



IN THE DARK

Information Needs
of Older People

EASTLEIGH SOUTHERN PARISHES OLDER PEOPLE'S FORUM



www.espopf.org

EASTLEIGH SOUTHERN PARISHES OLDER PEOPLE'S FORUM

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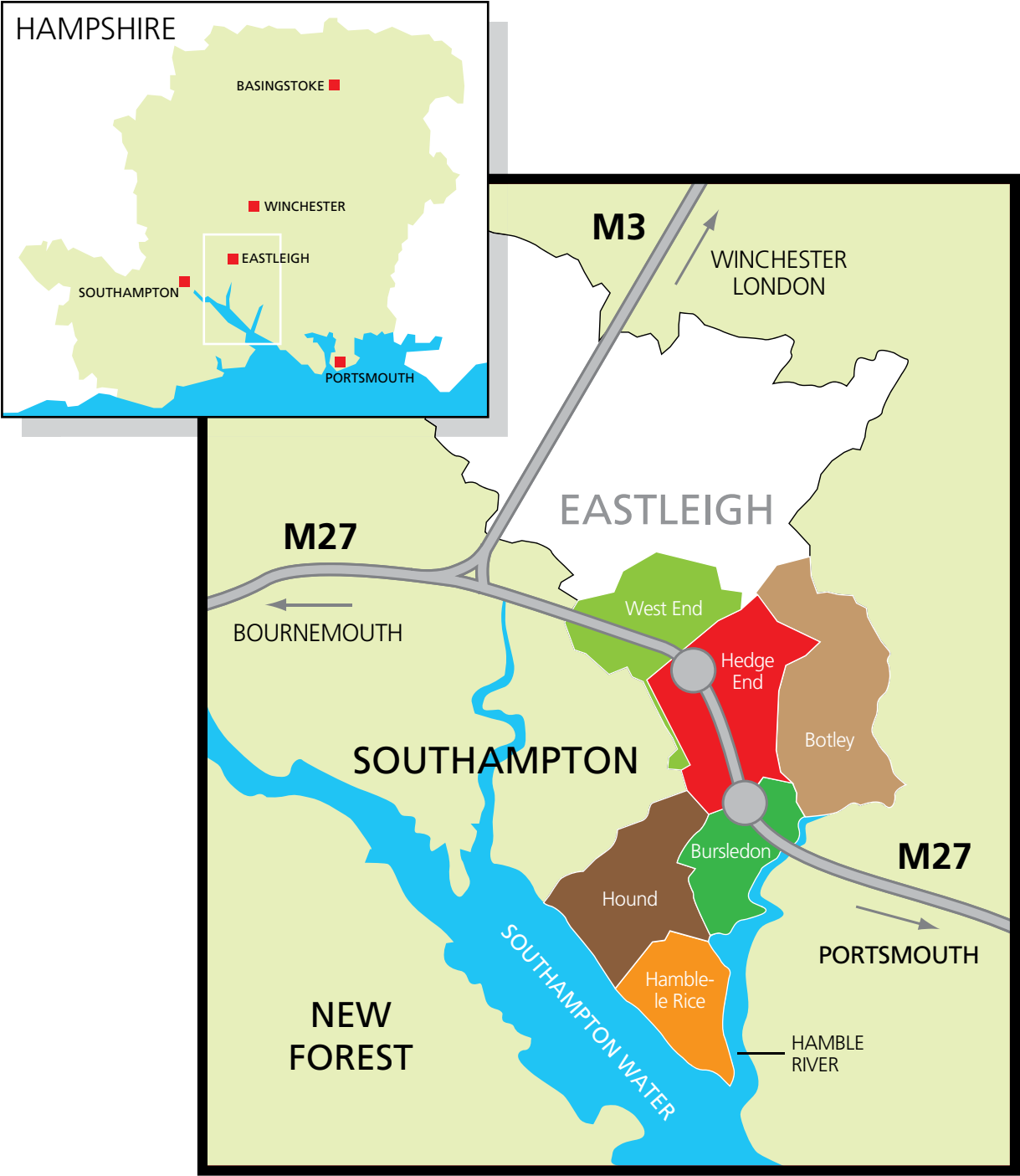
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EASTLEIGH SOUTHERN PARISHES OLDER PEOPLE'S FORUM (ESPOPF) has surveyed the information needs of older people living in six villages in semi-rural Hampshire and has published a report entitled "In the Dark". It is ESPOPF's fifth piece of research and was conducted entirely by older people into problems faced by older people.

The aim of the research was to improve the supply of information to older people by researching their needs and by putting pressure on providers to target and improve their services to older people.

Questionnaires were sent to all 3,000+ ESPOPF members and 451 were completed and returned. Ten members requested interviews and these were conducted and recorded in the interviewees' homes. Three focus groups of people with special needs for information were convened. Twenty providers of information were approached with requests for interviews and those who agreed were interviewed.

The research revealed the following:

- Older people are not receiving the information they need when they need it. Like the rest of the population, they need information to survive and deal with the challenges and changes of an increasingly complex society.
- In an age of technological advance, 60% of the respondents have no access to the internet. The reliance on the internet by information and service providers, marginalises those without it. More should be done to break down the barriers to older people's use of the internet.
- Older people experience further barriers, such as hearing and sight loss, lack of mobility and a widespread aversion to the telephone. These contribute to their social exclusion.
- Overwhelmingly, older people prefer to receive their information from people they trust, face to face, yet this option is rarely provided free, except by medical professionals.
- Older people want local, accessible, staffed information hubs in their own communities. When they have a problem, they need to be able to access reliable information immediately and to know where they can receive it, when they need it. A good example of this is travel information, which is very hard to come by.
- The hubs would need to be linked to the internet and telephone and situated as focal points in communities. Space permitting, they could be developed as internet cafés, the venue for advice, and even as centres for leisure activity. All information providers could use them.

Providers of information need to review their services in the light of the expressed needs of older people and engage in social marketing to research those needs and assess how far they are meeting them. The County Council should review and examine the scope of its Information services, in line with its Equality duty. It is well placed to provide, with others, an accessible, comprehensive Information Service reaching all the communities it should be serving.

INTRODUCTION

EASTLEIGH SOUTHERN PARISHES OLDER PEOPLE'S FORUM (ESPOPF) was established on 18 July 2000. Its objectives are:

- To consult with older people (55+) in the southern parishes of Eastleigh and to promote their benefit
- To consult with statutory authorities on issues of concern to older people and to bring unmet needs to their attention
- To bring issues of concern to older people to the attention of the wider public

Currently, a committee of fifteen representatives is drawn from the six southern parishes of Eastleigh Borough: Botley, Bursledon, Hamble le Rice, Hound, Hedge End and West End. The Committee meets monthly and is responsible for the organisation of the Forum. A bi-monthly Newsletter is posted to 2,400 households and distributed to councillors and officers of statutory authorities and voluntary organisations. Bi-monthly Open Meetings with speakers and workshops are held in West End.

In December 2003, ESPOPF was invited by Help the Aged to undertake outreach training in research method by the University of Teesside, and the self-selected group known as ESPOPF Researchers was formed. "Sic transit...", a study of the difficulties of hospital travel faced by older people, was published in October 2004. "Missing the Bus", a study of travel concessions offered by Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) in the light of the new, mandatory, free bus pass, was published in January 2006. In 2006, ESPOPF approached the Head of Housing with a proposal to undertake research into the housing needs and aspirations of older people to inform the new Housing Strategy. This offer was accepted and the report "Bleak Housing" was published in 2007. "Pills and Perils", a study of repeat prescribing for older patients, followed in 2008. All studies have been circulated widely and have received critical acclaim. They have been acknowledged as "the authentic voice of older people", influencing policy and acting as a catalyst for improvements, though, sadly, many of the problems remain. All this research may be accessed on ESPOPF's website, www.espopf.org.

In 2009, ESPOPF published its 'Age-Friendly Action Plan' for Lifetime Neighbourhoods and, after mapping three villages, discovered that older people lacked the information to access the services and facilities they needed. The Audit Commission had already identified the seven dimensions of independence for older people, information being one, and it was agreed that the next research subject should be **INFORMATION**.

AIM

To improve the supply of information to older people by researching their needs and by putting pressure on providers to target and improve their services to older people.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

All 3,165 ESPOPF members were invited, through the Newsletter, to become involved in the 2009/10 research and to form the ESPOPF Researchers' team. The purpose of the research was to explore the needs of older people for INFORMATION. Fourteen members expressed interest in becoming researchers.

Questionnaire

The research began in June 2009, when 10 of the team of 14 Researchers attended a brainstorming session about older people's needs for information, problems associated with accessing it and their preferences for receiving it. One of the researchers recorded their experiences on a flip-chart. This yielded 4 pages of material, which would inform the Questionnaire.

At the next four meetings, Researchers agreed the aim of the research and the tools to be used. They discussed the Questionnaire material, gathered at the brainstorming, organised it under headings and gradually composed questions designed to draw out responses, which would form the basis of the quantitative research. Once the Questionnaire was drafted, it was piloted, first by the Research Group and then by 12 randomly-selected members. After further modification, two copies of the Questionnaires were sent out with the November 2009 Newsletter to 2,444 households on our mailing list of members. This was our sample.

Interviewing

Interview request forms had been enclosed with the Questionnaires and ten members returned the forms requesting interviews. The new Researchers were trained in interview method and ethical considerations by the more experienced researchers. It was agreed that, with the consent of the interviewees, each interview would be carried out by two researchers and that the interviews would be recorded in the homes of the interviewees. Most of them were carried out in December 2010.

Analysis

By mid-January, 2010, 451 completed Questionnaires had been received: a 14% (451/3,165) response. Three Researchers then inputted the Questionnaire data into a Microsoft Access program using the input forms illustrated.

FINANCE		Housing		YOUTH/TALENT SECTION		SECTION 1 ABOUT YOU		Size	
Widowhood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cash level	<input type="checkbox"/>	Savings	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Questions 1, 2 and 3	YOB	<input type="text" value="26.00"/>
Power of Attorney	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can't remember	<input type="checkbox"/>	Part Costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Section 2	Question 5	People?	<input type="text" value="Yes No"/>
Person credit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tax/Inheritance	<input type="checkbox"/>	HSP	<input type="checkbox"/>	MPs	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attendance alone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cost a Ride	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good Help/burs	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Borough Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
State/Adult's go	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	School advice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing benefit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Travel concession	<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-help groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shopping tips	<input type="checkbox"/>	RECEPTION CENTER	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/>	Heldhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insurance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	COUNCIL SERVICES	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wiring service	<input type="checkbox"/>	MPs	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bank account/AC	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mob or Wheel	<input type="checkbox"/>	People care	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early release	<input type="checkbox"/>	Demerol service	<input type="checkbox"/>	Day centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	School advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	<input type="checkbox"/>
Council tax benefit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Waste collection	<input type="checkbox"/>	Care Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/>	Heldhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>
NEEDING	<input type="checkbox"/>	Council meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	Care Together	<input type="checkbox"/>	MPs	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
Home info pack	<input type="checkbox"/>	Police	<input type="checkbox"/>	LOCAL IDENTITIES	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability adapted	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adult/Social care	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency contact	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religious services	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social and Leisure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/>	Heldhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help/care plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bus service	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
Referral system	<input type="checkbox"/>	JANICE PROJECTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Borough Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing Assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Council Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	NEIGHBOURHOOD	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEDICAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	Power Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	Churches	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
GP	<input type="checkbox"/>	Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop/Trade people	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dentist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Specialist children	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post Office	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health visitor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Help the Aged	<input type="checkbox"/>	Handicaps	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pharmacist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Age Concern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
Podiatrist	<input type="checkbox"/>	NH	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family History	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hospital	<input type="checkbox"/>	CAH	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local history	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
Optician	<input type="checkbox"/>	Schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	County Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parish Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Access database was then copied into an Excel spreadsheet for more comprehensive analysis.

The Access input form

Design

A graphic designer was involved as soon as the Analysis of the Questionnaire material was ready, and he continued to contribute ideas and features about presentation and how best to communicate the research to ESPOPF members and others.

Focus Groups

As the research progressed, three groups of older people emerged as having particular difficulties in accessing information: those without computers; the hard of hearing/deaf; the partially-sighted/blind. Focus groups of 10-12 older people were arranged in the early part of 2010 to capture the particular problems of these older people and two interviews were held with individuals.

Information Providers

It was obvious, from the Questionnaire responses, the interviews and focus groups, that the research was producing a one-sided view of consumers' problems in accessing information. The Researchers decided that it would be useful to conduct interviews with established information providers mentioned by respondents. Invitations were given to providers by email or telephone and, if no responses were forthcoming, the Provider Questionnaire, which had been devised to form the basis of the interviews, was sent to them with a request that it be completed and returned for inclusion in the research. Interviews were undertaken from March 2010.

Writing the Report

By mid-June, the Researchers had collected almost all the quantitative and qualitative evidence and it was ready for examination. The Conclusions, points for Discussion and the Recommendations were agreed and two researchers volunteered to write a Draft Report for approval by all the team.

The Report, with the agreed title "In the Dark", was launched at the Open Meeting on July 20 2010.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The sample is drawn from ESPOPF members and may not be representative of the population at large. It is a self-selected group with a smaller proportion of members in their 60's, than in the older population at large.
- In Question 7 of the Questionnaire, the respondents report using Eastleigh Borough Information Points. Where Information Points exist, they are usually provided by Hampshire County Council. This is an example of the wide-spread confusion about which councils provide which services.
- In Question 15, about the preferred location for accessing information, many respondents ignored the instruction to tick one box and ticked several boxes. It is also clear that the term "Drop-in Hub" was not understood.
- In Question 18, many of the responses were the same or similar and a selection was made to represent the most commonly-held views.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Purpose of study explained fully to all participants
- Questionnaires issued and analysed anonymously
- Strict adherence to ethical standards
- All quotations and interviews reproduced verbatim
- All information stored anonymously
- Executive Summary issued to all providers of information
- Research report offered to all interviewees and respondents
- Report available at launch, on ESPOPF website, at parish council offices and on request

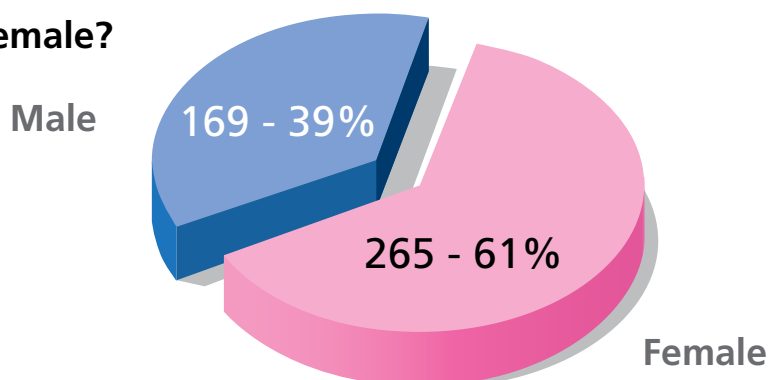
FINDINGS FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

The ESPOPF Researchers sent out 3,165 questionnaires to all Forum members on the newsletter database with the November 1st 2009 newsletter. By 1st January 2010, 451 completed questionnaires had been received, giving a response rate of 14% (451/3,165). There were 14 requests for interviews, of which 9 were completed.



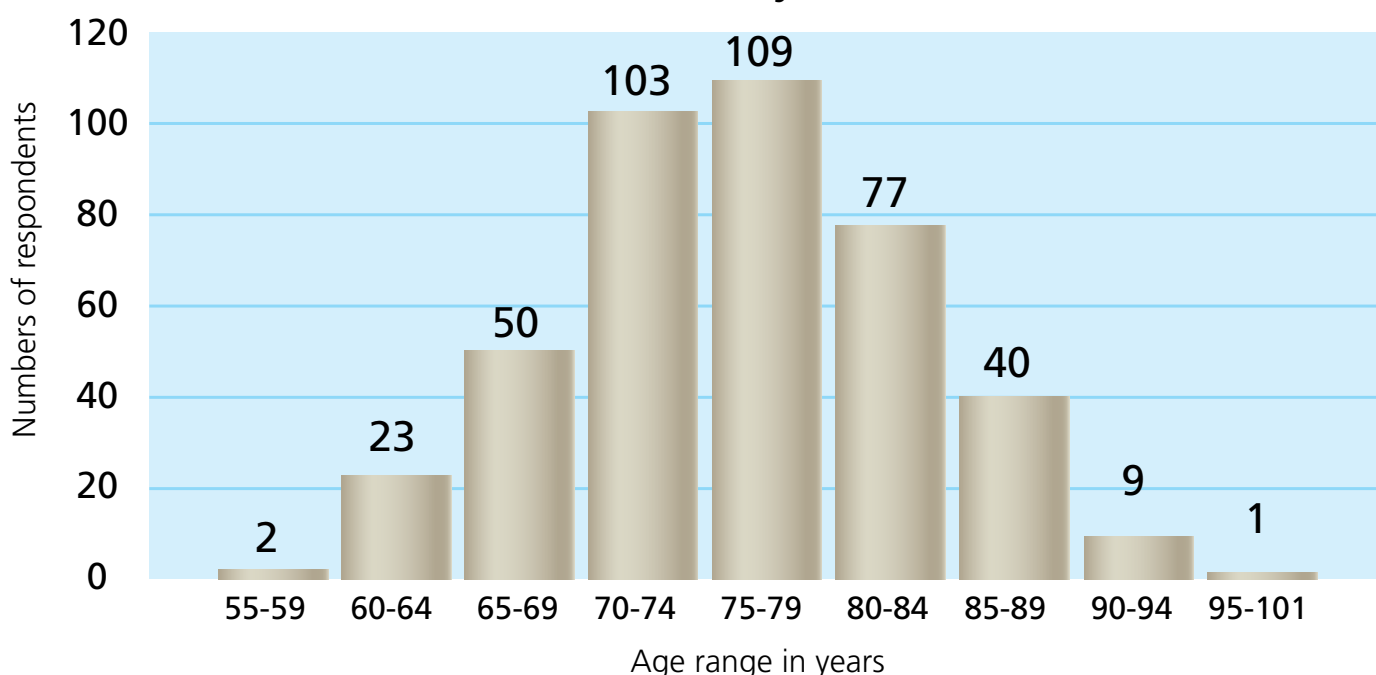
1. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Are you male or female?
N=434



This chart shows that there were 434 replies to the question. 17 did not answer. 39% (169/434) were male, 61% (265/434) were female.

How old are you? N=414



This chart shows that there were 414 replies from respondents whose age ranged from 56 to 101 years. Their average age was 75 years. The age-range 70-79 years made up over half, 51% (212/414), of those answering the question. 37 respondents did not give their year of birth.

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION 1

ABOUT YOU

- Are you male ☐ or female ☐ ? Please tick ✓ one box.
- In which year were you born? 19.....
- Where do you live? Please tick ✓ one box.

Boorley Green	Hamble	Netley	Thornhill
Butlocks Heath	Hedge End	Old Netley	Botley
Townhill Park	Hound	West End	Bursledon

- Have you ever needed information ABOUT the following, for yourself or others?
Please tick ✓ all that apply or leave blank.

FINANCE		TRANSPORT		VOLUNTARY SECTOR
Will-making		Coach travel		Samaritans
Powers of attorney		Bus timetables		Red Cross
Pension credit		Train timetables		HISP
Attendance allowance		Dial-a Ride		Good Neighbours
State/widow's pension		Medical appointments		One Community
Housing benefit		Travel concessions		Self-help groups
Financial abuse		Shopping trips		HELP FOR CARERS
Insurance		COUNCIL SERVICES		Sitting service
Bank account/debt etc.		Meals on Wheels		Respite care
Equity release		Democratic services		Day centres
Council tax benefit		Waste collection		Carers Centre
HOUSING		Council meetings		Carers Together
		Police		LOCAL ACTIVITIES
Home information pack		Adult/Social services		Exercise
Disability adaptations		Leisure services		Social & Leisure
Energy savings		Fire service		Learning
Handyperson		ADVICE PROVIDERS		Entertainment
Retirement options		Borough Council		Volunteering
Planning		County Council		NEIGHBOURHOOD
Housing Associations		Parish Council		Churches
MEDICAL		Councillors		Shops/Tradespeople
		Specialist charities		Post Office
Dentist		Help the Aged		Hairdresser
Health visitor		Age Concern		Neighbours
Pharmacist		MP		Family History
Podiatrist		CAB		Undertaker
Hospitals		Solicitor		Community Centres
Clinics				
Other (specify)				

SECTION 2 SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Do you get your information from people? Yes ☐ No ☐
Tick ✓ all those that apply.

MPs	Friends	Council Offices
County Councillors	CAB	Warden
Borough Councillors	HISP	Neighbourhood Watch
Parish Councillors	Specialist charity	Pharmacist
Spiritual adviser	Police	Doctor
Family	Good Neighbours	Practice Nurse
Neighbours	Adult services	Undertaker
Hairdresser	Carers	Other (specify)

- Do you get your information from the media? Yes ☐ No ☐
Tick ✓ all those that apply.

COUNCIL PUBLICATIONS	NEWSPAPERS
"Hampshire Now"	"Daily Echo"
"Eastleigh Borough News"	"Hampshire Chronicle"
Parish Council Newsletters	National papers
EBC A-Z	Other (specify).....
Other (specify).....	
MAGAZINES	OLDER PEOPLE'S NEWS SHEETS
"The Informer"	"The Message" - NPC
"Scene"	"Mature Times"
"Which?"	ESPOPF Newsletter
"The Oldie"	
"Saga" magazine	RADIO
Parish magazines	News
Other (specify).....	"You and Yours"

CAB <input type="checkbox"/>	HISP <input type="checkbox"/>	HCC <input type="checkbox"/>	EBC <input type="checkbox"/>	Parish Offices <input type="checkbox"/>
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8. Do you get your information from the <u>internet</u> ? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	If so, ✓ tick all those that apply.
--	-------------------------------------

9. Do you get your information from <u>leaflets/booklets/directories</u> ? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Tick ✓ those that apply.
Hampshire County Council	Yellow pages
Help the Aged/Age Concern	Telephone directory
Eastleigh Borough Council	Other.....

SECTION 3. PREFERENCES AND EXPERIENCES

10. How do you like to get information? Please ✓ tick all that apply.

Word of mouth	Telephone
Leaflet	Email
Internet	Newspaper
Local magazines	Notice boards
Radio	Television
Other (specify)	

11. How do you get information on the following subjects?

Please tick ✓ all that apply.

	Health	Transport	Leisure	Housing	Finance	Neighbourhood
Face to face						
Telephone						
Leaflet						
Internet						
Email						
Media						
Info points						
Notice boards						

12. When getting information, do you experience any of the following problems? Please tick ✓ all that apply.

Physical impairment		Other barriers	
Poor sight		Housebound	
Hard of hearing		No transport	
Speech problem		No computer	
Difficulty walking		No phone	
Get muddled		Low income	
Arthritis		Language	
Other (specify)			

13. Do you experience problems when using phone to get information?

Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, tick ✓ all that apply

Difficulty negotiating options		Kept on hold
Difficulty understanding accent		Speech too rapid
Being transferred between departments		Call centre
Poorly-trained telephonist		Musak
Other (specify)		

SECTION 4 . EASIER ACCESS TO INFORMATION

14. Would you prefer to access all your information in one place?

If yes, where would you like it? Yes ☐ No ☐ Please tick ✓ one box.

Your own community ☐ Fareham ☐
 Eastleigh (EBC One Community) ☐ Southampton ☐
 Winchester (HCC) ☐ Mobile information point ☐

Other (specify).....

15. If in your own community, where would you prefer an information point, ideally? Please tick ✓ one.

If not in your own community, leave blank.

