, they have the potential to significantly improve the levels of personal contentment, personal well-being and feelings of safety/ security for many older people living in the North East Inner City.

It is also recognised, however, that some actions might require a high level of investment e.g. development of primary health care units and construction of social housing complexes for older people. It is important to note that, in some instances, funding for these types of facilities has already been approved – for the new Primary Health Care Facility in Summerhill, for the construction of an older persons housing complex (comprising 60 housing units) at Spencer Dock. The next section of this report will detail the range of actions which, if implemented in an integrated and coherent manner, are likely to have a positive and decisive impact on the quality of life for many older people living in the North East Inner City.



Sean MacDermot Street

5. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The recommendations detailed in this report have been directly informed by the views and ideas of the 556 older people who participated in the needs analysis project. It is considered important that strategies are put in place for the implementation of the various recommendations. It is anticipated that the Inner City Organisations Network (ICON), together with relevant statutory agencies and voluntary organisations, will play a lead role in this implementation process.

The recommendations which have emerged form the Needs Analysis Project of Older People in the North East Inner City of Dublin will be clustered under the following headings:

Housing and accommodation
Healthcare and development of Primary Health Care Facility at Summerhill
Social activities
Counselling and befriending services
Provision of information
Support and advocacy services
Safety and security issues
Transport

5.2. HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION

Recommendation No. 1

□ Up to three new social housing complexes for older people should be developed within the North East Inner City. Each of these complexes should comprise 40-60 housing units. The proposed complexes should have an integrated range of services for older people including 24-hour security (through a warden or concierge service), access to nursing services and a community room for social activities. These complexes could be similar to the proposed social housing development for older people at Spencer Dock (which will comprise 60 2-bedroomed units). It was suggested that one of the new social housing complexes might be located on the grounds of the church site in Sean McDermott Street.

Recommendation No. 2

□ A new residential nursing home should be built and developed in the North East Inner City. At present there is only one nursing home in the area (i.e. St. Monica's Nursing Home) and this one nursing home does not have the capacity to deal with the number of older people in the North East Inner City who are no longer able to look after themselves independently but who

would like to remain living in the North East Inner City. It was suggested that the development of a new nursing home in the North East Inner City might involve some type of public/private partnership (with a combination of places financed through public funds and private funds).

Recommendation No. 3

■ Existing complexes for older people in the North East Inner City need to be effectively supervised and maintained. In relation to supervision and management there is a good deal of support for the idea of having wardens within these complexes for seven days each week. One of the roles of these wardens would be to carry out daily checks on each of the older people living in the complex (many older people are really scared of the prospect of dying and not being discovered for a number of days).

In relation to the issue of maintenance, it is considered important that regular inspections take place of the older persons' complexes in the North East Inner City and that if anything is found to be faulty or in need of repair the appropriate remedial action is taken. There were some references during the needs analysis project to the fact that the many of the showers in St. Lawrence O'Toole Court had not been working properly for 17 years. It was also suggested that lifts should be installed into older persons complexes which are more than one storey tall and/or older people with mobility problems should be accommodated on the ground floor of these complexes.

Recommendation No. 4

■ A directory or register of reliable tradespeople and handymen/women who could carry out repairs and maintenance jobs in the homes of older people should be produced. On the basis of the feedback from older people who completed the questionnaires, it is apparent that some tradespeople will not take on pieces of work which are too small or minor. In addition, many older people are concerned about taking on somebody whom they do not know or have not used before.

In this context it would be very useful to produce a directory of tradespeople and handymen/ women who are prepared to take on relatively small pieces of work and who have been recommended by other older people and by community based groups in the North East Inner City.

Recommendation No. 5

☐ The process of re-housing older people, so as to enable redevelopment and regeneration to take place, must be handled in a kind and sensitive manner. It is recommended that guidelines should be produced in relation to this issue by bodies like Dublin City Council and the Dublin Docklands Development Authority. Information contained in the completed questionnaires

would indicate that the process of moving home (after living for 40, 50 or 60 years in the same place) is particularly traumatic for older people – they are oftentimes being uprooted from the community which they have known and loved for many years.

