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parliament**



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Northern Ireland
**Pensioners Parliament Report
2016**

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1. foreword

Welcome to the official report of the sixth annual Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament (NIPP). The NIPP was established in 2011 to engage with older people from across Northern Ireland, enable them to have their say on issues that matter to them and to empower them to bring about positive change to the lives of older people.

Organised by Age Sector Platform and supported by The Atlantic Philanthropies and Comic Relief, the Parliament provides a bottom up, inclusive and democratic approach to tackling issues of concern identified by older people.

With each annual two-day event the NIPP continues to grow in popularity and influence. This year we received over 460 requests to attend with only 180 places available. I believe this demonstrates the growing reputation of the Parliament as an authoritative, informed voice of older people as well as highlighting growing determination of older people across Northern Ireland to contribute to that voice.

This year, for the first time, we held parliaments in each of the 11 new council areas, attended by over 800 older people. These were extremely successful and introduced NIPP to a new audience, as for many people, attending their local parliament was their very first Pensioners Parliament experience.

Surveys conducted at the local parliaments helped to shape the agenda for the annual two-day parliament. The key issues raised by older people as being of greatest concern to them were:

- Access to Health & Social Care (69.3%)
- Transport (50.6%)
- Keeping Warm in Winter / Energy Prices (49.3%)
- Fear of Crime (48.2%)

The number of older people citing Access to Health Care and Transport as their main issues has risen significantly since our last survey- conducted in 2014- and reflects increased concern around waiting times for operations, GP and hospital appointments and inadequate care packages which are not based on individual need. It also highlights the growing anxiety of many older people around quality and frequency of transport provision, time tabling and infrastructure. Based on the results of the survey, two plenary sessions at the two-day parliament were devoted to these issues.

Keeping Warm in Winter and Energy Prices remains a key area of concern for older people, although this has fallen by over 25% since the last survey. Age Sector Platform continues to actively campaign on this issue, most notably in efforts to have Northern Ireland included in the Warm Home Discount Scheme which could provide many older households here with an annual discount of £140 off their electricity bill. This issue formed the basis of a meeting with Northern Ireland MPs at Westminster in November and we continue to actively campaign for low income households in Northern Ireland to enjoy parity with such households in the rest of the UK.



Fear of Crime remains a key issue for many older people but again we are pleased to see that the number of people citing this as their main concern has fallen since the last survey. This may be in part due to the Feel Safe Campaign that was organised by Age Sector Platform during 2016. A full analysis of survey results is available in Section 4 of this report.

In addition to the 11 local parliaments held between February and April, 2016 was a busy and productive year. The Feel Safe Workshops referred to above were held between December and February as part of a partnership with the Department of Justice Community Safety Team. These were well attended and as mentioned, the impact of this campaign over the last number of years may be reflected in fear of crime becoming less of an issue of concern for older people.

The Stormont Question Time was also held in February, which was a busy month! Chaired by Mitchel McLaughlin MLA, then Speaker of the Assembly, it provided the opportunity for members of the NIPP to question Ministers on a range of issues including fuel poverty, age discrimination and health and social care. NIPP members were able to put questions to the then Junior Ministers, Emma Little Pengelly & Jennifer McCann, DETI Minister, Jonathan Bell and DSD Minister, Maurice Morrow. The event was timely, leading as it did into the 11 local parliaments and providing another important opportunity for dialogue and engagement with decision makers.

The 11 local parliaments represented a phenomenal piece of work by the team at Age Sector Platform. These were organised in response to older people stating that they wished to have parliaments in their own local council areas in order to engage with their local policy makers/ decision makers and to really connect to the issues and challenges in their communities. The overriding feedback is that local parliaments must become regular events and it is notable that a significant number of people, who participated in the two-day Parliament for the first time this year, did so after attending one of the local parliaments.

The capacity of Age Sector Platform to continue to deliver this level of activity will depend to a significant degree on funding. The next 12 months represent a critical time for the organisation following the loss of its principal funder, The Atlantic Philanthropies. Age Sector Platform is working hard to secure alternative funding that will enable it to continue to organize the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament. Donations to the Pensioners Trust represent a vital contribution to the sustainability of Age Sector Platform and members of NIPP have given generously in the past. This is needed more than ever now. I would once again urge everyone involved with the NIPP to support the Pensioners Trust either through personal donations and / or by promoting the Trust to local businesses and individuals.

All donations, no matter how small, will contribute to Age Sector Platform being able to support the parliament in the years ahead and improve the lives of older people.

The year ahead seems set to present us with significant challenges, most notably in the form of the uncertainty that currently threatens the future of our political institutions. However I take great encouragement from the ongoing commitment of our membership and staff and I am confident that the strength and reputation of the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament will see us meet and overcome these challenges.



Michael Monaghan
Chair, NI Pensioners Parliament



2. aims of the pensioners parliament

The aims of the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament are as follows:

- Increase the opportunity for older people to have their voice heard on the issues that matter to them
- Connect older people to key decision makers within Government and service providers
- Increase the confidence of older people to make their voice heard and to uphold their rights
- Increase older people's knowledge of their rights and entitlements
- Increase awareness and access to services that can improve the quality of life for older people
- Enable older people aged over 60, and especially those over 75, to become actively involved in influencing decisions that affect their lives
- Ensure that older people remain active and engaged citizens and are not excluded from decision making
- Enable older people to utilise the experience and skills they have amassed over their lifetime to develop solutions on important issues

3. executive summary

The sixth annual Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament (NIPP) took place on 13th and 14th October 2016. The NIPP is organised by Age Sector Platform and is supported by Comic Relief and The Atlantic Philanthropies.

Local Parliaments

This year was different for NIPP. We held 11 local parliaments across Northern Ireland, one in each new council area. More than 800 older people in total attended the local parliaments which were held between February and April 2016.



The host towns and cities were Newtownabbey, Irvinestown, Newtownards, Belfast, Armagh, Newry, Ballymena, Cookstown, Derry/Londonderry, Lisburn and Portrush. For almost half of the attendees, it was their first experience of participating in a Pensioners Parliament.

An electronic, interactive survey was conducted at each parliament. The results of the survey were used in setting the agenda for the two-day Parliament and in constructing questions to be directed to the expert panels.

Two - Day NIPP

153 Members of the Pensioners Parliament (MPPs) attended the annual two-day parliament which was officially opened by the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Robin Newton MLA.



There were four plenary sessions across the two days focussing on; Programme for Government, Health and Social Care, Transport and Westminster issues. These were supported by a number of high profile keynote speakers and expert panellists.

Following each plenary session members of the Parliament voted on motions on that topic with two thirds majority (67%) needed for a motion to be carried.

A total of 16 motions were voted on and carried over the two days on issues including; age discrimination legislation, health and social care, transport and the need for the UK Government and the NI Executive to include Northern Ireland in the Warm Home Discount scheme. An analysis of the motions and voting is included in section 7 of this report.

4. pensioners parliament survey results

Age Sector Platform (ASP) conducted an extensive survey at each local Pensioners Parliament asking respondents to list their top five areas of concern. ASP used the survey results to shape the agenda, discussions and panellists for the two-day Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament. The overall results of the survey are displayed in the table below.

There have been a number of significant changes to the issues concerning older people since the last survey was conducted in 2014.

Rank	Issue	% of older people that selected this as a top concern	% difference from 2014 survey
1	Access to health and social care	69.3	47.6 +21.7
2	Transport	50.6	19.9 +30.7
3	Keeping warm in winter/energy prices	49.3	74.7 -25.4
4	Fear of crime	48.2	56.3 -8.1
5	Information on benefits/entitlements	37.2	33.2 +4
6	Elder abuse	34.7	19.5 +15.2
7	Lack of respect	33.9	14.1 +19.8
8	Age Discrimination	32.7	27.9 +4.8
9	New technology	32.1	16 +16.1
10	Suitable housing	29	10.9 +18.1
11	Food prices	25.6	55.7 -30.1
12	Not enough money	21.9	35.7 -13.8
13	Loneliness/ boredom	18.6	29.2 -10.6
14	Isolation	18	25.7 -7.7
15	Access to education/training	15.6	6.8 +8.8
16	Other	7	0.4 +6.6
17	Employment issues	5.7	4.3 +1.4

5. reports from local parliaments

Between February and April 2016, Age Sector Platform held 11 local Pensioners Parliaments across Northern Ireland – one in each council area. More than 800 older people attended in total, with around half attending a parliament for the very first time.

