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## Scottish Older People's Assembly 2011 Report



**Edinburgh International Conference Centre**



**Dumfries and Galloway College**

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## Foreword

The Scottish Older People's Assembly 2011 was the first to use video conferencing. This was both challenging and stimulating to arrange and we hope that all our delegates, not only in Edinburgh but also in Dumfries, Inverness and Hamburg in Germany, found the presentations and discussions both interesting and informative.

The Scottish Older People's Assembly Steering Group agreed to use video conferencing at this year's event to demonstrate the technology and how we could reach a wider audience. The webcast is available to view for six months after the conference on our website. We very much hope that we can build on this experience and look at how future Assembly events can further involve older people in setting our agenda with the Scottish Government.

The Scottish Older People's Assembly Steering Group would like to thank everyone who participated in the event. We would especially like to thank Gary Robertson who facilitated the conference. Gary's professionalism and friendly attitude greatly contributed to the success of the Assembly.

The report, together with the webcast of the day's event, will go to the Scottish Government and the Older People's Consultative Forum.

**Agnes McGroarty (Chairperson, Scottish Older People's Assembly Steering Group)**

**December 2011**

[www.edinburgh.gov.uk/SOPA2011](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/SOPA2011)

A voice for  
Scotland's  
older people

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## Introduction

The Scottish Older People's Assembly took place on Tuesday 25 October 2011 at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC). This was a one-day conference for older people and their representatives, funded by the Scottish Government and arranged by the Scottish Older People's Assembly Steering Group.

This was the third Scottish Older People's Assembly to take place and the first to include video conferencing. Previously the Assembly was held in October 2009 in the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh and in 2010 the event took place at the Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow. The Steering Group invited the City of Edinburgh Council to organise the 2011 event.

The Scottish Older People's Assembly is a "voice" for older people and an opportunity for older people from across Scotland to debate key issues of interest and concern. The key themes for this year's conference were active ageing, personal finance and care and support. The 2011 Assembly aimed to demonstrate positive attitudes for and about older people, working together, active ageing, intergenerational opportunities and older people's contribution to civic society. Video conferencing was used to demonstrate how the Assembly could reach a wider audience, involve those older people who were not able to attend on the day and share information about the conference as widely as possible with all stakeholders.



Gary Robertson from BBC Scotland facilitated the conference.

## Key Themes

The key themes to emerge from the speakers, presentations, questions and answer sessions and the conference evaluation forms included:

- Need to continue to address pensioner poverty and fuel poverty/energy costs
- Better integration of health and social care services that are also locally based
- Need to ensure quality and standards of care for older people in hospital and in community settings
- Need to ensure that older people are fully represented and involved in the plans for the Scottish Government's Change Fund for Older People's Services and in the plans to implement change at the local level
- Need for integrated local community transport services and public transport services to enable older people and their carers to attend hospital and day care – particularly in rural areas but also urban areas
- Share good practice on initiatives and projects that support older people and communicate information on services and activities that are available locally that encourage active ageing
- Look at ways for young and older people to learn together and share skills and ideas

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- Look at ways of using technology and social media to widen participation in future Assembly events to build on this year's event.

## Next Steps/Actions/Outcomes

This report will go to the Scottish Government and the Older People's Consultative Forum for information. The Consultative Forum involves representatives from older people's organisations from across Scotland and has regular meetings with Scottish Ministers. The report is also published on the Scottish Older People's Assembly website together with the webcast of the 2011 event. [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/SOPA2011](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/SOPA2011)

The Scottish Older People's Assembly Steering Group recommend the following actions that can be taken forward from this year's event. These include actions for national and local government and their partners and for older people themselves to pursue at community level.

- **UK Government (Department for Work and Pensions)** - to include the voice of Scottish older people in the development of legislation, policies and services relating to pensions and welfare benefits.
- **Scottish Government** – to continue to support the Scottish Older People's Assembly and the integration of the engagement of older people in the development of legislation, policies, and services.
- **Scottish Parliament** – to facilitate and build on the involvement of older people and their views in the work of the Cross Party Group (CPG) for Older People Age and Ageing and to make good use of the Public Petitions Committee.
- **Older People's Consultative Forum** - to agree and identify Scottish representation on the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) UK Advisory Forum on Ageing. The Forum membership includes representatives from stakeholder organisations, regional representatives from older people groups, devolved nations, Government Offices and older people themselves.
- **Local Authorities and NHS Boards** - to facilitate the involvement, engagement and integration of older people in the development of policies and services and particularly those directly targeted at older people such as Scotland's National Dementia Strategy and the Reshaping Care for Older People programme and the implementation of the Change Fund action plans.
- **Communities and Individuals** – to positively facilitate and promote the voice and needs of older people through existing structures such as Community Councils, social enterprises, voluntary organisations and forums for older people.
- **Scottish Older People's Assembly Steering Group** – to review the role of the Steering Group and the outcomes from the 2011 and previous Scottish Older People's Assembly events to take forward and refresh future arrangements for the Assembly.
- **Scottish Youth Parliament** – to continue to build on links made to older people's issues and intergenerational working.

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## Steve Webb MP, Minister of State for Pensions

Steve Webb, Minister of State for Pensions, spoke to the Assembly from Westminster via the video link.

