



# GATESHEAD OLDER PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY

STRATEGIC DELIVERY PLAN  
2016 - 2018



# Gateshead Older People's Assembly

is a charitable organisation based in Gateshead, Tyne and Wear. The organisation's constitution states that its aims are as follows:

1. To listen to and represent the views of older people in Gateshead
2. To be a source of information for older people in Gateshead
3. To improve the quality of life for older people in the community and in care

The organisation considers its beneficiaries to be people over the age of 50 and living in Gateshead. These are the criteria that need to be fulfilled in order for someone to become a member of the Gateshead Older People's Assembly. The charity has a very large membership which is always increasing. These members are regularly contacted both to find out their opinions on matters concerning older people in Gateshead and to inform them about relevant issues.

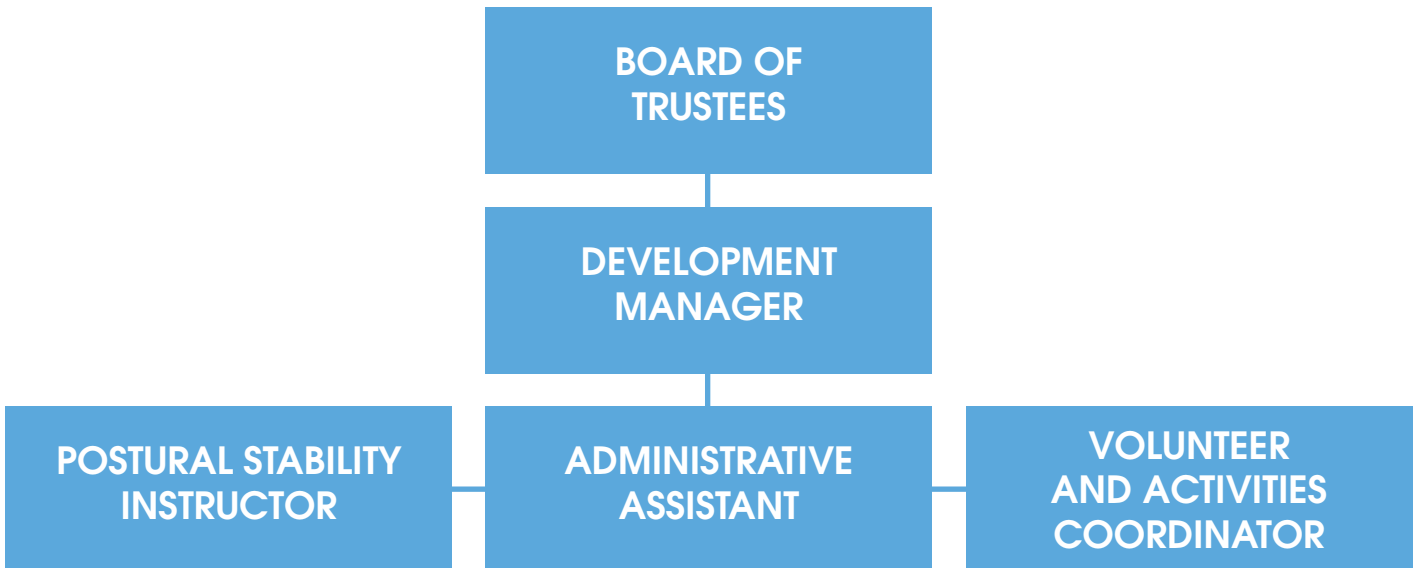
The Assembly is governed by a board of 12 trustees, all of whom are over 50 and who live in Gateshead. The board of trustees, made up of volunteers, provides strategic guidance and unique insight into the needs of the charity's beneficiaries - this is because the trustees are members and beneficiaries themselves. A charity that is governed by a board of trustees who are also the charity's beneficiaries is very rare and gives the Assembly an unrivalled perspective on the issues facing older people in Gateshead and across the UK.

