



Healthy Ageing | *a secure future*

Listening Day NEWSLETTER

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LISTENING DAY REPORT

The reason for holding a Listening Day

The North Eastern Health Board is committed to improving the services which are provided for the Older Person in the counties of Cavan, Meath, Monaghan and Louth. As the Board is currently formulating a Strategy of Services to Older People, it is important to include service users and carers in the formulation process. This partnership approach is one of the guiding principles of the future of health service developments.

Participants

The Listening Day was held in the Nuremore Hotel, Co. Monaghan on Tuesday October 10th, 2000. Over 160 people attended from the four counties with older people and their carers being in the majority. Service providers who attended included Health Board staff, Gardaí, Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, national organisations, voluntary and community organisations.

LISTENING DAY REPORT

Days Proceedings

The ethos of the day was that listening is a two-way process in that service providers listened to users and carers and visa versa.

The days proceedings were opened by Mr Paul Robinson CEO.

An overview of the current level of services to Older People was presented by Marie Dooley, Director of Public Health Nursing Services, Evelyn Martin, Co-Ordinator of Services to Older People and Dr Bill Burke, Consultant Geriatrician, OLH, Navan. This was followed by a brief question and answer session.

The later part of the morning was dedicated to the perspective of the service user with regard to their own health, access to health services, housing and their own personal experience throughout. Their generous sharing of their personal and real experiences was most enlightening and respectfully appreciated by all participants.

- z Mr Tommy Sherrit, an eighty-eight year old man from Killeshandra, Co Cavan, who shared his views on moving from his own home in a rural setting into a social housing complex in an urban area in Killeshandra town.
- z Ms May Quinn, Summerhill, Co Meath shared her experiences as a former carer and more recently as a user of the services.
- z Mrs Eileen Maloney, a ninety-six year old lady, shared her experience of residential services in Lisdarn Unit for Elderly, Cavan.



LISTENING DAY REPORT

Days Proceedings

Their generous sharing of their personal and real experience was most enlightening and respectfully appreciated by all participants. The afternoon session was dedicated to listening to and recording the views of the five smaller workshop groups. The groups worked for 90 minutes on identifying the issues that they felt were most relevant in the North East area. At the end of the 'think tank', the groups completed individual questionnaires and returned to the main hall to discuss what had emerged for each group.

The main issues identified as of primary importance were as follows:

- z Finance
- z Transport
- z Primary Services (GP/PHN)
- z Integration and Co-Ordination of Services
- z Information and Communication
- z Community Care
- z Hospital Care
- z Preventative Health/Health Promotion and Screening
- z Voluntary Services

SERVICE USERS MAIN ISSUES AND SUGGESTIONS

Finance

Means Testing for carers allowance should be removed especially if they are caring for a family member.

- z Chiropody should be free as is physiotherapy and occupational therapy.
- z All women should get a pension of their own.
- z Government to increase money to provide acute and non-acute services to older people.
- z Government to provide more monies to residential services.

Transport

Extension of use of buses that are available for wheelchair users. The essential elements identified were as follows:

- z transport for treatment
- z transport for general purpose
- z transport for independence
- z transport for social activity groups.

The solution to this problem is crucial for the welfare of the older individual in our society particularly in rural areas.



SERVICE PROVIDERS MAIN ISSUES AND SUGGESTIONS

Primary Services:

General Practitioners

More dialogue and co-operation between the local GPs and the Health Board. As the initial contact person, the GP should have all of the key information about the health services.

Public Health Nurses

- z There should be an increase in the number of Public Health Nurses.
- z Public Health Nurses should have additional supports to provide a nursing service.
- z There should be more access for Public Health Nurses to non nursing services such as personal alarms etc.