- The Minister spoke about how over the last 30 years the State Pension had fallen relative to earnings. He said that the Government has restored this link and it is estimated that over the course of a retirement, £11,000 will be added to the value of the pension.
- In future the State Pension will be increased annually by whichever is highest from growth in earnings, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or by 2.5%. The Minister described this as a “triple lock” to ensure a minimum increase of 2.5%.
- The Minister said that the Government had reduced the winter fuel payment but had taken the decision to prioritise the cold weather payment (to be kept at £25 per week for each consecutive seven-day period where average actual or forecast temperatures are below 0°C). During the winter of 2010/11 the Government had spent £400 million on payments that helped older people and disabled people.
- The Department of Energy & Climate Change has been working with the energy companies to introduce the new Warm Home Discount that will require energy companies to give a £120 rebate on electricity bills in winter 2011/12 for those who receive the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit.
- The Minister said that the broader quality of life of older people was important, as well as income, and he was looking at ways of tracking this in the future.
- The Minister spoke about Pension Reform and the Government’s aim to create a simpler state pension system and to encourage more private saving. With the introduction of automatic enrolment in 2012, employers will have to enrol all eligible employees into workplace pensions schemes, although individuals can decide to opt out should they so wish. The Government has also consulted on proposals to reform the state pension system. Reform includes a proposal for a flat rate weekly pension to be introduced in 2016 of £140 (figure is at today’s rates, and would be upgraded). The Minister indicated that the majority of people currently receiving pensions already had an equivalent pension and that this was “not about extra money but about simplifying the system”. Following a period of consultation, the Government was now considering proposals on pension reform to be brought forward in a White Paper.

### Assembly discussion

- Delegates expressed disappointment that the proposed changes to the state pension would only apply to future pensioners and would not help current pensioners – particularly those experiencing poverty. The issue of fuel poverty and high cost of energy bills was also raised.
- Delegates raised concerns about the Government’s decision to use the Consumer Price Index (CPI) instead of the Retail Price Index (RPI). Delegates also pressed the Minister to confirm that the state pension would be increased by 5.2% in April 2012 (based on the September 2011 Consumer Price Index). The Minister referred to his previous comments regarding the “triple lock” and said that an official announcement would be made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Autumn Statement. [The Chancellor confirmed on 29 November 2011 that the basic State Pension will increase by the triple guarantee, as

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announced in the June 2010 Budget - the increase is 5.2%, which is the September 2011 CPI]

- Delegates expressed concern about the regulation of the automatic enrolment system to be introduced in 2012.

## Highland Senior Citizens Network

Highland Senior Citizens Network works on behalf of all senior citizens in the Highland area. The Network's current activity includes engaging with Highland Council regarding the provision of care homes and care at home.

32 members of the Network attended the regional event at Highland Council Chamber in Inverness and via the video link gave information about the work of the Caladh Sona Action Group to secure the future of the residential care unit in Melness on the North Coast of Scotland. Caladh Sona means "Haven of Rest". The Action Group is a community driven organisation. Meetings are attended by a cross section of the community and regular attendees include district nurses, local social care staff, local councillors, the local Minister of the Church of Scotland and the local GP who is also the Group's secretary.

The Action Group agree that services should be provided to allow people to remain in their own homes wherever possible but acknowledges that a number of residential places will continue to be necessary. The Action Group would like to see a new facility that would provide a holistic care setting with care and respite beds but which also saw day care and home care services located in the same place. Their vision is for care for the community by the community that could be achieved through devolved funding in partnership with a local community trust. Service provision would be within a co-operative model with staff having a personal investment in the co-operative. De-centralisation of services would allow growth in an evolutionary manner with quality as the core concern. The Action Group will continue to lobby their MSP and local councillors to encourage innovative thinking in government to match the aspirations of the local population.

## Assembly discussion

Key comments following the presentation from Highland Senior Citizens Network included:

- Locally based services support local economies and also contribute to good environmental practices and carbon reduction.
- West Dunbartonshire Community Care Forum has been involved in similar activity to keep the local hospital open. Many patients have to travel long distances out of the area for care.
- Aberdeenshire face similar problems to other rural areas and how best to provide quality care at home. One suggestion was that in looking for better care in the community local authorities could negotiate with local supermarkets to deliver shopping to people at home.
- Reference was made to the Food Train which provides a range of services including shopping, delivered by volunteers, to older people in the Dumfries and Galloway area. This

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third sector project is supported by the local authority. The project has been extended to West Lothian.

- Displacing people/sending older people to hospital and facilities outside their local area impacts on their quality of life/end of life care.
- Dumfries and Galloway Seniors Forum said that community infrastructure must be in place before any local hospitals and other facilities are closed. Previous experience regarding the closure of the psychiatric facility in the area shows that people cannot be confident proper services will be in place.
- One delegate said urban areas also had problems regarding travel to hospitals. Edinburgh residents had to travel to St John’s Hospital, Livingston for certain treatments and this can prove very difficult for older people. Patients attending St John’s also have to travel from the Borders area.

## Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy (Older People)



The Deputy First Minister thanked the Scottish Older People’s Assembly Steering Group for the opportunity to speak at this year’s event. The Minister commented that we are ageing as a nation – the number of people aged 75 and over is expected to increase by 84% by 2033 - noting that this was “*a good thing*” and reflected improvements in public health and medicine in our life-times. She said that older people are the core of many voluntary activities and provide more care to others than they receive. Older people “*live life to the full, and contribute to your communities. Many of you have committed years of your working lives or retirement to the cause of older people*”.

