

# THE SCOTTISH CENTRE FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE OLDER PERSON'S AGENDA



UPDATE NO.2

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## IN THIS ISSUE:

- New projects
- Innovative Collaboration
- Putting research into practice
- Courses
- Update on meetings

The OPA Initiative at The Scottish Centre for the Promotion of the Older Person's Agenda was set up in August 2001 with the aim of improving the quality of life of older people through research, practice development and education. This includes working together with older people, listening to their agenda and turning the political rhetoric into reality. It is partially supported by a grant from the Robertson Trust.

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From Margaret and Belinda: Welcome to Update No. 2 of the work of the Scottish Centre for the Promotion of the Older Person's Agenda (The OPA Initiative) where the pace of activity is steadily increasing! We are delighted to be working more and more in collaboration with older people themselves, with other organisations both statutory and voluntary, and with staff from a range of disciplines within QMUC. Some of this work is highlighted in this update. We would welcome comments and/or queries from our readership.

## NEW PROJECTS

### **An analysis of the portrayal of older adults in the visual media in Scotland**

Contributed by Evelyn Weir,  
Department of Podiatry and  
Radiography

Evelyn Weir, from the department of Podiatry and Radiography in QMUC and a member of the OPA Initiative team, is embarking on the final year of an MSc in Gerontology

at the University of Paisley, having completed the first and second years of the part-time course. The MSc in Gerontology is a dynamic, challenging and exciting course, and Evelyn has thoroughly enjoyed her time studying at the Centre for Gerontology and Health Studies at the University of Paisley. In the first year of the course, Evelyn completed the modules 'Introduction to Gerontology' and 'Psychological and sociological perspectives of ageing', and in the second year Evelyn completed the modules 'Legal and ethical implications' and the innovative 'Politics and policy in an ageing society'. Evelyn has discovered a new and keen interest in both politics and policy making, and also has a strong ongoing research interest in 'ageism' and in the imagery and media representation of older adults.

To complete the MSc, Evelyn has decided to investigate the portrayal of older adults in the visual media in Scotland, under the guidance of Professor Mary Gilhooly. Although the fine details of the project have yet to be finalised, it is anticipated that the role and portrayal of older adults in the visual media, such as in television and advertising, will be examined and analysed. More details will follow as the project develops!

## “How do you fasten your bra if you’ve just fractured both wrists?”

Contributed by Vivien Reynolds,  
Outlook Housing

This was one of the first challenges posed by one of the participants of a group brought together by Outlook Housing and the Scottish Centre for the Promotion of the Older Person’s Agenda at Queen Margaret to advise on the development of new services to assist those going home from hospital.

In researching the needs of older people with a view to configuring new services, Vivien Reynolds, Director of Development and Research at Outlook Housing recognised the lack of services providing short-term interventions for older people. The ‘Revolving Door’ concept has resulted. This aims to provide twenty-four hour care within a rehabilitative environment for individuals for short periods of time. Potentially the ‘Revolving Door’ project could be used for a variety of scenarios, ranging from respite and short breaks to convalescence, extended rehabilitation and for those ready for but awaiting hospital discharge.

In developing the ‘Revolving Door’ concept, older people were invited to become involved and since March a small group has been meeting to advise Outlook. Belinda Dewar, Development and Research Manager for the OPA Initiative has assisted with the facilitation of this group and a broad range of issues have been explored. Using innovative methods some very useful insights from the older person’s perspective have been

gained and these will inform the ways in which new services are designed and provided. One of the most enjoyable sessions involved the older people in pasting together images and words to express what the facility should ‘feel like’ and services it should consider providing. This culminated in an interesting collage. To achieve these expectations will be the ultimate challenge.



Group collage of what a good service for older people should look like

### **SHARE: an innovative project that aims to share stories about good practice**

Contributed by Fiona O’May,  
Research Fellow

The Centre for the Promotion of the Older Person’s Agenda (OPA) has been allocated funding to conduct a pilot project for setting up the Scottish Hub for Access to Research and Evidence (SHARE). This initiative is being set up to facilitate the sharing of good practice relating to older people, and will contribute to making a positive difference to the quality of life of older people.

Fiona O’May, Research Fellow, Social Sciences and Health, will be working on the project in conjunction with Belinda Dewar,

OPA Development and Research Manager. SHARE is a database and network which will be based in the Lothian region initially and will provide opportunities for those interested in issues relating to older people to access good practice and development initiatives, and to facilitate collaboration, implementation and dissemination.

The database will serve as a collation and dissemination tool, encompassing policy documents, information on research and good practice projects, as well as individual narratives relating to aspects of growing older. The database will also host a series of summaries about good practice projects across a range of disciplines and the voluntary sector. The network will serve as a forum to encourage communication and the sharing of ideas and initiatives, for both professionals and non-professionals, including older people, and will facilitate discussion, consultation, advice seeking and cross-fertilisation of ideas, knowledge and experience.

This pilot project will test out the feasibility of SHARE and will look to provide demonstration material to support a proposal to gain substantial funding for the development and maintenance of a Scotland-wide database and network.