SERVICE PROVIDERS MAIN ISSUES AND SUGGESTIONS

Home Help

Within the areas of Home Help, the service user requires additional home help hours than is allocated and paid for by the Health Board. This role could be enhanced if the Home Help service was seen as a social service to facilitate loneliness, depression and the general well-being of the older person as well as providing domestic and personal support to the older person. It was suggested that all Home Help and Home Support Services should be co-ordinated with a single point of access.

Integration and Co-Ordination of Services

- z There is a need to centralise services across the region which would simplify access to appropriate information.
- z The medical card guidelines should be re-assessed, all those over 65 should have a medical card

SERVICE PROVIDERS MAIN ISSUES AND SUGGESTIONS

Accessing Information

- z One suggestion was a booklet on all services and entitlements to be circulated to all older people and updated on a yearly basis.
- z The concept of accessibility should encompass the reality that older people may have low literacy, numeracy or comprehension skills and may not have access to or the expertise in computers and the internet.
- z Information is needed on all Health Board Services.

Community Care

- z For those living in houses that are in need of substantial repair, one suggestion was the use of hostels/bed and breakfast while the house is being repaired or while they are on a waiting list.
- z Local Respite Units are needed.
- z When an older person is no longer able to live at home or wishes to continue living at home long term care should be considered.
- z Dementia requires specific responses and services.
- z Rural communities are often neglected, particularly farmers, the National Organisation for Older Men should be promoted.

SERVICE PROVIDERS MAIN ISSUES AND SUGGESTIONS

Day Care Centres

A different ethos and approach needs to be adopted.

An umbrella service whereby physiotherapy, occupational therapy, hairdressing, interesting activities and issues of empowerment for the older person could be accommodated in the Day Care centre. It could also be used to fulfil the function of a central information point.

SERVICE PROVIDERS MAIN ISSUES AND SUGGESTIONS

Hospital Care

- z There should be follow-through after discharge.
- z Services should be provided in a community care setting which would lead to less hospital visits and greater efficiency.
- z In Hospital Care a greater emphasis should be placed on post discharge and preventative care.
- z There should be a planned discharge for each person which has established service links with community supports before the patient is discharged.

Carers

- z The means test for carers should be reviewed as a priority.
- z One element of this review should be to provide carers with additional incentives such as additional income, accreditation and recognition for the work that they carry out.
- z Patient should have input into the choice of the carer.
- z Night/Weekend support for carers of Dementia patients is crucial.

SERVICE PROVIDERS MAIN ISSUES AND SUGGESTIONS

Voluntary Services

The Health Board should be an active agent in setting up active retirement groups in areas where they do not pre-exist.

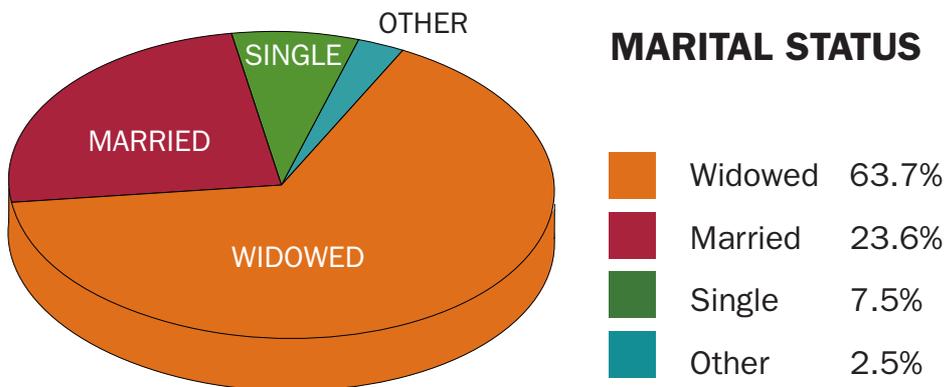
If the Health Board had the capacity to work with and co-ordinate the services of all bodies (voluntary, health boards and all services), there would be a very comprehensive and broad service on the ground. The 'Meals on Wheels' service should not be charged for.

RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

This Factsheet is compiled from the responses received from the service users and carers on the Listening Day. It is a profile that is very useful in terms of local information with regard to Older People in the North Eastern Health Board Area.

- z Over half of the those who completed the questionnaire were in the 70 - 80 years age bracket.
- z Over 30 % of respondents were aged 60 - 70 years
- z With almost 12% of respondents over the age of 80.

What is your Marital Status?



RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Preventative Health Care/Maintaining Health and Well Being.

- z There should be more emphasis on Preventative Medicine and mobility .
- z A Mobile Unit for screening services to serve rural areas would be of great benefit and certainly go a long way to addressing the issues of health promotion in the region.
- z A portable screening unit may be the answer to cater for the need for preventative health in rural areas.
- z It would be helpful if the Health Board compiled a visiting list in local areas where independent people over 60 years can visit others.

RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Transport to Listening Day

60% of people surveyed availed of the transport provided by the NEHB for the Listening Day. The remainder travelled with others and a small number drove their own car.

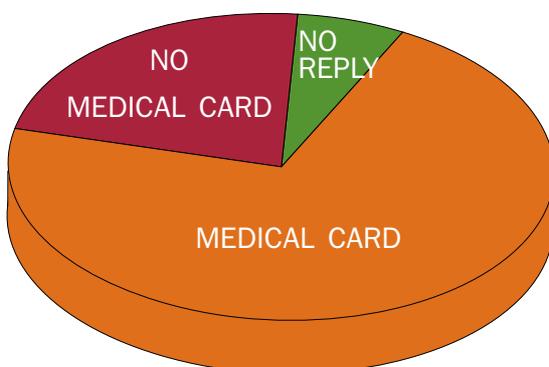
Living Circumstances

Almost 55% of those surveyed live on their own.

Medical Card

- z Almost 72% of those surveyed had a medical card.
- z Those that didn't have a medical card were mostly in the 50-60 age bracket or younger.
- z However there were a number of elderly individuals who do not have a medical card.

Have you got a Medical Card?



MEDICAL CARD

	Medial Card	71.3%
	No Medical Card	22.5%
	No Reply	6.3%

RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Do You have adequate Water Supplies/Good Food/Heat/Light/Sanitary Facilities/Security/Transport and Income?

The categories are prioritised as 'not adequate' by those surveyed.

1. Transport
2. Income
3. Security
4. Water
5. Good Food
6. Heat
7. Light
8. Sanitary Facilities

Transport was the biggest issue on the day and this was reflected in the questionnaire with almost 1/3 (**31.3%**) of Older People stating that they did not have adequate transport. This was followed by **Income**, with **27.5%** of those surveyed stating that they did not have adequate income. Inadequate **Security** was also highlighted by **22.5%** of those surveyed.

RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

How would you describe your health?

38.8% of the those surveyed affirmed that their health was **'Fair'**.
36.3% of the those surveyed affirmed that their health was **'Good'**.
16.3% of the those surveyed affirmed that their health was **'Very Good'**.
7.5% of the those surveyed affirmed that their health was **'Poor'**.

The following is a list of conditions and the percentage of those surveyed who identified them as a current illness/issue. A high number of people ticked more than one issue.

Arthritis	41.25%
Back Pain	22.5%
Diabetes	16.25%
Blood Pressure	27.5%
Coronary Heart Disease	17.5%
Osteoporosis	12.5%
Mobility	7.5%
Body Weight	13.75%
Depression	15%

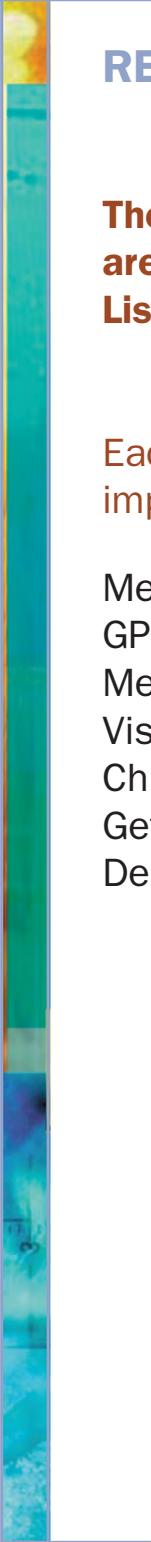
RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Use of Mobility Aids