The Minister referenced aspects of Scottish Government policies that benefit older people including the freeze on Council Tax; the commitment to Free Personal and Nursing Care and to the National Concessionary Bus Travel Scheme; and, the Energy Assistance Package which tackles all aspects of fuel poverty. She then highlighted some key policies going forward including:

- Prevention around support for older people in the areas of health, housing and social care. Its importance was recognised in the recent Christie Commission report.
- A focus on older people’s services and better integration of health and social care. Putting the patient and service user at the centre of delivery and reshaping care services for older people in the light of the demographic ageing of the population.
- The Change Fund for Older People’s Services of £70m a year (now £80m for the next 2 years) provided from NHS Budgets to enable health and social care partners to implement local plans to make better use of their total combined resources for older people’s services.

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- Standards of nursing care – the Chief Nursing Officer will oversee a programme of work to improve the quality of care for older people in hospital, and to oversee the implementation of the new Dementia Standards in acute hospitals. Healthcare Improvement Scotland is to carry out a programme of inspections to ensure hospitals are living up to the Care for Older People in Acute Settings standards.
  - Dementia care – the Scottish Government launched its Dementia Strategy in June 2010 and also published the Standards of Care for Dementia in Scotland to help people with dementia, their families and carers understand and assert their rights. The dementia skills framework - Promoting Excellence – will help ensure the standards are met by ensuring staff have the best professional qualifications, enhancing workforce capability and developing leadership within the workforce. The Minister said that the Scottish Government has prioritised the care of dementia patients in hospital and post-diagnostic support for people with dementia.
  - In December the Scottish Government will publish the national strategy for housing and housing-related support for older people and a framework for delivery.

### **Assembly discussion**

Key comments following the presentation from the Minister included:

- Concerns about the introduction of 12-hour shift patterns in hospitals including A&E services and the possible effects on patient care and the quality of care. The Minister responded that Health Boards were responsible for decisions on shift patterns taken in consultation with staff. The Scottish Government's Quality Strategy and the Scottish Patient Safety Programme are there to ensure correct procedures are in place that put the quality of care and the safety of patients as a priority.
- The need for a period of post-diagnostic support (of one year) for people diagnosed with dementia and their families. The Scottish Government will work with Alzheimer Scotland on how post-diagnostic support can be delivered practically.
- Concerns were raised about local authority promotion for self-directed support. The Minister said that the Scottish Government was introducing legislation on self-directed support which would provide the legislative framework for this area of service.
- The Minister was asked if she was satisfied that older people were involved and engaged in plans for the Change Fund. The Minister responded that this was a new initiative and approach still in the early stages but local authorities and Health Boards were expected to adopt a collaborative approach that involved not only older people, but carers and the voluntary sector.
- The importance of evaluating and monitoring the procurement of care services to ensure this did not lead to ever-deteriorating services. The Minister agreed with the statement that *"purchasing care services is not the same as buying stationery"* – the guidance for local authorities includes advice on procuring quality services.
- Home Closure (and local authority ownership of care homes) was raised as a concern. The Minister said that there was a mixed economy between private, local authority and the third sector and that there was a balance to be looked at. Scottish Government and local authority responsibility was to ensure continuity of care if there was a change in circumstance such as the closure of private care homes.



- The majority of older people live in existing housing stock/older properties and find it difficult to install insulation because of cost.
- The Minister was also asked if a nationalist government in an independent Scotland would tackle the energy companies, cost of heating and bring the energy companies under public ownership. The Minister responded that an independent Scotland would have the powers to regulate the energy market.
- When asked about Scottish Government support for a Scottish Parliament for Older People, the Minister said that she believed that the work of the Assembly and other forums for older people had made a difference and indicated that the name was less important than what the Assembly does and the difference that it can make.

### The Voice of a Generation; are YOU being heard?

Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament and the A City for All Ages Advisory Group (Edinburgh) discussed “The Voice of a Generation; are YOU being heard?” and commented on issues of joint concern for young and older people. Delegates at the Assembly contributed to the discussion. There was agreement that young and older people can learn from each other.

The Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) was established in 1999 and works towards an inclusive Scotland in which young people realise their potential, are full and active citizens and play a key part in all decisions which affect them. A City for All Ages includes individual older volunteers and representatives from older people’s groups and organisations and since 2001 has worked with the City of Edinburgh Council and partner organisations on plans and services for older people.



The key comments from the discussions are summarised below.

- The importance of engaging people of all ages in a way that is comfortable for them. The SYP go to young people and speak to them in their own environment.
- It is not only about engaging with people but also about addressing the problems that “hard to reach” groups experience. For example: communities and society need to deal with homophobia and not expect the LGBT community to do this in isolation. One delegate said that no group is “hard to reach” and it is about service providers having the right support in place so that they can engage with and include all BME communities and others.