The organisation has existed since 2002 and has established a strong network regionally and nationally. After an unsettled period in 2014/2015 the Assembly moved to Deckham Community Centre where it is now based. The centre now provides older people with a central hub for a range of physical activities, a community cafe which provides many volunteering opportunities, and a place for learning and enrichment. This allows Gateshead Older People's Assembly to help older people from Gateshead to live fuller lives.

In addition to the activities taking place at the charity's base in Deckham, the organisation has many friendship groups across the borough which exist to help tackle loneliness and isolation and to provide a platform for the charity's beneficiaries to develop stronger relationships and to try a range of new activities.

# ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The charity's staff team is small but with a broad range of skills so that the Assembly is able to be proactive and reactive in equal measure. Based at the Assembly's base in Deckham, the team works across the borough, supporting older people from all over Gateshead.



**Development Manager** - the Development Manager works closely with the board of trustees in developing the organisation's overall vision and strategy, and with the staff team to implement the strategic plan and undertake all operations. The main roles of the Development Manager include: securing the funding required to undertake the organisation's strategic plans, managing and overseeing all operations, developing a strong network, devising and implementing organisational change, and being accountable for all of the organisation's work and its financial situation.

**Administrative Assistant** - this role is the glue that holds all of the pieces together, the Administrative Assistant plans and schedules all of the Assembly's activities and groups while making sure all financial information is in place. The Administrative Assistant also oversees external communication via the newsletter and social media. This is more than just a supportive role within the Assembly's staff team - it is a crucial role in the organisation's development.

**Volunteer and Activities Coordinator** - much of the organisation's work is carried out by volunteers (such as the friendship groups which are all volunteer led). This role is about recruiting, training and developing volunteers while working with the Assembly's beneficiaries and management to ensure the range of activities is relevant and driven by older people across Gateshead. Driven by a desire to reduce loneliness and isolation, the Volunteer and Activities Coordinator also oversees the operations of the charity's community cafe, ensuring safety and compliance throughout.

**Postural Stability Instructor** - this role exists to reduce the number of falls that are had by older people across Gateshead. The borough is an outlier in the region and the PSI's role is to work with older people to increase their wellness, their core strength and their physical health so that older people in Gateshead ultimately have fewer falls.

# MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

The board of trustees is a democratic group of older people from Gateshead who meet regularly to discuss, plan and scrutinise the operations of the organisation which will be carried out by the Development Manager and the rest of the staff team. Over a number of development sessions, the board of trustees came up with the following organisational Mission, Vision and Values. These statements and guiding principles are what defines the work undertaken by Gateshead Older People's Assembly.

## Mission

To be the recognised provider of support and to be the voice of older people in Gateshead by communicating, providing relevant services and representing the views of our beneficiaries.

## Vision

In three years' time, Gateshead Older People's Assembly will be known by EVERY older person in Gateshead as the best place for advice and assistance, and will represent older people at all levels.

## Values

Respect, Equality, Honesty, Fairness, Trust.

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

After deciding upon the organisation's guiding principles, the board of trustees worked closely with the Development Manager to establish specifically what Gateshead Older People's Assembly should focus its efforts on in the forthcoming 3 years. These strategic objectives are as follows:

1. Increase older people's knowledge of issues affecting them
2. Be the voice of older people in Gateshead
3. Reduce loneliness and Isolation for older people in Gateshead
4. Increase opportunities for older people to live fuller lives
5. Improve the health and wellbeing of older people in Gateshead
6. Reduce the number of falls by older people across Gateshead
7. Build stronger networks to support older people across Gateshead
8. Increase opportunities for older people to participate in wider society
9. Increase community safety and awareness of safeguarding issues

These Strategic Objectives will help to secure Gateshead Older People's Assembly's future by providing a framework and an organisational direction that the Assembly's staff team can follow. A clear strategic plan prevents both 'mission drift' and the organisation becoming 'funding led', as well as allowing staff and trustees to establish clear goals and targets. The result of this is that more and more older people across Gateshead will benefit from the activities of Gateshead Older People's Assembly.