- z Over 65% of the those surveyed are not dependent on any device for mobility.
- z 18.1% of the those surveyed use a 'Stick' to get around.
- z 1.2% of the those surveyed use a 'Frame' to get around.
- z 3.6% of the those surveyed use a 'Wheelchair' to get around.
- z There were 12.5 % of those surveyed that stated that they required assistance with 'getting up', 'getting dressed' and 'bathing'.

Public Health Nurse Visits

- z 11.3% of the those surveyed are visited on a monthly basis.
- z 1.3% of the those surveyed are visited on a weekly basis.
- z 1.3% of the those surveyed are visited annually.



RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

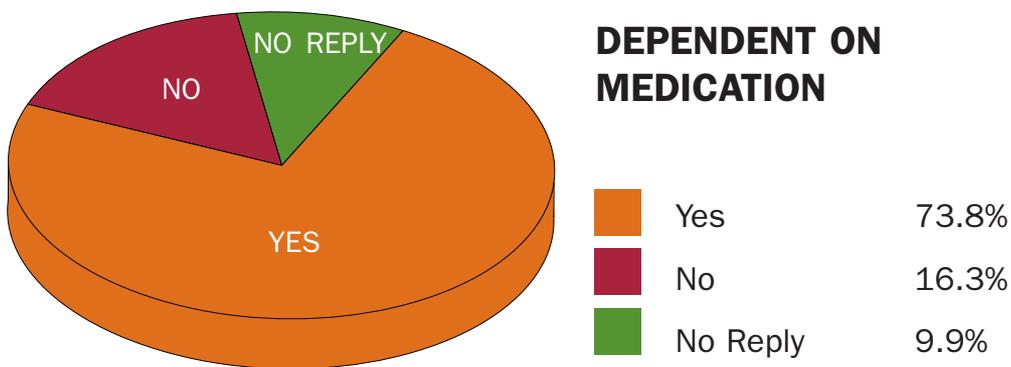
The following figures represent how important each of the areas are for the individual older people who attended the Listening Day.

Each figure represents those for whom the topic is very important.

Medical Card	65%	Day Care	21.25%
GP	57.5%	Public Health Nurse	21.25%
Meeting People	53.75%	Eye & Ear Services	21.25%
Visitors	42.5%	Occupational Therapy	10%
Chiropodist	36.25%	Home Help	6.25%
Getting to Shops	35.5%	Respite Care	6.25%
Dental Services	23.75%	Meals On Wheels	5%

RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Are you dependent on medication?



- z Nearly 74% of those surveyed were dependent on medication.
- z Over 70% of those surveyed reported that they had no difficulty in obtaining their medication and most of those surveyed fully understood their medication.

RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Contact With Family:

- z 33.8% of respondents were in contact with family on a daily basis.
- z 18.8% of respondents were in contact with family on a twice-weekly basis.
- z 18.8% of respondents were in contact with family on a weekly basis.
- z 2.5% of respondents were in contact with family on a monthly basis.
- z 10% of respondents had no contact with family.