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- Older people from BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) communities often have strong ties with the country of their origin and feel an obligation to parents and close relatives. Children born and brought up in Scotland regard themselves as “Scottish” and feel closer to Scottish culture and customs. The service providers need to understand and look into the needs of BME older people as the perception is that they are taken care of by their families, and this should not be used as the reason not to deal with them. BME older people are also ageing and growing in numbers similar to the mainstream ageing population.
  - Concerns were raised about employment opportunities for young and older people. Reference was made to the number of young people aged between 16 and 24 who were now unemployed and the Government decision to remove the default retirement age coupled with proposals for pension reform and to encourage people to work longer. It was acknowledged that older people may want the opportunity to work longer but it was also commented that some work is not suitable. Reference was made to the loss of skills as older workers retire and the suggestion that older workers nearing retirement and young workers could be teamed together, sharing the work but also as an opportunity to learn and pass on skills.
  - All generations may have concerns about being safe. Younger people are more likely to be the victims of violent crime and can also find large groups of young people intimidating. Also, groups of people of any age can be intimidating. There needs to be less stereotyping of all ages.
  - Delegates said that bureaucracy and “red tape” can be a barrier to older and younger people doing activities and learning together.
  - One panel member asked “*what is a generation?*” – there are different generations between the ages of 60 and 90.
  - The SYP representatives said that SYP members are all elected and mandated to speak on behalf of their local areas. This structure takes a lot of organisation, finance and publicity. The work that young people and the SYP do at local level is essential, often the most successful and as important as their involvement at national level.
  - Some Assembly delegates called on the Scottish Government to provide funding to set up a Scottish Parliament for Older People.

## **Haus im Park (House in the Park) Hamburg, Germany**

House in the Park and the City of Edinburgh Council (A City for All Ages) linked at the Symposium on Political and Social Participation by Elderly People, Hamburg in November 2010 organised by the Körber Foundation. Two older volunteers from the A City for All Ages Advisory Group attended the symposium and visited House in the Park. These links are strengthened by House in the Park’s involvement in the Scottish Older People’s Assembly and as a pre-cursor to the “European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity Between Generations 2012.”

40 people from House in the Park participated in the Assembly via the video conference link. House in the Park is a social centre for older people based in Hamburg, Germany offering a wide range of services and volunteering opportunities for people aged 50+. Over 200 people work at House in the Park, more than half as volunteers. All the volunteers are seen as co-

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workers with an equal status and involvement as the paid staff. Volunteers take part in all meetings and training. House in the Park receives no public funding but is supported by the Körber Foundation.

House in the Park offers a range of services and activities including a café, language clubs, computer classes, a visiting service for older people in the community who are more isolated, exercise and dance classes, and care support and physiotherapies.

A short film demonstrated the work and activities of the complex and four of the older volunteers described their involvement as a reader in the audiobooks library; as the coordinator of the visiting service/befriending service for older people; as a volunteer in the office and reception desk of House in the Park answering questions, handling the phone and doing office work; and, as a volunteer with the women's discussion group.

### **Assembly discussion**

The key comments following the presentation from House in the Park are summarised below.

- House in the Park was commended for the way volunteers are respected, the way they were actively involved in the running and decision making and viewed as co-workers.
- Delegates were interested in how the model developed by House in the Park could be used in different settings or translate into a smaller community.
- Members of the U3A (University of the Third Age) spoke about their organisation in Scotland. U3As are local, self-help groups for older and retired people that give their members opportunities to share learning and activities. U3As are run by members for members. People can join their local U3A for a small yearly subscription.

### **Dumfries and Galloway Seniors Forum**

Dumfries and Galloway Seniors Forum works on behalf of older people and is a focus for contact between the senior citizens, local authority and other agencies within Dumfries and Galloway. The Forum services a membership of over 3,000 people. At the Forum's invitation, thirty-three people from various groups and organisations attended the regional event at Dumfries and Galloway College Campus and Forum members, via the video link, gave information about projects they are involved in.

Dumfries and Galloway Regional Third Sector Forum (3SF) is one of five partners working with the Scottish Parliament (Community Partnerships Project) to gain first hand experience of working with the Parliament and how to influence policy. The Dumfries and Galloway "A Road to Health" project has identified community and hospital transport as a key priority linked to the health and wellbeing of older people. The key issues are the need for a better co-ordinated community transport system; patient travel to appointments is often difficult and time consuming adding to anxiety; and, the lack of travel provision for visitors, families and carers. Volunteers are unable to pay the travel costs; methods of claiming travel expenses are often inconsistent and patients and families are often left to make their own way home from hospital appointments.

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A survey carried out by the project has revealed that one third of people aged over 70 go out less than once a month while 37% of people have to travel over 30 miles (and some much greater distances) for appointments. Dumfries and Galloway Seniors Forum is looking at good practice in other areas as it believes other rural areas will have the same issues, and calls on the Scottish Government and local authorities and health boards to work together to improve transport arrangements for older patients and their carers attending hospital and day care.

The Dumfries and Galloway Seniors Forum has welcomed the Scottish Government Change Fund which will be taken forward in the local area under the banner of “Putting You First”. In its presentation to the Assembly, the Forum raised concerns about the exclusion of older people from the structures and meetings to develop the local plan and actions.

Dumfries and Galloway Seniors Forum is looking at new ways of working since the core funding from the local authority was reduced by half. This has included launching the new “Lust for Life” magazine which is being supported by several organisations, including NHS Dumfries and Galloway.