The project has already started, and involves reading, collation and analysis of existing literature, documents and newsletters. A list of projects, organisations and individuals to contact will be drawn up, and they will be notified of SHARE and its aims by letter, and posters/fliers. Fiona will then set up visits to projects and organisations

which work with older people, and will work jointly with them to write up summaries of good practice examples which will be disseminated on the database. At the same time, individuals who are interested will be registered on the network, indicating their interests/areas of work and/or research, thus enabling us to target information to relevant groups/members.

It is envisaged that the pilot of SHARE will run until the end of February, when it will be evaluated for effectiveness. Throughout the project, Fiona will monitor all tasks, contacts, user comments, feedback, and problems. The outcome will be incorporated into a bid for further funding.

If you know of anybody who is carrying out innovative work with older people or know of any individuals who would like to join the network please contact Fiona O'May on 317 3615 or email [fomay@qmuc.ac.uk](mailto:fomay@qmuc.ac.uk)

### **Towards an Understanding of Practice in Working with Older Adults**

Contributed by Sheena Blair,  
Department of Occupational  
Therapy and Art Therapy

Sheena Blair of the Department of Occupational Therapy and Art Therapy has been working with the team at OPA to deliver the 'Education for Participation' module which she designed on 'Helping Older People to tell their Stories'. This fits well with Sheena's keen interest in health policy, research and lifelong learning. She is currently working on the above collaborative project

with Professor Jenny Ozga of the Department of Education at Edinburgh University. The project is part of her current studies for a Doctorate of Education at the University. Sheena comments that her research and her links with the Scottish Centre for the Promotion of the Older Person's Agenda provide her with opportunities to study policies in relation to older people, to explore the nature of learning in later life and to keep up to date with the burgeoning and multi-disciplinary literature which exists on older people's learning needs – an area which increasingly is attracting research funding. In April this year, Sheena had an article published in 'Scottish Affairs', entitled 'Free Personal Care for Older People - Is this a Scottish bid for Distributive Justice for Older People?' Also, as part of a mini-project for Sheena's Doctorate, she is evaluating the reflective experiences of taking part in the 'Education for Participation course - from the perspectives of the QMUC staff leading the modules and the older people participants themselves.

## **INNOVATIVE COLLABORATION**

**Innovative Collaboration to be launched on 19th November, 2002.**

Contributed by Vivien Reynolds,  
Outlook Housing

The Scottish Centre for the Promotion of the Older Person's Agenda at Queen Margaret (the OPA initiative) and Outlook Housing, based in Edinburgh, have been discussing the potential for a collaboration between the two parties which will combine the

expertise of each organisation for the benefit of older people.

These discussions come to fruition on 19th November when a formal agreement will be signed by both parties at a reception to be held at the Clerwood campus.

This is understood to be a first for this form of partnership working and both parties are excited by the opportunities that could result. Initially it is anticipated that these will include the development of an innovative project for Outlook Housing, the 'Revolving Door', which will provide short-term interventions for older people. The scope for joint working on this project alone may involve a range of QMUC departments e.g. Nursing, Occupational Therapy and Art Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech and Language, Drama, Business and Computing. Funding is currently being sought from the DTI's TCS Scheme with QMUC as the academic partner.

The anticipated synergy resulting from this collaboration will impact on a very broad cross-section of the community at this time of intense activity around community care and older people's issues. For further information please do not hesitate to contact Belinda Dewar of OPA or Vivien Reynolds of Outlook Housing.  
[vivienr@outlookhousing.org.uk](mailto:vivienr@outlookhousing.org.uk)



Belinda Dewar and Vivien Reynolds

## PUTTING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

### Involving relatives in care processes - a real challenge in practice!

We are now nearing the end of a project funded by the Foundation of Nursing Studies which set out to implement guidelines to involve relatives in care processes in continuing care settings for older people. Belinda Dewar from OPA has been working closely with Ria Tocher and Wendy Watson, both Clinical Development Nurses at Lothian Primary Health Care NHS Trust. The main focus of the project has been around helping to bring about changes in practice. Staff have developed a number of opportunities to enhance relative involvement including newsletters, life story work, communication books, and home visits for respite patients. Staff in one area have also embarked on a series of action learning workshops to help them to develop positive relationships with relatives. It has been a real challenge for staff to bring about these changes in settings that have had continual changes of staff and where increasing demands have meant that it was hard to place relative involvement as a priority.

Wendy, Ria and Belinda have had the opportunity to present the findings of this work at conferences in Keele, London and Edinburgh. The final report will be published in November 2002 but if anyone would like more information about this work please contact Belinda Dewar OPA on 0131 317 3575 or email [bdewar@qmuc.ac.uk](mailto:bdewar@qmuc.ac.uk).