Contact With Neighbours:

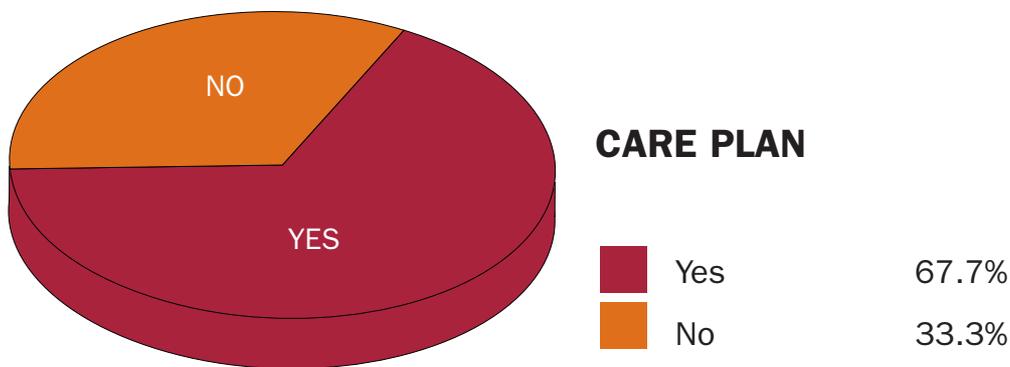
- z 38.3% were in contact with neighbours on a daily basis.
- z 16% were in contact with neighbours on a twice-weekly basis.
- z 14.8% were in contact with neighbours on a weekly basis.
- z 3.7% were in contact on a monthly basis.
- z 3.7% had no contact with neighbours.

Social Activity:

- z The activity that individuals participated in most was active retirement groups followed by availing of library facilities.
- z Bowling was the most predominant activity that people would like to try.

RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE - CARERS

Has there been a care plan developed?



67.7% of Carer's when asked stated that a care plan had been developed for the person for whom they care. Over half of these carers had been involved in the preparation of the care plan.

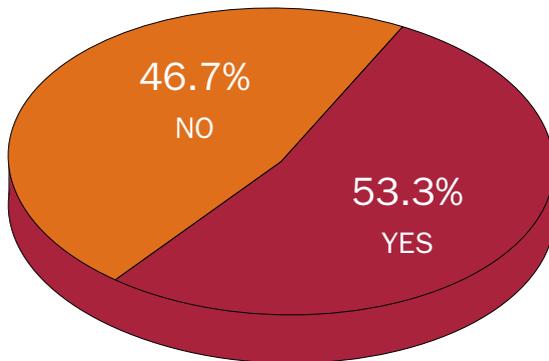
The GP was the lead health professional for almost 20% of those surveyed. This was followed by the Public Health Nurse.

RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE - CARERS

Health Professionals Understand Your Needs

53.3% of carers stated that they felt the health professional understood their needs, while almost 47% answered 'No' to this question.

Do you feel health professionals understand your needs?



HEALTH PROBLEMS

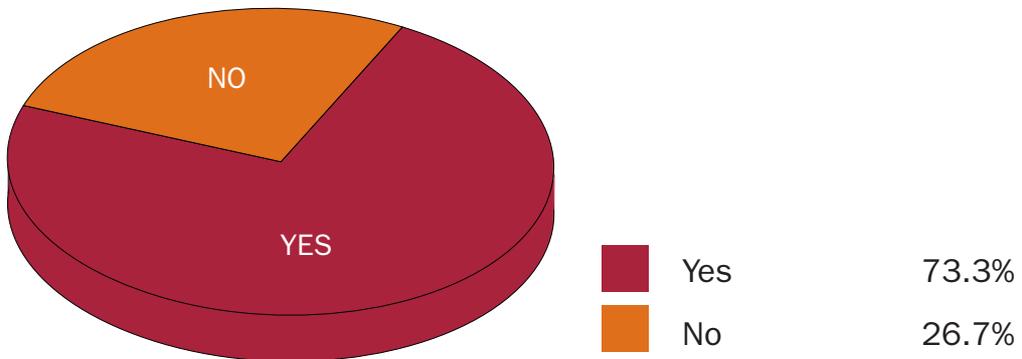
Yes	53.3%
No	46.7%

Carers were asked to identify the services that they availed of most and most carers ticked more than one option.