Library	Community Centre
Parish Office	Shop
Cafe	Drop-in (hub)
Medical Centre	Post Office
Superstore	Church
Other (specify)	

16. Do you think it should be linked to information providers by email, internet and phone? Yes ☐ No ☐

17. Do you think it should be staffed? Yes ☐ No ☐

18. Why is this facility is needed?

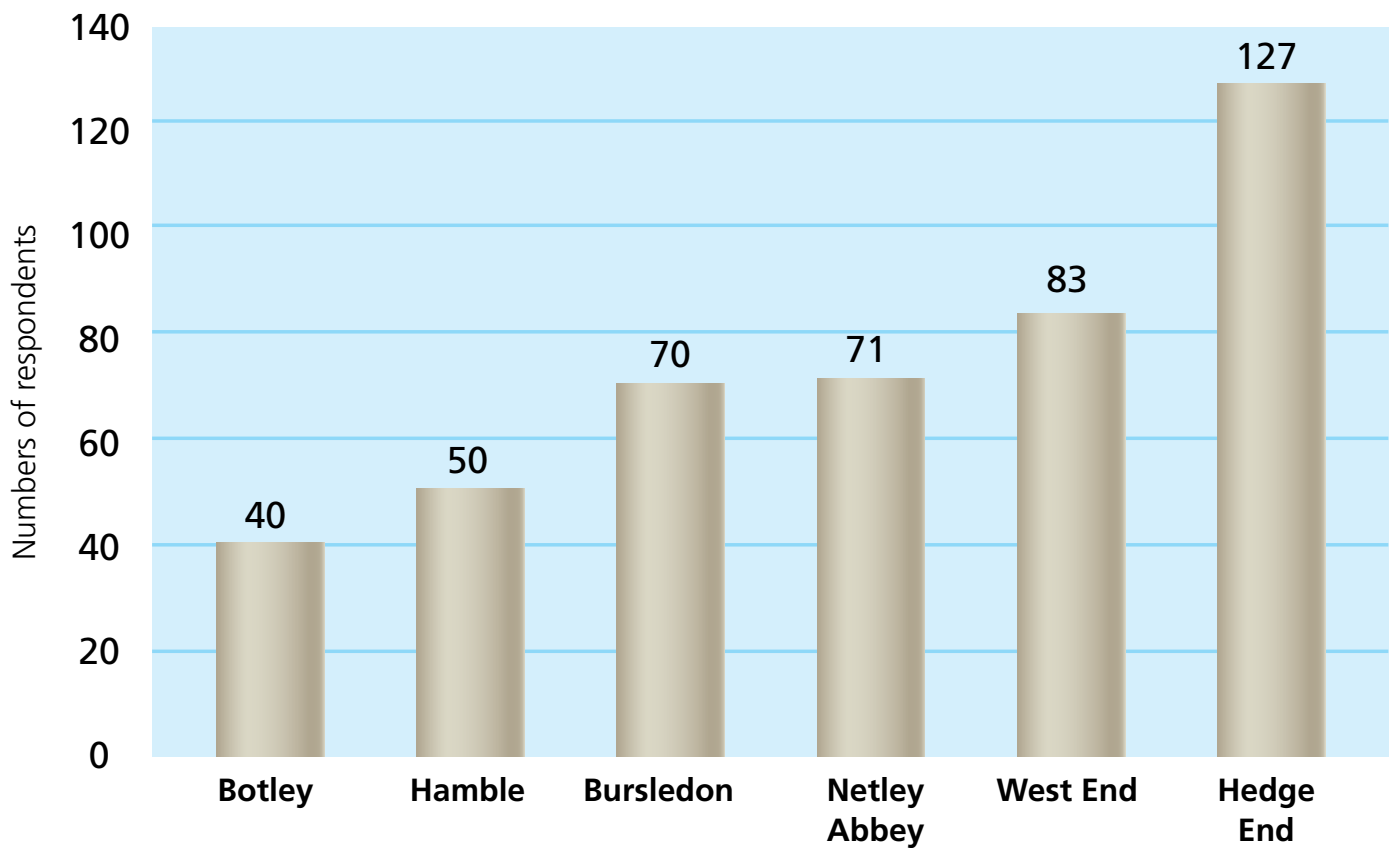
If you have more to say, please fill in the yellow *Interview Request* form.

If you need help with this questionnaire, ☎ 023 8040 3311

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

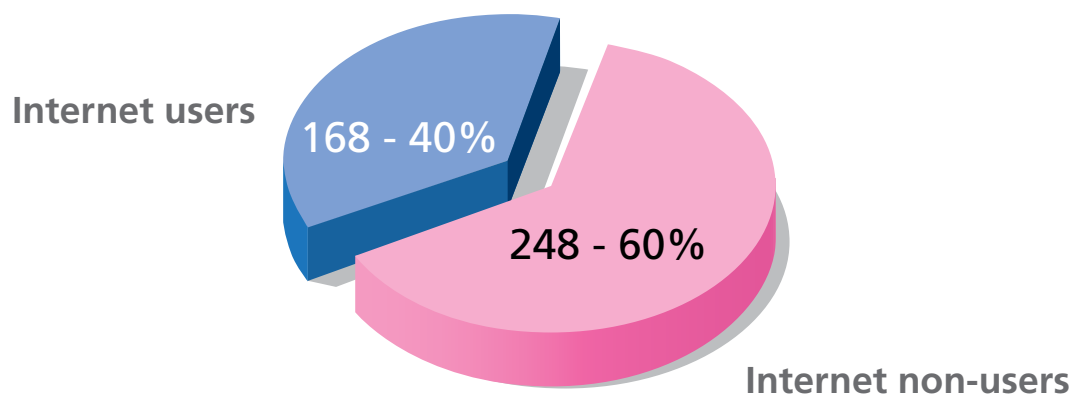
Please post it in the Freepost envelope as soon as possible to:
 ESPOPF Researchers, Orchard Hill, Salterns Lane, Old Bursledon.

Where do you live? N=441



This chart shows that there were 441 replies to this question. 10 people did not reply. Of the six southern parishes, Hedge End produced the largest number of responses (127) and Botley the fewest (40).

Do you use the internet? N=416



This chart shows that 40% (168/416) respondents used the internet and 60% (248/416) did not. 35 people did not answer the question.



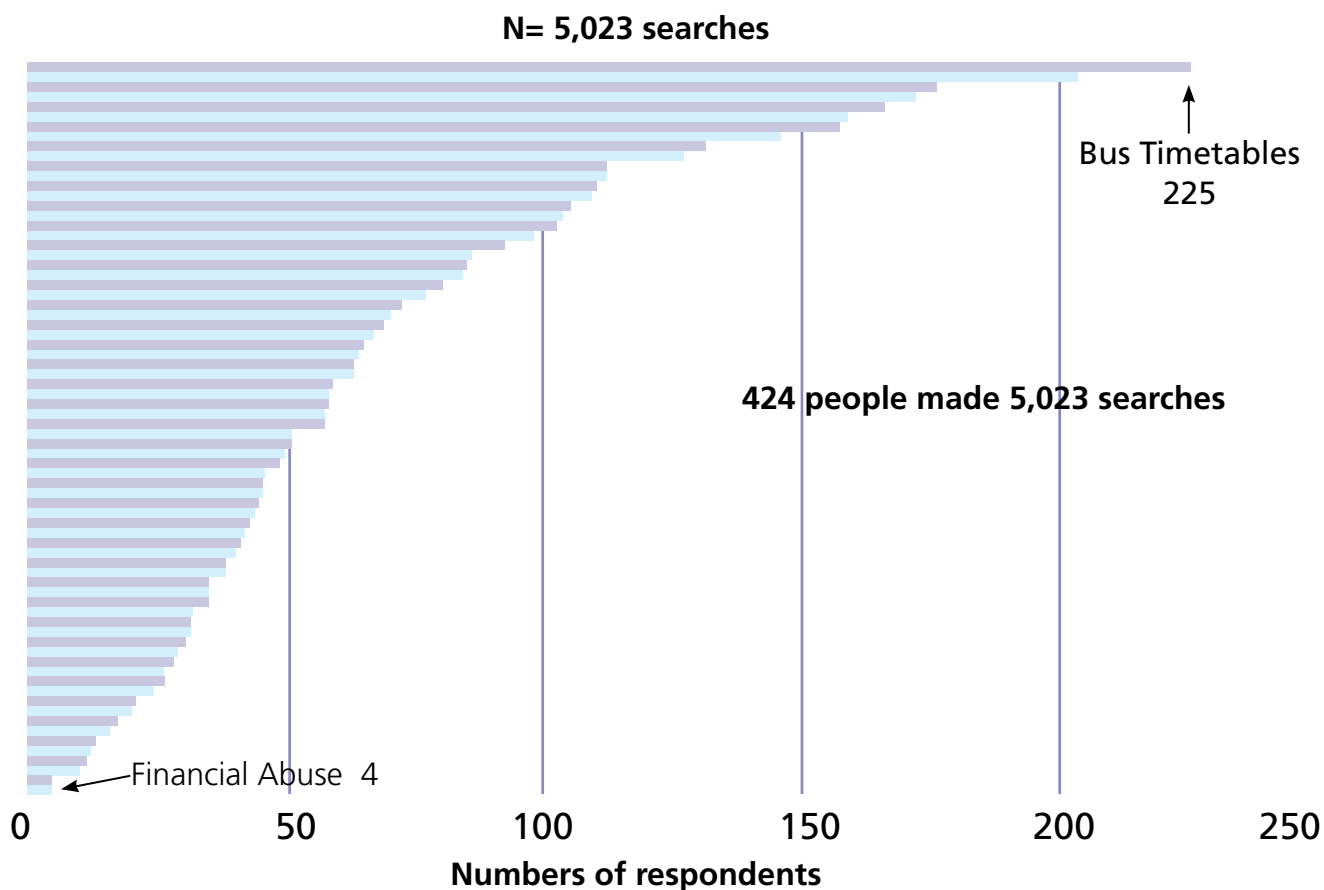
2. RESPONDENTS' INFORMATION NEEDS

What information have you ever needed for yourself or others?

Bus timetables	225
Will-making	203
Dentist	176
Waste collection	172
GP	166
Travel Concessions	159
Train timetables	158
Powers of Attorney	146
Hospitals	131
Attendance Allowance	127
Borough Council	112
Solicitor	112
Energy savings	110
Podiatrist	109
Post Office	105
Medical appointments	103
Handy person	102
Insurance	98
Coach travel	92
Social & Leisure	86
Parish Council	85
Council Tax benefit	84
Pharmacist	80
Exercise	77
Clinics	72
Learning	70
Disability Adaptations	69
Shops/Tradespeople	67
Hairdresser	65
Pension Credit	64
Help the Aged	63
Entertainment	63
Dial-a-Ride	59
Churches	58
Undertaker	58
State/Widow's pension	57
Age Concern	57
Leisure services	51

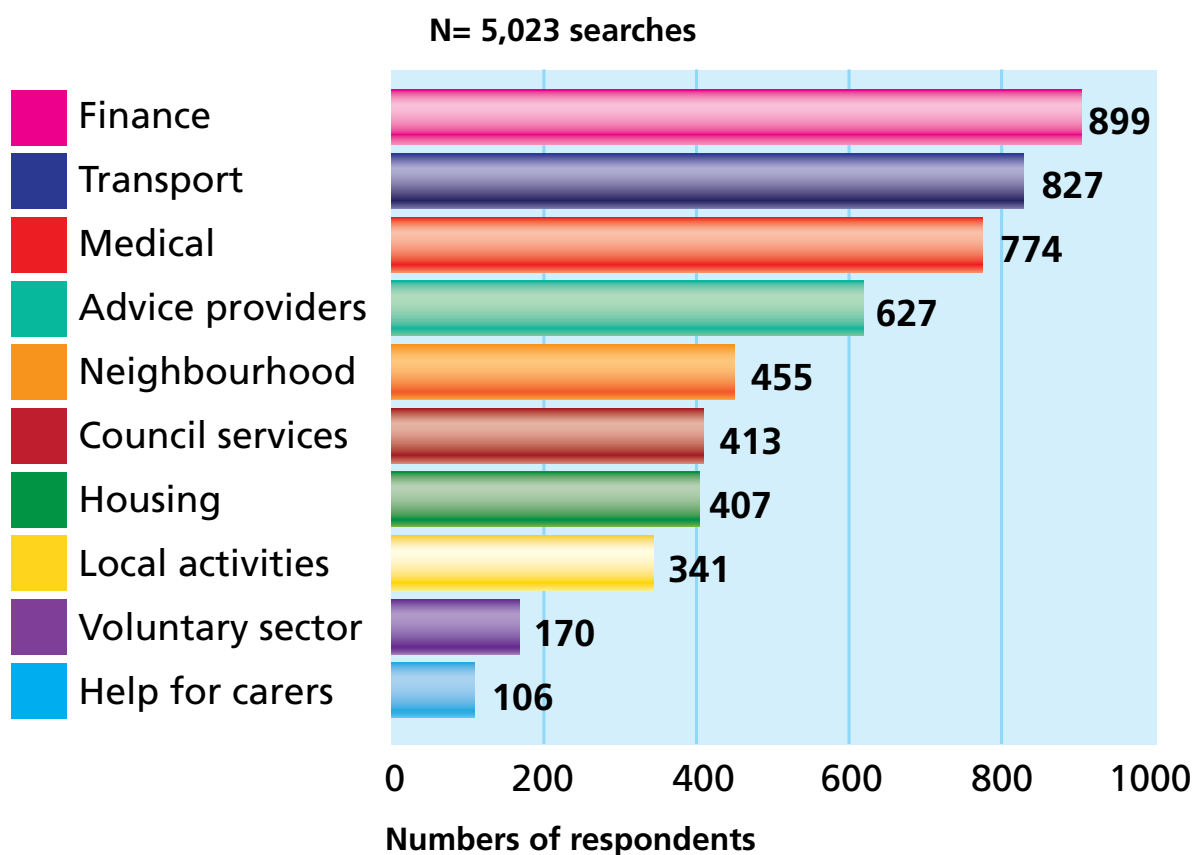
MP	50
Police	49
Bank account/debt etc	48
Adult/Social Services	46
Good Neighbours	45
Volunteering	45
Councillors	44
Planning	43
County Council	43
One Community	42
Family History	41
Health visitor	40
Housing Benefit	38
Respite care	38
CAB	35
Red Cross	35
Community Centres	35
Council meetings	32
Housing Associations	31
Shopping trips	31
Equity release	30
Fire service	30
Day centres	29
Home Information Pack	28
Specialist charities	26
Neighbours	26
Retirement options	24
Meals on Wheels	21
Self-help groups	20
HISP	17
Sitting Service	16
Carers Centre	13
Democratic Services	12
Samaritans	11
Carers Together	10
Financial Abuse	4
Other	4
TOTAL	5,023

Other (4): analysis of blood (INR) at local surgery; veterinary pet sitting; help for caring for a very frail husband; residential care; disabled equipment.

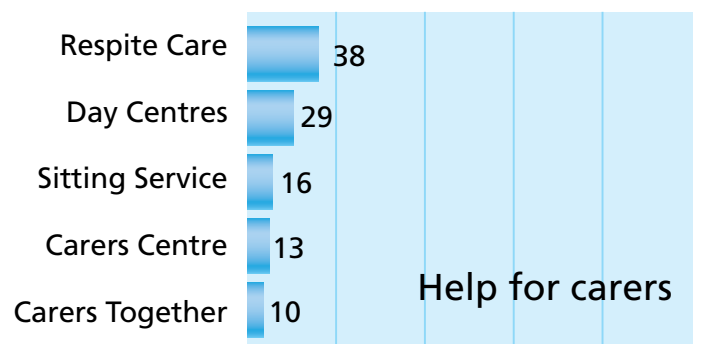
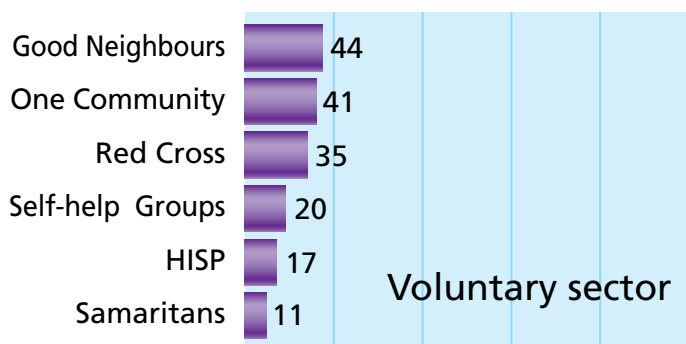
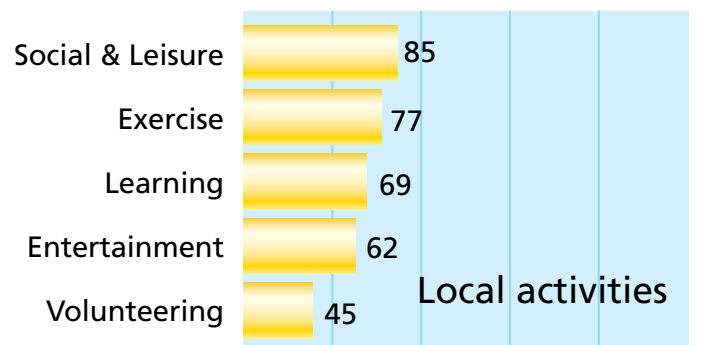
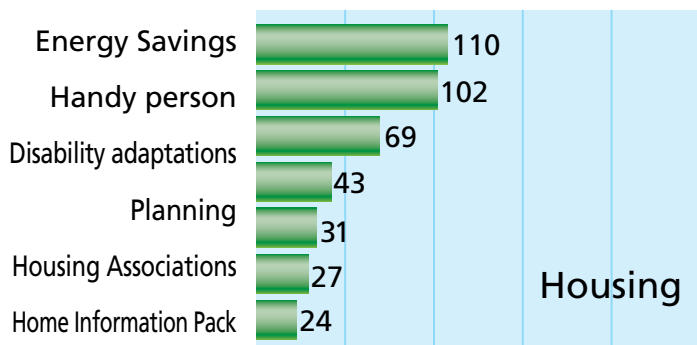
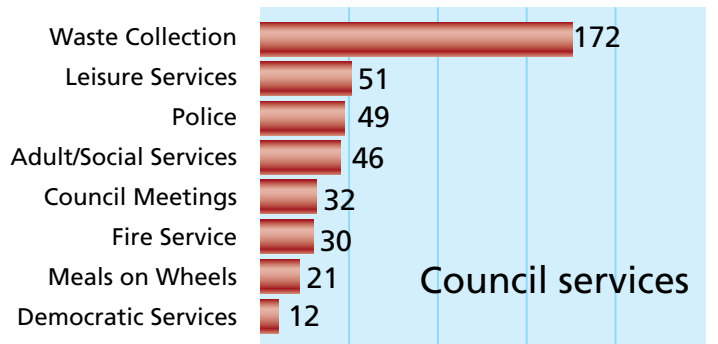
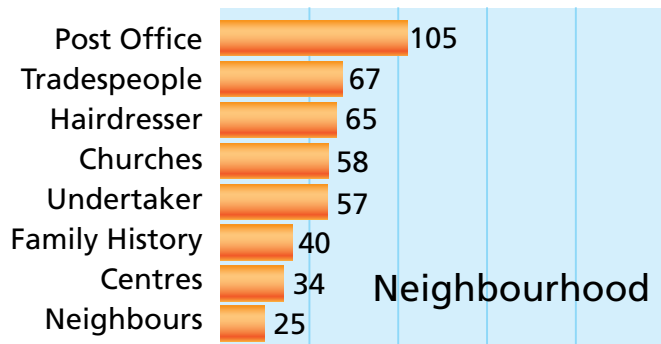
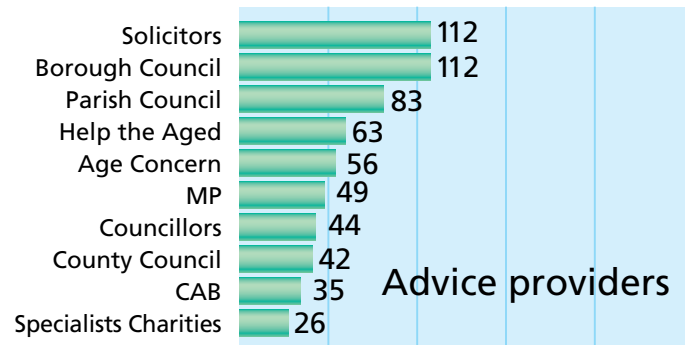
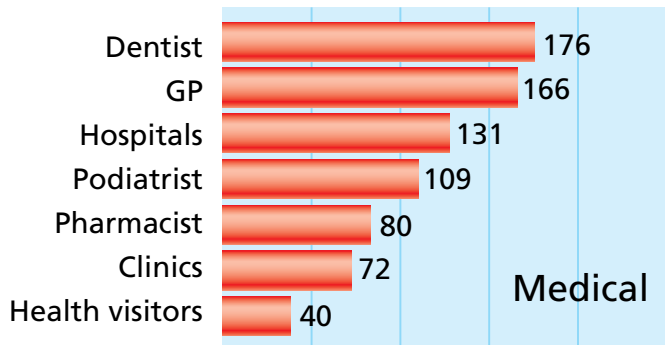
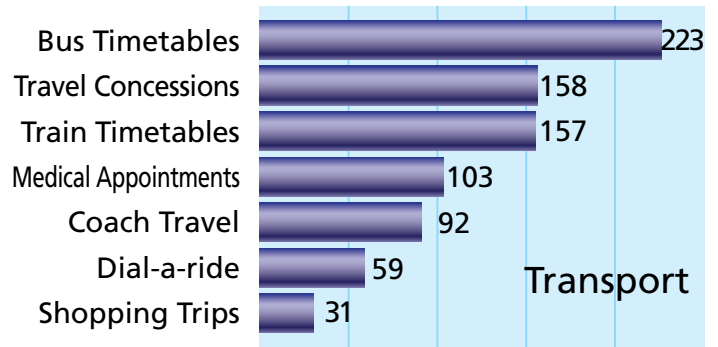
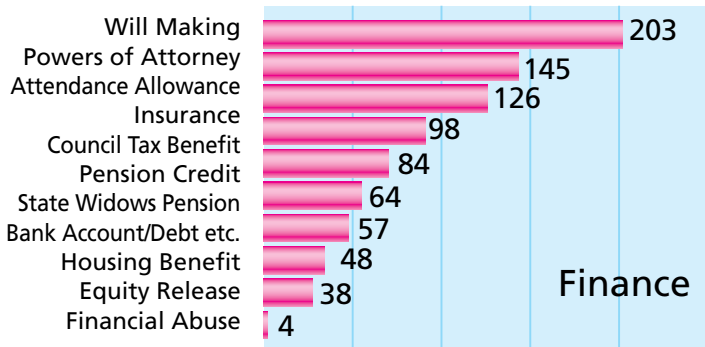


424 people replied to the question and the chart shows that there were 5,023 searches. Information about bus timetables (225) headed the list and financial abuse (4) came last. 27 people did not reply.

The chart below shows the breakdown of information into 10 categories. Finance (899) was the most sought-after and Help for Carers (106) the least sought-after.