Staff and older people doing life story work together



## COURSES

### Education for Participation - The Voices of Older People

At the Scottish Centre for the Promotion of the Older Person's Agenda this year we have been running a course called Education for Participation: The Voices of Older People. The aim of this course has been to work with older people to enable them to feel more confident about participating in and influencing the development of services. The course started in September 2002 and consists of 4 parts:

'Drama for Democracy' run by Stephanie Knight, Department of Drama,  
'Reviewing Documents to Enable the Older Person's Voice to be Heard' run by Evelyn Weir, Department of Podiatry and Radiography,  
'Having a Voice in Formal Arenas' run by Linda Sydie, Department of

Health and Nursing and 'Helping Older People to Tell Their Stories' run by Sheena Blair, Department of Occupational Therapy and Art Therapy.

Working together with staff from other Departments who all have a keen interest in the quality of life of older people has been really exciting.

We sent flyers out about the course during the summer and managed to recruit 24 older people. We are working with them in this pilot phase to develop the course. Early evaluations show that participants have really enjoyed taking part and have identified benefits, such as gaining more confidence in speaking out, meeting other people, having fun, and learning that they have got something important to contribute.

One of the key aspects of the course that we wanted to include was having some 'real' opportunities to practise what participants had learnt. In the Drama course for example we were invited to present short sketches of their improvisation work at a Strategy Meeting in the City Chambers in October. Evelyn is working with participants to review a real policy document that is still in the consultation phase and Linda has organised a series of 'real' meetings for participants to attend as observers.

As part of the course we are holding a one-day event on December 16th, where we will work with participants in the morning to evaluate the course and develop the content and approach for running this again after the New Year. In the afternoon we would like

to consider opportunities for the participants to further develop their skills. We are hoping to introduce participants to research, education and policy opportunities during this session. If you have any opportunities within your organisation for older people to contribute please contact Belinda Dewar on 0131 317 3575 or email [bdewar@qmuc.ac.uk](mailto:bdewar@qmuc.ac.uk).



Acting out scenarios in the Drama for Democracy course

### **A Second Chance to Play!**

Contributed by Stephanie Knight, Department of Drama

Stephanie Knight from Department of Drama is also running another course called 'Drama for Carers and the over 50's: A Second Chance to Play'. Stephanie will work with this group every Wednesday afternoon between 16th October and 4th December 2002. The group will decide which areas of drama they would like to explore and Stephanie will then develop a learning contract with them. This could be a performance or a play exploring one of their own stories. If you would like more information about this course or other courses in the future please contact Stephanie Knight on 0131 317 3979 or email [sknight@qmuc.ac.uk](mailto:sknight@qmuc.ac.uk)

## **UPDATE ON MEETINGS**

Contributed by Lyndesay Irvine, Department of Health and Nursing.

The inaugural meeting of the Older People's Network in Scotland was held on July 5th 2002 at RCN Scotland, Edinburgh.

This meeting focussed on the implications of the Joint Futures Agenda for nursing and social care sectors. Speakers included Maureen O'Neill, Director of Age Concern(Scotland), Sandra Stark, Director, Ashbourne Homes and Tracey Gellately, Project Nurse for the single Shared Assessment pilot scheme in Dundee. Much discussion was generated by the implications of free personal care, joint futures and the social sector agenda. A particular issue was the difficulties presented by cross sector funding and the differences in the philosophical base of nursing and social services. Trying to find common ground and collegiate

working appear to be proving to be major challenges. The meeting was well attended by practitioners from across Scotland who had a common interest in the welfare of older people. The final session of the morning was a discussion by members on the future of the Older People's network, the result of which was the setting up of a database of interested parties.

### **And Finally.... Watch this Space**

Here are just two or three examples of potential future activities of the Centre:

- Collaboration with Stirling University's Dementia Services Development Centre, Zurich Financial Services Community Trust, and Department of Dietetics and Nutrition to explore the nutrition needs of older people who are unable to leave their homes.
- Collaboration with Age Concern and Scottish Executive to plan a 'blue skies' visioning conference on the future of day care
- Development of a project together with foruminteractive (independent company creating theatre based solutions for organisational and cultural change) to examine good practice in relation to older people's involvement in public services.



Please turn over...

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A colleague at work sent this poem to me - we are unsure who the author is, but I think it is a lovely example of a stimulus to think about older people as life long learners.

*The old rocking chair is empty today,  
For Grandma is no longer in it,  
She's off in her car to the office or shops  
and buzzing around every minute.*

*No one shoves Grandma back on the shelf  
She's versatile, forceful, dynamic.  
That isn't pie in the oven, my dear -  
Her baking today is ceramic.*

*You won't see here trudging early to bed  
From her place in the warm chimney nook.  
Her typewriter clickety clacks through the day  
For Grandma is writing a book.*

*She isn't content with the crumbs of old thought,  
With meagre and secondhand knowledge  
Don't bring your mending to Grandma to do,  
For Grandma has gone back to college.*

If anyone knows where this poem originated from please contact Belinda Dewar on 317 3575

If you would like to learn about the OPA Initiative, please contact Belinda at [bdewar@qmuc.ac.uk](mailto:bdewar@qmuc.ac.uk) or Margaret at [malexander@qmuc.ac.uk](mailto:malexander@qmuc.ac.uk)

Best wishes for 2003.