# ACTION PLAN

Each of the strategic objectives needs a set of actions to be undertaken to ensure the organisation stays on target and supports as many older people in Gateshead as it can. These actions are as follows:

## 1. Increase older people's knowledge of issues affecting them

### ACTIONS:

- a) Monthly Assemblies - the organisation will host a meeting every month to which all older people across Gateshead are invited to have their say about issues affecting them. Meetings will be held at 11am on the first Tuesday of every month.
- b) Monthly Newsletter - a newsletter containing relevant and interesting information aimed at older people will be published monthly and will be distributed as widely as is financially viable.
- c) Website - the Assembly's website will be kept up to date and will feature a blog, a news page and other information that is relevant to older people who can access the website.
- d) Publicity Materials - the Assembly will produce publicity materials about its services and distribute them, along with materials from other relevant organisations, to as many older people as possible, through networks, events and the Assembly's groups.
- e) Media - many of the Assembly's activities and events are newsworthy and, with this in mind, press releases will be written and distributed to maximise publicity and to reach as many older people as possible. The Assembly's social media will be kept up to date and will provide information for older people across the borough of Gateshead.

## 2. Be the voice of older people in Gateshead

### ACTIONS:

- a) Monthly Assemblies - (see 1a for details)
- b) Member Catch-ups - volunteers from the Assembly's board of trustees will work with the Administrative Assistant to develop a schedule so that all members are given a regular courtesy call to see if they are well and to keep them informed of the latest happenings at the Assembly. Members will be asked if they have any issues that the Assembly can raise on their behalf.
- c) Events - The assembly will hold regular events for its members to attend and will also attend events hosted by other organisations so that members can talk to someone from the assembly and have their voice heard.
- d) Friendship groups - all friendship groups will provide opportunities for members and participants to raise any issues that the Assembly can provide support with and amplify the voices of its members.

### 3. Reduce loneliness and Isolation for older people in Gateshead

#### ACTIONS:

- a) Friendship Groups - throughout the period of this strategic plan, Gateshead Older People's Assembly will establish 10 new friendship groups per year, which will increase the number of older people attending groups by approximately 400. This will significantly reduce loneliness and Isolation across Gateshead. Over the 3 year period, the group locations will also include more areas in the more rural parts of Gateshead, including the Inner and Outer West Neighbourhood Areas.
- b) Community Cafe – the cafe will open for 2 days per week in year 1, increasing to 3 days per week in year 2, and then 4 days per week in year 3. The cafe will provide meaningful volunteering opportunities for older people and will also be a base for learning, leisure and wellbeing.
- c) Intergenerational Work – Gateshead Older People's Assembly will create opportunities for its members to interact with younger people at its hub in Deckham and at other groups across the borough. These sessions will help reduce social isolation by tackling stereotypes of younger people, reducing fear of leaving the home.
- d) Community Garden - within year 1, Gateshead Older People's Assembly will establish a small community garden at its base in Deckham. This will bring together older members and people from the community, working together to achieve common goals and build community resilience.

### 4. Increase opportunities for older people to live fuller lives

#### ACTIONS:

- a) Increasing meaningful volunteering opportunities - the Assembly will increase the number of volunteering opportunities each year in its cafe, at friendship groups, within the community garden setting and in other social settings. This will increase social capital throughout the borough and help more older people to live fuller lives.
- b) Tackling stereotypes - Gateshead Older People's Assembly will devise a programme of activities and events which have the principle outcome of reducing the currency of the stereotype of older people. Reducing stereotypes will improve social capital, build community resilience and allow both older and younger people to interact without the burden of stereotypes.
- c) Reaching out to single people - In year 2, Gateshead Older People's Assembly will develop activities and events that specifically reach out to single older people. Single people are most at risk of experiencing poor mental health and are often more difficult to reach.
- d) Social Media/Internet/IT training - in year 1, the assembly will help to reduce loneliness and isolation and provide opportunities for living a fuller life by providing training and support around becoming connected to the internet, how to use social media and how to use other forms of e-communication.