The agenda for each parliament was identical but discussion on specific local issues received prominence during the days' proceedings. Delegates were provided with information about new community planning powers given to local councils and had an opportunity to question Councillors on local issues that are the responsibility of Council.



The timing of the parliaments, in the months leading up to the NI Assembly Election, provided an opportunity for delegates to question MLAs / Assembly candidates on issues of concern to older people. The Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament manifesto took centre stage, with political representatives asked to outline their party's position on issues including protection of the Smartpass, waiting lists for hospital and GP appointments and age discrimination in respect of access to goods, facilities and services.

Interactive voting enabled delegates to provide their views on topics including - age discrimination, health and social care, energy prices, community safety and the new state pension. Delegates were also asked to provide information about their digital skills and their views on how well their local council engaged with older people.

Finally, and most importantly, delegates were asked to identify their top five issues of concern, which would inform the results of the 2016 Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament survey. A short report from each local parliament is provided on the following pages.



Antrim & Newtownabbey Parliament

When? Friday 19 February 2016
Where? Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey
Attendance? 89 older people from the borough

Opened by Cllr Thomas Hogg, Mayor of Antrim & Newtownabbey

Councillor Q&A panel Cllr John Blair (Alliance), Cllr Phillip Brett (DUP), Cllr Mark Cosgrove (UUP), Cllr David Hollis (TUV) and Cllr Roisin Lynch (SDLP).

Stormont Q&A panel Adrian Cochrane-Watson MLA (UUP), David Ford MLA (Alliance), Paul Girvan MLA (DUP) and Cllr Roisin Lynch (SDLP)

Issues discussed

- Future of Whiteabbey Hospital
- Suitable housing in Antrim
- Recycling in the borough
- Traffic, parking and footpaths
- Flooding & environmental issues
- Inaccessibility of hospital appointments



Top 3 issues from Antrim & Newtownabbey Parliament survey

	Issue	% of older people that voted this as a top concern
1	Access to health and social care	66.5
2	Fear of crime	60.7
3	Keeping warm in winter/energy prices	46.4



Many thanks to Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council for supporting the parliament

Fermanagh and Omagh Parliament

When? Friday 26 February 2016
Where? Bawnacre Centre, Irvinestown
Attendance? 85 older people from the district

Opened by Cllr Paul Robinson, Vice-Chairman of Fermanagh & Omagh Council.

Councillor Q&A panel Cllr Rosemary Barton (UUP), Cllr John Feely (Sinn Féin),
 Cllr Richie McPhillips (SDLP) and Cllr Paul Robinson (DUP)

Stormont Q&A panel Thomas Buchanan MLA (DUP), Phil Flanagan MLA (Sinn Féin),
 Daniel McCrossan MLA (SDLP) and Alastair Patterson MLA (UUP)

Issues discussed

- Car parking
- Pedestrian safety
- Local GP surgery provision
- Age discrimination
- Nursing home and care packages
- Transport to hospital appointments



Top 3 issues from Fermanagh & Omagh Parliament survey

	Issue	% of older people that voted this as a top concern
1	Access to health and social care	79.5
2	Transport	64.1
3	New technology	41



Many thanks to Fermanagh & Omagh District Council for supporting the parliament

Ards and North Down Parliament

When? Friday 4 March 2016
Where? Queen's Hall, Newtownards
Attendance? 62 older people from the borough

Opened by Alderman Alan Graham, Mayor of Ards & North Down

Councillor Q&A panel Cllr Kellie Armstrong (Alliance), Cllr Joe Boyle (SDLP) and Ald Alan Graham (DUP)

Stormont Q&A panel Steven Agnew MLA (Green), Kieran McCarthy MLA (Alliance), Mike Nesbitt MLA (UUP) and Peter Weir MLA (DUP)

Issues discussed

- Gym membership rates
- Social isolation
- Recycling in the borough
- Funding available for health reforms
- Waiting times for health problems
- Pensioner benefits



Top 3 issues from Ards & North Down Parliament survey

	Issue	% of older people that voted this as a top concern
1	Access to health and social care	78.6
2	Fear of crime	51.8
3	Keeping warm in winter/energy prices	50



Many thanks to Ards & North Down Borough Council for supporting the parliament

Belfast City Parliament

When? Tuesday 8 March 2016
Where? City Hall, Belfast
Attendance? 82 older people from the City

Opened by High Sheriff of Belfast, Alderman Jim Rodgers.

Councillor Q&A panel Cllr Paula Bradshaw (Alliance), Cllr Ross Brown (Green Party), Cllr John Kyle (PUP), Cllr Stephen Magennis (Sinn Féin), Alderman Chris McGimpsey (UUP) and Cllr Christopher Stalford (DUP)

Stormont Q&A panel Andy Allen MLA (UUP), Chris Lyttle MLA (Alliance) and Cllr Nichola Mallon (SDLP)

Issues discussed

- Safety of footpaths
- Empty shops across city
- Street lighting
- Energy prices
- Rehabilitation of offenders
- Pensions and benefits



Top 3 issues from Belfast City Parliament survey

	Issue	% of older people that voted this as a top concern
1	Access to health and social care	73.8
2	Transport	60.7
3	Fear of Crime	50.8



Many thanks to Belfast City Council for supporting the parliament

Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Parliament

When? Tuesday 15 March 2016
Where? Armagh City Hotel, Armagh
Attendance? 87 older people from the district

Opened by Councillor Margaret Tinsley.

Councillor Q&A panel Cllr Brendan Curran (Sinn Féin), Cllr David Jones (UKIP), Cllr Sam Nicholson (UUP) and Cllr Margaret Tinsley (DUP)

Stormont Q&A panel Cllr Doug Beattie (UUP), Cllr Garath Keating (Sinn Féin), Justin McNulty (SDLP) and Cllr Gareth Wilson (DUP)

Issues discussed

- Leisure facilities
- Value of local rates
- Council engagement with older people
- Need for rail link to Armagh
- Hospital parking/closure of some hospital services
- Age discrimination



Top 3 issues from Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Parliament survey

	Issue	% of older people that voted this as a top concern
1	Access to health and social care	67.9
2	Keeping warm in winter/energy prices	48.7
3	Transport	47.4



Many thanks to Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon District Council for supporting the parliament

Newry, Mourne and Down Parliament

When? Friday 8 April 2016
Where? Canal Court Hotel, Newry
Attendance? 83 older people from the district

Opened by Chairman of Newry, Mourne & Down District Council, Councillor Mickey Ruane

Councillor Q&A panel Cllr Harry Harvey (DUP), Cllr Harold McKee (UUP),
 Cllr Brian Quinn (SDLP) and Cllr Mickey Ruane (Sinn Féin)

Stormont Q&A panel Patrick Brown (Alliance), Danny Kennedy (UUP),
 John McCallister (Independent), Karen McKeivitt (SDLP),
 Conor Murphy (Sinn Féin) and Jim Wells (DUP)

Issues discussed

- Council engagement with older people
- Leisure facilities
- Local traffic management
- Planning decisions
- Transport to hospital appointments
- Waiting times in health service



Top 3 issues from Newry, Mourne and Down Parliament survey

	Issue	% of older people that voted this as a top concern
1	Access to health and social care	78.7
2	Keeping warm in winter/energy prices	45.3
3	Fear of crime	41.3



Mid and East Antrim Parliament

When? Tuesday 12 April 2016
Where? Tullyglass Hotel, Ballymena
Attendance? 81 older people from the district

Opened by Mayor of Mid & East Antrim, Councillor Billy Ashe.

Councillor Q&A panel Cllr Beth Adger (DUP), Cllr Timothy Gaston (TUV),
 Cllr Stephen Nicholl (UUP) and Cllr Tommy Nicholl (DUP)

Stormont Q&A panel Roy Beggs (UUP), Stewart Dickson (Alliance),
 Connor Duncan (SDLP) and Gordon Lyons (DUP)

Issues discussed

- Local tourism development
- Winter gritting in rural areas
- Leisure facilities
- Importance of Smartpass
- Administration of health service and waiting times
- Fuel poverty and vulnerable energy customers



Top 3 issues from Mid and East Antrim Parliament survey

	Issue	% of older people that voted this as a top concern
1	Access to health and social care	66.7
2	Keeping warm in winter/energy prices	46.8
3	Transport	46.8



Mid Ulster Parliament

When? Friday 15 April 2016
Where? Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown
Attendance? 52 older people from the district

Opened by Chair of Mid Ulster District Council, Councillor Linda Dillon.