### **Assembly discussion**

Key comments following the presentation from Dumfries and Galloway Seniors Forum included:

- Concern about transport in both urban and rural areas, particularly for older people to attend hospital, which has implications for people’s care and wellbeing. For example: the new hospital in Glasgow is an excellent facility but many people struggle to get there due to the lack of direct bus services.
- People can be isolated but not everyone wants to go to a day care centre or organised activities. Community Connections is an example of a new outreach project in Edinburgh where someone is offered one-to-one support with a volunteer for individual support – this could be going out shopping or to a football match. The purpose is to build the person’s confidence, sense of wellbeing and belonging.
- Reference was also made to Edinburgh’s Get up and go brochure and web based information which lists activities for older people. Get up and go is published by the City of Edinburgh Council’s Libraries and Information Service.
- One delegate suggested that older people and older people’s groups could not rely only on local authority funding but in the current circumstances must also use their own experience and initiative to support activities.
- Delegates spoke about a number of projects organised without local authority funding but through the efforts of volunteers. Examples cited included Cancer Care shops in North Ayrshire which use money raised to provide volunteer transport to take people to hospital for appointments and the Kilwinning over 60s club that raises money through bring and buy sales and other events to provide social activities for members.

### **Video Conferencing and Social Media**

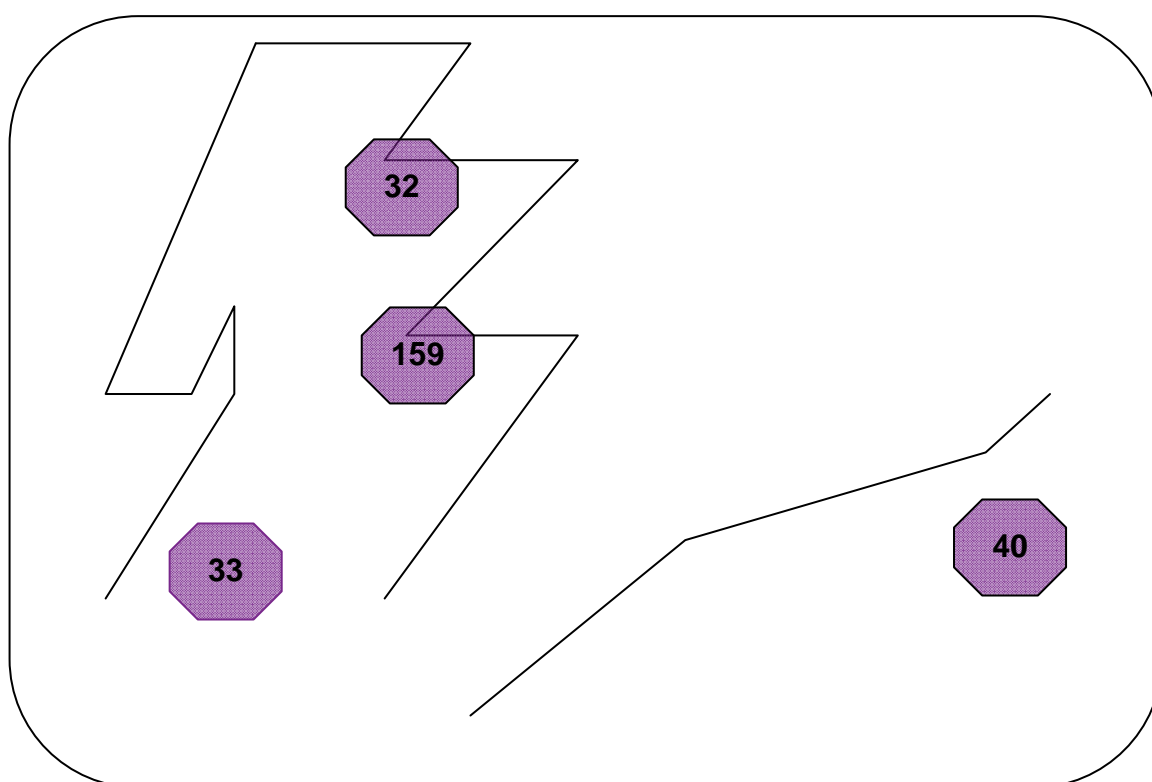
This was the first Scottish Older People’s Assembly to use video conferencing. The player was viewed by 685 viewers on 25 October - 672 from the UK, 11 from Sweden, 1 from Canada and 1 from Belgium. The webcast of the day’s event is available to view online for six months after

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the Assembly at [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/SOPA2011](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/SOPA2011) and a DVD of the event has been produced as a permanent record. The SOPA11 Twitter account was used leading up to and during the conference to publicise the event. It is estimated that Tweets, via SOPA11 and Age Scotland, reached an estimated 3458 people on the day of the Assembly.

## Evaluation

The Scottish Older People's Assembly had an attendance of 264 people across four locations. The map below shows where participants attended.



Attendees in Edinburgh, Dumfries and Inverness were asked to complete an evaluation form where there was a very high return rate of 46%, and 64% of respondents gave a high rating for the usefulness of the Assembly. The comments from the evaluation have helped to inform the key themes and next steps sections of this report.