BREAKDOWN OF CATEGORIES



0 50 100 150 200 250

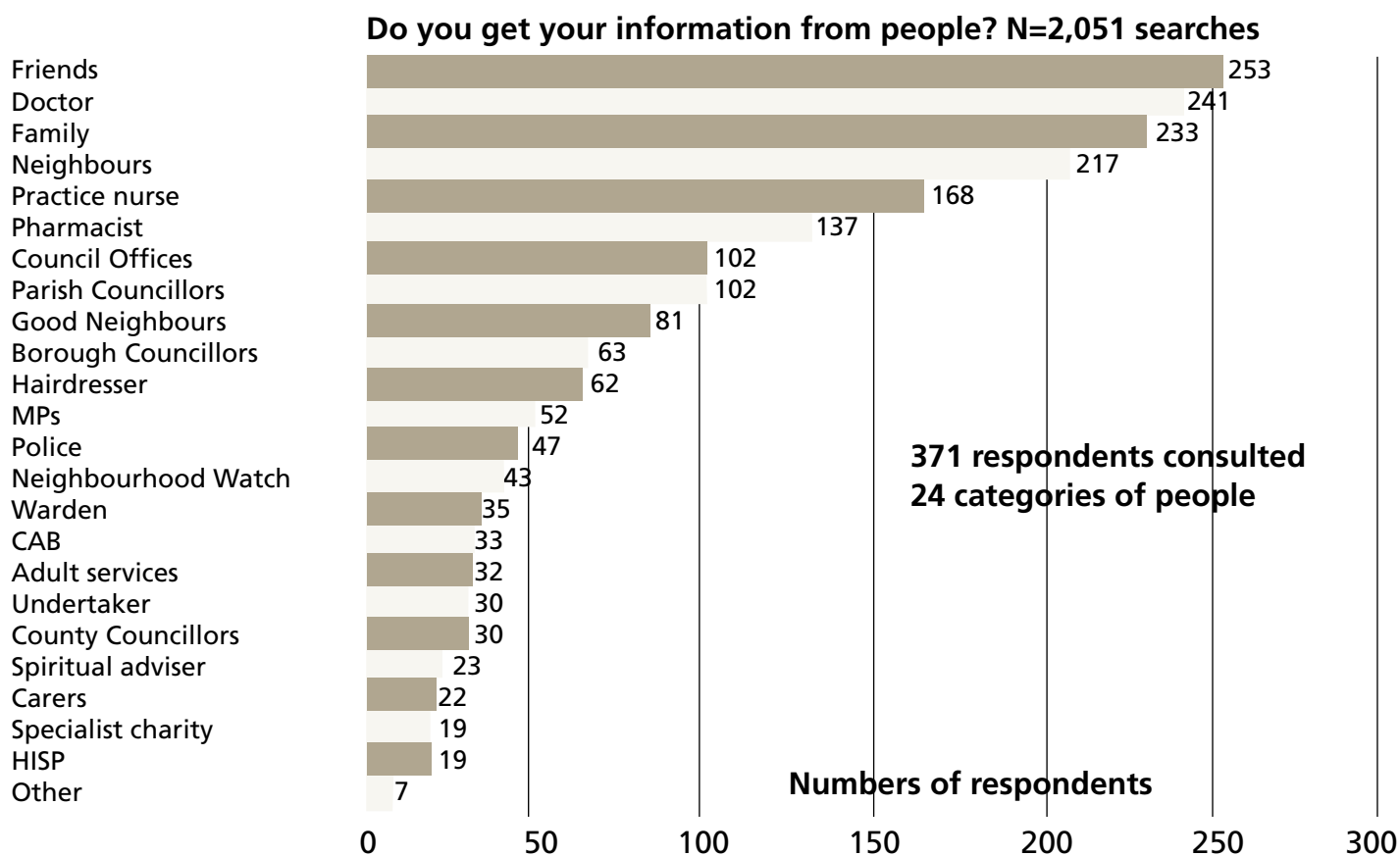
Numbers of respondents

0 50 100 150 200 250

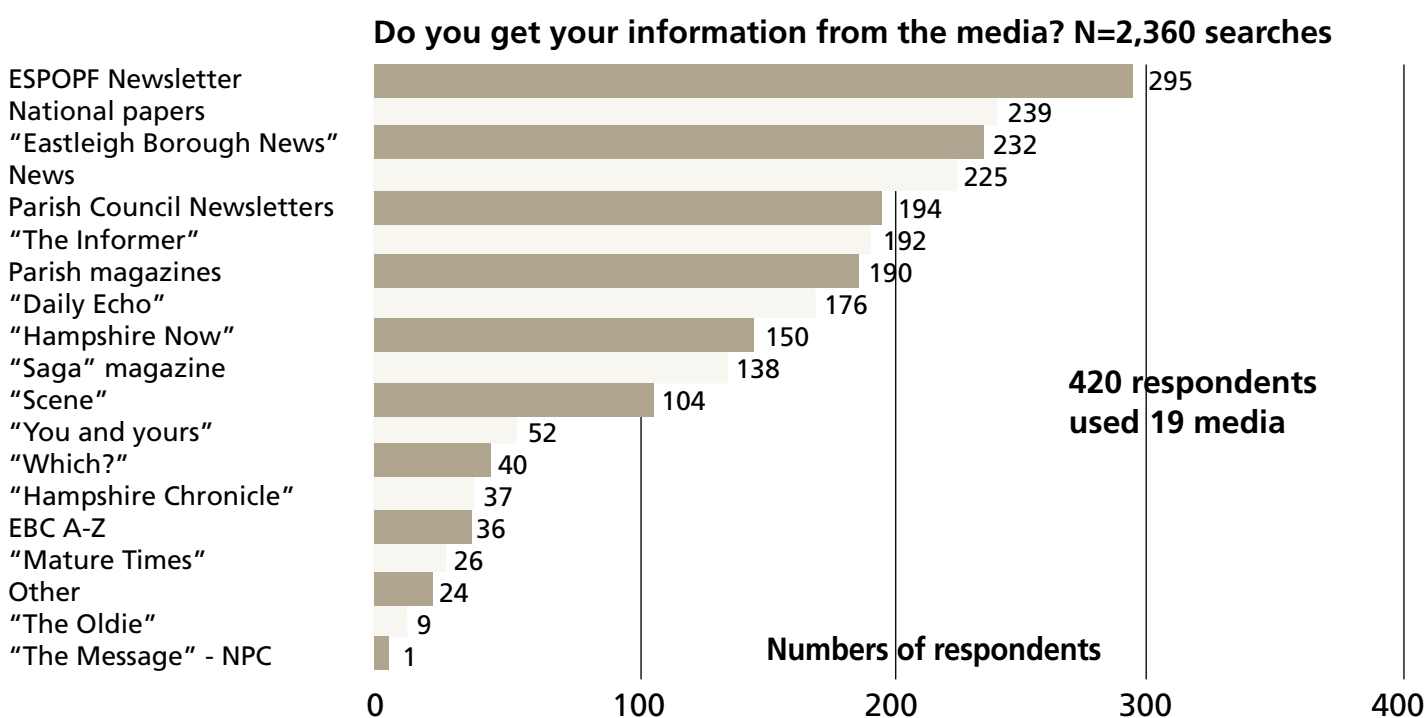
Numbers of respondents



3. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

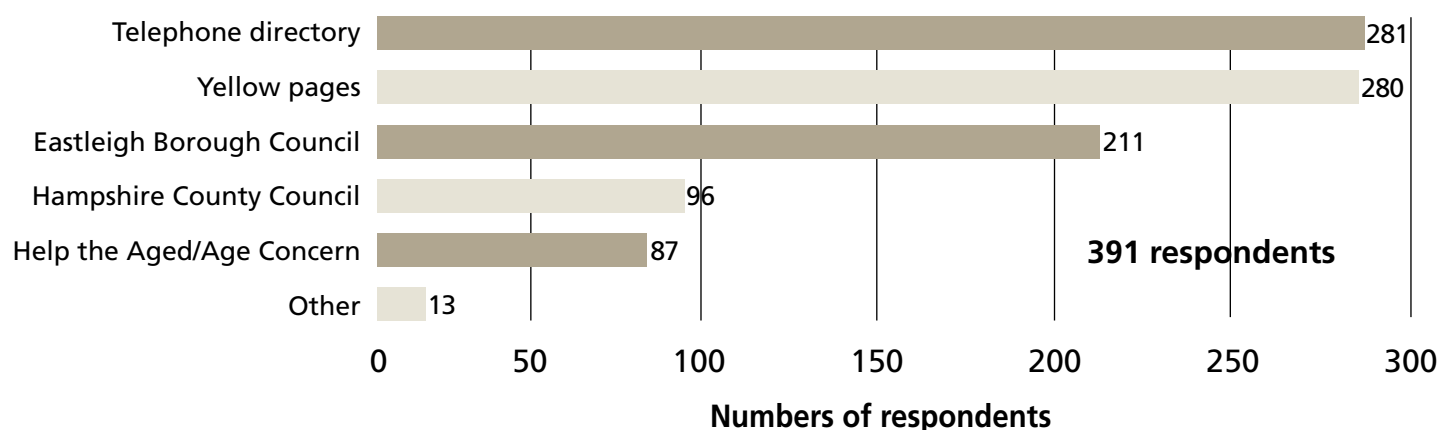


There were 399 replies to this question: 371 respondents obtained information from people; 28 respondents did not; 52 people did not reply. Most people used friends (253), family (233), neighbours (217). Health professionals came next: doctors (241), practice nurse (168), and pharmacist (137). Home Information Support Project (19) came last. Other (7): district nurse, occupational therapist, RAFA, mental health nurse, dog walkers, fire brigade, post office.



There were 420 replies to this question. The chart shows that the ESPOPF newsletter was used by 295 people and "The Message" from the NPC, once. In all, 19 media were used. 31 people did not reply. Other (24): "Now", "Community News", "New Waves", "Easy Living", "Prima", "She", "Cosmopolitan", church magazines (2), "Compass", "Choice" (3), "Yours" (3), "People's Friend", "Readers' Digest" (2), "Southampton News Extra", T.V., Wildern School, W.I., RAFA Branch News.

Do you get your information from leaflets/booklets/directories? N=968 searches

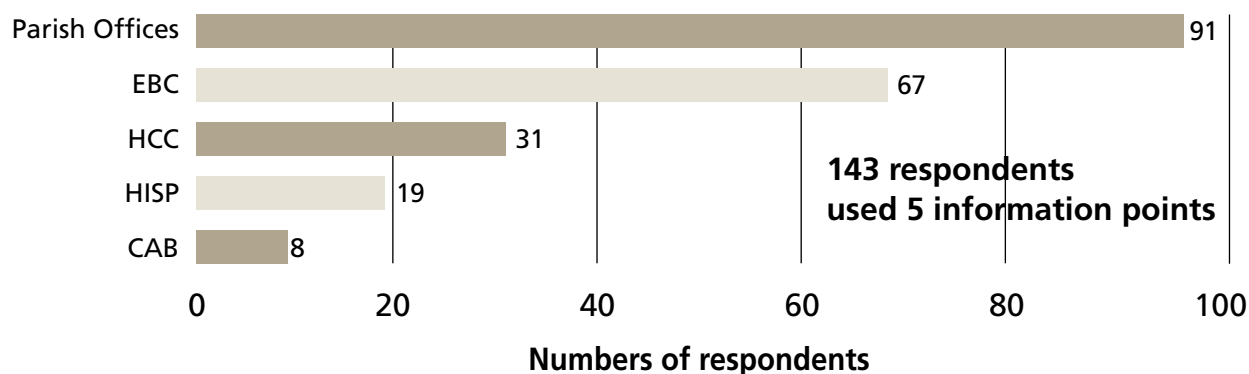


There were 391 replies to this question.

The chart shows that respondents used telephone directories (281), yellow pages (280), EBC (211), HCC (96) and Help the Aged and Age Concern (87). Other (16): professional publications from Teachers' Union, SO30 Directory (5), local mass, West End Directory, adverts, RAFA Membership Services, Focus, Tesco, M&S, John Lewis opening hours and offers, Thompson Directory.

15

Do you get your information from information points? N=421 searches



There were 421 respondents to this question.

Two thirds of respondents (278/421) did not use information points and only one third (143/421) did.

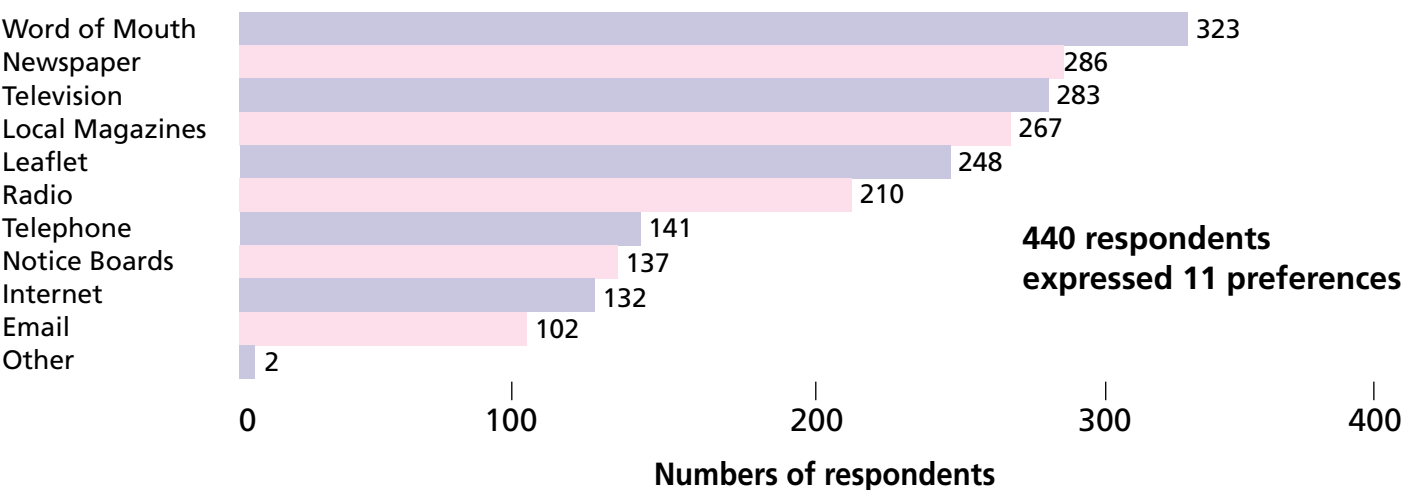
There were 30 people who did not reply.

The chart shows that the 143 respondents used 5 information points: Parish Offices (91), EBC (67), HCC (31), HISP (19) and CAB (8).



4. ACCESSING INFORMATION

How do you like to get information? N=2,131



There were 440 replies to this question. They expressed 2,131 preferences: word of mouth (323) was most popular followed by newspapers (286) and television (283). Information technology was least popular: internet (132) and email (102). Other (2): ESOPF Newsletter, mail.

Face-to-face

'Information obtained face-to-face promotes confidence in its being correct. It also gives the opportunity to re-visit and clarify any points' (74 years)

'A person to person can explain things much better' (75 years)

'I prefer to be informed by a person, rather than listening to a pre-recorded message' (83 years)

'Because information is not easily absorbed the first time it is given, when you are over 70 yrs of age. Confirmation that you have got it right is needed' (80 years)

'To see people face-to-face to speak a problem through' (73 years)

'The face-to-face scenario leaves less chance of misunderstanding' (90 years)

'Questions that may need to be asked and answered' (62 years)

'It is always better to ask someone for information face-to-face' (86 years)

'It is easier to talk to people than to read information or look for it' (77 years)

'Face-to-face explanations are always preferred' (62 years)

How do you get information on the following subjects? N=2,656

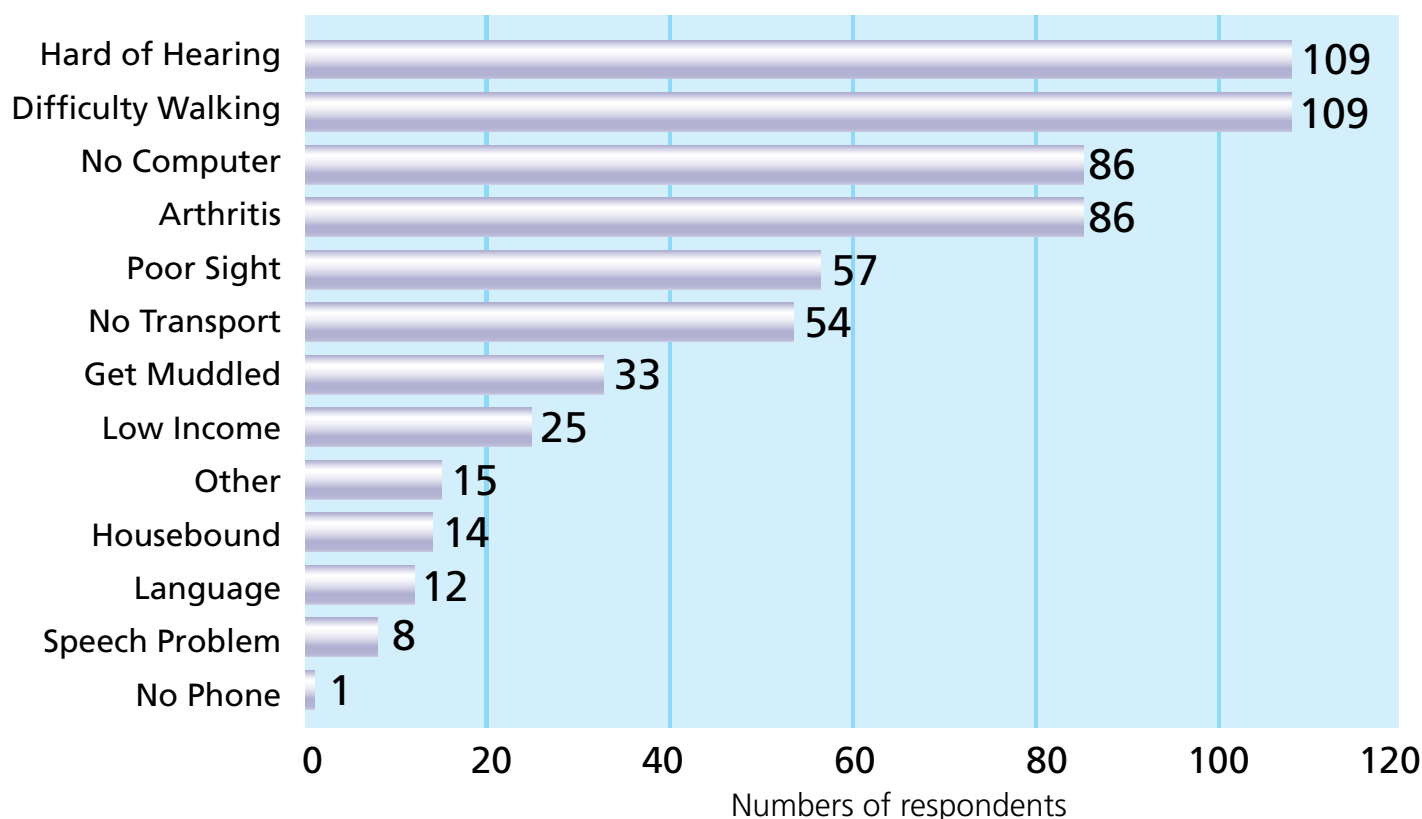
	Health	Transport	Leisure	Housing	Finance	Neighbourhood	Total
Face-to-face	282	48	68	22	113	114	647
Telephone	106	115	41	22	40	35	359
Leaflet	90	122	115	27	49	93	496
Internet	51	78	55	12	57	12	265
Email	15	17	16	5	14	7	74
Media	94	49	76	28	75	60	382
Info points	18	34	28	10	11	38	139
Notice boards	38	54	76	16	4	106	294
Total	694	517	475	142	363	465	2,656

There were 409 replies to this question. This table shows the other 6 dimensions of independence identified by the Audit Commission, and how older people get information about them. For example, 282 people get health information face-to-face, and 15 get it by email; 122 people get transport information by leaflet, and 17 by email; 115 people get leisure information by leaflet, and 28 get it at information points; 28 people get housing information from the media, and 5 by email; 75 people get finance information from the media, and 4 from notice boards; 114 people get neighbourhood information face to face and 7 by email.

The table shows that most people (647/2,656) get their information face-to-face. Emails are the least used (74/2,656).

17

When getting information, do you experience any personal problems and barriers? N=609

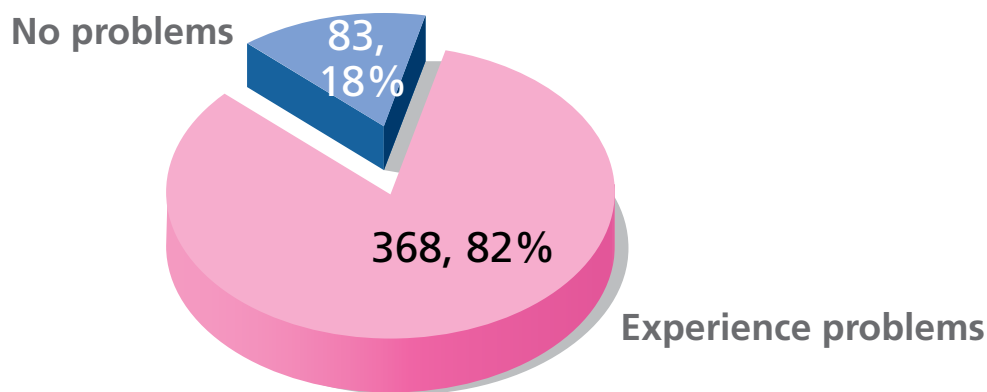


The above graph illustrates 13 different personal problems. There were 350 replies to this question. Equal numbers of respondents (109) were hard of hearing and had difficulty in walking. Equal numbers (86) were arthritic and lacked a computer. Just one respondent had no phone



5. TELEPHONE AS A BARRIER

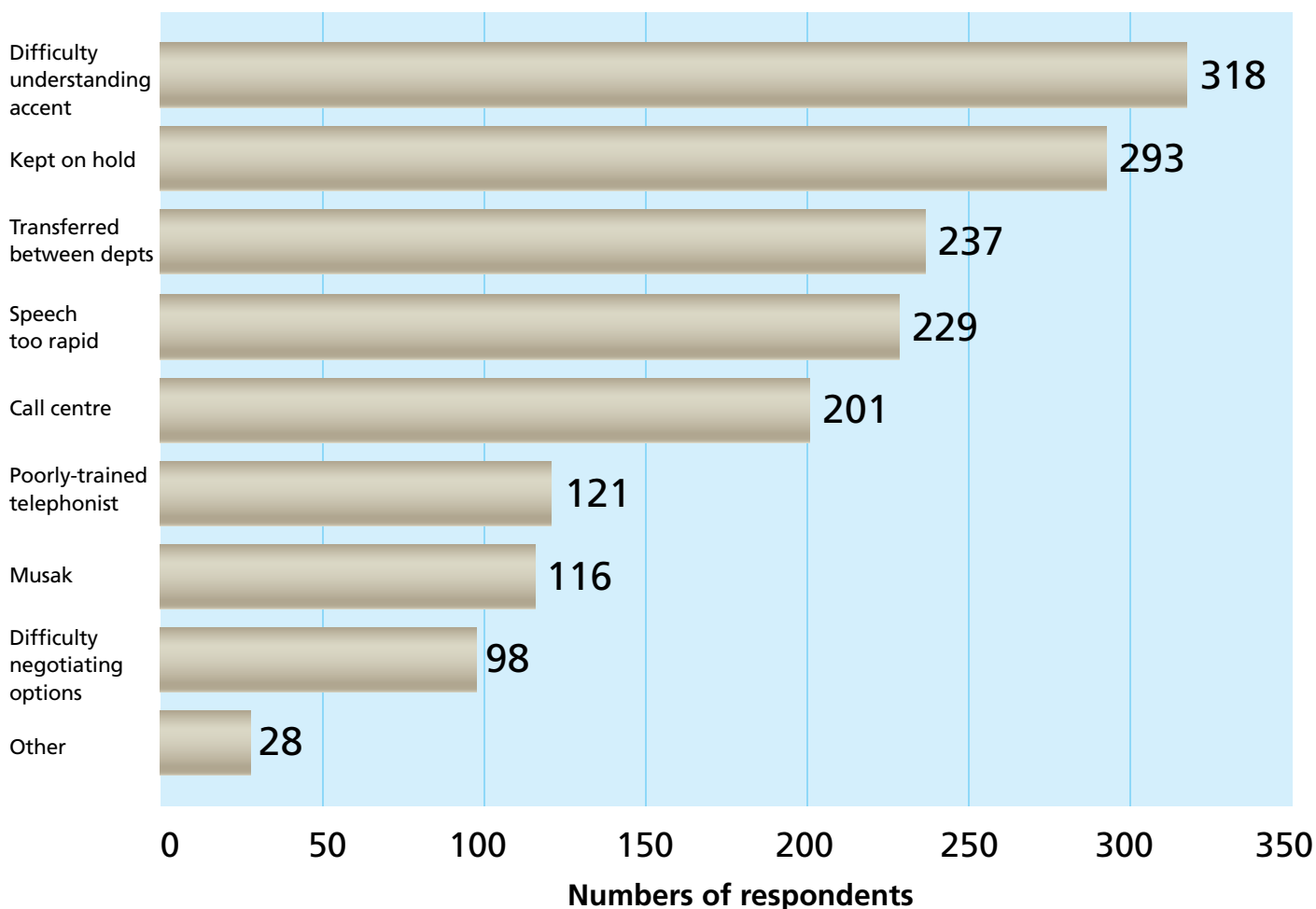
Do you experience problems when using the phone? N=451



The majority of older people 82% (368/451) experience at least one problem when phoning for information and 18% (83/451) experience none or did not answer the question.

18

What problems do you experience? N=1,641 difficulties



The above graph illustrates the problems experienced by 368 older people when using the telephone. They experienced 1,641 problems or 4.5 (1,641/368) each. Foreign accents (318) and being kept on hold (293) were the most commonly reported problems. Other (28):

Telephone problems

'People do not ring back' (83 years)

'Difficulty phoning for hospital appointment which increases telephone bill' (80 years)

'Told you are ninth in the queue for hospital appointments' (76 years)

'Voice mail is an annoyance and unsatisfactory' (85 years)

'Being cut off regularly' (77 years)

'Most respondents are polite and helpful when I state I am an octogenarian' (82 years)

'Lack of knowledge and bureaucracy' (76 years)

'Too many calls diverted abroad' (age unknown)

'Cost of making calls. Nearly all premium rates' (88 years)

'Lots of calls come from telephonists who do not appear to be very well-spoken in the English language' (93 years)

'Getting through to the right person in big organisations, cannot ring direct to them, have to call general number' (75 years)

'Difficulty in getting in touch – gas, electricity, water' (age unknown)

'Wrong information' (63 years)

'Nobody real, on the phone!' (73 years)

'Some telephone centres seem to have a set script and this is reeled off at breakneck speed' (70 years)

'Automessages – not ones wanted' (64 years)

'Hospital switchboards are awful, esp R.S.H.' (68 years)

'Too frustrating being passed from person to person' (73 years)

'Hate music playing and I end up being in a temper' (82 years)

'Some British accents are difficult – foreign call centres worse' (76 years)

'Things like call centres are a waste of time especially if they are in India' (74 years)

'I do not use telephone – hard of hearing' (75 years)

'Press number options often not clearly defined' (77 years)

'Cannot hold telephone' (62 years)

'Older people need one phone number to remember or to affix to phone or nearby– particularly housebound' (82 years)

'It is not always easy to find out which organisation you need to ask, or what their phone number is, even in the telephone directory. You have to know the exact name they are listed under' (78 years)

'Difficulty negotiating options if given too rapidly – trying to remember which number to press' (83 years)

'I don't use the internet and using the phone you have to hang on, and on, and on or are pushed from one dept to dept or press this number then that number etc' (71 years)

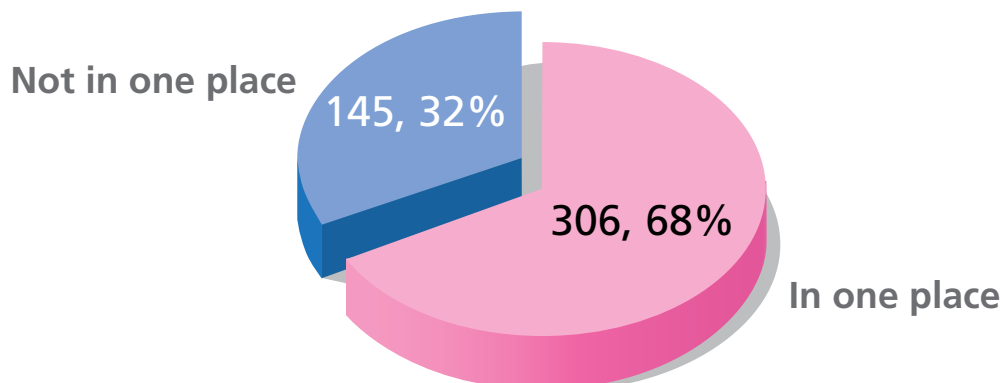
'Pushing buttons' (76 years)

'When options are poorly-defined and one is sent round in circles' (73 years)



6. IMPROVING ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Would you prefer to access all your information in one place? N=451



This chart shows that of 451 respondents, 68% (306/451) would prefer to access all their information in one place, 32% (145/451) would not prefer not to or did not answer the question.