Home Care	20.7%
Sitting Services	6.7%
Home Services	20 %
Medical Appliances & Aids	20%
Respite At Home	33.3%
Day Care Centre	40%

RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE - CARERS

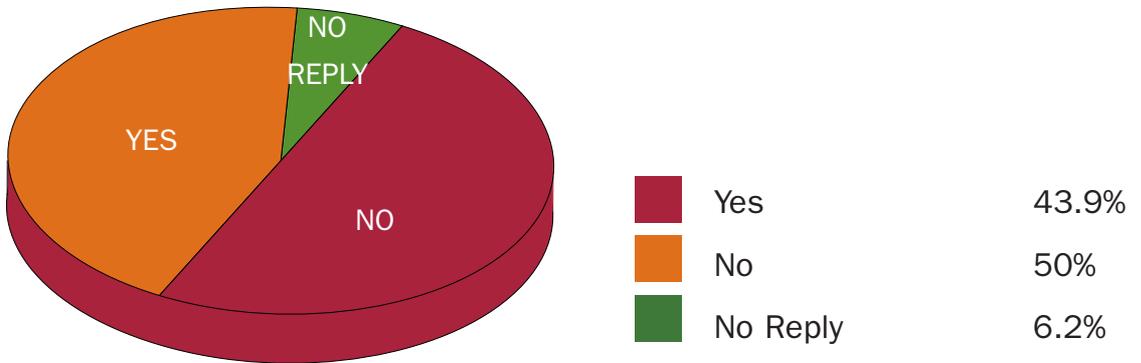
Do you know who to contact if you have a problem?



- z 73.3% of Carers stated that they know who to contact if they have a problem.
- z The remaining 26.7% stated that they did not know who to contact in that event.

RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE - CARERS

Does the service reach your needs?



50% of carers when asked 'does the service reach your needs?' replied 'No'. A total of 43.9% of Carers stated that the service does reach their needs.

RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Future Developments

All of the research findings from the Listening Day are central to the Formulation Process of the Strategy of Services to Older People.

The Board would like to take this opportunity to again thank the participants for their voluntary input and personal time given to the Listening Day.

As a follow on from the issues raised on the Listening Day, it is hoped to provide an annual newsletter for older people which will contain relevant service information and contact addresses and phone numbers for Service Users and Carers in a user friendly format.

CONTACT NAMES

Antoinette Doocey
Director of Services to Older People
North Eastern Health Board
St. Joseph's Hospital Campus,
Trim, Co. Meath
T 046-81122 F 046-81117
www.nehb.ie

Contact Details for the Older Person in each area:

Counties	Contact	Address	Phone No.
Meath	Tom Oxley	Meath Community Service County Clinic, Navan	T 046-21595/ F 046-22818
Cavan	Jim Sherry	Cavan Community Care Offices Lisdaran, Cavan	T 049-4361822/ F 049-4361877
Monaghan	Bill Davey	Monaghan Local Health Care Unit Rooskey, Monaghan	T 047-30400/ F 047-84587
Louth	Annette McDonnell	Community Care Centre Dublin Road Dundalk, Co.Louth	T 042-9332287/ F 042-9333814
	Jane Carolan	Child & Family Centre St Mary's Hospital Drogheda, Co. Louth	T 041-9832963 F 041-9833067

CONTACT NAMES

Contact Details for the Co-ordinator of Services for the Older Person in each area:

Counties	Contact	Address	Phone No.
Meath	Maureen Caffrey	Meath Community Services County Clinic Navan	T 046-21595/ F 046-22818
Cavan	Josephine Collins	St Felims Cavan	T 049-4331900/ F 049-4371803
Monaghan	Josephine Collins		T 047-30400/ F 047-84587
Louth	Evelyn Martin	Louth Community Services Community Care Centre Dublin Road Dundalk	T 042-9385452/ F 042-9332496

Contact Number:
North East DOC on call **1850 777911**