Some examples of the comments were:

**“I feel this was a worthwhile event as it provided an opportunity for live discussion with a range of people without the expense and time involved in travel. I hope it happens again.”**

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**“A real step forward from the previous assemblies - the video link and webcast are a great innovation.”**

**“An essential and important event giving older people the opportunity to come together and voice their concerns to government ministers with a view to raising awareness of issues affecting older people.”**

Some respondents highlighted the importance of action, outcomes and taking issues forward.

**“We don’t know enough about the problems/achievements in other parts of Scotland, and that transport is a universal problem.”**

**“Too closely matched to political/parliamentary debating mould instead of problem identification and solving.”**

**“Very well organised and facilitated excellently. Perhaps next one could have some focus on problems of having an older population.”**

## **Scottish Older People’s Assembly Steering Group Role**

The Scottish Older People's Assembly Steering Group includes representatives from older people's organisations and groups across Scotland and is responsible for the Assembly arrangements.

- Agnes McGroarty - Chairperson (Scottish Seniors Alliance)
- Joan Turner - Vice Chairperson (Scottish Pensions Association)
- Barbara Barnes (Alzheimer Scotland)
- Betty Farmer (Highland Senior Citizens Network)
- Diana Findlay (Scottish Borders Elder Voice)
- Elinor McKenzie (Scottish Pensioners Forum)
- Peter McColl (WRVS)
- Rohini Sharma Joshi (Trust Housing Association/Equality Scotland)
- Alan Sidaway (National Pensioners Convention Scotland)
- Eric Souter (STUC)
- John White (Dumfries & Galloway Seniors Forum)
- Katie Docherty/Callum Chomczuk - representing Age Scotland
- Glenda Watt - representing The City of Edinburgh Council (A City for All Ages)
- John Storey - representing the Scottish Government (Disability Equality, Independent Living Policy and Older People and Age, Equality and Communities, DG Governance and Communities)

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## Budget

The Scottish Older People's Assembly is funded by the Scottish Government. The Scottish Older People's Assembly Steering Group invited the City of Edinburgh Council to arrange this year's event. Thanks to a combination of tight control of expenditure, sponsorship income and generous in-kind support from all three partner venues, the Assembly was delivered within the available budget.

## Acknowledgements

The Scottish Older People's Assembly Steering Group would like to thank the Scottish Government for funding and supporting the Scottish Older People's Assembly.

The Steering Group would also like to thank the following for their support and contributions to the 2011 Assembly.

- Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy (responsible for Older People)
- Steve Webb MP, Minister of State for Pensions
- Dumfries and Galloway Seniors Forum
- Dumfries and Galloway College – for providing the venue, technical support and arrangements to Dumfries and Galloway Seniors Forum
- Highland Senior Citizens Network
- Highland Council – for providing the venue, technical support and arrangements to Highland Senior Citizens Network
- House in the Park, Hamburg in Germany
- Scottish Youth Parliament (Gina Clark, Alexander Keenan, David Leitch)
- A City for All Ages Advisory Group, Edinburgh (Violet Laidlaw, Mary Scott Macfarlane, Tim Puntis, Shaheen Unis)
- Gary Robertson (BBC Scotland)
- Fiona Rutherford (Harpist) – for providing the lunch time entertainment
- Lloyd Smith (Photographer)
- The City of Edinburgh Council (Glenda Watt, Veronica Wishart, Anne Elliot, Fraser Rowson, Iain Grant, Sally Kerr, Bronwen Brown, Simon Goundry, Jacqueline Allan)

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## Exhibition Stands

The Scottish Older People's Assembly Steering Group would also like to thank the following organisations for their support.

- **Action on Hearing Loss (Scotland)** - provide support for people with hearing loss and tinnitus, support for people who are deaf and have additional needs; supply communication services and training; offer practical advice to help people protect their hearing; campaign to change public policy around hearing loss issues; support research into an eventual cure for hearing loss and tinnitus. Action on Hearing Loss was adopted in 2011 as the new name of the RNID.
- **Age Scotland** - provides advice on money matters, health and wellbeing, travel and lifestyle, work and learning and how to get involved. Age Scotland campaigns with and for older people, supports local groups, informs and empowers older people. The Age Scotland Helpline (0845 125 9732) offers an independent, confidential telephone based information service to people aged fifty and over living in Scotland, and to those associated with them such as their carers and families.
- **Alzheimer Scotland** - is the leading dementia organisation in Scotland. They campaign for the rights of people with dementia and their families and provide an extensive range of innovative and personalised support services. Alzheimer Scotland's 24 hour, freephone Dementia Helpline 0808 808 3000 is there for people with dementia, those who care for them and anyone with a concern or query regarding dementia.
- **Care and Repair Scotland (and Edinburgh)** - offers independent advice and assistance to help older and disabled homeowners repair, improve or adapt their homes so that they can live in comfort and safety in their own community. Care and Repair services are available in 31 Council areas in Scotland. Staff can arrange home visits so that the service is widely accessible. Care & Repair Edinburgh, for example, have a Handyperson Service which is reliant on its team of volunteers.
- **The Centre for Cognitive Ageing and Cognitive Epidemiology (University of Edinburgh)** - is a centre of excellence to advance research into how ageing affects cognition, and how mental ability in youth affects health and longevity. The goal of researchers at the Centre is to understand more about the changes in our brains that accompany age-related mental decline. The Disconnected Mind is a research project that aims to understand more about how the ageing process affects our thinking and memory skills. It is funded by the charity Age UK and is being carried out by the Centre. The research team is studying a group of people, now in their mid-70s, called the Lothian Birth Cohort 1936 (LBC1936).
- **Equality Scotland** - promotes equality for Scotland's many communities, particularly black and minority ethnic older people. The Older People Services Project works closely with older people, their families and community groups to help them to learn about and access a range of vital benefits and services to which they are entitled. The project provides expert advice and help on how to obtain such things as pension benefits to reduce financial stress, improvements to living environments, help with heating and energy costs, and better social connections. The project also provides support and guidance on more general age-related