Positive comments

'Information on most subjects is available but is given by many providers and so is not "joined up" or readily/easily accessible by everyone' (75 years)

'Co-ordinate information available' (67 years)

'It is difficult to find 1 or 2 places where one can access all information one might need at some stage of their lives' (81 years)

'It would bring all the advice facilities together – close to the shops' (83 years)

'No joined-up source of information' (69 years)

'In Hedge End I'm not aware of a central point for information' (76 years)

'We are overwhelmed with information. Some selection for specific need might be helpful. A rich source in one place would be useful' (70 years)

'Some people have no transport, no phone and no internet. A "one stop shop" would therefore be the ideal option' (61 years)

'One source of information would be ideal' (84 years)

'In a much-used central building it would provide instant help. At present this is not available' (90 years)

'There is nowhere locally that we can find all the necessary resources to enable us to tap into all the necessary information to live full lives in the country' (66 years)

'If information was in one place in each community, those of us who don't have telephone/internet as a starting point would know' (71 years)

'For centralised general information' (79 years)

'Easy access to all information in one place' (71 years)

Negative comments

'I don't need this personally' (70 years)

'I am not sure that it is needed' (79 years)

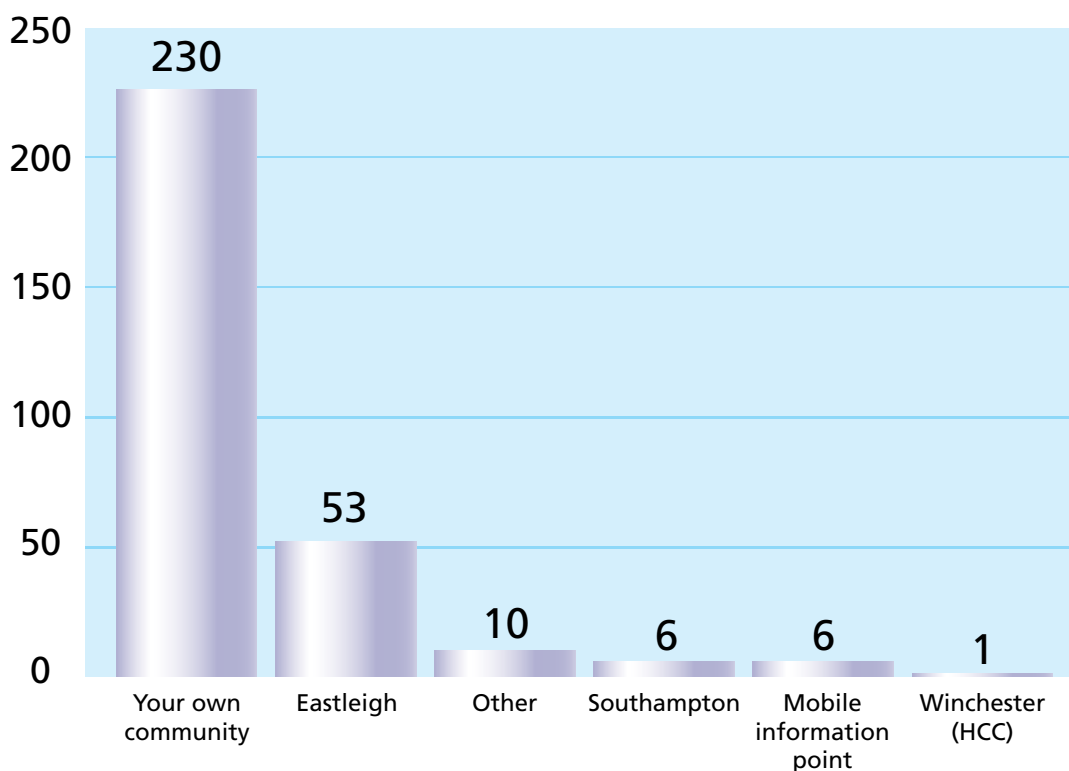
'Desirable but not essential' (86 years)

'A lot of housebound people would never get to know anything if it was all in one place' (70 years)

'I do not think it is possible or sensible to expect all information to be in one place' (72 years)

'It isn't needed. No one centre could be expert on all subjects' (77 years)

Where would you like to access your information? N=306



There were 306 replies to this question. 'Own community' (230/306) led the field. Winchester was the least popular (1/306). Other (10) included ESPOPF, ESPOPF (meetings 2-monthly) where there is always a selection of information available, through the letter box, house visits, home visit.

Your own community

'Not everyone is mobile enough to visit outside the village' (84 years)

'Since closure of Hamble Square Post Office necessitating car drive to Coronation Parade Post Office & difficulties at times parking' (79 years)

'Those mobile need one contact point, within easy walking distance – by scooter/short local bus ride' (82 years)

'For local information. It is necessary for me to visit Winchester at least once a month. There is no bus service into the village (Lower St Helens Road). I have to get a lift into the village and get a bus to Eastleigh and then a connection to Winchester. The whole journey takes approximately 1 hours.

Due to health reasons, I am unable to go by train' (64 years)

'It's in my own community, if possible near enough to walk in, or be able to telephone' (76 years)

'To provide information near to where I live' (89 years)

'To be easily and readily available' (78 years)

'Useful to have a central point when information is required' (83 years)

'So that the elderly can access information they need in a place they regularly visit and which is usually centrally located' (78 years)

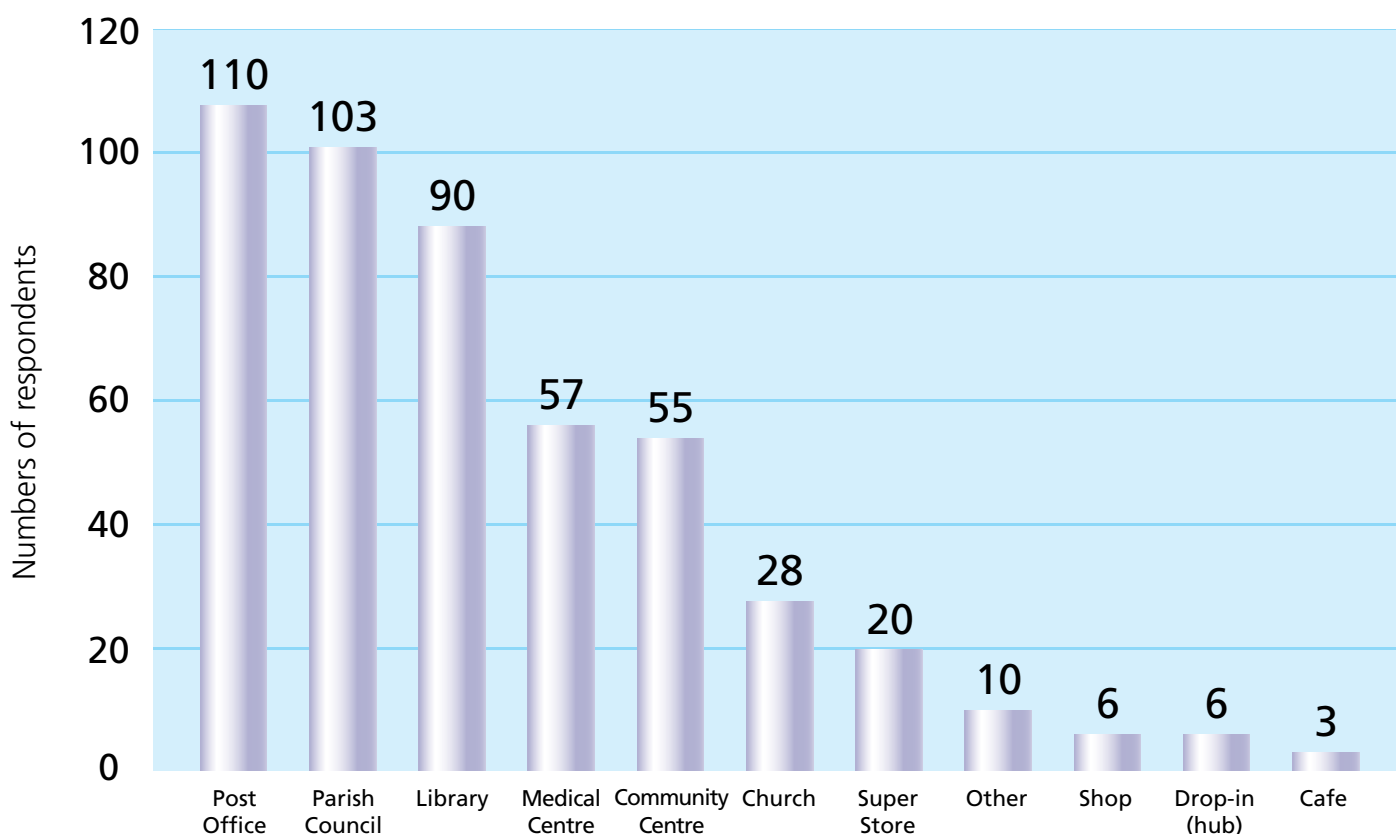
'Local and convenient' (age unknown)

'Because no transport to Eastleigh B.C. or "One Community" direct' (80 years)

'Eastleigh is difficult to get to other than by car! Bus service is not as good as it was' (76 years)

'As one becomes older and availability lessens it is helpful to have sources of information available locally and easier to access' (86 years)

Where would you like a local information point ideally? N=488



In this question, respondents were asked to tick one box. 76 people did not reply. However, 375 people did reply, some ticking more than one box. There were 488 replies to the question: Post Office (110) and Parish Council (103) were preferred to shop (6), drop-in hub (6) and café (3).

Other (10) includes: Chemist, Pudbrook House, at a place of residence with house manager (i.e. Lincoln Court), ESPOPF meetings, not feasible, house visits, home visit.

Parish Council

'To make it easier to obtain any information needed but the parish office would need to be twice as big!'
(72 years)

'Parish Council Office is in a central position with helpful staff but I do not think it is possible or sensible to expect all information to be in one place'
(72 years)

'We should know what is happening in our village. Parish Offices I find are best' (84 years)



Post Office

'We need one point for information and using the Post Office would reach everyone, as we all use the Post Office. Also, this may keep the Post Office open' (72 years)

'Easy access and helps to keep the Post Office in business' (71 years)

'Easy access to all information in one place and no need for extra staffing if in Post Office which is open at convenient hours' (67 years)



Library

'The library in Stubbington – friendly and full of information. A purpose-built library is really required in Hamble' (74 years)

'Most elderly people in this area (West End) use the Library and Post Office on a regular basis' (85 years)

'Libraries provide most of the facilities required for providing a good information point: regular opening hours; accessibility; trained staff; computers; leaflets; links to council services; central location in communities; permanence; equal access' (76 years)

'The majority of people know where the library is, even if they don't use it. It would be much easier if all the information needed was in one place, with an assistant available' (72 years)

23

Citizens Advice Bureau

'CAB can point people in the appropriate direction' (68 years)



Medical Centre

'A medical centre is where a lot of people go for advice' (72 years)

'When you have no transport, and unable to walk any distance, all information in one place, medical centre would enable me to get a taxi as I do now and get my information I need at the same time. Great' (80 years)

'Without, many elderly people such as myself could miss vital things i.e. Flu vaccine etc' (87 years)



7. WHY IS A LOCAL INFORMATION FACILITY NEEDED?

There were 180 replies to this question. 271 did not reply. Many of these answers have been incorporated under previous questions. The rest may be divided into 6 categories.

...start of the trail

'Start of the trail to the correct source of information required' (78 years)

'When information is needed it is difficult to know where to start' (74 years)

'Information is not easily available' (72 years)

'There is so much information available locally that help with finding a starting point would be of real value not only to the elderly but to other members of society' (70 years)

'One problem is information overload so not always possible to see wood for trees' (89 years)

'There are so many options to choose from' (75 years)

'Seniors cannot get information easily, don't know who to contact' (74 years)

'At times we don't know how to obtain info' (86 years)

'Locally I am not aware of all the services available for the elderly or even how to find out if I needed anything. I suppose Social Services would be a starting point' (66 years)

...need for up-to-date information

'To keep abreast of services' (76 years)

'To keep people updated with help available' (77 years)

'Because our circumstances change over a period of time and although information may have been provided some years ago, it was not relevant at the time' (74 years)

'Whatever happens, it needs to be re-jigged every year to keep up to date' (79 years)

'So elderly people have information' (75 years)

'To keep people up to date' (age unknown)

'Many people are unaware of available help & doubt when you give them "unofficial" advice that is correct!' (68 years)

'That I may keep pace with the many matters that affect me' (80 years)

'To take the worry and hassle out of day to day living and because institutions come and go, change their role and often their name' (age unknown)

'It is very easy to miss out on allowances and help as they are not advertised at all well' (75 years)

'Information needs to be accessible and convenient. Also needs to be current' (77 years)

'To let people know what is going on and what is available' (79 years)



...local information

'Because local people can source local information' (70 years)

'Because I do not go to any of the above on such a regular basis to receive info on all that is happening in the area' (72 years)

'To provide local people with local information' (64 years)

'For information on what is going on locally' (71 years)

*'It would be very nice to learn about things that take place in the village before they actually occur'
(age unknown)*

*'We should know what is happening in our village'
(84 years)*

25

...focal point in village - HUB

'To provide a focal point in the village' (74 years)

'A drop-in hub would be an opportunity to swap and compare information with others' (74 years)

'Easily obtainable information from a place most people visit and that is open every weekday and some evenings' (64 years)

'I think it would galvanise some of us lazy folk (like me!) to mix more & gain information socially, for local people to pop in & find out about local information' (73 years)

'It would give information not just to pensioners but to young people, to struggling parents, to estranged couples, in fact to embrace the whole community' (82 years)

'Central information point useful in a village not only to provide a variety of information but also to signpost people who need more in depth help/advice– also useful for keeping a village diary, or selling tickets for events – but it would probably need to be a salaried post' (81 years)

'We need less centralisation and, if we lose any more local facilities in West End, the village will be non-functional' (76 years)

'All local facilities are gradually disappearing, eg banks all gone in West End and less and less clinics being held at Moorgreen so we really need some local benefits' (82 years)

'Would also generate community if most local elderly (and others) regularly use the same centre of info' (82 years)

'Bring information point back to own community' (59 years)

...to improve the quality of life

'To make life easier' (80 years and 77 years)

'To make information more easily available' (80 and 72 years)

'For others who do not have access to the internet' (64 years)

'Many of our residents are eighty years of age and finding difficulty in attending meetings especially in the evenings after dark' (80 years)

'To improve quality of life for the elderly eg leisure facilities etc. To enable elderly to be more self sufficient and not have to bother family. My family are great but I did not have them as an insurance policy for my old age!' (77 years)

'To provide essential information to those who are in need of it' (79 years)

'To answer people's questions' (75 years)

'Because in many areas there is such a lack of communication. We don't get to hear what is available unless we make specific enquiries, and that is often difficult' (73 years)

'Because housebound and need to know what is going on and what is available' (77 years)

'To enable people to get help and lead better and fuller lives' (73 years)

'For getting the support when needed' (92 years)

'The unexpected can happen at any time and therefore you never know when a vital piece of information will be needed' (64 years)

...to save time

'One can waste so much time and energy and money making separate phone calls or writing separate letters to all centres from which one needs information' (74 years)

'We all need information and time can be wasted trying to access it. On occasions access takes so long that the need passes – very frustrating!' (71 years)

'There is plenty of information available but it can be time-consuming & frustrating trying to find it' (66 years)

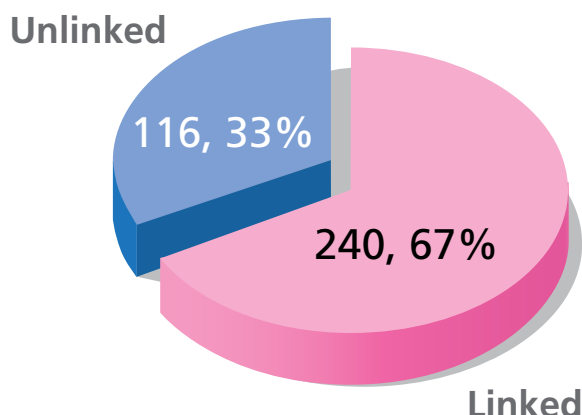
'I prefer to collect all information available and ponder over it before seeking further advice and making a decision' (64 years)

'Information in this borough is very piecemeal; having to contact many different departments is time consuming and unnecessary' (74 years)

'To save wasting time and unnecessary elongated telephone calls' (71 years)



Do you think the local information facility should be linked by email, internet or phone? N=356



Reasons for link by phone and internet

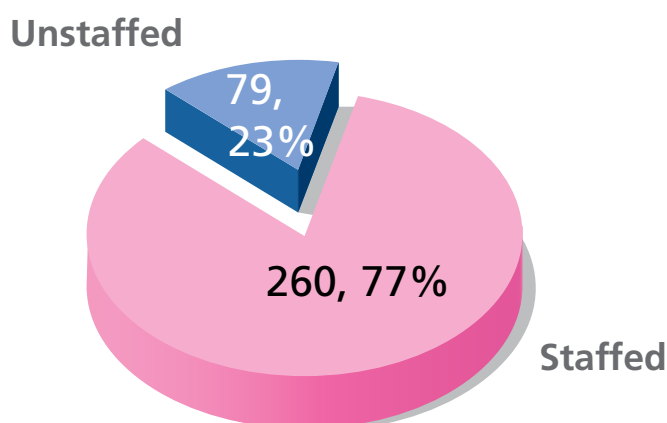
Instant access and saves trying to contact local councils and waiting for returned calls (70 years)

Information needs to be accessible, understandable and accurate. An internet link to a centre, eg. HISP, would depend on staffing and local groups making local information available. Help with supplying and training older people with computers, vital (78 years)

There were 356 respondents to this question. This chart shows that 67% (240/356) thought that the information point should be linked by email, internet or phone and that 33% (116/356) thought that it should not. 95 people did not answer the question.

Do you think the local information facility should be staffed? N=339

There were 339 replies to the question. This chart shows that 77% (260/339) thought the information facility should be staffed and 23% that it should not. 112 people did not answer the question.



Reasons for staffing

'A staffed centre, full or part time where questions could be answered would be a great help especially to the older population' (74 years)

'Yes, I think it should be staffed' (75 years)

'When time is essential, a trained member of staff could find answers to queries – quickly!' (82 years)

'To be pointed in the right direction to access help from reputable individuals without travelling distances and endless frustrating phone calls would be an invaluable service' (68 years)

'Bus services are limited but it is often difficult to find out the times they run especially if only an occasional user. Trying to speak to correct person when wanting information can be very frustrating. It would be ideal for us to have a person to ask' (82 years)

'To provide one centralised source of information or of advice on where to go to get required information and if manned to get assistance with finding the information' (74 years)



What sort of staff?

*'When you are turned 80 years of age it is not very easy to assimilate information first time round'
(83 years)*

'Loop systems and hearing aids are essential and their functions fully understood by all information staff who should be fully able to explain in Queen's English how to obtain required information' (89 years)

'People can get very worried if they cannot get information on important things, are on their own or cannot understand. They need someone to explain where they can get help eg. forms, benefits, transport, Social Services, help in the home & personal care, social activities, churches' (64 years)

'When you are elderly, it is nice to have things explained clearly' (73 years)

'To get the information easily and accurately' (68 years)

'I can manage to access information at the moment but foresee a time when this may not be possible without help. I know some people who already have problems' (68 years)

'It is good to ask or discuss with a friendly face and for many this would form a central point for the community' (64 years)

'People may need help to find answers to their problems or may need help in filling in forms once they have found where to apply for help' (83 years)

'Staff provide further explanation and a human element' (68 years)

'Some information is difficult to find and understand' (79 years)

'I have always found the parish staff are excellent, so are EBC (over the phone). But due to the fact that the Parish Office is not always open, the Post Office staff are always very helpful, but would possibly be too busy to explain everything' (62 years)

'Trained staff would help anybody to understand their options on any subject' (70 years)

'It would probably need to be a salaried post' (81 years)

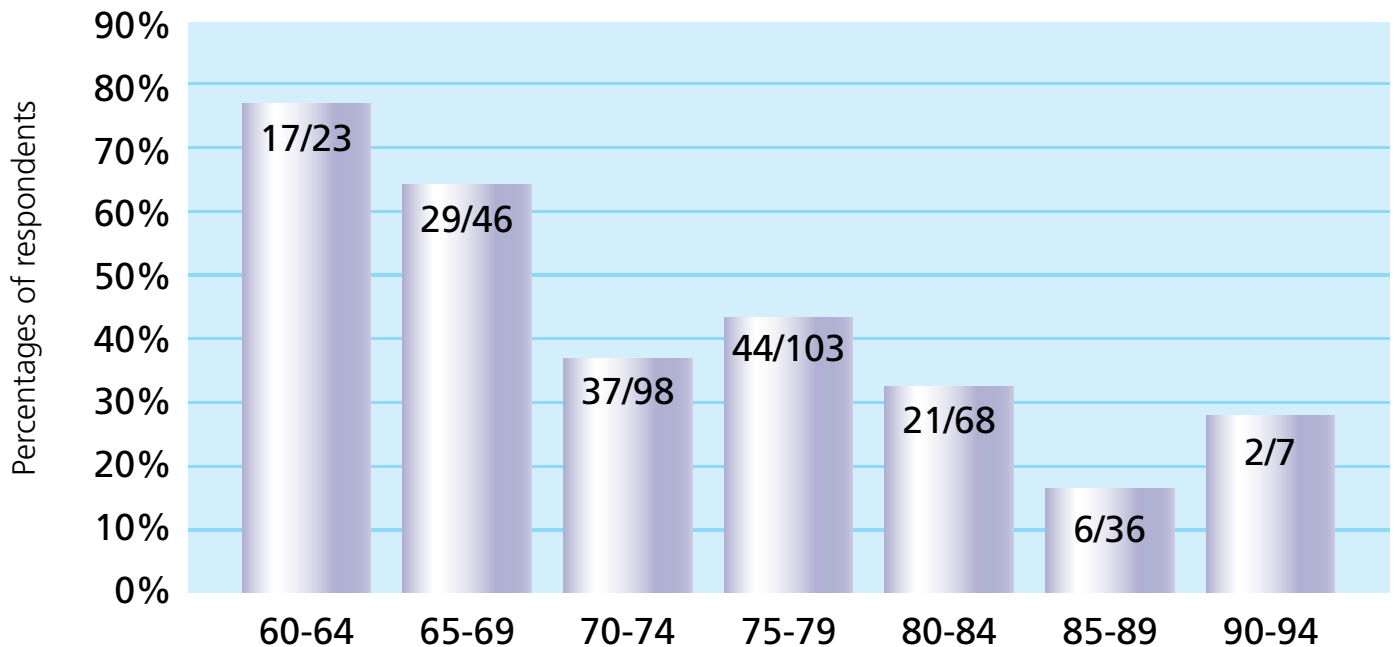
'Any staff would need the sort of training used for CAB volunteers' (77 years)



8. OLDER PEOPLE AND THE INTERNET

The graph on page 2 shows that 40% (168/416) of respondents used the internet and 60% (248/416) did not.

How does age affect internet usage? N =381 respondents



There were 23 people aged 60-64 years and 74% (17/23) used the internet. This dropped to 17% (6/36) for 85-89 year olds. There were only 3 respondents between 55-60 years and between 95-101 years; these numbers were not statistically significant and have been omitted in the chart. Not every respondent who answered the internet usage question also gave both the age and gender. The chart shows how internet usage declines as age increases.

Computers and the internet

'I do not have, neither could I use, a computer' (74 years)

'I have no computer and cannot use one, so cannot email or internet' (90 years)

'Email and internet give you the time to consider answers to question' (71 years)

'Lots of older people do not have internet access' (64 years)

'Not everyone has email etc facilities & we need a central point of contact' (age unknown)

'Many older people are confused by new technologies & require supervision' (61 years)

'Most people of my age (70+) do not have access to the internet so the telephone is our only contact' (75 years)

'Not everyone can use modern technology' (80 years)

'Not everyone is "on line" to gain information which most people/organisations seem to assume' (73 years)

'Help with supplying and training older people with computers, vital' (80 years)

'Not everyone has access to, skill to use, a computer. Sometimes people need help thinking out the best way to find out what they need to know, but don't want to be made to feel silly by exposing their ignorance.