Councillor Q&A panel Cllr Frances Burton (DUP), Cllr Linda Dillon (Sinn Féin), Cllr Barry Monteith (Independent) and Cllr Kenneth Reid (UUP)
Stormont Q&A panel Ian McCrea (DUP), Patsy McGlone (SDLP), Ian Milne (Sinn Féin) and Sandra Overend (UUP)

Issues discussed

- Accessibility of local towns
- Parking and pedestrian access
- Problems accessing local GP surgeries
- Care packages for older people
- Waiting times in health service
- Age discrimination



Top 3 issues from Mid Ulster Parliament survey

	Issue	% of older people that voted this as a top concern
1	Access to health and social care	66.7
2	Keeping warm in winter/energy prices	46.8
3	Transport	46.8



Derry City and Strabane Parliament

When? Friday 22 April 2016
Where? City Hotel, Derry/Londonderry
Attendance? 90 older people from the district

Opened by Deputy Chair of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Alderman Thomas Kerrigan.

Councillor Q&A panel Cllr Christopher Jackson (Sinn Féin), Cllr Patsy Kelly (Independent), Ald Hilary McClintock (DUP), Cllr Derek Hussey (UUP) and Cllr Martin Reilly (SDLP)

Stormont Q&A panel Mark H Durkan (SDLP), Maeve McLaughlin (Sinn Féin), Gary Middleton (DUP) and Ross Hussey (UUP)

Issues discussed

- Community safety and policing
- Disabled parking in Strabane
- Bin collections and street cleanliness
- Care home availability and suitability
- Waiting lists in health service
- Resourcing of domiciliary care and Meals on Wheels



Top 3 issues from Derry City and Strabane Parliament survey

	Issue	% of older people that voted this as a top concern
1	Fear of crime	64.4
2	Access to health and social care	60.3
3	Keeping warm in winter/energy prices	60.3



Lisburn and Castlereagh Pensioners Parliament

When? Tuesday 26 April 2016
Where? Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn
Attendance? 48 older people from the district

Opened by Mayor of Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Councillor Thomas Beckett.

Councillor Q&A panel Cllr Robbie Butler (UUP), Cllr Vasundhara Kamble (Alliance), Cllr Johnny McCarthy (SDLP) and Cllr James Tinsley (DUP)

Stormont Q&A panel Robbie Butler (UUP), Pat Catney (SDLP), Trevor Lunn (Alliance) and Edwin Poots (DUP)

Issues discussed

- Bin collections
- Investment in local area
- Prescription charges
- Privatisation of health service
- Disabled access on public transport
- Fuel poverty schemes



Top 3 issues from Lisburn and Castlereagh Parliament survey

	Issue	% of older people that voted this as a top concern
1	Access to health and social care	51.2
2	Fear of crime	48.8
3	Information on benefits/entitlements	46.3



Many thanks to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council for supporting the parliament

Causeway Coast and Glens Parliament

When? Friday 29 April 2016
Where? Royal Court Hotel, Portrush
Attendance? 51 older people from the borough

Opened by Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens, Councillor Michelle Knight-McQuillan.

Councillor Q&A panel Cllr Joan Baird (UUP), Cllr David Harding (Conservatives) and Cllr Ian Stevenson (DUP)

Stormont Q&A panel Caoimhe Archibald (Sinn Féin), Jordan Armstrong (TUV), Yvonne Boyle (Alliance), David Harding (Conservatives), Gerry Mullan (SDLP), Claire Sugden (Independent), Ian Stevenson (DUP) and Robin Swann (UUP)

Issues discussed

- Local public transport services
- Enterprise zone in Coleraine
- Rural broadband
- Dementia care
- Centralisation of health care & doctor shortages
- Age discrimination



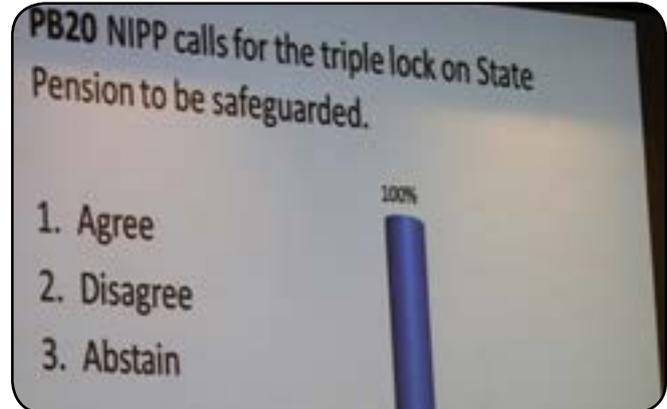
Top 3 issues from Causeway Coast and Glens Parliament survey

	Issue	% of older people that voted this as a top concern
1	Access to health and social care	67.3
2	Transport	67.3
3	Keeping warm in winter/energy prices	65.3



6. ni pensioners parliament day 1

The sixth Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament (NIPP) was held at the Clayton Hotel in Belfast on Thursday 13th and Friday 14th October 2016. 153 Members of the Pensioners Parliament (MPPs) attended this event. Over the two days motions were passed on a range of issues, including; age discrimination legislation, health and social care, transport and the need for the UK Government and the NI Executive to address the inclusion of Northern Ireland in the Warm Home Discount scheme.



Official Opening of Parliament

Anne Watson, Chair of Age Sector Platform, issued a warm welcome to delegates, stating that it was wonderful to see such a great turnout again of older people from every part of Northern Ireland. She reminded everyone that the Pensioners Parliament enables older people to have their say on the issues that are affecting them – and most importantly, provides a forum through which they can address these with decision makers in order to bring about change. Anne also thanked and acknowledged those organisations which provided funding and support for this year's parliament.

Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Robin Newton MBE MLA, officially opened the Pensioners Parliament, stating that it was a pleasure to attend. He described the NIPP as “one of the most important events of the year”, enabling our older community to engage with local politics. He emphasised the importance of bringing issues that affect older people to the NI Assembly in order to enhance the democratic process and identified “creating opportunities” as a theme running through his time as Speaker in the Assembly chamber.

Mr Newton also stated the importance of priorities from the NIPP finding their way onto the agenda of Ministers and MLAs and becoming incorporated into the Programme for Government (PfG) as an example of how older people can influence ministers and other decision makers and hold them to account. He concluded by wishing the Parliament success over the two days.



Anne Watson



Robin Newton MBE MLA

Eamonn Donaghy, recently appointed Chief Executive of Age Sector Platform, thanked Mr Newton for opening the parliament and for his valuable support for NIPP over the years. He began with an apology to delegates that the Minister for Health, Michelle O’Neil would not be addressing the parliament as advertised in the Programme and explained her office had advised that morning that she was unable to attend. The Department for Health confirmed that it had arranged for one of its officials to attend in place of the Minister.



Eamonn Donaghy, CEO of Age Sector Platform

Eamonn then formally introduced himself and commented how encouraging it was to see so many people in attendance. He highlighted the reputation of the Pensioners Parliament across NI and identified the parliament as an important medium through which older people are able to influence policy makers. He thanked the members, Trustees and staff of Age Sector Platform for making him welcome in his first few months in his new role and paid tribute to their commitment, enthusiasm and dedication.

Eamonn advised delegates that Age Sector Platform has reached a critical stage in its development. The loss of our principal funder, The Atlantic Philanthropies, means that over the next twelve months we will need to secure replacement funding from a variety of sources in order to ensure that we can continue to develop and run the NIPP.

Eamonn acknowledged the support and contribution of the Pensioners Trust and thanked all those who had donated to the Trust since it was set up in 2013. He underlined the importance of the Trust as a vital source of funding for ASP going forward and urged everyone present to promote it in their local areas to individuals and businesses.

