

Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Senior's Network
Chairman's Report for Annual Charities Commission,
For year ending 31 December, 2023

ABC Seniors Network as a charity is celebrating operating as a charity for 13 years. We support older people's groups and group leaders to provide services for older people in the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon area. The organisation is completely run by volunteers, who each belong to their own older persons' groups. We have over 35 groups connected to our Age Sector Network.

Our Mission Statement is: *"To represent and influence decisions or policies for the older community in the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon area by giving them a voice on topical issues that impact directly on their health and social wellbeing".*

The Group has informal partnerships with 15 partners like Age NI, SHCST, Council, Linking Generations NI, ABC Community Network and TADA.

We have 4 members of the ABCSN who sit on the ABC Age Friendly Alliance. We help with the support and delivery of this Council's new three-year Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan and to support partnership working by ensuring voices of older people are heard by addressing the eight World Health Organisations' sage-friendly themes which are:

- Social participation
- Respect and social inclusion

- Civic participation and employment
- Communication and information
- Community support and health services
- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transportation
- Housing

A number of our Committee Members have taken one each of these themes and committed to attending any event or consultation that covers the subject of that theme, so that they can report back to the full committee. This will help to create age-friendly communities involving older residents, local groups, community and voluntary sector, health partners, council, and businesses working together in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough.

As a Network being a partner on the Age-friendly Alliance we link with different sectors with different expertise including older people's representatives, charities and community groups and statutory agencies. This helps to widen our involvement in, and our contact with, others who can help impact on the needs of our older community.

ABCSN's Core Committee has met 6 times since our last AGM, with the Working Group meeting an additional 10 times over the same period. We have hosted 4 community events and taken part in 2 consultations over 2023. Each of our Community events have been based on the HSC Making Life Better Take 5 steps to wellbeing (Give, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Connect).

We have been represented this Borough at 4 Age Network Exchange meetings, 2 Loneliness Network meetings, 3 All-Party Group meetings on Ageing and Older People, 3 ABC Age Friendly meetings and 3 ABC Community & Voluntary Sector Panel meetings. As a Network we aim to continue to represent the views of older people and keep raising our profile.

Like every other community and voluntary support group we have found it increasingly difficult to secure funding to sustain the work and support

that we offer the older residents of the ABC Borough. A large number of hours were spent by members of this group devising funding programmes and filing submissions for funding. We were unsuccessful with these applications, but thankfully our more recent application to the TNL Community Fund was successful and it is this funding that has allowed us to hold today's event.

I would like to thank all of the Committee Members for their engagement and contributions throughout the past year during some very trying and difficult times. I especially thank all the Working Group members for their hard work that enables this Network to survive and flourish. I thank those Committee Members who have volunteered to represent this Network on other Panels, and also thank Elaine Curry (Engagement Manager Age NI), Stephanie Rock ABC Age Friendly Officer), Tracey Powell and Gerardette McVeigh/Michael Devine (Southern Trust Well Being Team) and Billy Stewart (ABC PCSP) for their time, input, advice and support throughout the year. I have to say a big personal thank you to each person who took on additional responsibilities whilst I was receiving medical treatment over the summer months and ensured that the Network continued to operate as normal.

I must also thank Age NI, our funders and other benefactors for the generous support and encouragement they have provided to us throughout 2023.

I am confident that the Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Seniors Network will continue to develop and represent the older community within the Borough in 2024 and beyond.

There are currently 20 committee members within the Network who voluntarily give up their time and effort to represent the older community within the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. Sadly we lost 2 Committee Members through bereavements this year – Mary Alicia (May) Dickson who had been a committee member for many years and Derek McMullan who had joined us more recently. Our condolences, thoughts and prayers have been offered to both families.

David Hammerton BEM
Honorary Chairperson/Trustee