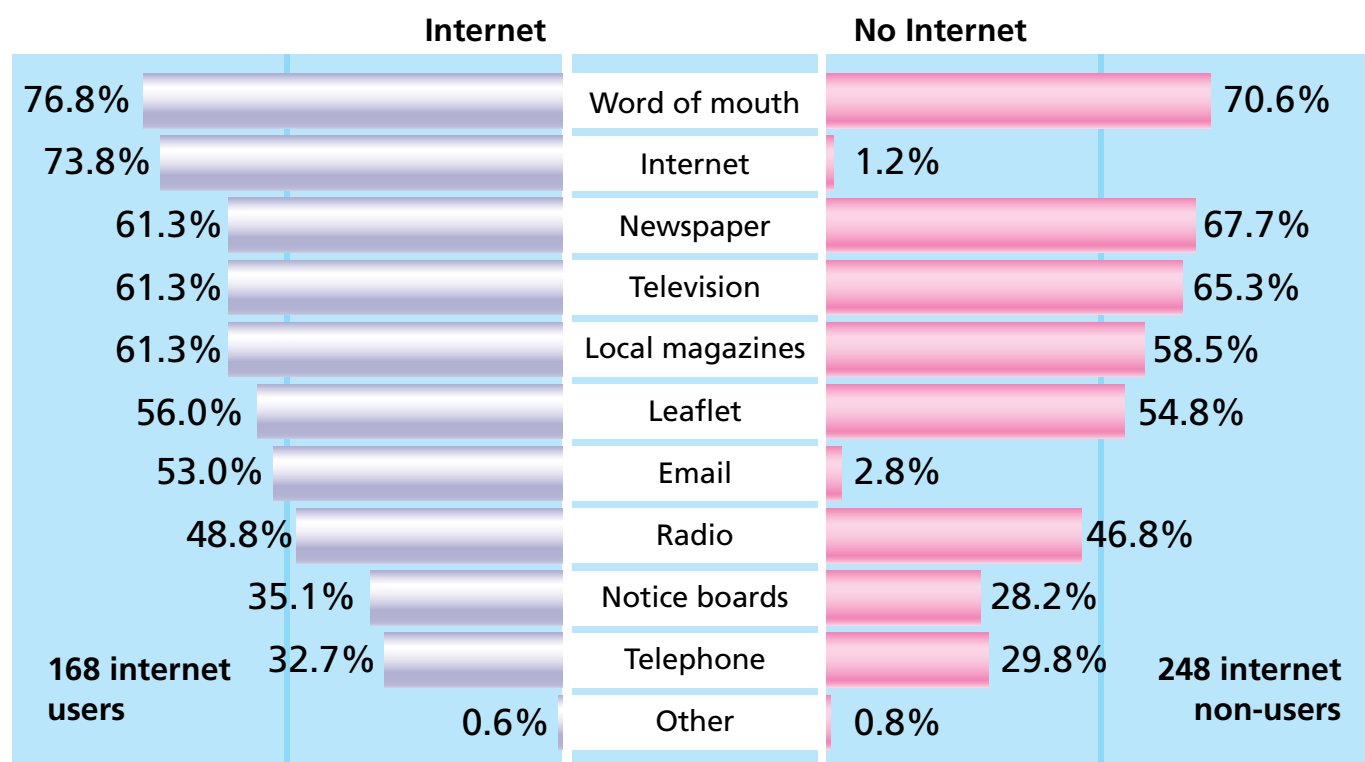
Not everyone is literate, can hear/see/understand' (74 years)

Use of the internet by males and females. N=403

	All	Percentages	Female	Percentages	Male	Percentages
Internet users	164	41% (164/403)	92	37% (92/247)	72	46% (72/156)
Non-users	239	59% (239/403)	155	63% (155/247)	84	54% (84/156)

There were 403 replies to this question. 41% (164/403) used the internet and 59% (239/403) did not. A greater percentage of men, 46% (72/156) used the internet than of women 37% (92/247). 49 people did not answer the question.

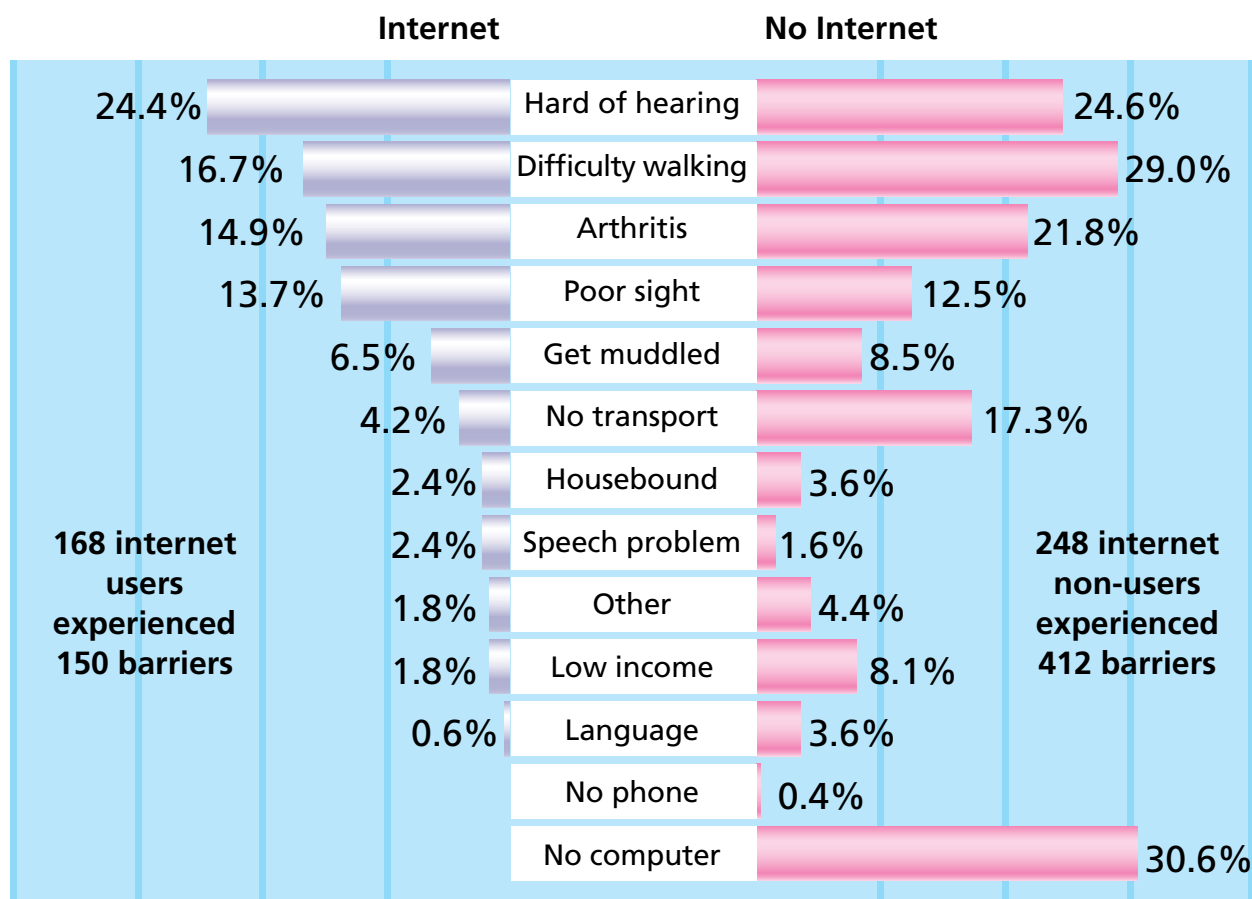
How do you like to get your information? N=2,000



There were 416 replies to this question, 168 internet users and 248 internet non-users. Word of mouth is the first choice for receiving information, 76.8% (129/168) of internet users and 70.6% (175/248) of internet non-users. This was closely followed by the internet 73.8% (89/168) for those on the internet. Emails are used by 53.0% (89/168) of internet users and by only 2.8% (7/248) of non-users.

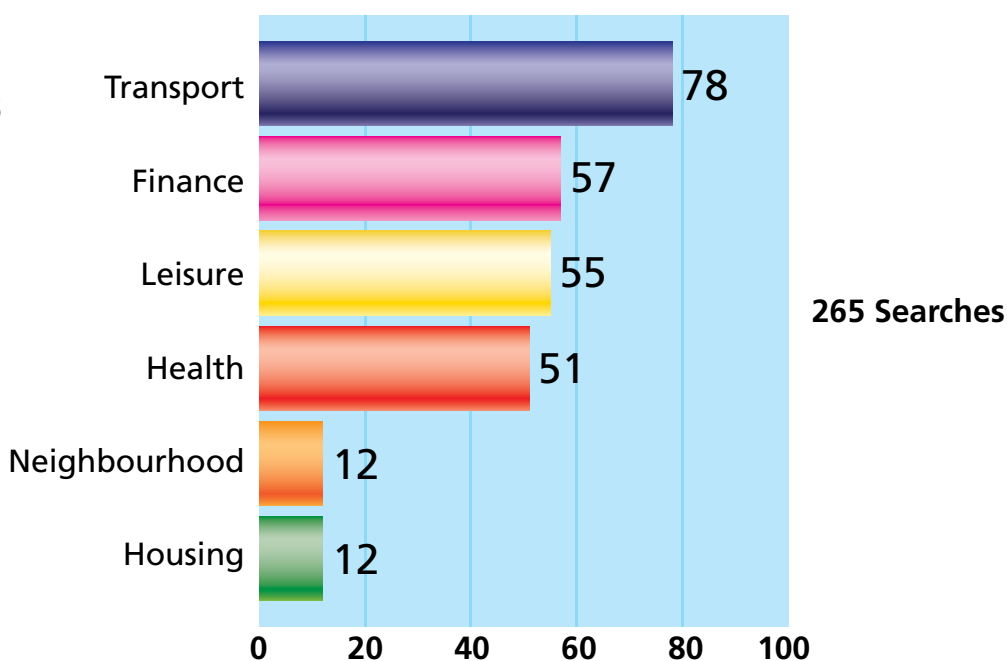
Internet users expressed an average of 5.6 (942/168) preferences each, while internet non-users expressed an average of 4.3 (1,058/248) preferences each. Other methods of getting information followed similar patterns for both groups. This graph seems to show that those using the internet have more information contacts than those without computers.

Barriers experienced by internet users and non-users N=562



There were 168 internet users and 248 internet non-users. Internet users averaged 0.89 (150/168) barriers to getting information, while internet non-users averaged 1.67 (412/248) barriers, nearly twice the number. Lack of a computer was perceived as a barrier by 30.6% (76/248) of those without internet access. This chart suggests that internet non-users experience more barriers of nearly every kind when seeking information, except poor sight (12.5% of non-users and 13.7% of users) and speech problems (1.6% of non-users and 2.4% of users).

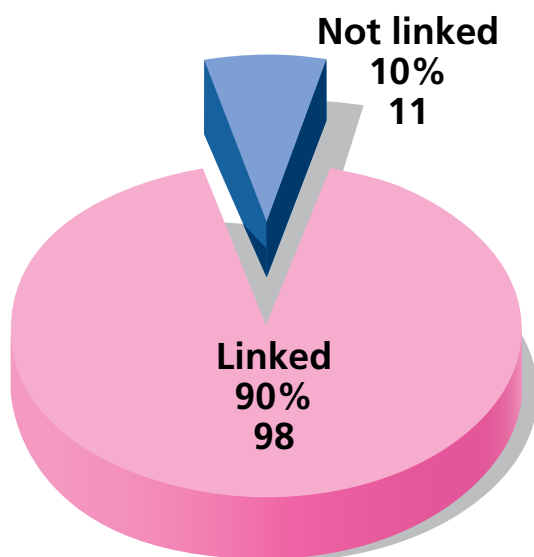
What information do you access on the internet? N=265



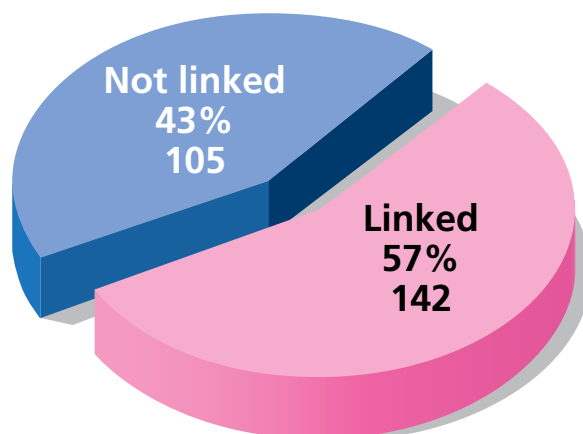
168 Internet users made 265 searches for information on the internet. Transport (78) was most popular. Neighbourhood and Housing were least popular (12).

How internet usage affects preference for linked local information facility (N=356)

Internet users (109)



Internet non-users (247)



There were 356 replies to this question, 109 internet users and 247 non-internet users. 90% (98/109) of internet users favoured linkage to email, phone and internet: 10% (11/109) did not. On the other hand, 57% (142/247) internet non-users favoured linkage and 43% (105/247) did not



FOCUS GROUP: COMPUTER NON-USERS

March 16 2010

1. Sixteen ESPOPF members people attended, none of whom had computers.

2. Three questions were discussed:

- Would you like a computer?
- What would help you to start using a computer?
- What help could ESPOPF give?

3. Eight members said they would like a computer for the following reasons:

- To use email: for keeping in touch with family at home or abroad
- To use the internet: for getting "good buys"
hobbies (eg. genealogy)
so as not to lose out
accessing bills, (eg gas, electricity, bank statements)
keeping up-to-date
- For use as a typewriter: for more professional presentation of letters and documents
and checking spelling

4. Eight members said they did not want a computer for the following reasons:

- Feeling of incompetence and that computing is technically difficult
- Insecurity, being open to fraud
- Expense: initial cost of computer; continuing cost of broadband rental.
"I can't afford £15 a month: £180 a year is out of the question."
- "I don't like being called by my first name by somebody I don't know."
- "My eye-sight is not very good."
- "I have got 'dodgy paws.'"
- "The words and commands are incomprehensible and illogical. You have to press the start button if you want to stop and shut down the computer!"
- "I am frightened of the computer. It can tell you that you have done something illegal."
- "I would need a lot of support from somebody who is understanding. I am embarrassed by repeatedly bothering my son."
- "I might get a lot of SPAM."
- "Technical support is stressful. They use words I don't understand."
- "I wouldn't know where to begin. How do I know what computer to buy? Who is going to set it up for me? Will I know how to start?"
- "Why do I need a computer? I have managed all my life without one, so what are the advantages for me? I have no relatives abroad and I think that telephoning is a more friendly way to keep in touch."

5. Four sorts of help with getting started were identified:

- appropriate classes
- user-friendly technical support
- advice on how to start
- somebody to visit me in my home

6. ESPOPF could help by

- advertising what is available for beginners in the Newsletter
- encourage other members to help

7. Conclusions:

- A number of people said they found the session helpful. They realised that they were not alone in having worries about starting off and that there were people to help.
- Two said they would find out about the UK Online Centre in Pilands Wood.
- Transport to computer classes was a continuing problem.
- One person was encouraged to go to the Silver Surfers' Introductions in Alan Chun House and another to a West End Sheltered Housing location.
- Bursledon and Botley residents have opportunities to use computers.
- The session revealed the many reasons why older people do not have computers and the help they need to get started.



FOCUS GROUP: NETLEY BLIND CLUB

Method:

Seven ESPOPF Researchers attended a regular session of the Netley Blind Club on Wednesday January 27 2010 2-3pm. Fifteen Club members, who were from four of the southern parishes, formed the Focus Group.

After introductions, a researcher explained that the researchers were ESPOPF members researching older people's needs for INFORMATION, how they liked to get it and the problems they experienced. She said that they were especially interested to know about the situation for people with sight impairment. Over 450 ESPOPF members had returned a Questionnaire and she would like to ask Club members the same questions, if they would raise their hands to indicate 'Yes' answers to the questions. The Club members agreed to do this and another Researcher wrote down the responses counted by other researchers on a Questionnaire form. The session finished before the survey was complete.

Findings:

1. The information most needed by group members appears to be for medical and related issues, such as disability adaptations, benefits and pensions, transport for medical appointments, care services. It is supplied in the main by health and social work professionals.
2. Members said that they all like to get information from friends; some name family and neighbours; almost half say, unsurprisingly, that they prefer to get it by word of mouth.
3. Members seem to rely most on information which is delivered to their doors, like the Borough News, the ESPOPF Newsletter and parish council publications. Information sources that are already in the home, such as television and local radio and Yellow Pages and the special Directory Inquiries Service for partially-sighted people are also popular. However, only one of the group uses the internet.
4. The impression given is that people with sight impairments have particular problems in accessing information that is available outside the home, such as information points and notice boards, and their opportunities for doing this are limited, as they are, to a very large extent, dependent on others for assistance in getting out and about.
5. Members who are partially-sighted do not appear to be involved in local activities in their neighbourhoods and, consequently, miss out on physical exercise and social and leisure opportunities, which are important aspects of wellbeing.
6. It would appear that the quality of life of sight-impaired people would be enhanced considerably if they had access to more local information, in a form which meets their needs, about activities that they might enjoy in their neighbourhoods. The Good Neighbour Schemes could meet their community transport needs for getting out and about.
7. With hindsight, one-to-one interviews might have yielded more personal responses and information about barriers and problems, that had not been foreseen by the researchers when they composed the survey questionnaire. As it was, researchers gained some insight into the lives of people, who have to depend so much on others to help them to keep their community contacts, and a deeper appreciation of the assistance provided by carers and volunteers.

“If I look in the telephone book, I can’t see a thing!”

“If I don’t get any worse, I shall not mind because I can see everything in this room, but not in detail, so I have got the periphery vision. With one eye, most of it is blocked out, but with this eye, it is much better. I think my hearing is very good, but sometimes I don’t hear very well on the telephone.

Information is a problem. The difficulties I have are reading and seeing the television; travelling independently; eating out and reading the menu; finding out about everything; using the telephone when I don’t know what the number is without having to look it up; getting through to the library and Dial-a-ride on the telephone; scanning newspapers and magazines that come through the door; reading leaflets; exercise, especially walking; knowing what’s on in the locality; dealing with medication; shopping – to name but a few!

I have got everything organised with the bank so that it is paid on the monthly Direct Debit. They also pay if I have got anything on my card; they pay that monthly, whatever it is, and I don’t have to worry about that. I have a daughter who comes to see me generally about once in two months. I don’t have any financial problem, because I make sure I have always got a surplus in the bank and, if I go to the bank and ask them to give me my statement, I ask them to tell me what I’ve got and they always do.

I listen to the radio. I just know where everything is, and the tapes and the CDs, so that is marvellous. The radio/player is designed for partially-sighted. Because it is yellow, you can see all the yellow against the black. What I do have is the ‘Talking Echo’ which is very good. I mean, it tells you some things, but it doesn’t tell you everything.

I belong to so many things, because I can then get information and I am the person who goes out to get the information in order to pass it on to others. Before U3A, I was just deprived of the theatre, unless somebody took me for some special treat. I wouldn’t be able to go to the theatre if I didn’t have transport and didn’t know about it and I do like the theatre.

I have a computer, but I haven’t got as far as accessing the internet. I know there are U3A Minutes there, but I am not sure how to get hold of them. I have only got as far as scanning and ‘reading’, I mean ‘listening’, and sending emails and receiving so much, though not completely. If there are any attachments, I don’t know how to get them. You see, my grandson is my mentor and he lives at Portsmouth, so I am hoping he will come this weekend and he’ll give me another lesson. It is very difficult to hear him on the telephone, as I can’t bear music in the background. I have a reader on the computer, but I need to more instruction in how to use it.

The worst problem is getting anywhere. When I had the car, of course, I could just go anywhere. When we had travel tokens, I could use them for taxis to go to the hairdresser and the station, though you can’t get help at Hedge End on the train because it’s not a manned station. Dial-a-Ride is good in theory. People sing its praises and I think it is very good, but you try to access it! I’ve given up. You have got to ask where you want to go three days before you want to go, so you must get in on the first day. It’s the third day you are after, actually. So, you ring them up and you don’t get through and you don’t get through and you don’t get through and it goes on and on. You eventually get through, but they can’t take you on that day at that time because they are full.

So you think to yourself, 'It's a waste of time, I can't wait for three days. I'll have to get a taxi or do something else.' The only thing that I find good about Dial-a-Ride is that you have six free bookings in advance and I use my six bookings in advance. I can ring them up at any time. I don't have to get in early on the day, and I can ring them at any time of the day and say, "I want it for a week or two weeks in advance". Then it is always all right. So that's good, I could do with more bookings, but they have got so many people they can't give any more because they have probably been booked in advance.

I can't manage the telephone. If I look in the telephone book I can't see a thing, but I have my own telephone book. It's very big and my daughter has written the numbers in it. The difficulty is, when you've got a number, you write it out in very large letters and you pick up the telephone and I can't see those numbers. I know there is 3, 3, 3, there and another 3 there and I can see 1, 4 and 7, but I can't see the other numbers, so I know where they are. I can't look at the number and do this at the same time as dialling. I have to pick up a magnifying glass, put that down, pick up the directory and look and see what the number is, remember it and then dial it, but I sometimes forget it or do it incorrectly. That is difficult for me, though I've got some numbers put in up to ten. You can ring 135 and then I have got a little tiny card with a number on it and I have got to tell them what your number is, and that's the same with the library. What I have been doing is put the phone down and call out the number and shout it out. So you can't just pick up the phone and say, "Oh! I'll ring that number".

I use the library, not for information but for getting books. I know you can use them for information, or you always could do, if you wanted to know what a word meant, for instance. I used to do that quite frequently at one time, but you can't get through to the library now. You get through to Winchester and there you've got to give them this number, which is on this little card. You put this down and start shouting. If you could get through to the library direct, it would make such a difference to me, but now you have these call centres."

I do try to help myself, you see. I never sit back and wait for people to help me."

Hedge End member (87)

FOCUS GROUP: FAREHAM & GOSPORT HARD OF HEARING GROUP

Method:

Two researchers met 7 members and 2 carers in Park Gate, Fareham, having failed to find a similar group in Eastleigh, on Friday May 14 2010. It was apparent that group activity would be difficult as the researchers were not skilled in sign language and communicating with hard of hearing people. It was decided that the Information Questionnaires would be circulated to members, who could complete them at their leisure and return them via the Organiser: 5 were returned.

Findings:

1. Information needed most was about transport, advice providers, local activities and finance.
2. Word of mouth is the preferred way of accessing information followed by the internet and local magazines.
3. In every case, except transport, the preferred method of receiving information was face to face.
4. Being hard of hearing was the main barrier.
5. All experienced problems when using the telephone. This section drew the most responses.
6. Friends, family and good neighbours were seen as the best sources of information.
7. More reliance was placed on radio news and parish magazines than other media.
8. Information points were not widely used.
9. All used the internet.
10. Telephone directory was most popular of leaflets/books/directories
11. There was support for the idea of having information in one place, which would be staffed and linked to information providers by internet and phone and situated close to home.

Conclusion:

Data from 5 respondents are not statistically significant, but this small focus group has allowed a glimpse of the views, experience and needs of some hard of hearing people in pursuit of information. (Details are to be found in Appendix). All members of the focus group (5/5) experienced problems with poorly-trained telephonists, compared with 33% (121/368) experienced by the original Questionnaire respondents. Musak posed particular problems for focus group members: 80% (4/5) compared with 32% (115/368) of the original Questionnaire respondents.

“The Audiology people should surely be deaf-aware, but it does make you wonder...”



“We call ourselves the Fareham and Gosport Hard of Hearing Group, to encompass all people with whatever level of deafness they have. We socialise, to bring out those who have become deafened and shut-in and those whose hearing has gradually worsened, so that they find they cannot mix with other people because they feel cut-off and miss most of the conversation.

We communicate, socialise and try to mix signers with lip-readers, people with hearing-aids, and with hearing people, because we found that a number of signers are very excluded, for they find it too difficult to communicate with a hearing person. We are all trying to break down those barriers and to bring us together.

I think the question, ‘What information do deaf people need that other people don’t?’ should really be ‘How should deaf/deafened/ hard of hearing people receive information?’, for we all need to receive the same information as hearing people, but the way we receive it is the crucial factor.

I think it is essential that we see the person’s face, because a lot of us lip-read without realising that we are actually lip-reading and it helps the volume of sound that we might be receiving to form into words. Ordinarily, a person wouldn’t necessarily look at someone speaking.

I think having information in writing is essential because you can think about it, study it, memorise it.

There’s a general sharing of information amongst us. Sometimes, we spread the word if we find a new piece of equipment or we’ve heard about something that might help one of us. Some of us will need to know all about how to qualify for a Hearing Dog, but we also need to know if we qualify or will benefit from, say, a cochlear implant or any of the aids, equipment, benefits that are out there to improve our quality of life.

When we knew that we were going to get the Deafplus Bus, we told everybody in the Group; we asked the signers to go back to the deaf clubs and spread the word at the deaf clubs. We got Social Services to spread the word amongst their sensory team, who go out on home visits, because some of the facilities might be suitable for those with sight loss as well as hearing loss.

The Deafplus Bus is a charity based in Farnborough, paid for by Hampshire County Council to visit various locations across the county so many times a year. The Bus is kitted out with door-bells, smoke alarms, pagers, many type of pieces of electrical equipment that some-one with a hearing loss might find useful. It also has loads and loads of literature. It carries the equipment catalogue from the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID), just to give information: the staff do not sell, they do not do hearing tests. They are there just to give information and demonstrate equipment.

Normally, the Bus is located close to a Sensory Team Clinic. A member of the team can be called a Communication and Rehabilitation Officer (CRO). So, if there is a clinic, say at Gosport War Memorial Hospital, then they arrange for the Bus to be there, so that the member of the Sensory Team from Social Services can direct someone who’d come to them to the Bus to find out further information that perhaps the Sensory Team hasn’t got time for. The bus is fitted with lots of batteries, someone can try a telephone, for instance, to see if that is suitable for their range of hearing loss, to see if it works with their hearing-aid. Again, the flashing light can be powered, the smoke alarms, the door-bells etc.

A lot of deaf people don't know anything about the Deafplus Bus. When we first made moves to try and get it, I approached my County Councillor at Fareham Borough Council, Sean Woodward, and he leant on County to pay for it to come. We then had a fair bit of publicity by the 'Evening News' and on Fareham Borough Council's website. I got the posters from the Charity and managed to persuade Fareham Borough Council to put one in each of their public notice boards – that was 45 posters and they were put up for a fortnight before the event. Then the Council said they wouldn't be able to do it every time the Bus came, so I am now taking posters round to our local churches and some community centres. The first time, I did all the libraries and the health centres and doctors' surgeries. I did try to persuade them that they could have the posters sent to them direct by email. Whether they have followed that through, and whether the health centres do put the posters up is another matter. We put a piece in our Church Magazine and asked other churches to promote it. First time, fine, but as the years go by....