As Dublin City Council implements its plans to improve and modernise all of the older persons complexes across the city, it is likely that there will be a period of significant change and upheaval for older people. Hence the need to produce guidelines on the most effective and sensitive ways to re-house older people in Dublin City.

5.3. HEALTH CARE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE FACILITY AT SUMMERHILL

Recommendation No. 6

■ More detailed information should be provided to older people living in the North East Inner City about the services and activities to be provided in the new Primary Health Care Facility which is being developed at Summerhill. Whilst it is recognised that the precise services to take place in this facility still need to be determined, it would be reassuring to older people to have regular updates on the progress which is being made in relation to the facility (e.g. information about when the construction work will be complete, when it will be operational etc.).

It is suggested that the HSE should produce twice yearly newsletters about the facility and that these newsletters should be produced in a format which is accessible to older people (i.e. in accordance with guidelines produced by the National Council for the Blind of Ireland).

Recommendation No. 7

Consultations should take place with older people in relation to the services to be accommodated within the Primary Health Care Facility at Summerhill. Since older people are going to be amongst the most regular users of the facility, it is considered important that older people are provided with opportunities to contribute their views and their ideas in relation to the design/layout of the new facility and in relation to the services to be delivered within this facility.

It is anticipated that the consultation work being undertaken by the ICON Health Action Forum concerning the new facility at Summerhill will enable older people to contribute their ideas. It is suggested that part of this consultation work will involve meetings with groups of older people in the North East Inner City.

Recommendation No. 8

☐ In addition to the Primary Health Care Facility at Summerhill, consideration should also be given to the development of more localised and smaller health facilities at strategic locations

within the North East Inner City. The multi-purpose centre at Summerhill will not be accessible to all communities within the North East Inner City (unless the transport services within the area are dramatically improved).

Therefore some thought should be given to the establishment of localised health facilities and/or Minor Injuries Units. These units would be available to deal with bruises, burns, falls and other minor ailments rather than older people having to wait for hours at Accident and Emergency Departments of hospitals to get their injury sorted out.

Recommendation No. 9

An affordable chiropody service for older people should be set up across the North East Inner City. It is clear that the quality of life for many older people is being badly affected by problems they are having with their feet and that this significantly impinges on their mobility and their freedom to manoeuvre around their area and further afield (some older people said that they are practically housebound due to difficulties in linking into accessible and affordable chiropody services). Chiropody should be a core element within the new Primary Health Care Facility at Summerhill and chiropody services should also be available at other locations within the North East Inner City.

Recommendation No. 10

The HSE should produce a directory of services for older people within the North East Inner City. This directory would list the various HSE services available to older people, would describe what these services do and would provide information about how to connect to these services. The outcomes from the needs analysis project would indicate that many older people do not know how to link into occupational therapy services, ophthalmic/sight services and hearing/aural services. The proposed directory of services would provide clear, concise and easy-to-understand information about what different services do and about how older people can avail of these services.

5.4. SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Recommendation No. 11

Ongoing regular funding should be provided to support the organisation and delivery of social activities for older people living in the North East Inner City. These social activities are an important part of the lives of many older people and are a key mechanism for addressing issues relating to loneliness and social isolation. It is evident that there is no direct funding stream or funding programme to provide financial assistance for social activities involving older people. This is unfortunate given the health and well-being benefits of these social activities.

It is recommended that core funding should be provided (through bodies like Dublin City Council, HSE and North Inner City Drugs Task Force) to support existing social activities and to enable more social activities to be organised and delivered within the North East Inner City.