Mr Donaghy then provided delegates with an overview of the work of Age Sector Platform in the year to date, including the Feel Safe Workshops – which tackle fear of crime for older people, financial abuse and scamming - the Stormont Question Time event which raised awareness of issues such as fuel poverty, the programme of local Parliaments and recent meetings that had been held with Ministers.



He concluded by outlining the format and structure of the two-day parliament, explaining that there would be four plenary sessions with voting on a total of sixteen motions. Eamonn advised that a motion must receive the support of over two-thirds (67%) of MPPs in order for it to be carried.



6.a) session 1: programme for government

Eamonn Donaghy introduced the session by outlining the importance of the PfG in reflecting priorities of government for the next five years. He highlighted the unacceptable fact that the draft document contains no mention of older people, despite the fact that we represent a growing proportion of the population. Eamonn advised parliament that in its response to the draft PfG, Age Sector Platform has expressed its dissatisfaction and disappointment with this and has also called for a specific clause to protect older people from discrimination in relation to goods, facilities and services to be included.

Eamonn then welcomed Mike Nesbitt MLA, Leader of the Ulster Unionist Party to address the parliament in his capacity as Chair of the Committee for the Executive Office.

Mr Nesbitt began by advising Parliament that from his perspective the PfG “has gone wrong” already and that the timeline set out in the fresh-start document is not currently being followed. He highlighted the lack of reference to older people in the current draft framework and called for an immediate response by those who are dissatisfied with the document as the final draft was probably already being written.



He then made reference to previous commitments relating to goods, facilities and services which were unfulfilled in the last mandate due to a lack of cross party agreement and advised delegates that whilst he agreed that these commitments should be carried over, it is his belief that they do not feature in the current departmental plan.

Mr Nesbitt provided some personal reflections on his experience of the health service and emphasised that in his opinion, health has to be the number one priority. He made reference to the unacceptably long waiting lists that currently exist, with many people having to wait a ridiculous length of time to be seen, resulting in more pressure on the emergency services. Whilst stating that he “will not politicise the health service,” he stressed that it is the responsibility of government to allocate public resources effectively. Mike Nesbitt concluded his address by urging the NIPP to “make a lot of noise very quickly” to address all of these shortcomings.

A number of questions from the floor followed.

“How do you see this Programme for Government delivering for people on the ground? How will it be different to the delivery of previous Programmes for Government, where departments worked in silos and fought over funding?”

(Jimmy Nixon, Belfast MPP)

Mr Nesbitt replied that previously, people had been working in vertical silos enabling problems to be allocated to particular departments. This new way of doing government will see departments operating not in vertical silos, but cutting across them, enabling ministers to tackle problems on multiple levels. He commented that it will facilitate “bringing in all the departments we need to make things happen” and is a “brilliant principle if applied effectively.”

“The Programme for Government Framework, which was consulted upon over the summer, lacked any reference to older people in its high level outcomes, measures or indicators. Considering the fact that the over 50s make up a third of Northern Ireland’s population, how can this be justified?”

(Ivan Baxter, Belfast MPP)

Mr Nesbitt said PfG contains “good aspirations” but this is “meaningless” without good action plans for implementation. It leaves the government open to criticism with no reference to older people or victims of the troubles. He stated that we require a proper draft PfG with “some meat on the bones.” He stated the need to restore public faith that there is actually a plan and the government can actually deliver something.



Jimmy Nixon, Belfast MPP



Ivan Baxter, Belfast MPP

“Does anyone monitor the spending of public departments?” (Question from floor)

Mr Nesbitt replied that every department has a statutory committee which scrutinizes its work, including its budgets. He advised that the way the Executive compiles budgets is very confusing and that it would be better to bring in expert private sector bodies to monitor where money goes and how it is spent.

The final question was:

“In relation to the carry over, how firm is the commitment in the framework, and how substantive is the point, that provision for action on goods, facilities and services discrimination will be in the next PfG?”

Mr Nesbitt replied that he unfortunately can foresee no political agreement on this matter moving forward.

Eamonn Donaghy thanked Mike Nesbitt for his insights and welcomed David Malcolm, Director in the Department for Communities to the stage.

Mr Malcolm described his department as one with a very broad portfolio, responsible for pensions and benefits, child maintenance, sports, local stadiums and libraries to name a few. He explained that responsibility for the Active Ageing Strategy had transferred to the Department in May of this year.

He began by stating that a Social Strategy is needed in order to address inequalities and challenges which exist across Northern Ireland, offering the following examples:

- By 2064 it is expected that the proportion of the population aged 65+ will double
- In the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland there is a differential of 8 years in life expectancy compared to that in more prosperous areas
- There are also stark variations in terms of 'healthy life expectancy' between prosperous areas and deprived areas in Northern Ireland
- 1 in 3 school leavers in Northern Ireland leave school with less than 5 GCSEs
- Northern Ireland has the highest levels of economic inactivity and the highest rate of suicide in the UK
- 18% of pensioners in Northern Ireland live in poverty
- Health and educational inequalities between different areas are prevalent



David Malcolm, Dept for Communities

The Social Strategy will encompass an anti-poverty strategy in order to tackle a number of connecting issues with early intervention being key to this.

He concluded by advising that the Department for Communities is currently working to protect pensioner benefits and ensure an extra £40m is secured. However it is attempting to tackle the previous 'disconnect' between different departments in dealing with these issues and he also made clear that the department is focussed on developing an effective social strategy.

Mr Malcom responded to a number of questions from the floor.

“Why does the executive believe this new approach is going to deliver what it hasn’t delivered in the last 5 years”?

He acknowledged that some activities and strategies to date have not been effective at meeting targets and reducing poverty figures etc. There is an expectation this time round that ministers will have the capacity to make a difference in relation to outcomes-based accountability and to provide evidence of the delivery in statistics.

“You mentioned community cohesion and work from government down to local government... I don’t see things working as well as it should. How can you explain money that had been wasted in a lot of things that are done in local programmes?”

Mr Malcom responded that a lot of these programmes have exhibited snagging problems, but there is also considerable evidence that points to them delivering long term positive effects. Often the end product does produce wider benefits for the community.

“Is the Government failing people by spending too much money on bureaucracy?”

Mr Malcolm stated that the Civil Service experienced a reduction in resourcing of 17% resulting in savings of £150m per annum. Once the strategy has been published he confirmed that he will be happy to meet members of NIPP to discuss the document and potential changes to it.

“Is there any way of monitoring consumer behaviour? In order to avoid dilemmas in which people are faced with choosing whether ‘to eat or heat?’”

Mr Malcolm explained that his department is working with other departments to avoid people having to make these decisions. It is accepted that these issues are relevant.

The following motions were passed receiving over 67% of the votes by the parliament.



Programme for Government: Voting on Motions

Motion M15

NIPP calls for an end to age discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services.

Agreed: 99% Disagreed: 0% Abstained: 1%

Motion E13

NIPP calls for a ‘Whole House Solution’ plan to tackle fuel poverty which would include new developments and target fuel poor households on a phased basis.

Agreed: 95% Disagreed: 1% Abstained: 4%

Motion C18

NIPP calls for tougher sentences for those convicted of crimes against older people.

Agreed: 94% Disagreed: 3% Abstained: 3%

Motion C19

NIPP calls for action to be taken to tackle low clearance rates for crimes against older people.

Agreed: 99% Disagreed: 1% Abstained: 0%

Motion C20

NIPP calls for tackling fear of crime among older people to be a priority for the NI Assembly.

Agreed: 93% Disagreed: 6% Abstained: 1%

6.b) session 2: health & social care

Eamonn Donaghy set the context for the plenary session on Health and Social Care by describing it as a critical issue. He referred to a NIPP survey which revealed that one in three older people describe the running of the Health service as “poor” or “very poor” and that 71% of people surveyed do not believe that current plans to reform health and social care will result in better treatment for older people. He stated that it is encouraging that both the DUP and Sinn Fein committed in their election manifestos to commit an additional £1bn spending on Health.

The session opened with a presentation by Chris Matthews, Director of Disability, Mental Health and Older People at the Department of Health who was deputising for the Minister for Health. His presentation contained the following highlights.