Years and years ago, the Bus was located at the Communications Rehabilitation Clinic behind the shopping centre under the multi-storey car park. Nobody found the Bus there, because nobody would go and look for it there - it was a bleak, dark, dismal place under the car park. We chose Fareham Market on a Monday, and I was quite strong about that because we felt it would pick up people from Portchester, Wickham, Titchfield, Stubbington. It would pick up that travel-to-work radius, because people come into Fareham for the Market. It was a reason for coming. Being out in the market, we are hoping that we will get the casual passer-by who will then spread the word.

The first time the Deafplus Bus came, I stayed at the Bus for most of the day – it was bitterly cold – but we did have about 30 people call during the day. It was placed in a slot in the market in West Street. It has to go where a trader hasn't turned up, and we can't have a permanent site because traders pay for specific sites. The first time we were outside Iceland, in West Street, Fareham; the second time it was somewhere else, but I wasn't there. They said they had a good response at the second visit. When I go down next, I shall walk up and down until I find it. We had hoped to be near The Podium, where the carpet man is and he hangs his carpets up around The Podium. That will be the third visit and they only come once a quarter. If we could get them once a month, it would be fantastic with a regular place, at a regular time to be advertised, but I am not sure that County will pay for that. We know now that the Deafplus Bus operates in two other counties, as well as Hampshire, but it took me some years to find that out. (It calls at Blackthorn Medical Centre in Hound.)

When my hearing began to get worse, particularly as I couldn't hear my husband, we decided we ought to go to some lip-reading classes. That was in 2003. I was still working then full-time. We shopped around and found that there were lip-reading classes at a local school close by, but on Friday lunch times only. This was no good for my husband or me, so we went to Eastleigh College of an evening and the courses at that time were free. We had a fantastic teacher, absolutely fantastic. Not only was she teaching us how to lip-read and our partners to speak, as they don't open their mouths, or have moustaches and other things like that, to speak, but she was giving us all tips and the British Sign Language alphabet too.

The way it was set up, we didn't get any other information from the College, but because the tutor was so fantastic, once a term she arranged for something special to happen and each year, she would have somebody from RNID come and talk to the class about the equipment: what was on offer, where they could get it, that if they were registered as hard of hearing that they could get it without VAT, which is another good point. Then she would arrange for some-one to come from Hearing Dogs to come and talk about the Hearing Dogs and all those types of things. So, in a way, she was giving us information that none of us knew about.

She introduced us to the newspaper, 'Hearing Times,' and she also introduced us to a firm which arranges holidays for those who sign or lip-read. We haven't been on any of those, but they seem really quite interesting holidays, as you always have an interpreter and guide with you. These are small groups and consequently they are more expensive holidays. She really opened our eyes to a lot of things that we hadn't a clue about. Then, when I was recognised as definitely needing hearing aids, we continued to go. We went to her classes for three years and it made a tremendous difference to both of us. The classes were for both of us, though my husband says his hearing is normal. It did help him to realise why I could not lip-read him. He has improved, but there are times when he drops back.

I don't know where else these classes are held. A lot of older people didn't want to come out of an evening, so more younger people were there. If it had been in the daytime, some of the older people might have got there. This year, there are very few lip-reading classes still running. I haven't investigated the situation, because I haven't seen the latest Adult Education brochure, but British Sign Language looks to have been dropped by a number of Adult Education Centres in this area. I know I can do British Sign Language Level 1 at the Hampshire Deaf Association in the heart of Southampton. There is a possibility I might be able to go to Porchester. The lady who did it at Havant is now doing it privately. All the big colleges are no longer running the BSL courses because the funding has gone. The same applies to the Lip-Reading courses.

In Hampshire, people are having to pay to go to lip-reading classes now as lip-reading is no longer considered a life-skill, therefore it is no longer free: the funding has been taken away. When we started the lip-reading courses they were free. Now they can be up to £90 for 36 weeks - that is a 2-hour session once a week for 36 weeks. I can understand why the Centres might say that someone with a disability can go free, but their friends, partners, whatever, have to pay so much. We would have done that, but at the time we were going it was free for both of us. Now I have heard that if Highbury College run it this year, it will be free if you are registered disabled, but not free if you are a hearing person.

Travelling is very difficult for people who are hard of hearing, when they need to hear the public announcements. The tannoys vary so much from railway station to station, from accent to accent, which doesn't help and I now have to rely on the digital display, the digital read-out, but, even so, you have to adjust your glasses quite often to make sure and sometimes if the lights are shining on the read-out, it's hard to see. Fortunately, I haven't been very much on my own, so I've usually had some-one with me that I can ask. I don't find approaching people a problem. I am quite happy to pretend I am a silly old bat, if you see what I mean. But I do know of other friends of ours who couldn't ask a stranger. They would find it embarrassing. It is not that they are shy but they are all so... I don't like to use the word vain, but they don't like to admit there is a problem and I usually have a go at them and say, Forty years ago you wouldn't have worn glasses, but now you have no problems whatsoever in wearing spectacles!

To buy a ticket, I might go with it written down to push through, but I usually say, I can't see you and I have been known to say, There is no point in talking to me with your back to me or I cannot read your lips through the back of your head, which is perhaps a little rude but it usually gets rid of my frustration. I have two little blue badges which say Lip-reader or Hard of hearing and our lip-reading tutor gave them to us. I also have the RNID card, which I am supposed to hand over if the loop system in a shop or bank etc is not working, and then I am supposed to make a note and let RNID know which shop, post-offices, whatever, are not using the loop properly.

Tannoy's in super-markets are a problem, with so much background noise. When a call goes out with information, I am wondering if they are saying my car lights are left on. Is the information for the shoppers? Is it for the staff? I often turn to some-one and say, Was that a message for the staff or was it for us shoppers?

We have problems on airlines and we now book aisle seats and I usually stick my head out and try and lip-read if the stewards are doing anything. When the pilot does his announcements, I usually grab a steward and say, 'What did he say, I cannot hear him? Can you get him to turn it up? Is it important?' Invariably, the steward says, 'Oh! It is just telling us how high we are travelling,' or something else and they are quite dismissive of your problem. Some people find they cannot wear their hearing-aids as you take off and as you land, which can also be a problem. If it is important, it would be nice if they had some recorded statements they could put on the little TV screen, for those of us with hearing problems.... Some planes descending are worse than others for the pain and discomfort in my ear.

My doctor knows that she has to look at me, and I make sure that, if a receptionist turns her back on me and walks off, I stand there until they come back and say, I haven't a clue what you said. That is me and not everyone can be that forthright. In the Audiology Department at Q.A., there is a little room and you have to pick up a number and some-one comes to the door and says, 'Brsfjky'. I say very loudly, 'What number did you say? We can't hear you.' The Audiology people should surely be deaf-aware, but it does make you wonder... Deaf-awareness is something that tends to be forgotten. This is a hidden disability, especially if your voice is normal.

Opticians do free hearing tests, but they are pushing private hearing-aids and they do not cover the range of equipment nor the benefits: the fact that, if you are registered as hard of hearing or whatever, you can get reductions on the trains, you can get entrance into stately homes and such-like free. They don't tell people about the signed films or about the captioned films. For some-one who has gradually got deafer and deafer the world has become quieter and quieter and we don't realise what is out there. Going to our lip-reading classes was a tremendous eye-opener because we had such a fantastic tutor, who told us about these things.

There is the Horizon Centre at Cosham, which is a day centre for quite severely handicapped folk of all descriptions. They have one room which contains equipment for loss of sight and loss of hearing, but you have to make an appointment to go there and it really is secret. We found out by accident because I went to a meeting there. There is one in Southampton, but it wasn't open when we drove round there down in amongst that industrial estate. It was shut – they said we had to come back at another time. Empress Road. Railway sidings - not a place I would have chosen to go and certainly not on my own and not a place I would have found very easily. As it is limited opening, we haven't made the effort to go back there. I wanted to get a new phone and to try them out which is why we went over there. In the end we bought a new one from RNID on the understanding that if it wasn't suitable they would take it back. We discussed my needs and the telephone they recommended is working a treat now.

Much, much more could be done. I wish that there was in each town, in each large village would be fantastic too, some shop, a place where all the information that we have gathered could be readily available and people could drop in. But an information centre must not be dry and boring, because people won't search for information, whereas if it was a shop, with equipment, and a small sections of information displayed in eye-catching ways: what Social Services can do for you; what benefits you can get; VAT relief; this would be a fantastic resource. A cup of tea goes down a treat and volunteers or paid staff could be ready and willing to give advice."

MEMBER INTERVIEWS

“Wasn’t it lucky I could use the internet?”

“I am 76 and a few years ago, I had a knee replacement and the year before, I had a left hip replacement. Well, then I fell over indoors twice, tripped on the step, and since then, that knee has deteriorated: it swells up. I’ve been to see the surgeon and he thinks he might have to do it all again. He can’t see anything untoward there, not out of place, but he said, ‘The only thing is I don’t know if I can do it.’ He said, ‘I’ll replace it and see what happens.’ The knee swells up. I can’t walk very far... My sleep pattern is all to pieces.

Out of the blue, I had a phone call. I thought it was the welfare people, or social services and did I require, I think it was wheelchairs or things like that? I thought it was the people that had brought in the riser for the chair and the toilet riser, before when I had my knee done. It wasn’t them at all, but I didn’t realise that at the time. They said they would send somebody round and they phoned up later on and they told me he would be a chap called Mr Dadd and he would show me his identification.

Sure enough, he turned up the following night or a couple of nights later, I can’t remember what firm it was. He turned up and he’s talking away there and he said, ‘I have to take some information down,’ and he started writing. He wanted to know what illnesses I had had, you know, this, that and the other, several other things and, thinking he was the social officer, I supplied the information to him. Well, I had phoned up a company for a side-door bath, but they start at £3,500 and I told him that a bath with a side-door was too expensive and I had said, ‘Well that’s out of my range, I’m afraid. Forget it.’

‘I’m glad you told me that,’ he said, ‘because I have in the car a particular seat that I bought for my mother.’ He fetched it in from the car and said, ‘This seat fits in the bath. It goes right the way down to nothing and comes back up. You put it up to the level with the... you put it in the bath, press the little button. Up it comes level with the top of the bath and sit on it and then you press the other button and it lowers you right down into the bath again, which is very good. Also, the back goes down like this and you recline in the bath. It takes you down to within this much (indicated 2 inches) off the bottom of the bath, which is quite good actually. The price is £1,295, which is a lot better than £3,500.’

I said, ‘Good, that’s quite good,’ but he said, ‘I’ll tell you what, I’ll phone up my boss and have a word with him and see what we can come up with.’ His boss came on the phone and said he’d knock £200 off the price, which made me sort of smell a rat to start with because why didn’t he come up with that price to start with? He spoke to me and he said, ‘I am authorised to drop £200 off the price, and, if you sign here and now, I can guarantee it. Sign for it now.’

At any rate, I wasn’t going to sign straight away; I wasn’t going to be pushed into that. I said, ‘You’ll have to give me a week or so.’ After I put down the phone, I spoke to the chap that was here and he packed up and went and, as soon as he had gone, I got on to the computer. Within five minutes, I had 10 sheets of information off the internet. I had liked the look of this Bellavita bath seat and I then phoned up the company. I got hold of them at wherever it is, there’s a Welsh address here, I phoned them up, a very nice lady was on the phone and I spoke to her, Carol Sanderson, and she took my order and said that it would be here within two or three days. I asked

her about a swivel seat because there is a seat available that you can sit on and, say you were sitting there, you could get your feet up over and you'd lift your feet up and you could turn yourself round. And she told me that there was one available.

The price came up at, the price was, according to the book, £355, and I don't know how it came but, however, I ended up paying £339, I think it was with VAT on it. Well, £339 - that's hundreds of pounds cheaper than the original price they quoted me. They are taking people for a ride.

People should know about this. Perhaps the ESPOPF Newsletter could let everyone know about the Bellavita good bath seat, but warn them about the people who were trying to fleece me. Wasn't it lucky that I could check it out on the internet?"

Hamble member (76)



“If I had known what was available, I would have done something about it...”

“Well, Fred had his stroke six years ago in October and he was in Victoria House at the Southampton General for 32 weeks, because I had to have certain things done at home in that time before he could actually come home. They really gave him excellent care and did all they could to try and encourage him, you know, physio and all that sort of thing. Of course, I had to have the room converted and I had to have ramps done and that, so that so did take a bit of time, but it was quite intensive treatment he had, you know, to try and get everything done.

It was quite a severe stroke: paralysis down the left side. It affected his vision and it's affected sort of everything on that left side. He has to concentrate and think of what he wants to say. It doesn't come like you and I, you know. He has to think of what he is going to say.

So then he came home and I had an assistant - that is part of the rehab. team they give you when you first come home. I can't remember if it was for a month or six weeks. A lady called every day for about an hour and sometimes we would just talk and sometimes she would go and do some shopping for me and that. It was just a Welcome Package or something, I think they called it. It was welcome really. It was like you break the day, whereas I should probably have been on my own, you know. It was all very strange to me and that.

After the six weeks, that was it. That was it. I mean, if I needed any care assistance and that, it was up to me to sort it out. You are given booklets and that...I didn't think of help. I was just focused on what I had to do. I had been doing it all for six weeks sort of thing, because she didn't do anything to assist with Fred's care. She probably would have done if I'd asked, but after, that's the way it was. They obviously thought I could cope to let him come out of hospital. So, any rate, you jolly on. You see a community nurse once a year and the doctors are on the end of a phone if you need them and you just jolly on.

Of course, as time goes on, I did mention something to somebody at some time about physio. Maybe he should have some physio? And then we did have a physio. They did come in for a few weeks, what they are allocated to, which is fair enough. He did give him some exercises and that, you know, and gave me some idea, one fellow - he did show me how to pull his arm over like that (demonstrates) to twist his shoulder round to get him out of bed at time. Well, that did help at the time but, of course, with this prostrate cancer he is gradually putting on his weight through the treatment. Of course, he's got heavier and heavier and funnily enough, I have got older and older - five years down the line exactly... I had a lady come in from the wheelchair service on Friday actually to weigh him.

The crunch came when one of the engineers, the people that come and service things, knew I was struggling and he noticed something on one of the risers that Fred had and it was broken. I mean it was like metal pieces along a frame, if you can imagine. You lay the riser on the mattress with the bed - the mattress is on this riser like, it's the cushioning, like egg-box type, So, we've never had a problem with it, and what happened is that by pressing a control I could raise him up to assist to get him out of bed. And then I could lower it, you know, it's just like in television. Well, he did notice that I had just put a piece of tape around it or something. I mean you just have to get on with it. You've got to sort the thing, and he said, 'Why don't you ask for a re-assessment?' And I thought about it and I thought, 'Well, I'm going to.' He gave me the number to ring and said, 'Ring these people' and when I rang, they said, 'Oh! You are top priority.' And then things started to move.

Nobody had told me before that I was top priority. Of course, they all say, 'Now, if you want something, you've got to shout.' You know, I could have still been there struggling. I can't believe that what I've got now has made such a difference in this short time. It's only a few weeks, but I feel a different person. I think it was draining me physically and you just don't realise it because you are driven. You know you've got to get on and do it and I cannot believe what I am doing now because my whole body is, well, my mind and that... if you are able to do something you just get on and do it. I have been doing things that have been pushed away in the back of your mind. I even watched a television programme last night. I watched the 'Antiques Road Show', but I could never sort of really settle. I'd look at the paper and ...

If I'd known what was available, I would have done something about it. I would have found out that Fred was top priority. Nobody told me that, no."

Hedge End member (76)

“I came here, not knowing the place at all...”

“I came to Bursledon from Bournemouth three years ago in January. My son had bought this bungalow and I came six months before he moved in, while he was building a floor above. We live separately, but we share the kitchen. I knew absolutely nothing about Bursledon and I came on the ESPOPF Committee and the Bursledon Rights of Way & Amenities Preservation Group Committee, because thought I should at least find out something about it. One thing leads to another and now I am a member of the Local Area Community Safety Action Group as well. I manage to find my way around by just asking people.

When I came here, not knowing the place at all, I went down to the library in Hedge End and the lady in there was absolutely marvellous. She really was so helpful. She gave me all sorts of information. She gave me a plan of Hedge End, a small booklet of plans, which I carry around with me when I go around in the car, and information about buses, but only the number 3. I have since discovered that there is one bus a week going all the way through to Eastleigh and that takes an hour. I think I went on one of the buses as far as Sainsbury and Marks and Spencer's. I do need help to get on the bus. I had no idea of any other buses going from this area into Southampton, but a driver told me there was a 16a. He was very helpful: he gave me a time table and then he also showed me where his route was and it takes me to the top of the road here. Much nearer than Hedge End. So when I need to go into Southampton, I just nip up to the top of Dodwell Lane to catch the hourly bus. I don't go into Southampton very often, I don't like the place at all. It's very busy.

The lane I live in is a rat run from the M27. It does not have a footway and is very dangerous for pedestrians. My little dog is terrified of the traffic and I have to carry her. It was very difficult when my car was out of action recently. I have discovered lovely walks in the two Country Parks in the area, but we have to drive there in the car.

I had no difficulty finding a doctor. I just nipped round to Hedge End and saw the Surgery and also the chemist and optician, just along by the post office, so everything is fairly centralised there and quite useful. Actually, the doctor has been quite helpful and the receptionists know such a lot of things - they really do. I am diabetic and so every couple of months I need prescriptions and things. Everett's, the chemist, collects the prescription and delivers it to me which is very nice.

I find the booklet called 'Scene' very useful, in showing you what goes on. I also found out about 'In Touch', the people who will come to your house to do small jobs at £11 an hour including VAT and I have had them 4 times now. They have two men and they are simply marvellous, Andrew and Simon I think it is, and they work together and put a roof on my shed out here and small jobs like brick building, but they won't do digging...

There is really quite a lot going on here, which you find out by becoming part of it. I go to the ESPOPF meetings; I think they are fun. I went to the library recently to find out if they could give me any help about finding a new yoga teacher as I have been doing it for 50 years. I was told they were doing it at Bursledon Community Centre and joined the class, but the teacher had to give up following an accident to her back. I really would like to join another class, but can't find one.”

Bursledon Member (90)



“It makes such a difference to be able to hear what people are saying.”

“Using the telephone with a hearing loss is not ideal. I do have a telephone and I use it, but I do not like having important conversations. It is so easy to mis-hear a word and then be talking absolute rubbish as a result.

I am not ashamed of wearing a hearing aid, but I find that a number of older people just do not want to accept that their hearing may be suspect. Yet it makes such a difference to be able to hear what people are saying. This interview situation is ideal – one to one. I shall not be going to the W.I. Christmas party this evening as there will be so many voices speaking at the same time and it's best not to go and be grumpy because I cannot hear.

Recently, I was admitted to hospital and a Chinese nurse refused my request for a hearing ear over the bed saying that it was not necessary. When I told the staff nurse of my hearing difficulties, she instructed her colleagues to raise their voices when speaking to me. Then they began to shout so loudly that everyone in the ward heard everything that was said to me. No understanding, confidentiality, dignity or respect there.

I had to find a suitable nursing home or rest home for a lady with Alzheimer's, recently, and all that had to be done by telephone, which added considerably to the difficulties. I didn't know a great deal about them, but had heard of a few places that offer residential care. Yes, Adult Services produces a booklet, which gives good basic information, but no indication of quality. Not all applications are accepted – it depends on the degree of dependence and some facilities, such as *en suite*, cost considerably more. The experience was very challenging and people need more information and help with this.

I also had to set up a power of attorney for this lady. I asked around for information and discovered that you have to use a solicitor for this. Once I was working with the solicitor, they handled all matters to ensure that everything was above board.

As a parish councillor, I was aware of a contentious situation that developed in Botley recently, because a housing association failed to present sufficient information to their tenants about the need to refurbish or redevelop their bungalows. The older people became extremely worried at the prospect of losing their homes, the upheaval and distress. They needed the backing of people who were able to put their case. All this was avoidable, had the housing association consulted sensitively with their tenants, providing them with all the information they needed to allay their fears.”

Botley member (71)

“Well, mother, nobody is going to come and knock on your door and tell you things...”



“I had great difficulty filling in the Questionnaire and I thought some other people would too. I’ve got numb fingers. I had a slight stroke three years ago and that’s the only thing it has left me with. A mobile is no use to me for that reason. You see, if I don’t get the exact angle with my fingers, it doesn’t work. I also have difficulty with the machines up in the super market. They expect you to be able to do the numbers, and petrol stations are the worst place for me. I have given up going to Tesco and now go to Sainsbury’s. The last time I was in Tesco, a queue formed behind me, because I was having so much difficulty doing my fingers on the machine, and I thought, ‘Oh, blow it!’ and I went to Sainsbury and have no trouble there, as it is on a different height feeding in my credit card number. I’ve got a mobile in my drawer and I don’t use it, because I can’t.

I don’t have any difficulty finding information. My daughter says, ‘Well, mother, nobody is going to come and knock on your door and tell you things!’ Actually, I find people quite helpful and anything that I need to know I have had an answer. I use the council offices and there’s a lady at Eastleigh, who sent me a whole sheaf of papers, including the ESPOPF Newsletter, and I have used the public library at Woolston. I used to work in Woolston, so it is all familiar to me. If, in fact, I couldn’t find what I needed, I have a very reliable daughter, who lives in Southampton, a staff nurse at the General, and she’s very good. If I have a question and I cannot get an answer to it, I ask her – second, not first. She has a husband who has had a stroke and she has her hands full. If I can sort it, myself, I try to.

I use the telephone to get information and Nicholas, my grandson, put everything on a number so I can press the number that I want. Other than that there is no problem. If I am put through to a call centre, I put the phone down. I don’t like call centres. I object to speaking to somebody in India when my business is in Southampton. One thing I dislike is being on the telephone and they say, ‘Press 1’ and then, ‘Press 2’ and then you have to press another one and I am just losing interest and I put the phone down. If they put music on, I just put the phone down. I feel that there is someone sitting there at the end of the phone and they are being paid to do a job and the fact is, they are not doing it. I put the phone down so many times, because I just refuse to sit around waiting, and I go without.

I saw that computer classes were advertised in the paper and I rang Age Concern and they told me about the class in Butlocks Heath. I have got my third lesson tomorrow. I don’t know whether I am sticking really. The first time I went, I walked into the class and it was just a mass of bodies with three round each computer. I am not claustrophobic, but I do not like small spaces. I thought I can’t stay here for an hour. And nobody seemed to care whether I was there, so I thought, ‘Blow this!’ and I came back home again.

I didn't go the following week and the following Wednesday, I had this phone call and she said, 'I am the receptionist from the computer class. I understand you came, but didn't stay.' I explained and she said, 'Will you come tomorrow?' And I said, 'Not if the situation is just the same.' She said, 'Well, if I arrange it so that someone different will be with you, will you come?' I said, 'All right,' and I have now have an elderly lady – actually, she is younger than me. She is very nice and very helpful. I went again last week and I am going again tomorrow. I don't know whether it is for me. I don't know whether I can be bothered with all this business. She is very keen on using the Shopping Online service, but I wouldn't use it. I like to go out to the shops. My granddaughter uses her laptop for Facebook, but I wouldn't do that.

I haven't got a computer, myself, but my daughter has one in her loft that she is prepared to let me have if I stick to it. She says to me, 'I am not getting it down until I am absolutely sure you are going to do it. I know you, mother!' You can use computers in libraries, I believe.

Well, I shall keep going until Christmas. Then I could go to the Pilands UK Online Centre. I didn't know about that. That would be nearer and much handier, but, you know, we always coped before without technology. The only reason why I am doing this computer thing is because my grandson said, 'Oh, you can't do that, Granny!' I said, 'I beg your pardon. I'll show you.'

I live alone and always look at the list of things that are on at the Community Centre on the notice board as I go past, but then I forget. I don't have a diary, but I write things on my calendar. There was a notice about starting a Book Club, but I didn't hear any more about it. I don't really know what is going on here. I suppose, if I'm honest, I tend to veer away from a group of older people, like those ones who get off the bus to go shopping at Tesco's. My daughter thinks I ought to go into sheltered housing, but I don't want to be the same as everyone else. She said I should move in the spring, but moving is traumatic.

I don't get a local paper, because I don't know anyone. I read the Parish Council newsletter. In fact, Bursledon has a lot of leaflets that come through the door like the new 'Scene' magazine. I get my news from the television."

Bursledon member (80)





*“The only people that
answer my letters
are the parish council”*

“Well, the thing is that I am 83 next month and not that good at walking these days. Two and a half years ago, my children bought me a scooter. Unfortunately, although I can drive it and the scooter is ideal, the kerbs are so deep that I cannot get up them, and I am really quite frightened to try. I do use the scooter just around here getting up and down people’s drives. I really wanted it to go to Botley, which is a mile and a half away, or down to Hedge End, but I can only get to Woodhouse Lane, where I would have to cross the main road. The kerbs are so high at the top and bottom that I am frightened I will topple over. I have never really tried it because of that, and all the money the children paid out for the scooter has been wasted. So that was my question, ‘Why can’t we have the pavements dropped where the roads cross?’