Recommendation No. 12

In relation to new activities and programmes, it is suggested that consideration should be given to the establishment of summer projects for older people, to the organisation of more educational classes and courses for older people, to the extension of community meals services for older people into more locations in the North East Inner City and to the organisation of social activities at the week-ends (many older people said that the week-end is the loneliest and most depressing period of the week).

All of these projects or initiatives will require some planning and it is recommended that the Old Folks Committee of ICON might take on responsibility for progressing the development of these projects/initiatives (are they feasible? is there a sufficient level of interest? how will they be funded?).

5.5. COUNSELLING AND BEFRIENDING SERVICES

Recommendation No. 13

■ A local befriending service for older people should be set up in the North East Inner City. The outcomes from the needs analysis project would suggest that many older people who are living alone would welcome the possibility of being visited in their own homes. It is also clear, however, that many of the older people only want to be visited by middle-aged and older people who come from their area. Hence, the reference to a local befriending service rather than older people being linked up with other people from different parts of Dublin.

Recommendation No. 14

Consideration should be given to the development of a bereavement counselling service for older people who live in the North East Inner City. This service would build upon and complement the work carried out by the Bethany Bereavement Group. There are many widowed people living in the North East Inner City and older people have also lost children and other close relatives. Comments in the completed questionnaire would suggest that many older people who have been bereaved would welcome the establishment of a one-to-one bereavement counselling service in their area.

5.6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION

Recommendation No. 15

A regular newsletter should be produced for older people living in the North East Inner City. This newsletter, which need not be longer than four pages, would contain information on services available to older people in the North East Inner City, on upcoming events in the area and on other developments which might be of interest and of relevance to older people. It would include information on redevelopment and regeneration plans for the area and updates on projects such as the Primary Health Care Facility at Summerhill.

The newsletter for older people might also include information on benefits and entitlements which are available to older people and where to find out further information about these benefits and entitlements.

Recommendation No. 16

A card should be produced which would contain important, emergency telephone numbers for services which are of most concern and relevance to older people in the North East Inner City e.g. medical services, social services, chemists, clergy. This card, which would be widely distributed, could be attached to a fridge or inserted into a wallet or purse. It could be particularly useful in emergency situations and would provide a direct response to the fears of older people that they might suddenly become ill and not know the telephone numbers of the people whom they will need to contact.

5.7. SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY SERVICES

issue of advocacy initiatives for older people.

Recommendation No. 17

□ There is a need to develop strategies in relation to the advocacy needs of older people in the North East Inner City. Many of the people consulted during the needs analysis project said that they found it increasingly difficult to make representation (by telephone, letter, application form or in person) on behalf of themselves in relation to services, benefits and entitlements for which they are eligible and /or which they would like to access. It is recommended that some consideration should be given to the idea of matching up advocates to older people in the North East Inner City, advocates who would represent the interests and the wishes of older people. This advocacy service might be supported by the HSE and/or the Citizens Information Board, both of whom have a particular interest in the

Recommendation No. 18

Ongoing and regular consultations should take place with older people in the North East Inner City in relation to ways in which services and facilities for older people might be improved.

Older people who participated in the needs analysis project felt that they still have a lot to contribute to the development of their area and that they would like to be invited to meetings which are considering the development of services and supports for older people.

Specific references were made to the establishment of a Forum for Older People in the North East Inner City, a peer led group of older people which would aim to influence the policies and programmes of agencies and organisations which have some responsibility for the welfare and well-being of older people.

5.8. SAFETY AND SECURITY ISSUES

Recommendation No. 19

□ Close circuit television (CCTV) systems should be installed in older peoples housing complexes within the North East Inner City. Many older people living in these complexes have been unnerved and frightened by some of the attacks and break-ins that have taken place within some of these complexes in recent times. Older people would be reassured if CCTV systems could be installed in these complexes. They feel that the existence of CCTV would act as a deterrent to potential robbers/muggers and would also help to convict people involved in criminal activities within the older persons complexes.