## 5. Improve the health and wellbeing of older people in Gateshead

### ACTIONS:

- a) Training sessions on basic cooking skills - in year 1, the Assembly will deliver basic cooking skills to 60 older people who have self-identified as being in need of developing their cooking ability. This project will be evaluated, amended (if necessary) and replicated in years 2 and 3.
- b) Community Cafe - The community cafe will not only serve as a hub for social interaction, eating and education but will also provide opportunities for a range of wellness activities. Health and Fitness groups will meet at the cafe as well as groups specifically targeting older men who may be experiencing poor mental and physical health. The cafe, and the rest of the centre, will act as a wellness hub for older people so that the Assembly can help improve wellness and wellbeing.
- c) Tai Chi and Postural Stability - in year 1, the Assembly will deliver Tai Chi sessions to 50 older people from across the borough. This project will be evaluated, amended and replicated in sheltered accommodation schemes across the borough in years 2 and 3. In addition to Tai Chi, the Assembly will deliver 4 Postural Stability sessions every week in year 1 in areas that have been identified as having the greatest number of falls by older people. This will reach hundreds of older people, reducing the number of falls that happen in Gateshead.
- d) Interaction with health practitioners - as the number of friendship groups increases, the number of older people interacting with the Assembly will also increase. The Assembly will work with primary care providers, Gateshead Council's Public Health Department and the QE Hospital to secure the services of health professionals who are able to come and talk to the groups about maintaining and improving their physical and mental health.

## 6. Reduce the number of falls that are had by older people across Gateshead

### ACTIONS:

- a) See 5c
- b) Sloppy Slippers - in year 1, the Assembly will secure funding to provide older people across Gateshead with safe, sturdy slippers which are proven to reduce the number of falls in the home. members will be required to hand in their old slippers in exchange for a new pair as part of an 'old slipper amnesty'.
- c) Increased information for older people - in years 1 and 2, the Assembly will work with the local authority to produce information leaflets about how older people can reduce falls and the steps that need to be taken. This information will be distributed in the newsletter, on the website, at groups and at events.

## **7. Build stronger networks to support older people across Gateshead**

### **ACTIONS:**

- a) Partnership working - the Assembly will continue to develop relationships and networks with external organisations across all sectors who are able to support older people in Gateshead. This will include other VCS organisations, Gateshead Older People's Partnership, the Gateshead Council's Public Health and Communities Departments, Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group, elected members, primary care providers, secondary care providers, the Gateshead Housing Company and any other organisation which can enhance the Assembly's current offer and improve the lives of older people.

## **8. Increase opportunities for older people to participate in wider society**

### **ACTIONS:**

- a) See 4d
- b) Mobile Phone training sessions - in years 1, 2 and 3, the Assembly will develop and facilitate education sessions aimed at increasing older people's confidence and knowledge of mobile phones and how they can be used for a range of useful things such as communication (phone, text, video, Skype, social media, etc.) as well as renewing prescriptions, shopping online, playing games with friends and relatives and all of the other uses a modern smart phone has.

## **9. Increase community safety and awareness of safeguarding issues**

### **ACTIONS:**

- a) Raise the concerns of older people - the Assembly will use its monthly assembly meetings and friendship groups as a forum for older people to raise any concerns they have around community safety and safeguarding
- b) Engaging with professionals - the Assembly will work with local community safety teams, the police and any other groups or individuals who are able to attend groups and provide older people with information about staying safe both inside and outside the home.
- c) Events - the Assembly will host regular events focusing on community safety and safeguarding, as well as setting up mobile stalls in prominent places across Gateshead (Tesco in Trinity Square, Civic Centre, GP Practices etc.) to promote a message of safety and safeguarding.



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