

SOLICITORS SUPPORT WORLD ELDER ABUSE EVENT

15th June 2009 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and organisations around the globe will be holding events to raise awareness of the vulnerability of older people.

To mark World Elder Abuse Day, Newcastle Society for Blind People (NSBP) is holding its own event. NSBP is the long established local society for blind people currently supporting 1,300 people who are blind or have dual sensory loss living in Newcastle.

The aim of this event on Monday, 15th June is to draw attention to the unseen misery affecting significant numbers of elderly people in this city. The event is open to the public and the Society invites anyone involved in working with, caring for, or an interest in the well-being of older people, to come and share their experiences and learn about the signs of abuse and what to look out for. Northumbria Police, Age Concern – Newcastle, Newcastle Carers Centre will all be supporting the event, together with local councillors and a number of other charities and organisations attending also.

David Gray Solicitors are supporting the event. Cliff Veitch, a partner at David Gray Solicitors said “we are pleased to support such a worthwhile cause. Solicitors, in particular, need to be sure when carrying out the wishes of an elderly client that the client is fully advised and is telling you what they want - rather than what someone else has persuaded them is for the best. It is so important that everyone who comes into contact with older people, whether in a professional or personal capacity, knows how to spot the signs of mistreatment”.

Newcastle Society for Blind People which originated in 1867 (reg. charity no1115815), is skilled at assisting local people to overcome sight loss. From long experience NSBP knows through its regular contact with people with visual disability, that this client group is at particular risk of maltreatment. Heather Niven, CEO of Newcastle Society for Blind People said “it has been really alarming to discover how many of local people with sight loss – elderly people in particular- are victims of abuse.

Having gathered this evidence of elder abuse among its client group, NSBP made a successful funding application to Comic Relief. We now have a full time worker who, at any one time, is working with, and supporting - two or three, older, local people with sight loss or dual sensory - to overcome elder abuse. Perpetrators can be anyone with close contact with the client – family, neighbours, care workers and from many other situations. Sight loss can cause those affected to become isolated and affects mobility. Elderly people with sight loss frequently find themselves in a position of having to rely on one particular person to exist. Perpetrators make use of this situation and clients fear of isolation tends to stop them reporting abuse. Elder Abuse is much more prevalent than generally realised. NSBP’s Safeguarding Adults Officer is using its large print newsletter, information sessions at its social and self-help groups for older people with sight loss, to get the message across that there is support available to enable clients to overcome this. The event on the 15th June is an ideal way for members of the general public to come and find out more about the work being done to protect elderly people in Newcastle from abuse”.

Everyone interested is welcome to come along on 15th June to this World Elder Awareness Day at Durant Hall in the Church of Divine Unity, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne (opposite Mea House), from 1.30 pm until 3.30 pm. For further information on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, and what you can do to help older people by becoming a volunteer or to make a donation, please contact the Newcastle Society for Blind People on 0191 232 7292 or visit their website at www.nsbp.co.uk. Alternatively please go to Action on Elder Abuses web site - www.elderabuse.org.uk It also has a telephone helpline – 0808 808 8141

