Chairs of English Forums on Ageing
13 November 2013

Attendees

Peter Coleing	East of England - Future East (Chair)
Anne Bailey	West Midlands Later Life Forum
Peter Dale	South East England Forum on Ageing
Bill Ions	Years Ahead (Deputy)
David Shalit	Positive Ageing in London
Brian Warwick	South West Forum on Ageing (Deputy)
John Welham	Yorkshire & the Humber – Vice Chair Future Years
Ruth Feathers	Vice Chair Future East
Gwen Wolf	DWP UKAFA
Helen Dimmock	DWP
Alisdair MacKenzie	Parliamentary Outreach Service
Maya Freedman	Department of Energy & Climate Change
Ken Cooper	DWP – Notes

Apologies

Alan Patchett	Years Ahead
Kevan Larkin	Future North West
Liz Mandeville	East Midlands Later Life Forum
Shelagh Marshall	Yorkshire & the Humber – Future Years
Tony Watts	South West Forum on Ageing

Welcome and Action Points

1. Peter welcomed the group and introduced his deputy, Ruth, to the group.

2. David was concerned that a number of Regions were not represented at the meeting, and asked that this be minuted. Ken said that Liz from East Midlands had sent her apologies as she was unable to attend for personal reasons, and her deputy was at another meeting today. Kevan Larkin from the North West had recently stood down as Chair, and a replacement had not yet been elected. His deputy had received all the papers but had not indicated whether or not she would attend. All other Chairs who could not attend were represented by their deputies.

3. Ken went through the Action Points from the last meeting. All have been cleared with the exception of AP2. Ken reported that Caroline had been invited to attend the meeting, but he had not received a response. David said that he had received correspondence from her indicating that she the meeting in her diary and would attend between 11.30 and 12.00. Helen took a copy of the email David had received so that the Secretariat could investigate. There was some discussion as to whether or not a meeting was still necessary as relations seemed to have improved. **(AP: Ken will liaise with David regarding the necessity of inviting Caroline to the next meeting, and organise if appropriate).**

4. It was pointed out that there was an error in the last notes, Anthea Tinker being listed as Andrea. Ken apologised for the error and agreed to amend file copy.

5. Ken reported that he had contacted Matt Hibbard from the LGA who had originally hoped to attend this meeting. There has been a reorganisation at the LGA recently and they have recently appointed a staff member, Kevin Halden, to lead on the older people agenda. Kevin has agreed to attend the next meeting. **(AP: Ken to invite Kevin Halden to next meeting.)**

6. AP1 was scheduled to take place prior to this meeting, but has been postponed until the March meeting as three of the Chairs were unable to attend. **(AP: Ken will rearrange the TOR meeting to begin at 10.00 before the next Chairs meeting)**

7. Ken apologised to Brian for failing to notify him of the last meeting which came about due to the agreement that he would represent SWFoA at the meetings not getting into the minutes. Ken said that the error was his, but in mitigation pointed out that everyone at the June meeting had received the minutes and no one had queried the omission.

8. It was agreed that in future invites to the meetings and copies of the notes would also be sent to Vice Chairs to ensure that if the Chair was indisposed, or suffering from IT problems, the Region would still receive the information in good time. **(AP: Ken to copy Vice Chairs into all future communications)**

9. It was agreed that future meeting should be scheduled to start at 11.00 so that members could make homeward journeys before peak evening travel. **(AP: Ken to arrange future meetings to begin at 11.00)**

UKAFA

10. Gwen and Helen attended the meeting and said that rather than just go through what she did as Secretariat for UKAFA, which would probably be fairly boring, she wanted to ask the Chairs for their views and concerns.

11. The point was made that it was important for the Chairs group to be represented at UKAFA. Gwen responded by pointing out that membership of UKAFA was my Ministerial invitation, and that membership was currently limited to 30. A number of Chairs already attended fairly regularly as observers, and UKAFA has always allowed/encouraged observers to participate in the meeting. She also added that whilst observers were welcome, they were not members of UKAFA and attendance could not be guaranteed as room number restrictions placed limits on how many spaces were available at each meeting.