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The Liberal Democrats send out a leaflet with a thing at the bottom where you can write and I did fill it in two or three times about this question. On one occasion, one or two men called, who wanted to know exactly what I wanted and I said, ‘Well, it is simple. I just want the kerbs dropped, just like people do when they have the drives, so that I can use my scooter.’ They said, ‘Oh yes, well, yes, we’ll have a look and let you know,’ but I never got anything back.

I don’t know if they were from the Council, but I think they were Liberal Democrats, because they were the only people who were asking you to write to them. The only people that answer my letters are the parish council. If I write to Botley Parish Council, you can bet your bottom dollar, I have return post. They replied that it was nothing to do with them, it was the County Council for the Highways, and they would bring it up at meetings. Well, you never get a reply from the County Council. I have written to them, but I am just ignored.

I wrote to Eastleigh Borough Council about the buses after they put a big notice in a box on the front page of the ‘Borough News’ saying how wonderful the transport was for the people of Eastleigh and surrounding areas. Well, we didn’t have a bus at that time. I had to walk right down to Woodhouse Lane to get a bus ... so I photocopied the notice and sent it to the borough council, county council and the parish council, but still I got nowhere... I don’t know whether my letters had anything to do with it, but now we have got a local bus, the ‘A’ bus, that takes me to Eastleigh. I picked up the bus timetable in the bus. Whether they will take the bus off because so few people use it... That’s the whole problem living out here, but I like it here.

I am not stranded because my friend will take me if she is free, and my neighbours are very good and will collect anything for me. I didn’t want to give up driving, but I had to for two years and then you lose your confidence. I am an independent person. I don’t want to be dependent on other people.

So, to sum up, I am getting older, but can still walk. I can still use buses, though they are inconvenient. The worst thing was having to give up my car. I would like to use my scooter, but it stays in the garage and I can’t use it, because I cannot get the council to provide a dropped kerb, so that I can do my shopping in Botley and visit my friends in Hedge End.”

Boorley Green member (83)

“You feel you are being given the run around. Very often.”

“My husband, G., was born and bred in Hedge End and we have lived at this address together for 28 years. I have lived here for 38 years. There’s no information that comes out when you are retired that, if you need this or that, all these clubs are available or if you want to join. You have no message, even from League of Friends. You don’t get no information at all and I think that is bad. I mean, when you retire, nobody ever informs you whether there is any clubs and things that you can join to broaden your horizon.

We are fortunate in that we are Salvationists, so we go to the Salvation Army Over-60’s Club, but we live in Hedge End and we have not been notified of anything in Hedge End and I would have thought that would have been quite a priority for people that are retired and perhaps want something, not necessarily volunteering, ‘cos neither of us is fit enough for that, but there are no sorts of clubs that you could go to mix with people your own age and that’s about it.

I wouldn’t have thought about going to the Town Council for this information. We probably wouldn’t go to most of the groups for older people. It depends on your interests. You can be selective if you know what is around. You can be selective about what you want to do. We don’t have a lot of time to do things. I am very keen on gardening and grow fuchias and African violets, but when it is raining and there’s nothing on the tele, then you can think, ‘Oh, we could go there...’.

We are very interested in computers. There is still lots of things that both of us are not 100% sure of, so, just somewhere to go where you can find that information. Graham would like to do digital photography. It would be so much easier if you could go onto a website and say, ‘How could you do this?’ Everything you want to find is on the internet, but you can spend hour after hour pouring through, but if you know the website, like ESPOPF’s, then you can follow up and get things from it.

Do the councils have websites? I don’t know what they are. The thing is you pay your rates. They know who the older people are, so they should be sending us this information with the rate demands. I have never seen the ‘Borough News’. What is HISP? We get quite a lot of information from the ESPOPF Newsletter, but we don’t keep ESPOPF Newsletters. Once I have read it, it’s gone. In the bin. None of the information comes through with your rate bill, where you would expect it to come through. It shouldn’t be up to us, you and I, to find out how to contact this person and that person.

When G. went into hospital with one pressure sore, he landed up having 5. The actual care in the hospital was not up to standard, so I had to phone PALS and things did start to improve. Then he eventually came home, after being in hospital for 5 weeks – almost 6 weeks it was. He couldn’t get in the front door, so I had to get the dustbin there. He can use the dust bin to lean on to get in.

When he came home from hospital, that was it! He just arrived. He did not have a social worker attached to him in hospital and we had no care package. We had a letter from the hospital to give to the GP, because he had to have a drain in the kidney. I took it down and showed them. They gave it back and where it is I couldn’t tell you. We had two district nurses come in on one-off visits during the four weeks he has been home.

For a week, I phoned and left messagesWe felt we had been deserted. We were in a situation where we were coping, but needed help with the things we could not do. Who do you go to for

help in this situation? I mean, you leave messages on phones and nobody gets back in touch with you, so what do you do? I mean, something I was after, a while ago. I got through to one person. 'Oh no, it is the wrong one. You need this number.' Got through to them and they told me, 'Oh no, you need this number. You've got to go back to that one.' Then you go back to that one and then they can't do it, but you can. No it's a different department! Three or four different phone calls. Phone calls cost. You feel you are being given the run around. Very often."

Hedge End members (66 and 71)



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“It is easier to go out of the Borough to find these things, because the transport is so much easier into Southampton”

“Well, I went to an ESPOPF Open Meeting and there were loads of people from Eastleigh Borough Council, who were there to offer advice on all sorts of things, from libraries to the Handyman and I was really very interested in that as I am no longer able to go up stepladders and things and I don't feel safe.

The other thing is that I am on a perpetual quest to find something that would be stimulating to me, like courses, but I can't find... it is all sport: swimming or tennis or some boring thing and I am not terribly interested in that.

I have found a reading group in Southampton, which is held in the library and organised by Macmillan, the cancer people, and I just saw it advertised in the loos up there. There isn't really very much round here, not really, you have to go into the City to find anything. It is reasonable here with buses and the station just down the road.

I have got hold of a group, which I found by mistake by asking a woman in the Fountains Café in Southampton. I said, 'Are you part of the reading group?' And she said, 'No, I am part of Pre-Shakespearean Drama,' and I said, 'What on earth is that?' And she said, 'Well, you pay £3 on the door and for that, you get a university doctor of English and it's really having a lecture of degree status for two hours, complete with photocopies and lots else.' That's at the Library in Southampton. But it is quite difficult to find information about things like that, cultural pursuits. But I just wanted to keep my brain going.

I know about the University of the Third Age, but I haven't contacted them because I have got this Pre-Shakespearean Drama going and I have also got a WEA history course starting in the Spring Term, so every Wednesday and Thursday I am going to be tied up.

It is easier to go out of the Borough to find these things because the transport is so much easier into Southampton. You see I only have to walk up to Butlocks Heath to catch a bus and then just have to walk up to the library.

I look at that 'Hampshire Magazine', when it comes, and I look at that 'Scene' magazine – that's very useful, with a lot of useful addresses in it. So yes, because of all this stuff from your Information Day which I keep together now in a special place altogether, so that if there is a query, I can find out.

I haven't thought of going to the Parish Council for information and I pass it quite often. It is quite near the Post Office and the Library. I haven't thought of using any of them for local information. I don't know anything about the Local History Group, but I had thought about investigating it, but I might do that in the summer, because I am going to have quite a lot on my plate in January. Would the parish office be able to tell me about the Local History Group and your Hamble Culture Club? I could go down there and try to find out something. The main thing is to keep my brain alive.

I don't know Eastleigh at all. I have lived here since 1980, but have never gone to Eastleigh, always to Southampton. The bus goes to Southampton or we take the train into Fareham. There's no way I can get to Eastleigh. There used to be a bus, but it has gone. You can't get there directly. You have to go into town (Southampton) and then get another bus to Eastleigh. It's crazy. It's difficult. I have done it to Winchester twice: bus into town and then through all the little villages to Winchester. The only time I went to Eastleigh was to register my husband's death. A friend took me in her car and we got lost. It would have been much easier to have registered the death in Southampton – just catching the bus - but we had to go to Eastleigh.

It would be very good to have a local centre, where older people could get information on anything. I don't like getting information online. I don't like the wretched thing, because you don't get face-to-face contact. I can get a book from Amazon, but, apart from that, I do not use it an awful lot. Google is very useful for facts, but I just like face-to-face contact with people.

When my husband died, Eastleigh were marvellous – I suppose that was Adult Services. I contacted them first for John and I looked them up in the phone book and said, 'Help!' An occupational therapist got in touch and she was absolutely wonderful. A stair lift and all sorts of grab rails and a chair in the shower and they were so good. Once she had come, she got everything organised and the stair lift was in in about a month. Because he was a priority he did not have to wait, because he had a terminal illness – a rushed job. We had no complaints at all. When he died, we had a local funeral director who was very helpful and the Registrar was wonderful.

I had to stop driving because my feet can no longer feel the pedals. Apparently, the feet are all right physically...but my brain tells me they are numb. It is very common in people my age, apparently, so I stopped driving myself and had to sell my lovely car last June. So now I am very dependent on public transport and terrified that the bus passes will be taken away."

Hound member (73)



“I do get quite a lot of information because I ask for it.”

“Where I am living here is only temporary. I pay Council Tax for this; I don’t ever intend to move elsewhere. I’ve had the Council out, but they say that to do some of the things I want is so expensive, like insulation, heating, a bath, steps outside. I got all the correspondence. I have set aside enough, well, what I consider sufficient for my funeral and a few thousand for a solicitor.

It’s easy isn’t it? I’ve been in touch with so many. The parish council and the borough council I get out of the paraphernalia I get sent: I get a monthly (Newsletter) from ESOPF and what’s happened in the parish, the (phone) numbers, I got all the numbers. Monthly Parish (Council Newsletter) they give you all I got all the numbers somewhere.

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Magazines and papers are delivered from the council, from the County Council, I get one. There’s one called the ‘Scene’. I should think I get ‘Eastleigh Borough News’, which I do study. I do get quite a lot of information because I ask for it.

I should think what’s happening throughout our borough I would get that information and I also get information what’s happening along the south coast. I’ve sent away for their plan, many years ago now. I had to pay for it. I don’t know what that was... 30 years ago whatever... thirty odd. The planning and proposal along the south coast. Hampshire along down through to Dover and up to the Thames. I’ve got all that paraphernalia but that’s gone by the board, because the Government has come up with different..... They don’t know what they’re doing, do they?

Medical information I get from my doctor’s surgery down Hamble Lane. My doctor’s the most wonderful doctor that you could ever wish for looking after you. I’m not under any medication. I’m well looked after from that point of view. My health generally, honestly, is good. My eyesight is good.

I’ve got arthritis. I find it very difficult to walk about. I find it extremely tricky now crossing the road. They’re so wide. The Highways department – I’ve been on to them on many occasions over the years about all those trees growing up round there and the drains were squashed up and made unfunctional when they put the motorway through about 30 odd years ago. You understand? It was totally different before that.

There’s that book of mine over there. I’ve got all the phone numbers I’ve dealt with in the past. I just get on with them and, if they don’t know, they pass me on to somebody else. I find they’re very courteous – the borough council and from Winchester, the county council also, I’ve had dealings with them, the parish council quite a number of times.”

Bursledon member (84)

PROVIDERS OF INFORMATION INTERVIEWS

'Scene' Magazine



“‘Scene’ is a free, community magazine that allows local organisations to communicate with the local population. It provides a free-of-charge service to all non-profit making organisations. Advertisers are the people who fund it. ‘Scene’s distribution is about 8,500 homes and businesses. We try to reach as many properties as we can in Bursledon, Hamble and Netley, but we can’t guarantee to reach all. We use a professional distribution company for most of the deliveries and when we request it, they do back-checks which is when they send people out to knock on doors randomly, just to make sure that the distribution is going through. The Magazine has been running for a number of years now and, if people don’t get it, they quite often ring and say, ‘Where is my magazine?’ We get feed-back from a lot of areas.

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We send out requests for news before each magazine goes to the printer’s and we have well over a hundred different groups to be contacted. It is up to them to send the news in. A lot of people do regularly, but some people just don’t seem to want to take advantage of the offer. It is entirely down to people to send their news in and we do our best to publish it. We don’t discriminate between any groups. They send us the news and we do our best to publish it in the magazine, which currently consists of 48 pages.

I have tried over the years to get regular news from the councils, but they don’t bother. I have to go chasing it from their websites. It is hard work. The BHH Area Co-ordinator is very good: he is much more focused on providing information. I get all Hampshire County Council’s press releases and so on, but a lot of their news isn’t relevant to our area.

We don’t have our own editorial in the magazine. We just edit the copy. The reason we do it that way is because we don’t have the manpower to go out and write articles. There are only two of us.

The magazine started in Netley. There was a newsletter that came round and it didn’t have a lot of information in it and we thought we could do a bit better, so we started the magazine. It’s grown from Netley and expanded into Hamble and Bursledon. Previously, I worked for some big international publishing companies in London so we had a bit of a head start and knew what we were doing. The magazine makes a little money and it provides a good service for the community. It’s a nice position to be in. It was always our aim to cover the whole of the Hamble Peninsula which is what we now do.

The magazines are delivered door-to-door, free of charge, through people’s letter-boxes, unless there is a sign that people don’t want to receive free papers. We also leave piles of magazines in various locations like post offices, the library, the council offices, that sort of thing. We deliver to some sheltered housing in Netley. I certainly leave a pile in there, every issue. I am not sure about elsewhere. Sometimes, access is difficult.

We do not target older people specifically, as the magazine is for the whole community, though it seems to me that the older people seem to read it cover to cover – they seem to be more interested in what is going on in their communities and we obviously get a reasonable amount of news from clubs and societies, which tends to be geared towards the older communities. We would be more than happy to target older people, as I think there is a lot of information and news in the magazines which is relevant to them.

We could also target advertisers, who respond to the needs of older people, such as painters and decorators, plumbers, gardeners, window cleaners. That is something that we could do. I haven't specifically done that as yet. It is more of a general range of businesses for advertising. We could take advice on that side of things about what older people are looking for. Actually on the website there is a facility for a directory and all groups can add their details. We keep promoting that within the magazine but, as yet, only a few people are going online and adding to it. There is the facility to create quite a large directory on our website.

We recently increased the size of the magazine, so the print is a bit bigger now. One of the reasons was to make it easier to read. It's a fine balance, when you are producing a magazine; the smaller the typeface the more information you can get in, so... We put our magazine on the internet so it's possible to bring it up on screen and then enlarge it to whatever size you want to read.

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We do get general feed-back, which always seems to be positive. Advertisers are getting responses and we get phone calls from time to time, and feed-back from friends and colleagues, but I have no plans to expand to the other southern parishes. Another magazine started up in Hedge End quite recently called the SO30 Directory and they cover right through from West End to Botley. It doesn't have as much community news as ours and it has more advertising. We try to keep a balance; we never have double pages of adverts alone and I think it is good for the advertisers as well to have the news spread throughout the magazine.

I think a community information point is a good idea. Information should be available locally, and if the villages round here don't have a library, they all have parish council offices, some more accessible than others, and that would seem to me the best way for people to pick up information. In the meantime, we publish as much as we can, but by no means are we getting it all into the magazine. I would be quite happy to provide a section within the magazine in each issue, which could be geared towards the older person. It is something we could do. I haven't put a lot of thought into it yet, but, if it would be useful, then ... "

Taken from a recorded interview with Alan McMurtry

Hampshire Open Sight

"Open Sight supports people with visual impairment to help them adapt and manage an independent life whilst living with sight loss. We provide information on practical day- to-day living, financial matters, social networking, breaking isolation, employment, applicable resources and aids and equipment to assist people living a practical and independent life. Because of Open Sight's experience, we have a 100% success rate in benefits and entitlements applications.

We also give information regarding an individual's sight condition. The organisation also gives advice on sight loss prevention, eye health, education and awareness. Our aim is for communities to become inclusive.

We do not target older people specifically. However, the majority of our service users are of retirement age, mainly because of the ageing process that has caused their visual impairment. We do cater for people of all ages in terms of support and sight loss. We do provide for older people because of the large number of people over 55yrs who have a visual impairment. It would be fair to say that the majority of our work – say 90% - is in association with people of that age. There are specific activities that would be of interest only to older people via our network of social clubs, but we also facilitate holidays and other activities too.

The social clubs connect with the more traditional things older people enjoy, their experience and knowledge, their mobility needs, their financial position, their awareness of how they can live an independent life, especially when they are on their own. Of course, we try wherever possible, to give someone who is elderly a focus on still enjoying their life. We also work with partner organisations to help people to live in their own homes or to be transferred into sheltered housing or rest homes. Care managers like our advice and input because some of the clients they visit are borderline, in respect of some of the aids we can introduce to be able to stay at home. We offer them an information, advice and guidance service. On the other hand, we will do our utmost to assist the person to stay in their own home if that is what they want.

Whilst we cover the whole of Hampshire, Eastleigh and the Southern Parishes are part of our local community and of course we are based in Bishopstoke, in Eastleigh. All the services we provide, such as our benefits advice, social clubs and holidays, are available to every Hampshire resident. We have social clubs in Netley, Eastleigh and nearby Locksheath that ESPOPF members could attend. Lack of volunteer drivers prevents us from providing more clubs and activities that people would like as a social group. In other areas, Club Hampshire and Brendon Care provide a very good service and there is no need to duplicate the work of those agencies. If there is a need and it is practical to do so, we will look at accommodating it.

We constantly monitor all of our services, because we need to know if that service is still an essential part of what we do. For statistical reasons, as a charitable, trustee managed organisation across the county, we have to produce and be aware of the people who require, need or take some, all, or none of our services. In Eastleigh and the Southern Parishes, we monitor through the distribution of our large, informative magazine, "Second Sight". Our database is constantly updated wherever possible. For that we do rely upon the individual informing us of changes in their lifestyle or address or eye condition, though we maintain as much contact with an individual as possible.

We are very keen for people to be aware of the services we offer. We receive referrals from lots of different sources: Adult Services refer people for Open Sight to provide services that they don't, and that gives us an awareness of who and where people are. Similarly, word of mouth is important, and we try, wherever possible, to create an awareness of our services in any community for anyone needing information, advice and guidance regarding their eye health. ESPOPF could advertise us to their members and hopefully, in our next magazine, we can find space to ask if they receive the ESPOPF newsletter. This would give Open Sight service users who live in the ESP area the opportunity of asking for the ESPOPF newsletter to be available in alternative formats.

We have searched our database for postcodes and done searches, which have highlighted areas of the county with low numbers of people with sight impairment. This may indicate that we have to go into that area and raise public awareness through poster campaigns, through GP's or local newspapers. A problem is that our service users have to go to various different points to get their services and we rely on sighted people to pass on information about us. We need to do some work in this area. We do use our volunteer network, currently in excess of 400 people county wide, in asking them to pinpoint areas of need.

We comply with all statutory legislative requirements including CRB and DDA and are a member of Visionary, the national association of local societies for the visually impaired. Staff will need to be aware of the new requirements in the Single Equality Act about the provision of goods & services to older and disabled people.”

Taken from a recorded interview with Terry Smith and colleagues

Home Information Support Project (HISP)

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“HISP is part of One Community, which is the umbrella for organisations in the voluntary sector in Eastleigh Borough, providing services to complement those provided by the statutory sector, increasingly outside the borough.

HISP provides the basis of One Community's Information Service and it is used by staff on behalf of their clients. It promotes One Community services, such as Dial-a-ride, Help in the Home, Care and Respite, Day Care and the Lifeline pendants. HISP is funded by Hampshire Primary Care Trust and One Community.

There are two staff: one full-time and one part-time (22 hours). Volunteers help with the administration at very busy times. The staff are based in Eastleigh town at One Community's offices. A former staff member, who was a pensions specialist, established HISP's reputation for that work, so the present staff are trained and updated by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), in order to offer an alternative service to theirs, helping people with benefit claims and pension queries.

HISP aims to provide an information service to anyone about anything. If they do not have the answer to a question, they will find someone who does. Most of the queries are made by telephone and 60 to 70% of queries lead to home visits to people who are unable to visit the office. There is an ansafone facility, which records an average of 10 enquiries during periods when the office is unstaffed. The One Community website has a facility for emailing enquiries to HISP. Referrals to the service are made by Adult Services, Community Innovations, ESPOPF etc.

HISP advertises its service in many ways: through a Newsletter, 'Silver Clarion' sent to existing clients and distributed at Information Fairs; Council events; Age Concern clubs; visits to community groups; and One Community's Mobile Café for community group organisers. It valued the opportunity the annual EBC Travel Token Issue Roadshows provided to make contact with hard-to-reach older and disabled people in all parts of the Borough; they had to come out, because they needed their travel tokens. Unfortunately, the roadshows have been discontinued. HISP also uses flyers which are distributed to council offices, parish council offices, community centres etc.

HISP is primarily a reactive, older people's service, though it helps younger people in difficulties, for example those with learning difficulties or early stroke victims. Most older people contact the service direct by telephone, but sometimes their children telephone because they want to find out what help is available for their parents or to know about matters such as power of attorney. In addition to general enquiries, older people want to know about pension credit, attendance allowance, disability benefits, pensions, and they want help with filling in forms and making applications.

HISP aims to offer information that is relevant, current and of interest to the individual. People often do not know what information is available and it is important to offer simpler versions than official forms and leaflets and in large print. People also need help to contact official bodies, such as the Fire Service and the Councils and specific services, such as the Handyperson or Trading Standards, as well as the Citizens' Advice Bureau, Age Concern etc. HISP believes that there is a limit to the amount of up-to-date information that can be held and that it is often better to give contact numbers, so that people can get information for themselves directly from the source. HISP used to help people to apply for Blue Badges until the system changed.

The satisfaction of working for HISP is in making a difference to people's lives. Very often, Adult Services refer people who are eligible for benefits and the part-time worker, alone, managed to claim £130,000 extra money for people last year. The following case is an example:

An older person converted a bathroom to a wet room for her husband, who was dying. She paid for the work out of her own money. Later, after her husband had died, her children suggested that she could have claimed VAT for the work and she came to HISP for help, still stressed. The worker researched the matter on the internet, telephoned for applications forms, filled them in and did everything that was needed to get the money back. It was just under £400. The worker enjoyed the detective work, finding out what she did not know and helping the older person with such a difficult problem.

HISP has a stall at ESPOPF's bi-monthly Open Meetings and those visits produce more requests for home visits than are done in the rest of the Borough. Members approach quietly to ask about a specific problem, such as council tax deductions, for example. There are leaflets on the stall, which they can ask about or take away. Members can pass on information to each other. Older people are often coy and reserved about talking about money, but if the worker is upfront and asks questions gently, they will admit to struggling to manage on their pensions and then the worker can help them. The worker describes the following case:

Someone came up at an ESPOPF meeting and I managed to get her a lot of money in disability benefits that she didn't know she could apply for, and I increased her weekly income considerably. I also managed to get her husband a higher rate pension allowance.

Recently, HISP has been working with the Revenue and Benefits Service of Eastleigh Borough Council and the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) to target Over 80's in a Benefit Take-up Drive in villages. Letters were sent suggesting that there were money benefits to be claimed, if the residents would get in touch and ask for a visit. The take-up was very good. First, the DWP telephoned with general enquiries about how people were coping and this was followed up with home visits resulting in successful claims. It is hoped that every village will be covered eventually, though the time-scale is three months for each area.

HISP believes it provides a very good information service, which is obviously needed to reach those people who are not claiming the benefits and services to which they are entitled. It could be improved, but more demand would increase pressure on the service, which might not be met. The service is pre-dominantly re-active and extra publicity has led in the past to HISP sinking beneath the volume of queries. More staff are needed. The workers would like to go out into the community more - to be available - and they believe that it is important to be there. They feel that people do not go to people who sit in offices; that they need to be able to approach someone where they are.

Taken from a recorded interview

First Wessex Housing Association



First Wessex is a provider of social housing and housing-related support, working with our customers to develop communities to be proud of.. For older people, we provide sheltered and extra-care housing as well as accommodation that is designated for older people both in the Southern parishes and within the borough of Eastleigh. Older people are defined as 60+ although we can offer our support services to people over 55 where they have a high need for support.

People who become one of our tenants receive a Tenants' Handbook containing details about their tenancy, the repairs and maintenance service, support services, water and fire safety, local information and phone numbers etc. Follow-up visits are made.

We have learnt from different activities we have been involved in, particularly around how we consulted residents during the Velmore redevelopment and planning activities. We are involving tenants, themselves, at all levels, to get their views. Customer Service training has improved performance

Communication with our tenants is continued throughout their tenancy through our tenant involvement programmes. Our quarterly magazine 'Talking Tenants' and our Older persons reference groups and forums. It contains information about the scope of our work, which includes action on hoarding, drug-related problems, debt problems etc. We also provide community information on notice boards in our schemes, and advertise our services in Community Centres, the local libraries, doctor's surgeries etc.

Those tenants who have chosen to live in one of our older persons housing have the opportunity to choose one of our support services or both of our support services if they wish to do so. Either our Community Support Service costing £8.70 per week or our Alarm & Response service costing £2.56 per week, there is no charge to older people that are in receipt of means tested benefits such as Housing Benefit, Pension Credit or Council Tax benefit.

For those people who choose to live in our sheltered properties the support services come as are part of the sheltered services.