- It is important that the experiences of older people are listened to and reflected in the way services are delivered
- The health budget, of about £5bn a year, is struggling to cope in the face of demographic changes. Increased longevity, with people now surviving illness which would previously have been fatal, is putting increased pressure on carers and social care services. New models of care are needed
- The Bengoa report, due to be published in late October, should contain the vision for the Health service and a plan for reform
- The Department will focus on maintaining independence, supporting carers and developing preventative services that will assist planning for future care needs
- Domiciliary care is an issue which presents significant challenges. Demand for care closer to home is increasing and the department intends to ensure that resources are in place to address this
- Dementia is a growing area of concern. 19,000 people are living with dementia in NI, and this figure is expected to grow. This will be tackled by a Dementia Project which will involve awareness raising and improved support for carers. Memory clinics will be established in all five Trust areas aimed at providing information and improving diagnosis. From December 2016, each Trust will have 2 ‘dementia navigators’ who will be a point of contact for people living with dementia and their carers. It is also intended to develop a dementia learning and development framework which will bring all dementia training under one umbrella with 300 dementia ‘champions’ in place by June 2017



Chris Matthews, Dept of Health



Health & Social Care Panel Discussion

The panel for the Health and Social Care plenary session consisted of: Mark A Taylor, (Consultant, Belfast Mater Hospital), Garrett Martin (Deputy Director and Senior Employment Relations Officer, Royal College of Nursing), Claire McIlhatton (Director of Investigations, NI Public Services Ombudsman) and Kevin Keenan, (Assistant Director of Social Services, Health & Social Care Board).



Mark A Taylor, Consultant at Belfast Mater Hospital



Garrett Martin, Royal College of Nursing



Claire McIlhatton, NI Public Services Ombudsman



Kevin Keenan, Health & Social Care Board

Seamus Lynch, Speaker of the NI Pensioners Parliament welcomed the panellists and opened the floor for questions.

“Is something going to be done to keep our nurses and doctors in this country rather than having them move elsewhere where they are better paid?”

Martin Gallagher, Derry City & Strabane MPP

Garrett Martin responded that in terms of the nursing workforce, there are an estimated 1500 vacancies across Northern Ireland. There are plans to increase intake but it will take time, he estimates 4 or 5 years, before we get stability in the nursing workforce.

Mark Taylor commented that “the real value of social care in Northern Ireland is its people not its buildings.” Northern Ireland is no different to the rest of the world. The fact that we have a growing population of older people indicates the benefit of modern medicine and we have no choice but to change the way we deliver health and social care in Northern Ireland to manage this increase.

“It is clear that domiciliary care packages are not based on a person’s needs, but decided on resources available. With an ageing population, how can better care be provided in older people’s homes?”

Anne Watson, Antrim & Newtownabbey MPP

Kevin Keenan replied that the provision of an effective domiciliary care service is one of the biggest challenges facing the health and social care service. One of the most significant changes that will impact on domiciliary care in the coming years is procurement and the outsourcing of services to the independent sector. It is hoped that this will contribute to an improvement across the health trusts in time. The current situation is one of increasing numbers of older people in our population, ever increasing need and demand for resources.

“In view of the shortage of GPs in rural areas, how will demand be met?”

John Martin, Fermanagh & Omagh MPP

Mark Taylor replied that the British Medical Association has been closely involved in workforce planning for rural communities. The issue within rural general practices in Northern Ireland is the increase in the number of GPs retiring.

Garrett Martin explained that issues with workforce planning reflect a ‘perfect storm’ waiting to happen. There is clearly a demand for more GP’s but essential investment has not been made and pressure must be applied to address this.



John Martin, Fermanagh & Omagh MPP



Billy McComb, Mid Ulster MPP

Several MPPs commented that resourcing pressures are forcing many people to consider private health care. Mark Taylor stated that “I suspect that workforce planning will get better in Northern Ireland.” Garrett Martin responded, “There should be no need for any person to have to get private care for something that should be provided on the NHS, but you can understand in the context of waiting lists why people might do that.” Kevin Keenan was of the opinion that “with proper planning, proper leadership and a good game plan, we can play our way out of trouble.”

“Would community based hearing services not help to address the long waiting lists for hearing services and poor aftercare being experienced by people here following the decision recently made by the Department of Health to ‘put on hold’ a pilot giving access to hearing services in the community?”

Billy McCombe, Mid Ulster MPP

Kevin Keenan replied that transferring audiology services out into the community would necessitate a huge shift of resources out of the hospitals and this would need to be managed very carefully. In his opinion there are aspects of audiology that will not be transferred to the community. Whilst it works well for eye care, it is complicated and it needs to be well planned.

Mark Taylor added that over the next 8 to 10 years there needs to be much greater emphasis on community care with defaulting to specific hospitals becoming a thing of the past.

In responding to a number of statements from the floor around the general issue of waiting lists, Mark Taylor referred to “a burning platform”. Not a day or week goes by that we don’t hear about waiting lists or the effects of waiting lists and it is critical that this is addressed. The Trusts are continually looking at capacity and at initiatives to reduce waiting lists. The Bengoa Report will focus not only on the present situation but over the next 8 to 10 years.

The following motions on Health and Social Care were passed receiving over 67% of the votes by the parliament:

Health and Social Care: Voting on Motions

Motion HS24

NIPP calls for assurances that any changes to health and social care policies or practices fully consider any negative impact on older people and that measures are taken to ensure older people receive high quality healthcare.

Agreed: 93% Disagreed: 3% Abstained: 4%

Motion HS25

NIPP calls for operation waiting times for older people to be substantially reduced.

Agreed: 96% Disagreed: 3% Abstained: 1%

Motion HS26

NIPP calls for steps to be taken to ensure domiciliary care packages are determined by clinical need and that realistic timetables are implemented.

Agreed: 97% Disagreed: 2% Abstained: 1%

Motion HS27

NIPP calls for the retention of free prescriptions for everyone over the age of 60 regardless of income.

Agreed: 86% Disagreed: 13% Abstained: 1%

Motion HS28

NIPP notes with concern the unacceptably high audiology waiting lists, poor aftercare and inaccessibility of hearing services in Northern Ireland and calls for NHS hearing services to be provided in the community in full consultation with the needs and views of older people.

Agreed: 94% Disagreed: 5% Abstained: 1%

7. ni pensioners parliament day 2

Eamonn Donaghy welcomed everyone to the second day of the parliament and provided some reflections on yesterday's session. He referred to the passion and commitment of members of the NIPP that was clearly in evidence, particularly in the interchanges during the question and answer session with the Health and Social Care panel.

Mr Donaghy then opened the day's proceedings by welcoming Eddie Lynch, the new Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland to the platform.

Eddie Lynch began by providing a brief overview of his work to date, shared with delegates his plans for his time in office and provided information on the commissioner's office, including its legal powers and duties.



He described the continued absence of legislation preventing discrimination against older people in relation to goods, facilities and services as “a disgrace.” Mr Lynch said he feels positive about interactions he has had with ministers to date on important matters pertaining to older people and confirmed the key areas of work for the commissioner's office going forward will focus on policy, legal support and advice, large casework and communications and engagement.

Referring to the draft PfG, Mr Lynch stated that “I find it quite bizarre that older people aren't mentioned in something that is such an important document.”

He said that his office has carried out a substantial amount of work for government on this issue, and will do more in the consultation period to make older people a priority for government over the next 5 years. However, to date he does not detect any great willingness to consider including an additional outcome for older people.

He commented that it is essential that the Active Ageing Strategy is implemented as soon as possible to ensure that older people's needs are heard and listened to.

The Commissioner highlighted the growing issue of financial abuse of older people. The report recently published by COPNI, ‘Financial Abuse in Northern Ireland – The Unsettling Truth’ highlights disturbing trends, with 21% of older people affected by financial abuse. He confirmed that informing older people about financial abuse and increasing protection against it will be a key priority for his office over the next four years.

Mr Lynch concluded by referring to the value and importance of dialogue and debate generated by the Pensioners Parliament in producing a society that properly respects, protects and values older people.

A number of questions were put to the Commissioner.

Brenda Irvine, Lisburn & Castlereagh MPP, asked the Commissioner if he would back a campaign to introduce the Warm Home Discount scheme in Northern Ireland, delivering an extra £140 per year to those pensioners most in need.

Mr Lynch stated that he would absolutely endorse this campaign as fuel poverty has been a recurring issue of concern for the NIPP. He pointed to the rise in oil prices and the promises of a cold winter ahead which may present real challenge and hardship for many older people.