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issues such as dementia or coping with loneliness and isolation. Equality Scotland is supported by Trust, Hanover and Bield housing associations.

- **Generations Working Together (Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice)** - was set up by the Scottish Government in 2007 and provides information, commissions projects, delivers support and encourages involvement to benefit all of Scotland's generations, by working, learning, volunteering and living together. One of the priorities is to set up local intergenerational networks throughout Scotland.
- **Joint Improvement Team (Reshaping Care for Older People Programme)** - offers practical support to partnerships across Scotland to deliver better health, housing and social care services. In 2011-12 the Scottish Government allocated £70 million to a Change Fund to enable NHS Boards and local authorities, together with voluntary agencies, to redesign services for our growing older population (Reshaping Care for Older People). Plans for use of the funds are to be developed in partnership by health boards, local authorities and the third and independent sectors. They will focus on reducing delayed discharges, reducing unplanned emergency admissions to hospital, and making more innovative use of care home placements alongside improvements in care-at-home provision and housing-related support, and supporting unpaid carers.
- **NHS Health Scotland Mental Health Improvement Programme** - work has been developed to raise the profile of mental health improvement and support its application in Scotland. Much of the work also supports the implementation of the Scottish Government's health improvement policy in relation to mental health. "Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland", the national mental health improvement plan, indicates that an understanding of the importance of protecting a person's own mental health could be key to reducing the number of people with mental health problems.
- **OPENspace (In association with the University of Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt University)** - is an international research centre for inclusive access to outdoor environments. The centre brings together experts in landscape architecture, environmental psychology, human geography, forestry, quality of life measures and design for all ages and abilities. The work focuses on the benefits to be gained from getting outdoors and the barriers currently experienced by different users, particularly those from disadvantaged groups. Research projects include I'DGO TOO (Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors), a study into the effects of living in 'shared space' neighbourhoods on older people's activity patterns, wellbeing and quality of life.
- **The Risk Factory (Edinburgh)** - is a purpose-built interactive community safety centre based in Edinburgh. It uses scenarios of everyday risks in a safe environment to teach people how to deal with or avoid risks altogether. It aims to provide high quality, interactive community safety education, which will help to develop pro-active citizenship. The Risk Factory has expanded its programmes to facilitate tours for adults with additional needs who are moving towards greater independence and possibly independent living. The volunteering programme encourages older volunteers.
- **Telecare Services (City of Edinburgh Council)** - telecare is a term that covers a range of equipment and services that harness developing technology to enable people to live with greater independence and safety in their own homes. IT developments are continually extending the range of devices and services available and, as a result, the scope for telecare to support people with particular health and social care needs to remain in their own

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homes and optimise their independence and quality of life. Telecare can be provided alongside any other services like home care and can offer 24 hour monitoring and support.

- **WRVS** - is an age positive charity. Volunteers deliver personal and practical support to help older people and WRVS raises awareness of the issues older people face through their campaigns and research. More than 40,000 volunteers of all ages enable WRVS to run local services to support older people in communities all across Great Britain.



### Delegates

The Scottish Older People's Assembly Steering Group invited older people's groups and communities from across Scotland to send delegates to the Assembly.

Of the 180 people who registered for the Assembly, 159 attended the Edinburgh International Conference Centre. A further 33 people attended Dumfries and Galloway College, 32 people attended Inverness, Highland Council Chamber and 40 attended House in the Park, Hamburg, Germany, totalling 264.

The webcast player was viewed by 685 viewers on 25 October - 672 from the UK, 11 from Sweden, 1 from Canada and 1 from Belgium. Tweets describing the event as it happened reached an estimated 3458 people on the day of the Assembly.

All delegates at the Assembly events in Edinburgh, Dumfries and Inverness were asked to complete an evaluation form and 103 responded. Some forms were fully completed while others were partially completed and some delegates preferred not to answer some questions. The evaluation form included equalities monitoring information which may be used by the Scottish Older People's Assembly Steering Group when arranging future events.

### Usefulness of the Assembly

65 respondents gave a high rating for the usefulness of the Assembly, illustrated by the following statements.

**"I feel this was a worthwhile event as it provided an opportunity for live discussion with a range of people without the expense and time involved in travel. I hope it happens again."**

**"A real step forward from the previous assemblies - the video link and webcast are a great innovation."**

**"An essential and important event giving older people the opportunity to come together and voice their concerns to government ministers with a view to raising awareness of issues affecting older people."**

**"The assembly was excellent, covering all aspects of health provision. The individual speakers were very good at presenting their points."**

18 delegates had mixed views on the usefulness of the Assembly with some people commenting on the sameness of some presentations in the afternoon and poor quality of sound from some of the video links. One person stated that issues affecting older people were not addressed. Three respondents wanted to raise the need for a Scottish Parliament for older

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people while another respondent said that the Assembly was the right way ahead providing that actions are taken and the agenda moves forward.