Our Community Support team support just over 330 older people within Eastleigh, these include not only our tenants but people who live in private rented accommodation, other housing associations, our own general needs housing and those who own their own home. Our aim to keep people happy, safe and well in their own homes for as long as they may wish to do so. If they need to downsize, we can advise about alternatives and give all the information, contacts and support they need. If they need disability adaptations, such as a shower, we can refer them to Adult Services. We do not just impart information: we follow it through. Our remit is to give people the information that will help them to attain their desired outcome and support them to live independent lives. A Needs Assessment and Support Plan are done with our tenant/client which helps our client and their support advisor understand what their need may be, through this it can be discussed when and how often their support advisor will visit, giving information to isolated people to help them to take their first step back into the community; to learn, to join clubs, to get involved in local government, exercise classes, to achieve goals, swimming – whatever they want to do. We tell them what is available and support them to do what they choose and even arrange transport for them if they need it. Our support team work closely with other agencies such as Opal, Adult Services, Eastleigh Innovations team, local hospitals, the Voluntary Sector and other health care providers. As well as our support team referring to them, they can also refer people to us.

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Those who choose to have our Alarm & Response service, will receive a Lifeline and pendant, which they can use in an emergency to call for help, which is picked up by our call centre who will then pass on any messages or ask for a team member to attend. This response service is available 24hrs a day, every day of the year.

We should like to develop hubs in our schemes to bring people from the community into our properties to meet our tenants and use the community rooms and other facilities for activities. We could look at introducing computer facilities, for instance. Pudbrook House in Botley has a very good social club, which could be with the consent of our residents opened up to non-residents and Rodbard House in Bursledon also has good facilities. Funding might be able to be accessed to further our aim to build communities and demonstrate our wider concern for older people.

We have ten people working as part of our support team in Eastleigh, they are highly trained, motivated people. Our service is regulated by Hampshire County Council Supporting People, we have to meet a very high standard through what is called a Quality Assessment Framework, we are also regulated as a landlord by the Government to ensure we undertake our obligation appropriately and respond to changing needs of our residents.

Taken from an interview with Sheena Ibbs, Support Manager for Older Persons.

"I work for Corporate Information Services, which is based within Chief Executive's, so I am based in Winchester. We provide 5 Information Centres across the County in Basingstoke, New Milton, Farnborough, Waterlooville and the nearest one to Eastleigh Southern Parishes, Winchester, staffed by Hampshire County Council staff. The first one opened about 15 years ago. They are walk-in centres which people can visit and speak to a member of staff face-to-face. We deal with all enquiries for all departments of the County Council, so we are not service specific. Somebody comes in and asks about highways and/ or children's services, and we answer their questions. We are corporate.

When the Information Centres were first set up, it was realised that it was all fine and dandy, if you lived close to a big library or an Information Centre. However, we have a very wide and diverse county, 85% of which is designated rural, so we looked for an alternative ways to provide the opportunities for people to access information. The original project was called LIPs: Local Information Points. We sought partners who could act as information providers for Hampshire County Council and partner organisations, such as Health or the voluntary sector. The network grew until there were over a hundred customer access points across the County in a wide variety of locations. They are now known as Customers' Access Points, commonly known as CAPS. We have them in our own libraries, some adult and children's services offices and in some parish, town or district councils, so we join up with the other tiers of government and councils of community service, health sites, youth sites, doctors' surgeries and Age Concern sites. Age Concern is a very significant partner.

One sort of CAP is just a leaflet point, where we give a leaflet rack and provide a regular supply of leaflets. The Age Concern Day Centres are leaflet points and the parish council offices in West End, Hedge End, Hound and Hamble are CAPS. We have these CAPS in a wide variety of areas.

A customer survey in 2008 showed that 70% of people live within one mile of the CAPs and 92% found staff knowledgeable and helpful in supplying information about services provided by the County Council and partner organisations.

Over 450 staff and volunteers run the customer access points, but they are not our staff. It is not necessarily our building. A CAP has to have internet access and we run a training calendar of training for staff and volunteers, though most of our partners have internet training and outlook courses for their staff. I run health and safety training courses, equalities training, such as deaf awareness, and a variety of things which we offer to these partners. I hold two meetings a year, network meetings in Winchester, normally for the CAPS staff.

We also run the Blue Badge service from Winchester and there are about 75,000 badges in Hampshire.

Until two years ago, Information Centres were the corporate front line for email and telephone using an 0800 number. However, two years ago, Hampshire changed the way it does business in our front line with our customers, and we opened a large contact centre. It is a call centre and all calls and emails that come in are transferred to Hants Direct, which also deals with all the information sent out at the request of customers."

Taken from a recorded interview with an HCC Information Services Officer

Hampshire County Council Library & Information Service: Summary

Our role is to meet the evolving needs in Hampshire communities for reading, information, learning and enjoyment.

All types of information are provided using a wide range of resources, including books, DVDs, CDs, eBooks, audio books and online reference resources, including newspapers and magazines and free access to the internet.

Our service targets older people specifically by providing

- Social and learning opportunities
- IT taster sessions and accessible IT for visually impaired
- Large print and audio books
- Home Library Service and Library Clubs

Our service provides directly for older people in Eastleigh's southern parishes in the following ways:

- **West End:** Library services available 17.5 hours a week. Visually-impaired (VIP) reading group meets monthly.
- **Botley:** Connect@Botley library services based at All Saints Church and open during regular church opening with computers located upstairs available 7.5 hours a week. Regular coffee/chat session in the library area with a large proportion of older people from local community.
- **Hedge End:** Library services available 39.5 hours a week. Library Club for Home Library Service customers meets once a month. There is also a regular reading group.
- **Bursledon:** Mobile library visits 4 stops twice a month namely Peewit Hill, Hill Place, Old Post Office and Dodwell Lane.
- **Hound:** Library services 15 hours a week at Netley. Mobile library visits Hound Road and Hound Parish Hall twice a month.
- **Hamble:** The largest type of mobile vehicle visits Hamble Social Club for one morning twice a month. The mobile library also stops at Broadway and The Close every other week.

Libraries have a unique role in local communities being accessible to all and able not only to provide information directly, but also to signpost customers to other departments of the County Council, especially Adult Services, or to relevant organisations and groups. We do not monitor use of our services by older people.

Taken from a completed Interview Questionnaire

Hampshire County Council Library & Information Service: Equal Access

"The Hampshire Library and Information Service is the 3rd largest library authority in the country. I serve on the County's Equality and Diversity Group and I am the Equal Access Manager for library information services. There are groups, who can't get to the library physically, like the prisoners up the road in Winchester Prison, housebound people, people who are culturally isolated - like travellers, who feel reluctant to use the facility, and people who are disabled. It is also about access to our resources. Even if they can get into a library, some people might have problems with seeing print, for instance, so we have responsibility for providing large print.

The Prison Library Service is unique in that it is funded by the Home Office, which provides money to Hampshire County Council to supply not just stock, but also the services of a full-time librarian. She works closely with prisoners and, in fact, works alongside prison library orderlies, prisoners who are given the job of library assistants. She has a very good knowledge of what they want and also does an annual questionnaire. There is a list that comes from the Home Office of reference information material which every prison library has to provide.

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We are sitting in what is the leading edge of our service, which is the Discovery Centre, something that Hampshire has pioneered. We have two large Discovery Centres and we'll shortly have three, the third one being Basingstoke. We plan to open more, to provide not just a library, but a library plus. All Discovery Centres will look different in different locations, according to what is available and what is possible. This one has got a vast exhibition gallery upstairs and it has space for Winchester City Council to do exhibitions. It has a fantastic performance hall next door with a whole bank of seating which you can roll out and roll back. It is a very, very flexible space. We are actually sitting in what's called the learning rooms – this can either be one large room, as it is at the moment, or two separate ones and these are in constant use by different organisations. And then to my left, on the other side of the wall, there is a very highly specified I.T. suite,

We provide in all our libraries, free access to the internet and there are 600 terminals all connected to the internet by broadband, passport band connection. Huge numbers of people use our services. We run all sorts of classes including a weekly, what we call 'I.T. for the V.I.P.s', which is a computer class for blind and partially-sighted people. Hampshire is one of the leading authorities in providing that service. We have bought a global licence for a software program called "Super Mega" which is very expensive if you buy it individually. It allows totally blind people to have access to computers. It is a complicated program and we realise there is no point in providing it and saying, "There. Use it," because very few people would be able to start to use it, without help, so we also provide free classes and we have an excellent tutor. We run classes in about four different places: it changes depending on local need. The size of the library dictates the number of computers that are supplied. Botley, for instance, in Eastleigh's southern parishes, is a very small unique library that is staffed by volunteers. It has 4 computers.

The Home Library Service recognises that not everyone can get to a library and volunteers take books and other stock to housebound people. Provision is very patchy and we would like to know of anyone who would like that service. We wanted to develop its information potential, so that we encourage librarians to visit for half an hour and to be alert to any problems that could be referred to other services like Trading Standards, who have a Rapid Response Team.

We have Library Clubs which are the home library service in reverse. Rather than take the library service to older people, we arrange transport to bring them to the library and they have the



opportunity to discover the resources for themselves. If enough people wanted to join a reading group, they could form one. Another use for the Library Club might be to offer computer facilities. Age Concern use library premises in some areas when the library itself is closed. We are open to suggestions about community use and could direct people to make applications. Libraries should be a community resource open to everyone. With books available to everyone at all times.

There is also a mobile Community Link service that visits residential homes.

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In Eastleigh's southern parishes the four libraries operate part-time. In addition to our service at Botley library, we offer V.I.P. groups in Hedge End and West End, where there are libraries. Also in Hedge End, there is a reading group, which has grown out of the VIP group because it has never been closed off to partners and others who enjoy the group. There used to be a group in Netley, which also has a library with a computer and mobile library visits. There are no libraries in Bursledon and Hamble, but they have mobile library visits. The Mobile service does carry information and driver assistants will respond to requests.

I constantly come across people who do not know about the services we provide. There is a very entrenched, old-fashioned idea of librarians and libraries and people seem to cling to that. We want to promote the idea of the library as a public space that can be used by anyone at any time to enjoy being there with families. We provide public toilets now and coffee bars or facilities for making drinks. Libraries can provide information and signpost to other providers. It is unfortunate that people aren't able to contact libraries direct now, but have to go through Hants Direct.

Older People are the majority of our users. They are our mainstay. For them, we are a unique provider of large print books and audio books. We are working very closely with Alex Burn's Older People's Wellbeing Team, so that we understand much better what older people need. We are making links with their joint steering group and network of partners, which includes other organisations who work with older people. It is certainly an approach to adult social care that Hampshire is leading. We find it very difficult to consult with older users and would find it very useful to use ESPOPF for this.

The key things that we have concluded about Information are that too much information is as bad as too little; that it is about timeliness: giving people the information they need when they need it is absolutely crucial."

Taken from a recorded interview with Nick Coe, Equal Access Manager

Hampshire County Council Trading Standards “POP” Team

Our Trading Standards ‘POP’ team aims to Protect Older People from doorstep crime. We target older people with information. We give them advice on preventing doorstep crime and scams. Our Quick Response Team will visit to help and support. We also give general advice on consumer issues, including the safety of electric blankets.

We talk to groups and clubs. We attend information events. We visit victims to help and support. We publicise our ‘Buy with Confidence’ scheme, which lists good traders. We set up ‘No Cold Calling’ zones and issue stickers stating that goods will not be bought or sold at the door.

We provide for older people in the six southern parishes because we cover Hampshire as a whole and visit when requested to do so. The advantages of providing services to older people are that we prevent crime; we try to prevent scams by warning older people about them; we offer support to victims of scams.

We monitor the number of older people using our services and we are aware of the requirements of the Single Equality Act 2010, as it relates to older people.

Taken from a completed Interview Questionnaire

Eastleigh Borough Council: Climate Change

My service provides information about grants for heating and insulation and loans to improve the home and general advice on keeping warm at home, insulation and condensation, renewable energy and heating technologies for the home.

We do target older people: we attend events for older people, we get in touch with older people’s community groups, we put publicity in doctors’ surgeries and we work through One Community and Age Concern. We would very much welcome advice about communicating with older people in the Borough in a positive and effective way.

We do not provide services directly to older people in the southern parishes, but would like to do individual assessments of the energy efficiency in homes and give advice on how to reduce fuel bills and do benefit checks. This would enable older people to save money on fuel bills and remain healthier, both physically and emotionally.

We did engage with Eastleigh Southern Parishes Older People’s Forum in an Information Day, some years ago, where, in addition to having stalls with literature, we arranged a dramatic performance about risks to health and safety in the home.

The reasons why we do not provide more information to older people are lack of time and money, good ideas and channels of communication.

Extracted from a completed Interview Questionnaire

Age Concern Hampshire

Age Concern Hampshire is an independent local charity which started in 1985 and covers the whole county. Services include the free and independent advice line 0800 328 7154, day care centres, foot care clinics, I.T. centres and groups, such as the one in Netley, and outreach services, such as our Basingstoke café. We also provide an information and advice bus which tours the county.

Age Concern Hampshire's freephone information and advice line has been hugely busy since the start of the year with hundreds of calls asking about everything from gardening to residential care and benefits. Over 14,500 calls were taken countywide last year and this year there will be even more.

We work closely with other organisations such as local Age Concerns, Hampshire County Council, the Department of Work and Pensions, and community groups, so that we can signpost people to the appropriate services in their area.

Provided by email

Eastleigh Southern Parishes Older People's Forum (ESPOPF)

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ESPOPF is committed to achieving quality of life for older people to enable them to live happily and independently until the end of their days.

ESPOPF provides information focused on and relevant to older people through its bi-monthly Newsletter and Open Meetings. It also provides a website for the growing number of online members. It caused a thriving branch of the University of the Third Age to come into being a year ago.

The Newsletter contains comment on topical matters, local and national; committee business updates; helpful topical tips about benefits, concessions, services, etc.; a letter page for an exchange of information between members. The information in the Newsletter is gleaned from a wide variety of sources: newspapers; magazines; council minutes; charities; pensioner organisations; 'Mature Times' etc.

Open Meetings consist of workshops, talks and discussions designed to propagate information about services and facilities and to introduce professionals working in the field to their older clients. Themed Information Days with displays and demonstrations are popular with members, but also as a networking opportunity. ESPOPF's baby, the Home Information Support Project (HISP), has a staffed stall at every meeting.

Members live in the six southern parishes and they receive the Newsletter and invitations to Open Meetings individually, by post. They also have the opportunity to participate in ESPOPF's research, which, itself, often informs people of services they know nothing about. Members get involved in campaigns on issues that they, themselves, raise. Four of the six villages have been used as the venue for Open Meetings in order to make it easier for all members to attend. Free transport is offered to meetings.

Members appreciate the Newsletter because, they say, 'It tells us what is going on.' Members say, 'If you join ESPOPF, you know everything you need to know'! Members use the information in many different ways to improve their quality of life. They know they can contact ESPOPF with any query and they will be given the information needed, or referred to someone else.

Lack of finance prevents ESPOPF from extending its services, which are provided entirely by volunteers and financed by grants mainly from charitable organisations. Members know that they can rely on ESPOPF's independence and they trust ESPOPF to provide reliable information. ESPOPF is aware of the requirements of the new Single Equality Act and intends to continue its role as watchdog to ensure that older people know their rights as citizens and are able to exercise them. ESPOPF recognises that the ready provision of information is a key component of an age-friendly society.

Taken from a completed Questionnaire



A Medical Centre

The medical centre orders and updates clinical leaflets on the instructions of many people at the surgery. There is so much information that it is difficult to store and display all of it. There is a huge range of topics for every age, but, even so, there are gaps.

Doctors and nurses often print off relevant information to individual patients during consultations. All other leaflets are sent by various agencies, such as the Primary Care Trust and Eastleigh Borough Council.

There should be an information café/teashop with a public computer in every village, where information could be exchanged at every level, which could include gossip and community information. It should be staffed by someone able to access unusual information by knowing where to find it.

Given that a reason for seeking a doctor's appointment is loneliness, an information café could offer an alternative.

Provided by email

The following information providers did not respond to requests for interviews or interview questionnaires:

HCC Adult Services
First Bus Company
HCC Silver Surfers
Radio Solent

Saxon Weald Housing Association
One Community Carers Centre
Eastleigh Citizens Advice Bureau
Hampshire Now

QUESTIONNAIRE

ESPOPF QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PROVIDERS OF INFORMATION

- 1** State the name of your organisation and describe its role in one sentence.
2 Define **BRIEFLY** the information that your service provides.

- 3** Does your service target older people specifically? Please tick ✓ YES ☐ NO ☐

- 4** If yes, say in what ways:

- 1
2
3
4

- 5** If no, say why you do not target older people.

- 6** Does your service provide directly for older people in Eastleigh's southern parishes? Please tick
West End ☐ Botley ☐ Hedge End ☐

Bursledon ☐ Hound ☐ Hamble ☐

- 7** If yes, say what service you provide and in which parish?

- West End
Botley
Hedge End
Bursledon
Hound
Hamble

8 If no, say why you do not provide a service in particular parishes.

West End

Botley

Hedge End

Bursledon

Hound

Hamble

9 If you do not provide services directly, what services would you like to provide for older people in Eastleigh's southern parishes?

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10 What do you think are or would be the advantages to older people of providing services to them?

11 What stops you from providing for older people in Eastleigh's southern parishes?

12 Do you monitor how many older people use your service? Please tick ✓ YES ☐ NO ☐

13 Are you aware of the new requirements of the Single Equality Act, as they relate to the provision of good and services to older people? Please tick ✓ YES ☐ NO ☐

14 Do you have any further comments to make on this topic?

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire for us.

Please return to: **Diane Andrewes, Orchard Hill, Salterns** Lane, Old Bursledon SO31 8DH

Tel: 023 8040 3311 Or by email diane@espopf.org

CONCLUSIONS

- 1 In this study, 451 ESPOPF members, ranging in age from 56 –101 years, responded to a Questionnaire about their Information needs. 61% of respondents were female.
- 2 424 respondents indicated which of 75 topics they had ever needed information about, for themselves or others. They registered 5,023 searches in total, ranging from *bus timetables*, the most sought after, to *financial abuse*, the least sought after.
- 3 The 75 topics were divided into 10 categories: financial, medical, housing, neighbourhood, voluntary sector, travel, advice providers, council services, local activities, help for carers. Financial information was the category most sought after, with will-making topping the list.
- 4 Most respondents prefer to access information from people they know, *face to face*. The ESPOPF Newsletter is the most-used printed source, followed by Telephone Directory and Yellow Pages.
- 5 The most common personal barriers to access are being hard of hearing and having mobility problems. 82% of respondents report many difficulties using the telephone.
- 6 65% of respondents would prefer, for many reasons, to access all their information in one place, preferably in their own communities. Their ideal would be a staffed information point with internet and telephone connections, acting as a focal point in the village.
- 7 The study shows that 60% of respondents do not use the internet and that they experience twice as many barriers as internet users in accessing information.
- 8 The focus groups and associated interviews demonstrate that the special needs for information of people who are partially-sighted and hard of hearing are often overlooked, causing them to retreat from society and to lose their independence.
- 9 The interviews with ESPOPF members demonstrate situations where information has been needed desperately, but none was forthcoming.
- 10 The interviews with providers of information indicate that the supply of 'information' is big business and that it is widely available from very many different and competing sources. Unfortunately, too few attempts are made to target older people: to understand the barriers they experience and to ensure that they know where to go to get the information they need when they need it.
- 11 The small providers, who target older people and provide a good, responsive service, are unable to expand their services through lack of resources.

DISCUSSION

It is clear from their interviews that most information providers do not target older people, even though the services they provide are used mainly by older people. Instead of engaging in social marketing, where the needs of older users would be researched and services adapted to meet needs, the providers make assumptions about what is required on a one size fits all approach, which ignores diversity and difference and assumes that all older people are the same, even when most of them, for instance, are women.

Providers of information include older people within a general sweep of the population. "We cater for everyone," they say blithely, without considering that different approaches are needed for different age groups, interests and those with special needs.

This lack of awareness of needs is difficult to comprehend, given the enormous budgets and salaries of some information managers, often paid from the public purse. Councils have been criticised recently* for causing local newspapers to close because of their growing tendency to spend their resources on introducing their own free newspapers, whose purpose seems not to provide information, but to seek political advantage by putting their own services in a good light to the exclusion of everything else. There is little opportunity for other voices to comment.

It is hard to avoid the impression that providers are reluctant to extend their information services to the general public, lest the demand created could not be met. Hampshire County Council produces a magazine called "Hampshire Now", with a special edition for older people, but it does not reach everyone. How may those who do not know it exists get on the mailing list? This leads to the unhappy situation where many older people are unaware of their choices, opportunities and rights. How do you know what to ask for, if you do not know what is there?

This, unfortunately, demonstrates the general situation in Hampshire. There are Discovery Centres, Information Centres and libraries with associated activities, but they are not accessible to everyone. The limited mobile library service is meant to reach people where there are no libraries, but it will struggle to reach older people with mobility problems. An attempt was made some years ago to increase access to services by providing Customer Access Points across the county, but in many cases, these are just leaflet racks with a steady supply of HCC leaflets. Library services are being axed and it may be that their usefulness has been undermined by the concentration on the lending of resources rather than on the information service they should be providing to all parts of the county.

However, Hampshire's success in reaching minority groups and attempts to widen access to computers deserve special mention, especially services for people with sight impairment and Silver Surfer opportunities, but, again, this is a service that needs to be developed and advertised across the county, especially to the rural and semi-rural parts, if it is to reach the people who need the service most.

* "The Silent State: Secrets, Surveillance and the Myth of British Democracy"
Heather Brooke Cornerstone 2010

Older people want their information face to face and the timing is crucial. They want it when they need it. Obviously, their medical information needs can be answered by their GPs and pharmacists. However, for general knowledge and to keep control of their lives, they need local information hubs that are staffed and linked to telephones and the internet. This research reveals older people's overwhelming need to be sure of finding someone they trust who can answer their questions and knowing where they can go for help when it is needed.

Many libraries have been reduced to part-time working and the buildings could be used to house information hubs, with each community developing the resource to meet needs and determining staffing and training and input from advice-giving agencies, such as the C.A.B. Peripatetic workers could serve consortia of villages, working from different hubs, each worker with one laptop and telephone number. The Age Concern Advice and Information Bus and the Deafplus bus, could visit the hubs. The hubs would serve as complete information resources and could be developed to facilitate the Personalisation agenda, which seeks to give people more control over the support they receive and how they live their lives. Information, advocacy and advice are crucial in this process.

Eastleigh's One Community provides the Home Information Support Project (HISP) which offers the ideal one-to-one, face-to-face service in the community. Such a service should be expanded and provided in each district by councils of voluntary service. The workers would then be available to service the hubs, as well as continuing to offer services in the home.

The Audit Commission has recognised Information as one of the 7 Dimensions of Independence for older people and, if it is obvious that we all depend on being able to access information, the need for older people to keep abreast is crucial to their wellbeing. Those who are internet users have few problems, but this research has identified that only 40% of older people currently use computers. Those who do not are likely to be the most vulnerable and isolated older people, most in need of information.

There is a school of thought which seems to believe that those older people who cannot be bothered to learn how to use a computer deserve to be ignored. This research clearly outlines the many and various reasons why the computer is not an option for the current older generation. Far more thought is needed to discover how older people may overcome the considerable barrier of non-internet use in an age when the tendency is to relay all information online.

There is great scope for joint working and it is essential that the many different providers of information come together to review their services and to discover a way of working that meets the needs of this growing section of the community, but at a fraction of their present costs. The County Council, with its brief to provide information county-wide, is the obvious organisation to tackle this challenge and convene a gathering of all providers and older people to agree the way forward: to ensure that older people are not treated less favourably than others in receiving information, but rather receive enhanced provision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 That **Hampshire County Council**, as the largest public organisation in Hampshire with an information brief
 - review the priorities of its information services to ensure that the information needs of older people are catered for
 - identify those parts of the county where information services are not accessible to members of the population and do not meet the needs of older people;
 - call together district council representatives, other relevant information providers, older people and other interested parties to plan and deliver a comprehensive Information Service with local hubs, that meets the needs of older people throughout the county;
 - increase opportunities for older people to learn computer skills.
- 2 That **Parish Councils** work with **Hampshire County Council** to investigate, identify and develop suitable venues for information hubs in their communities
- 74 3 That **all providers of information named in this report**
 - review their services in the light of this research into older people's needs and preferences and consider joint working to provide a more comprehensive and targeted service.
 - place more emphasis on attending to the special needs of people with hearing and sight impairment and that Hampshire Colleges, in particular, be mindful of the need to provide free lip-reading classes.
- 4 That **Councils of Community Service in the District of Hampshire and/or Community Action Hampshire** consider the provision of Home Information Support Services to respond to the needs of housebound older people in the districts and that Eastleigh's One Community expand its current HISP service to meet the needs of older people in Eastleigh borough.
- 5 That **businesses, charities, hospitals etc. that expect older people to reach them by telephone and/or internet**, study the findings of this Report and
 - review their training of switchboard operators
 - accept that 60% of older people do not access computers and consider alternatives such as information hubs
 - make special efforts to communicate with "hard to reach" groups
 - conduct systematic evaluation of services to make them more accessible to and acceptable by older people

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DISCLAIMER

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Useful information is about, but not accessible to many people – guidance needed as to where to go for it and when it is available. Too many people losing out through lack of knowledge.' (79 years)

'Without access to information, people lead less interesting lives.' (92 years)

'Because through lack of information, many folk struggle on needlessly.' (76 years)

'When you live alone and have no friends or visitors, how does anyone know when you are dead?' (82 years)

'Life is so complicated.' (73 years)

'I don't know what I want to know, until I go to do it.' (87 years)