12. John asked about advanced notice of the agenda. Gwen explained that whilst she would like to be able to send out Agendas in advance of the

meeting, this was virtually impossible as it constantly changed due to ministerial commitments and the difficulty, on occasion, of getting confirmation of content from guest presenters. Gwen pointed out, that although a specific agenda was not possible, she always sent out details of the intended topics by email a month before the event. These sometimes changed, but not often.

13. Brian referred back to a previous UKAFA where it was agreed that older people in the group should have a pre-meet to discuss items on the agenda. Gwen said that this was from very early meetings when UKAFA had had a facilitator. As we no longer had that facility, and DWP had gone from 2.5 staff looking after UKAFA to herself, arranging an additional meeting on the day whilst overseeing the main event was beyond her resources.

14. Helen, said that in these times of extremely tight budget, it was important that UKAFA was able to justify its existence through outcomes. She felt that the Chairs could help here by continuing to suggest topics that their groups could lead on (she cited the recent examples by SEEFA and Years Ahead); engage with Government Departments that came to UKAFA seeking input to their work; and by ensuring that valuable time was not wasted by forums representatives getting on their soap box about topics not relevant to the discussion.

Older People's Delegate Access to Conferences

15. Tony had been due to dial into the meeting to discuss older delegates at conferences, but Ken was unable to get a connection. Brian was able to step in and explained that the concern was around the fact that there were a lot of conferences put on where older people's voices were encouraged, but the attendance fees were prohibitive, even where discounts were offered, especially as many were in London. It was felt that the group should seek to persuade organisers to offer bigger discounts or free places to older people representatives. Brian felt that this was particularly relevant around the current topics on the Health Bill and issues around affordable housing.

16. The group felt that organisers should be approached to offer free spaces, ideally one per Region but at least one via the Chairs group so that a suitable representative could be found. It was also suggested that the regions might be able to club together to fund a joint delegate There was concern that all this could be quite time consuming to arrange. Ken pointed out that, particularly in London, most conferences were arranged by 2-3 management groups, and therefore it might be possible to get general agreement by approaching those organisations direct.

17. It was decided that Tony should be asked if he could draft an approach to these organisations, making the case for free places (or at the very least a very heavy discount). Someone would then need to volunteer to take responsibility for making the approaches to these organisations. **(AP:**

Tony to provide a draft note for approaching organisers for free conference places)

Regional Income Generation Strategies

18. Peter D said that budgets were tight for funding conferences etc. He asked whether there should be an overall regional funding strategy. The funding the forums received from DWP were very useful in supporting their running, but they could not be taken for granted. The forums needed to look at other funding to ensure that any cut in DWP funding did not adversely affect their operations.

19. Ken said that DWP certainly hoped to be able to continue funding the forums, but that realistically they should expect reduced funding next year. Despite major cuts in its spending budget, DWP had maintained the same expenditure to the forums since the implementation of the recommendations in 'Empowering Engagement'; at the expense of internal admin. It was hoped that any reduction would be minimal, but at this stage it was not possible to give any firm guarantees.

20. Peter C suggested that the Chairs share knowledge of potential funding streams. East of England would provide advice for any regions looking at the option of Charitable Status.

21. It was suggested that a lot of funding, including that from the EU, gets channelled through Universities, but this is not always widely known about. The question was asked as to whether or not there was a published list of funding grants.

22. It was felt that the voice of older people needed to be heard, and that the regions should approach organisations for sponsorship. Universities undertaking relevant research projects should be approached with the intention of assisting them in their research. **(AP: All regions should share information on potential funding streams they are aware of,)**

Mobility Vehicle Survey

23. Ken reported to the group that to date he had received less than ten responses to the survey so far. From the post code of those who had responded, the majority came from Y&H with two from Ipswich and one from London. He said that he was aware of the efforts Shelagh and John had put into spreading the word, and something had obviously happened in East of England. London had put the survey on the Age UK London website; but he was unaware of any other activity. Although replies were starting to trickle in, he felt that this was a rather disappointing response, Given the forums coverage he estimated that if each local forum across the country sent in just one form, he would have hundreds of responses.