Tony Damoglou, Lisburn & Castlereagh MPP, asked Mr Lynch how he would use his power and influence as Commissioner for Older People to ensure legislation to outlaw age discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services is delivered as soon as possible during this Assembly term.

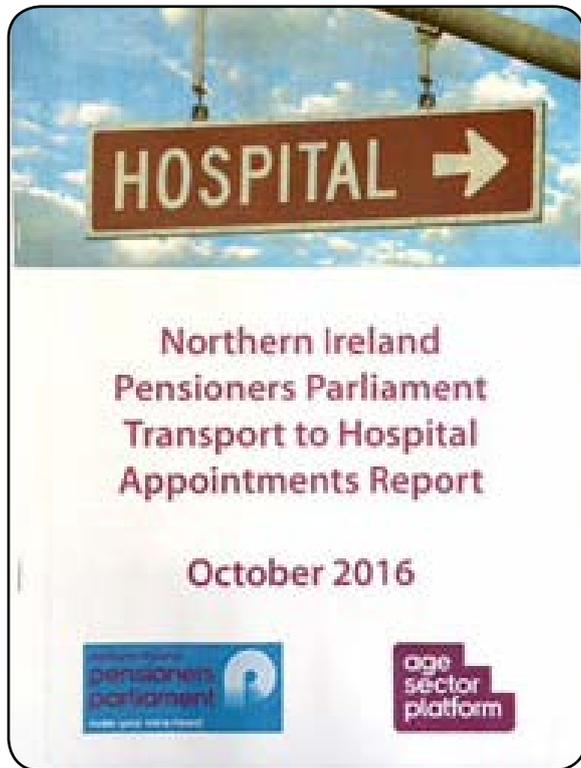
The Commissioner responded by expressing frustration that we are still discussing age discrimination legislation which “should have been done and dusted by now.” He said it is absolutely vital that older people are given this protection. It is not acceptable that it is still legal in NI to discriminate in relation to goods, facilities and services and it will be a priority for his office in the months ahead.



7.a) transport to hospital appointments report launch

Francis Hughes, Chair of Age Sector Platform Transport Campaign Committee presented the results of the Transport to Hospital Appointments Survey which was conducted earlier this year following the local parliaments. 18% of respondents to the survey were aged over 80.

Below are headline results from the survey.



Francis Hughes launching the report



A Member of the Parliament reading through the report

- 45% of respondents reported they had experienced difficulty travelling to hospital in the last 2 years as a result of one or more of the following:
 - They live in a rural area with no access to transport.
 - No family or friends to drive them to appointments
 - Don't drive
 - Parking is a problem
 - No public transport accessible in area
 - The appointment was arranged at a hospital too far away
- 89% of respondents were not provided with information on transport options when receiving notification of their appointment
- 77% had never heard of the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme
- 74% had never heard of the non-emergency ambulance passenger transport service and 94% had never availed of it
- 20% of people surveyed had cancelled a hospital appointment due to problems with transport

In response to the consultation on the Accessible Transport Strategy 2025 ASP made the following recommendations:

- Patients should always receive information about transport options with notification of their appointment.
- When appointment times are being allocated, consideration should be given to distance being travelled by patients.
- Community transport providers should be funded to provide services to those expected to travel outside their local area for specialist health services.
- Translink and relevant H&SC bodies should regularly share information to ensure public transport services meet the needs of those travelling to hospital.
- Hospitals should evaluate their car parking facilities regularly, in particular the demand for disabled spaces.

Francis Hughes concluded by highlighting how transport is integral to social inclusion: it provides vital access to services, entertainment and social life and enables older people to live active, full and healthy lives.



7.b) session 3: transport

Presentation: Sean Johnston, Project Manager, Department for Infrastructure.

Mr Johnston outlined the role of the Department for Infrastructure and described its responsibilities as follows:

- Regional Development Strategy
- Transport policy
- Managing and maintaining the public roads network
- Vehicle and Driver Licensing and Testing
- Land Use Planning and Policy

He said that Transport indicators in the PfG are designed to:

- Increase the use of public transport and active travel
- Improve transport connections for people, goods and services.



Sean Johnston

Mr Johnston advised that the rail network is at “peak capacity”. Ulster Bus and Metro service has considerable scope for growth but with multiple organisations involved in transport provision co-ordination is difficult.

Investment in schemes aimed at managing demand will be a key feature moving forward with the development of an integrated Passenger Transport Project a priority.

The Department’s objective is to develop and deliver a wider network of services.

Seamus Lynch, the Speaker of the NI Pensioners Parliament, opened the Q&A session on Transport.



Seamus Lynch, Speaker of the Parliament

On the panel were Sean Johnston, (Project Manager, Department for Infrastructure), Michael Lorimer (Head of the Secretariat, IMTAC), Paul Cavanagh (Assistant Director, Health & Social Care Board), Tim Cairns, (Director, Community Transport Association NI) and Terry Butler (Access Manager, Translink).



Sean Johnston, Paul Cavanagh, Tim Cairns, Terry Butler & Michael Lorimer

“Considering the difficulties older people face in travelling to appointments, what can Translink and the Department for Infrastructure do to improve public transport to area hospitals?”

(Jason Stewart, Mid Ulster MPP)

Terry Butler said that Translink always seeks to provide the best possible service to major towns where customers can get connections to the Royal, City and Ulster hospitals or the Antrim community hospitals. Sean Johnston stated that access to the main centralised hospitals necessitates changes to the transport system.

Michael Lorimer responded that the health services are becoming more and more centralised with an assumption that everyone has access to a car and can drive to hospitals. Public transport is treated as an afterthought.

A number of questions were raised and dealt with collectively by the panel. Dolly Misra, Lisburn and Castlereagh MPP, referred to the difficulty of keeping hospital appointments when a lack of suitable or accessible transport may result in having to use an ambulance and then having to sit around hospital for hours.

Victor Murphy, Ards & North Down MPP, commented that while the Smartpass was of great benefit to many older people, it was not of such help to people living in rural areas where there is no bus stop within easy reach.

Norah Browne, Causeway Coast & Glens MPP, referred to a lack of co-ordination between bus and rail timetables which can have real impact on people living in rural areas. She asked “are bus and rail timetables decided upon separately?”

The Panel agreed that the lack of joined up co-ordination between transport services can be frustrating and that public transport needs to be made better for older people. Michael Lorimer made reference to the fact that users of some community transport services are required to book services seven days in advance, which is incredibly restrictive. Tim Cairns expressed the opinion that the Smartpass needs to be used more flexibly with more forward thinking on the part of service providers.

A final question from the floor was “Can anything be done to issue timetables for a specific period of time and not until further notice?”

Terry Butler responded that putting an end date on a timetable means that it has to be re-issued at a cost of hundreds of thousands of pounds so this is generally not done.

Seamus Lynch brought the session to a close by thanking the panellists for their opinions and observations.



Jason Stewart, Mid Ulster MPP



Dolly Misra, Lisburn & Castlereagh MPP

The following motions on Transport were passed receiving over 67% of the votes by the parliament:

Transport: Voting on Motions

Motion T04

NIPP calls for the Smartpass to be protected for everyone over the age of 60 regardless of income.

Agreed: 90% Disagreed: 9% Abstained: 1%

New Transport motions

Motion T05

NIPP calls for improved access to public transport and community transport in rural areas.

Agreed: 98% Disagreed: 1% Abstained: 1%

Motions T06

NIPP calls for better provision and promotion of public transport, community transport and hospital travel schemes to improve older people's ability to travel to hospital appointments.

Agreed: 100% Disagreed: 0% Abstained: 0%

Motions T07

NIPP calls for the provision of disability awareness training for all staff involved in providing transport services to older people.

Agreed: 100% Disagreed: 0% Abstained: 0%

7.c) session four: westminster issues

The final plenary session focussed on Westminster issues.

The panel consisted of Gavin Robinson MP (DUP), Margaret Ritchie MP (SDLP), Mickey Brady MP (Sinn Fein), Stewart Dickson MLA (Alliance) and Danny Kinahan MP (UUP).



Westminster Panel

Seamus Lynch welcomed the panellists and invited questions from delegates.

“What is your view on the State Pension qualifying age as life expectancy varies significantly from region to region across the UK? How fair is it to impose the same, increasing, state pension age?”