Recommendation No. 20

□ There should be more regular and ongoing contact between community gardaí and older people living in the North East Inner City. This might involve more visits from community gardaí to houses of older people in the North East Inner City in order to check if they are safe and to provide advice on keeping their houses secure. It might also involve community gardaí participating in the information seminars and talks which might take place within local community facilities in the North East Inner City. Older people who participated in the needs analysis project said they would feel re-assured and safer if there was more contact with the community gardaí.



Summerhill and Buckingham Street

Recommendation No. 21

Information on crime prevention measures should be distributed to the houses of older people living in the North East Inner City. This information would include pieces on how to make a house secure, how to prevent burglaries, how to set up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme etc. It would also be useful to provide information about security equipment which could be purchased to make houses safer and more secure (e.g. personal alarms, security lighting over door, wide-angled viewers, mortise locks, door chains). Information notes should also include details about where this type of security equipment can be purchased.

Recommendation No. 22

□ Improved arrangements for the purchase and maintenance of security pendants and security chains should be negotiated and agreed. Outcomes from the needs analysis project would indicate that the annual maintenance costs for security pendants/chains often result in older people deciding to stop using them. This obviously places them in a very precarious and vulnerable position if they have a fall or accident when they are by themselves.

Arrangements need to be put in place whereby the costs involved in maintaining the security pendants/chain are subsidised more and/or maintenance costs can be paid on a monthly or quarterly basis.

5.9. TRANSPORT

Recommendation No. 23

■ An effective community transport service should be put in place for older people and for other groups which require transport (e.g. people with disabilities, children and young people going to cultural or sporting events). The lack of accessible and affordable transport is a major barrier to participation for many older people who will not go to activities and events in the evenings unless transport is provided. Many older people said that the provision of appropriate transport is the single most important factor that would encourage them to become involved in social activities and to meet with other older people on a more regular basis.

It is recommended that an audit or study should take place of community owned minibuses in the North East Inner City. There is a view that if these could be more effectively co-ordinated and utilised, they might form the basis for a good community transport service in the North East Inner City.

6. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The participation of 556 older people from the North East Inner City in the needs analysis project is a clear demonstration of the desire of older people to make their views known and to put forward ideas and recommendations about ways in which the lives of older people might be improved. Contained within the completed questionnaires is a strong sense that older people have been too quiet for too long and that when presented with opportunities to speak out about the services being provided to them, they will take maximum advantage of these opportunities.

There is a good deal of common ground amongst older people living in the North East Inner City in relation to the issues and concerns that need to be addressed by relevant statutory agencies and voluntary organisations. These issues and concerns are the development of more appropriate housing and accommodation for older people; the establishment of integrated one-stop-shop health care facilities; the organisation of more social activities, events and outings; better local transport arrangements; and the development of the North East Inner City into a safer and more secure place in which to live.

Older people said during the needs analysis project that if positive progress could be made in relation to a number of these issues/concerns, it would have a very significant impact on their overall quality of life. They said that if the various recommendations are implemented it would assist them in a number of different ways – in relation to their physical health, mental health and emotional health. They feel that if the recommendations are resourced and implemented by relevant statutory agencies and voluntary organisations it would be a real reflection and demonstration of the ways in which older people are being valued more and prioritised more within the operations of key agencies/organisations.

It is evident that many older people in the North East Inner City are still trying to come to terms with the massive changes which are taking place in the landscape of their area. Some parts of the North East Inner City are unrecognisable from 20 years ago, there has been a very sharp decrease in the number of older people in the area, many of the older people still living in the area feel vulnerable and isolated (as one interviewee said, 'we feel that we are like the forgotten people').

The effective implementation of the recommendations set out in this report, recommendations which have come directly from older people themselves, would clearly demonstrate that older people have not been forgotten about and that their contributions to family life and community life in the North East Inner City are both valued and recognised.



Sean Mac Dermot Street

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