24. Ken reiterated what he had said at the last meeting that he thought that this was a real opportunity for the Forums to demonstrate to a government department their reach and ability to tap into the views of a large number of older people. This information was going to be used in DfT's review of their Mobility Vehicle regulations, and could therefore potentially have a real influence on policy. Success here could influence other departments to consult with the forums.

25. He appreciated that it took time for information to filter down through the regions network of forums, but the geographical coverage of the replies implied that there had in fact been very little dissemination. To help the forums he had produced packs of 50 blank surveys that could be taken away and distributed locally to offset photocopying costs for those without access to computers.

26. Brian said that he was unaware of the survey, having not been at the last meeting, and not having received the minutes. He would happily distribute the survey if he had it. **(AP: Ken to resend the survey with the meeting notes)**

Cold Weather Plan

27. Peter C briefly drew the groups attention to the recently published Cold Weather Plan that Russell had forwarded to the Forums along with a summary of the key points.

28. Peter said that it was important that this was disseminated to the local forums, and that local authorities were fully engaged. He was concerned that the information was not getting out there and urged all the forums to check their local plan.

Parliamentary Outreach Service

29. Alisdair MacKenzie attended the meeting and despite technical issues which prevented him showing his slides until almost the end of his session, gave a very interesting talk on how the forums could engage with the likes of Select Committees and MPs. He gave examples of MPs ability to raise questions in the House.

30. His talk prompted lots of discussion and exchanges of views of how the forums could engage with the various groups to promote older people in a positive way.

31. Alisdair was happy to put the forums in touch with their regional representatives who would be able to talk to the forums and provide advice.on the various procedures .

New Fuel Poverty Indicator

32. Maya Freedman from Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) spoke to the group about the redefinition of the Fuel Poverty Indicator, and the Department's current focus' in this area.

33. Maya took the meeting through a series of slides which set out to show how the indicator worked and how DECC's limited resources were going to be focused. It was generally felt that DECC needed to find a better method for explaining the indicator to older people. Discussions covered issues such as heating and insulation, help being targeted at the very fuel poor, and issues around those theoretically not fuel poor who in reality were due to benefit offsets.

34. The group had a wide ranging and frank discussion with Maya about the indicator and the way resources would be targeted. Groups such as Fire and Rescue services, Care and Repair England, LGA for their links with local authorities, and Parish Councils were all suggested as the people DECC should engage with to get their message across.

35. Maya was keen to work further with the group and asked for their contact details so that she could keep in touch. She commented on how knowledgeable the group was, and hoped that they would be able to work together in the future. **(AP: Ken to supply Maya with the Chairs contact details)**

AOB

36. Bill Ions distributed a paper produced by Years Ahead in conjunction with Newcastle University on bus shelter design. He said that this was only a draft and that the intention was to share the final report with the AAA Transport working group, who were looking at this area. The prototype design was made after engaging with older people to determine their needs, and Newcastle City Council are very interested in the design and are now in discussion with the University about potential implementation in the city.

37. NE are also working on an Age Friendly City Conference to be held in the next couple of months.

38. Anne reported that WM are currently looking at the results of a survey they ran called 'How was it for you?' and she will share te results with the chairs. **(AP: Anne to send a note on the survey results)**

39. Since the meeting, Ken has heard that NatCen did not win the tender to run the Fulfilling Lives Evaluation discussed at the last meeting. It is suggested that the Chairs contact the winner to see whether they are interested in a similar collaboration to that proposed by NatCen.

Next Meeting of the English Chairs Wednesday ? March 2014 Caxton House

Summary of Action Points from EFA Chairs meeting

AP1: Ken will liaise with David regarding the necessity of inviting Caroline to the next meeting, and organise if appropriate.
AP2: Ken to invite Kevin Halden from LGA to next meeting.
AP 3: Ken will rearrange the TOR meeting to begin at 10.00 before the next Chairs meeting.
AP 4: Ken to copy Vice Chairs into all future communications.
AP 5: Ken to arrange future meetings to begin at 11.00.
AP 6: Tony to provide a draft note for approaching organisers for free conference places.
AP 7: All regions should share information on potential funding streams they are aware of
AP 8: Ken to resend the survey with the meeting notes.
AP 9: Ken to supply Maya with the Chairs contact details.
AP 10: Anne to send a note on the 'How was it for you' survey results