Ivan Baxter, Belfast MPP

Gavin Robinson referred to pension age as a massive public policy issue with increased life expectancy resulting in the huge cost for pension provision. In his opinion regional variation would be incredibly problematical and a universal state pension age must be the norm.

Stewart Dickson agreed with this. He also commented that calculation of the state pension should not be a political decision but that the government should take independent advice in order to provide a good quality standard of living for all pensioners.

Mickey Brady commented that the change in pension age for women from 60 to 65 is discriminatory. He agreed that logistically it would be difficult to have a regional variation on pension levels but stated that pension provision in Britain is amongst the lowest in the world and should be reviewed.

Francis Hughes, Lisburn & Castlereagh MPP, advised the panel that on 10th November 2015, in response to a question by the Chairman of the DECC Select Committee about the Warm Home Discount Scheme, the then Secretary of State, Amber Rudd MP, commented “The Government of Northern Ireland decided to opt out of the costs associated with Warm Home Discount.”

Francis asked the panel to inform Parliament, “if the statement is accurate and what action have you taken in the meantime to remedy this intolerable situation?”

Margaret Ritchie stated that NI Executive opted out of the scheme due to significant differences in our energy market compared to the rest of the UK. She is a strong proponent of the Warm Home Discount Scheme and believes that efforts should be made to have Northern Ireland included.

Stewart Dickson felt that people here may be better served by actually having a home with an effective and efficient heating system (good boiler etc.) which is properly and effectively insulated. Mickey Brady stated it was an example of being “second class citizens all over again, pensioners should have the right to discount.”

Gavin Robinson referred to the fact that a participating energy supplier needs to have a minimum customer base of 250,000. As there is only one supplier in Northern Ireland who meets this criteria, it would be too expensive to run the scheme here. Mr Robinson was challenged on this by a number of NIPP members who advised that the scheme could be spread amongst all suppliers, thereby offsetting the costs.

Danny Kinahan emphasised the importance of examining this matter closely to ensure that Northern Ireland is afforded parity with the rest of the United Kingdom.” He gave the NIPP an assurance that he and his fellow MPs will investigate this issue as part of an effective devolved government.”

A number of questions from the floor followed.

“There has been a steep downward spiral in interest rates from 2008 and those who were encouraged to save for their retirement now find their nest egg being very quickly eroded to maintain a decent standard of living. With no prospect of interest rates increasing in the foreseeable future, how can the Westminster Government and NI Assembly help pensioners who are dependent on their savings?”

Willie Carville, Newry, Mourne & Down MPP

This was a question the panel struggled to find positive answers to.



Willie Carville, Newry, Mourne & Down MPP



Margaret Galloway, Antrim & Newtownabbey MPP

Margaret Ritchie said that it is important to put pressure on the government to protect savings for older people. Mickey Brady referred to us being at the mercy of financial institutions which we do not elect but which dictate interest rates.

Gavin Robinson commented that “we’re all losing on our savings; we’re not being encouraged to save but to spend. Don’t always expect your money to work for you.”

There have been some threats recently to the triple lock on the State Pension. How will you work to ensure it is safeguarded?

Margaret Galloway, Antrim & Newtownabbey MPP

Stewart Dickson, Mickey Brady and Danny Kinahan all strongly endorsed the triple lock and there was consensus on the importance of holding the government to account to ensure that this is safeguarded and protected. Mickey Brady commented that ‘Even the Tories would find it difficult to erode something so precious to people.’

Seamus Lynch brought the discussion to a close and thanked the panellists for their attendance and contribution.

Westminster: Voting on Motions

Motion E14

NIPP expresses its extreme dissatisfaction at the failure of both the UK Government and the NI Executive to put in place arrangements to extend parity of treatment to vulnerable NI households by including NI in the Warm Home Discount scheme. NIPP directs that it is now timely to immediately develop a revised campaigning strategy to vigorously reinforce the demand that the existing scheme be extended to include NI.

Agreed: 93% Disagreed: 5% Abstain: 2%

Motion PB20

NIPP calls for the triple lock on the State Pension to be safeguarded.

Agreed: 100%

7.d) closing comments

Michael Monaghan, Chair of the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament, provided some closing comments.

Michael described the Parliament as a “very interesting and effective” couple of days. He thanked the Members of the Pensioners Parliament (MPPs) for their support and contribution to “a very interesting and stimulating” two days and acknowledged the work of the Speaker, Seamus Lynch in once again chairing the panel discussions so effectively.

Mr Monaghan also paid tribute to the work of the Age Sector Platform staff team in organising and running the parliament, to Stratagem for its continued support for the NIPP and to the staff of the Clayton Hotel for their help and support over the two days.

Michael concluded by encouraging MPPs to engage with local politicians on the matters raised at the parliament and advised delegates that representatives of the NIPP will again be visiting Westminster and Stormont later in the year for formal meetings with politicians on the issues raised at the parliament.

Mr Monaghan formally closed the 2016 Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament and wished everyone a safe and peaceful journey home.



Michael Monaghan, Chair of NI Pensioners Parliament

8. table of motions

Motion Ref	Motion	Voting Results (67% needed to pass)	Lead Organisations responsible
M15	NIPP calls for an end to age discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services	99% Yes 0% No 1% Abstain	The NI Executive Office
E13	NIPP calls for a 'Whole House Solution' plan to tackle fuel poverty which would include new developments and target fuel poor households on a phased basis.	95% Yes 1% No 4% Abstain	Department for Communities
C18	NIPP calls for tougher sentences for those convicted of crimes against older people.	94% Yes 3% No 3% Abstain	Department of Justice
C19	NIPP calls for action to be taken to tackle low clearance rates for crimes against older people.	99% Yes 1% No 0% Abstain	Department of Justice
C20	NIPP calls for tackling fear of crime among older people to be a priority for the NI Assembly.	93% Yes 6% No 1% Abstain	Department of Justice
HS24	NIPP calls for assurances that any changes to health and social care policies or practices fully consider any negative impact on older people and that measures are taken to ensure older people receive high quality healthcare.	93% Yes 3% No 4% Abstain	Department of Health
HS25	NIPP calls for operation waiting times for older people to be substantially reduced.	96% Yes 3% No 1% Abstain	Department of Health
HS26	NIPP calls for steps to be taken to ensure domiciliary care packages are determined by clinical need and that realistic timetables are implemented.	97% Yes 2% No 1% Abstain	Department of Health

Motion Ref	Motion	Voting Results (67% needed to pass)	Lead Organisations
HS27	NIPP calls for the retention of free prescriptions for everyone over the age of 60 regardless of income.	86% Yes 13% No 1% Abstain	Department of Health
HS28	NIPP notes with concern the unacceptably high audiology waiting lists, poor aftercare and inaccessibility of hearing services in Northern Ireland and calls for NHS hearing services to be provided in the community in full consultation with the needs and views of older people.	94% Yes 5% No 1% Abstain	Department of Health
T04	NIPP calls for the Smartpass to be protected for everyone over the age of 60 regardless of income.	90% Yes 9% No 1% Abstain	Department for Infrastructure
T05	NIPP calls for improved access to public transport and community transport in rural areas.	98% Yes 1% No 1% Abstain	Department for Infrastructure
T06	NIPP calls for better provision and promotion of public transport, community transport and hospital travel schemes to improve older people's ability to travel to hospital appointments.	100% Yes	Department for Infrastructure
T07	NIPP calls for the provision of disability awareness training for all staff involved in providing transport services to older people.(100%)	100% Yes	Department for Infrastructure
E14	NIPP expresses its extreme dissatisfaction at the failure of both the UK Government and the NI Executive to put in place arrangements to extend parity of treatment to vulnerable NI households by including NI in the Warm Home Discount scheme. NIPP directs that it is now timely to immediately develop a revised campaigning strategy to vigorously reinforce the demand that the existing scheme be extended to include NI.	93% Yes 5% No 2% Abstain	Age Sector Platform & The Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament
PB20	NIPP calls for the triple lock on the State Pension to be safeguarded. (100%)	100% Yes	Department for Work & Pensions (UK Government)

Motion References

- M** Miscellaneous
- E** Energy/Fuel Poverty
- C** Crime and Fear of Crime/Community Safety
- HS** Health & Social Care
- T** Transport
- PB** Pensions and Benefits etc



