

Search Project

# Older Asian women living in the West End



# Older Asian Women living in the West End

**A group of older women of Asian origin came together to talk about what they liked and didn't like about living in the West End of Newcastle.** This was part of a bigger project to find out what older people in the city think makes a neighbourhood "older person friendly".

A group of Asian women took part in a special event in Summer 2006. This combined an outing to Morpeth with consultation discussions about their neighbourhoods. The main themes identified were:

## What is good about your neighbourhood

- Valued local facilities
- Feeling of living as part of a community
- Gardens

## What was bad about the neighbourhood

- Abuse and harassment
- Feeling afraid to go out alone
- Loss of local facilities



During the autumn, four of the women took part in a photographic project, building on the themes identified at the event. Their pictures illustrate what makes their neighbourhoods "older person friendly" for them, and what makes it unfriendly.

# Living in the West End



"I used to live in Durham Street but they are closing everything down - post office, housing office, nursery. It used to be a nice place to live, but it's not now."

"I have lived here in the same street for 25 years. I like living in this area. My family all live near and I have a lot of friends. I do not go out much as there is nothing much to do."



"I like living in the West End. It's quiet when the children are at school, although we have had problems. Last week someone slashed the tyres of all the cars in the street."

"I have lived in the West End of Newcastle for 10 years. I like living here. There are lots of trees around. But I am worried about things closing down."



# What makes our neighbourhoods older person friendly?



"I like living in this area with other Bangladeshi families. My daughters both live near and I see my grandchildren every day."



"This house is at the top of Durham Street. The Bangladeshi community use it for groups and sometimes celebrations."



"I like living in the west end. My family all live near, so I can see them every day."



"The buses are good on Westgate Road, but I think it would be good if the Metro ran from the west end so we could go to the coast and other places."



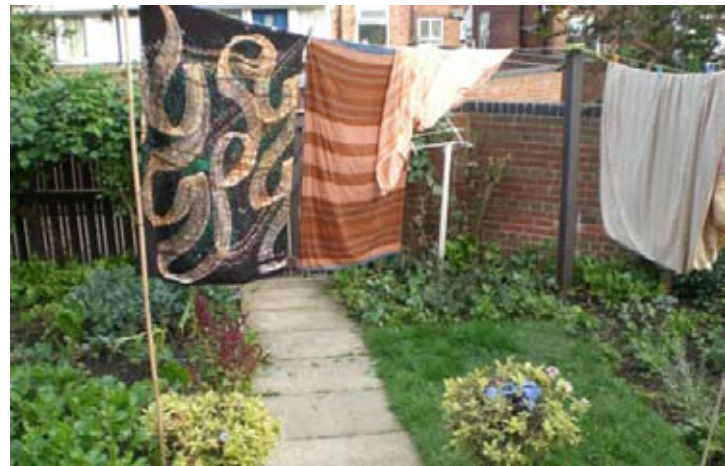
"I love my garden. I wish we had bigger gardens. In Bangladesh we have mango and coconut trees and grow lots of vegetables and herbs. In my garden I grow beans, mustard seeds, marrows, pumpkins, broccoli, coriander and rhubarb. I spend many hours in my garden and like being out in the fresh air."



“There are a few local Bengali shops in the area, and the mosque is very near.”



“My daughter takes me shopping on Stanhope Street for my fruit and vegetables. I buy my meat at the Halal butchers.”



“I love my garden, but the children get over the fence and pull out my plants. In Bangladesh we were always in our gardens. I love being out in the garden. I grow herbs and vegetables.”



“I go to Netto as it's close, and I go to the Asian shops for my Halal meat and my vegetables. There are lots of Asian shops in the area.”



# What makes our neighbourhoods older person unfriendly?

"It's awful that Durham Street Nursery has been closed as it was used mostly by the Bangladeshi community."



"It's a lovely building. There is a park behind it, but I have never been in it - too frightened."

"I would go to exercise class with other women. I would be scared to go on my own."

"We had sewing classes, art classes and English classes, and drop-in groups. If you needed any help or information you could just drop in. There was always someone to talk to. The children loved it. It's awful that they closed it without talking to people in the community. Now we have nothing. The women and children in the area will miss out."



"The buses are very near. There is a bus stop outside of a pub, and I know a lot of women have been sworn at. Nobody would use that bus stop to go to Benwell, as they are frightened. I think they should move it."



"My daughter went to Durham Street Nursery. It's really bad that it's been closed. The children have been in the playground and have smashed up the chairs and made a mess."

"My grandchildren used to go to Durham Street Nursery. It was a lovely place where you could get help about anything."



“It's awful that the post office has closed. I have to go to the West Road and it's difficult for me as it's all banks. I think it's a disgrace. Nobody thinks of the upset and inconvenience it causes.”

“They closed our post office, so we have to walk to Westgate Road to get stamps and other things. What have we done? Why are they taking everything away?”



“I don't feel safe walking around in the evenings as there are older children drinking and swearing at you.”

“I wouldn't dare go on this estate. I would be too frightened to walk there. The kids throw stones and call you names.”



“There is talk now that they are going to move the Housing Office. It makes me upset because I will have to walk up to Westgate Road and I will find it difficult. Nobody talks to us about any of these changes. They just expect us to get on with it.”



“I think the service the doctors give out is really bad. When you ring for a doctor, they do not see you for a week.”

“My doctors is not very far from here, but we have problems getting to see a doctor when you are ill.”

“They are saying the Housing Office is going to close. They are taking all the services we need from the area.”

## Participants in photographic project

Lutfu Khanon	Born in Bangladesh
Betty Fleming	Born in India
Angura Begum	Born in Bangladesh
Neherina Nessa	Born in Bangladesh

**Produced by Search, 2007.**

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