**“Very useful to hear the priorities and initiatives. Very disappointing that active forums identify problems such as transport and no action seems to be taken by local authorities even when money available. Waste on council employees being paid for meetings that don’t deliver. U3A type initiatives are great but need to be sure things are happening for people who are not so confident educationally.”**

### **Facilitation and Contributions**

Gary Robertson’s facilitation of the event was rated very highly by the majority of respondents. Comments from three people suggested that there was not an even opportunity for people from different areas to give their points of view.

The contributions from Nicola Sturgeon MSP and Steve Webb MP were highly rated, characterised by the following comments.

**“The ministerial presentations were very professional.”**

**“Pensions minister allowed good time for questions even if audience dissatisfied with some answers.”**

**“Steve Webb avoided answering direct questions. Nicola Sturgeon speaks well, just sometimes her hopes are not realised.”**

### **Intergenerational Discussion**

The overall rating for the intergenerational discussion was high but one respondent felt there could have been more input from the LGBT community.

**“The intergenerational discussion was very good - very proud of the Youth Parliament.”**

**“As regards the intergenerational discussion, an excellent idea at a gathering for older people in the main. ACFAA links with the Youth Parliament are good and mutually beneficial.”**

**“I was very impressed with members of the Scottish Youth Parliament during the intergenerational discussion.”**

### **Venue and Catering**

The venue and catering were rated very highly by the majority of delegates. There were critical comments from a small number of people on poor signage to the Edinburgh International Conference Centre and a limited selection of sandwiches available at lunch.



## Overall Comments

The majority of delegates gave a high rating for the Assembly. There were comments on it being an enjoyable, informative, very well organised and facilitated event. House in the Park in Germany commented on the good experience the event had been for both older volunteers and staff and intend to send a delegation to Edinburgh in 2012 to strengthen links already made.

**“The conference was an extraordinary experience especially for the four older volunteering people directly involved but also for the whole staff. It gave the House in the Park a recognition and interest, we are not used to have in the every day work. We learned from Edinburgh, that an Assembly of older people can be much more political than it would be the case in Germany, so it encouraged people here to speak up for their needs.”**

**“A very worthwhile event which should continue on an annual basis.”**

**“Well worth the effort to attend.”**

Some respondents highlighted the importance of action, outcomes and taking issues forward. For example:

**“The Assembly will only work if they enact some of the statements.”**

**“Would have liked to see more positive outcomes by having small workshops set up to try and take issues forward - care at home - pensions - fuel poverty.”**

**“As regards the video conference presentations, it was a very good try as it still has problems; not always audible. The best of the 3 held, as more variety in presentations, more time for questions and better use of time for different questions. A few people were allowed several questions in short time available.”**

**“On the whole good and helpful. Where do we go with this now?”**

## Suggestions for the Future

Suggestions for a future Assembly are categorised into the following three themes and illustrated by respondent’s quotes below.

- Rural and urban transport
- Problem solving approach
- Technology



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**“Our agricultural area needs as much help for elderly people as possible. Once a Senior Citizen it is more difficult to get to a Day Centre if long mileage away. Day Centre transport only travels certain mileage to some.”**

**“Too closely matched to political/parliamentary debating mould instead of problem identification and solving.”**

**“Very well organised and facilitated excellently. Perhaps next one could have some focus on problems of having an older population.”**

**“We don’t know enough about the problems/achievements in other parts of Scotland, and that transport is a universal problem.”**

**“Content of event did not address the opportunities that should have been available to discuss real problems and issues in current climate. Felt it was a diminution of what the Assembly should be providing and has been set up for.”**

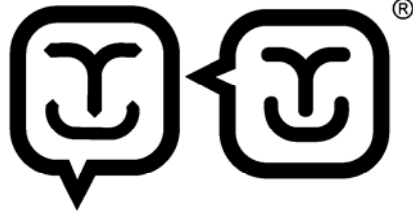
**“Clearer view of the purpose and objectives, with use of buzz groups and summary displays, would improve value.”**

**“Fewer presentations and more scope for Q & A. More small group work around pre-selected topics would be interesting.”**

**“The EICC, when one is inside is a really great venue - all on one level --- plenty of space, facilities, comfortable seating etc. Sincere thanks to all who worked so hard to make this --- and the 2 previous assemblies possible. We hope they may continue and, with improved video technology, even become better in the future. Once the building problems are over The EICC is an ideal and central venue, - Scotland wise and Edinburgh City centre wise for such events. With every good wishes for future work.”**

**“Overall these assemblies are very helpful, giving people a chance to meet chat and learn what is happening in areas other than their own. For this reason an assembly rather than an elected older people's parliament is probably best and, thus far, has been an annual event before the winter weather really sets in.”**

A voice for  
Scotland's  
older people



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

আনন্দের সঙ্গে অনুবাদ করব ترجمے کے لئے حاضر

يسعدنا توفير الترجمة MOŻEMY PRZETŁUMACZYĆ 很樂意翻譯

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