9. appendices

a) members of the pensioners parliament 2016

Raymond Aiken	Martin Gallagher	Linda Maguire	Anna Quinn
Marion Armstrong	Eugene Gallagher	John Mahood	Hugh Rafferty
Nixon Armstrong	Margaret Galloway	Mary Marr	Raymond Rea
Lavina Armstrong	Anil Gautam	John Martin	Gretta Reid
Ross Bailie	Nilam Gautam	Joe Mathews	Hilary Reid
Leonard Barr	Kenneth Gibson	John Maybin	Kathleen Roberts
Geoffrey Bateman	Paddy Gilgunn	Michael McAlinden	Hugh Ross
Ivan Baxter	Betty Gillespie	Martin McCartney	Daphne Ruddell
Robert Black	Robert Gilmore	Seamus McCartney	Ronnie Russell
Angela Boorman	Doris Gilmour	Stewart McCleave	Ann Sandy
Billy Boyd	Pat Gordon	Billy McCombe	Sandra Savage
Norah Browne	June Graham	William McConnell	Mary Shaw
Ann Burgess	Stanley Graham	Charlotte McCreanor	David Shaw
Mervyn Cairnduff	Sadie Hamill	Raymond McGarvey	Charlie Simmons
Olive Calvert	Irene Harbinson	Margaret McGreevy	Mary Small
William Calvin	Donald Harley	Denis McIlroy	Dorothy Stevenson
Tina Campbell	Irene Harper	John McManus	Jason Stewart
Heather Campbell	Robert Hasson	Celia McMenamin	Wilma Taylor
Bill Carson	Jean Haveron	Brian McMenamin	Gladys Thompson
Ken Carson	Peter Hedgcock	Jean McMillen	Ellen Thompson
Willie Carville	Denise Hegarty	Betty McNamarra	JP Ventura
George Cassidy	Isobel Herrick	Shirley McNulty	Margarita Vidinova
Anna Cassidy	Brian Herrick	Kevin McQuaide	Anne Watson
Derek Cooke	Francis Hughes	Thomas McQuillan	Ben White
Sarah Cooke	Peggy Hughes	Anne McWilliams	Patricia White
Angelina Cooper	William Hutchinson	Vincent Meenagh	Margaret White
Kathleen Corrigan	Brenda Irvine	Norman Meharry	Phillip White
Anna Corrigan	Roberta Irwin	Margaret Melarkey	Bernadette Whitley
Hazel Coulter	Naresh Jairath	Margaret Millen	Robert Windrum
Manda Craig	Indu Jairath	Dolly Misra	Jean Wylie
Kathleen Creighton	Kenneth Jamison	Michael Monaghan	
Tony Damoglou	Myrtle Johnston	Sean Moynihan	
Irene Davis	Richard Johnston	Kathleen Moynihan	
Sheila Dodds	Isa Johnston	Victor Murphy	
Violet Doherty	Sabine Jones	Derek Neill	
Patricia Donald	Mary Kearney	Kathleen Nixon	
Alan Dunn	Jim Kenny	Jimmy Nixon	
John Field	Anne Keys	Mary O'Donnell	
Peter Fitzpatrick	Violet Little	Moya O'Hara	
Anne Fitzpatrick	Thomas Mackin	Leticia Parkhill	
Betty Gallagher	Theresa Maguigan	Bridie Quigley	

b) pensioners parliament executive committee 2016



Michael Monaghan



Nixon Armstrong



Patricia Donald



Martin Gallagher



Brenda Irvine



Ivan Baxter



Caroline McKeown



Francis Hughes



Anne Watson



Tony Damoglou



Margaret Galloway



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Many thanks to Strategem NI for their help, support and advice throughout the two day Pensioners Parliament:

Claire Flynn - Snr Public Affairs Consultant

Conor Daly - Public Affairs Analyst

Natalie Clarke - Strategem NI Intern

David Petry - Strategem NI Intern

special thanks

A special word of thanks goes to Eddie Lynch for all his hard work and dedication to the Pensioners Parliament over the years. We wish him continued success in his new role as Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland.

10. stormont event

Following on from the 2015 Pensioners Parliament a special follow up event was organised at which Members of the Pensioners Parliament (MPPs) were given the opportunity to question Ministers from the NI Executive on the issues arising from the 2015 Parliament.

The event, held for the first time in the Assembly Chamber at Parliament Buildings, was chaired by the Speaker of the NI Assembly, Mitchell McLaughlin MLA and saw around 100 older people from across Northern Ireland experience the reality of an Assembly 'Question Time' session.

Twelve representatives from the Pensioners Parliament questioned Ministers present on issues around fuel poverty, health & social care and OFMDFM issues. Official responses were received from the Social Development Minister Lord Morrow, Junior Ministers Jennifer McCann MLA, and Emma Little Pengelly MLA and the Private Secretary to the Minister of Health Paula Bradley.

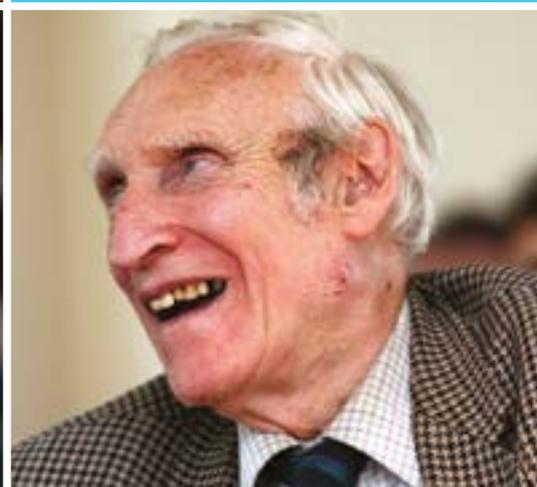
The 'Question Time' event was recorded by Hansard, the official edited verbatim report of proceedings in the NI Assembly.



northern ireland
**pensioners
parliament**
research panel



*Your passport to the
views of older people*





The Pensioners Parliament Research Panel is your passport to the views of older people in Northern Ireland. The panel is facilitated by Age Sector Platform, the charity responsible for the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament. Since 2011, the parliament has engaged with thousands of older people from across Northern Ireland.

Gauge older people's views through:

- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Consultation events
- Participatory research

Why use the Research Panel?

- Quick and easy access to older people from across Northern Ireland.
- Segment by age group, gender and geographical area.
- Benefit from expertise of Age Sector Platform staff who possess years of experience in engaging with older people.
- The trusted brand of the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament will encourage positive response rates and good quality findings.
- Income generated by the Pensioners Parliament Research Panel is invested in the charitable aims of Age Sector Platform.

Contact us

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www.agesectorplatform.org





pensioners trust

The Pensioners Trust has been set up by Age Sector Platform to improve the lives of older people in Northern Ireland by:

- Engaging with older people to identify the areas of concern to them; and
- Supporting projects which will tackle these concerns for older people.

How you can help

Do you feel strongly about tackling the problems facing older people in Northern Ireland? Could you provide some financial support to help us identify and address these problems?

Whether it's a one-off donation or a regular commitment of support, we welcome your investment in our vital work, and offer several flexible ways to contribute.

Donate by cheque

Make it payable to 'Age Sector Platform', and post it to the address on the back page of this report. Please indicate whether you would like Gift Aid* to be applied to your donation by filling in a gift aid declaration form (available online at www.agesectorplatform.org or through the office).

Donate online

Visit our website at www.agesectorplatform.org and click on the 'Donate' button, or visit our Just Giving page at www.justgiving.com/agesector.

Donate by text

Simply text the words 'PLAT28' then a space, then '£5' to 70070 to donate £5. Or text 'PLAT28 £10' to 70070 to donate £10. The donation will show on your next phone bill, or will be taken from your current balance.

Donate by standing order

Request or download a standing order form, fill it in, and return it to the address on the back of this report. This will allow you to make a regular donation to the Pensioners Trust on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis.

Leave a legacy

Speak to your solicitor about including a gift to Age Sector Platform in your will. Any amount - big or small - will help us do more.

* You will need to have paid enough UK Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year to cover the 25% that Age Sector Platform and any other charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs that you donate to will claim for the current tax year



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