

## FEEDBACK FROM EFA CHAIRS MEETING: 13<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2013 AT CAXTON HOUSE, LONDON.

Peter Coeling (Future East) chaired the meeting and there was representation from all EFAs apart from NW and EM and a number of regions were represented by Deputies. It was agreed that, in future ALL EFA Chairs should have named deputies and that they should receive all future Agendas, papers and minutes. This is a very important Forum and there needs to be continuity and ongoing input from across the 9 regions.

Ken Cooper was the Secretary and Helen Dimmock and Gwen Wolf (all DWP) sat in for parts of the meeting.

It had been planned that there would be a 2 hour pre-meeting to discuss the ToRs and whether revisions were needed. This had been postponed until the next meeting as few Chairs had turned up today. It was agreed that this pre-meeting therefore would need to be 9am if it is agreed that, in future, EFA Chairs meetings should start at 11am instead of 12noon. Hopefully this would allow the purchase of cheaper rail tickets. This suggestion was agreed by delegates.

The minutes of the last meeting (28<sup>th</sup> August 2013) were agreed subject to Andrea Tinker, Kings College, being amended to Anthea Tinker.

In terms of matters arising Ken said that he had invited Caroline Abrahams from Age UK to attend this meeting but had had no response. It was agreed that David Shalit would chase her up with a view to coming along to the next meeting.

I also raised the issue of securing an LGA presence because of their key role in influencing Las. Helen said that she had recently met Kevin Halden to discuss how the LGA might become more closely involved in the work of the Alliance and how, in turn, the AAA might support them. It is hoped that he will be able to attend the next Loneliness and Social Isolation Working Group. I suggested that it would also be useful to get him along to talk at the next EFA Chairs meeting. This was agreed.

There followed a brief discussion on how UKAFA currently works and how EFA Chairs might better influence its work plan etc. Helen explained that there are 4 meetings per annum and Agendas are put together based on a mix of what Ministers, as joint chairs, want to cover in their slots, what UKAFA members have suggested in previous round table discussions, and, given that the Forum covers the devolved nations there has to be recognition of what their needs are. Reductions in resources both staff and financial also meant that it was difficult to organise the type of wider workshops that had in the past being held to inform UKAFA. If there are burning issues that are not covered on UKAFA Agendas it was of course possible for Chairs to write directly to Ministers with their concerns. She added that EFA Chairs can also lead on specific topic areas and bring suggestions for action and improvement to UKAFA meetings. There were a couple of examples of UKAFA delegates using meetings to pursue their particular soapboxes of for lobbying on specific issues which was not always the best use of time. To ensure the future of the Forum DWP needed to be able to demonstrate that positive outcomes and results were being delivered.

Tony Watts Agenda Item on "Older Peoples Delegates Access to Confernces" was not fully covered as there was a problem with the teleconference line. The issue was about the cost of sending EFA

delegates to relevant conferences. I suggested direct approaches to conference organisers to ask if reduced rates were or could be made available given our limited resources and the need to get the voice of older people heard. Tony will be invited to write to the Secretariat to set out the issues he wanted to raise today.

Peter Dale then briefly talked about the need to begin to develop future funding strategies given the lack of certainty of future funding for EFAs from DWP. Helen indicated that DWP funding was very likely to suffer a 6% to 10% cut next year. To date the funding to EFAs had been protected but it was likely that a similar sized cut would be passed on to Forums. It was **agreed** that Forums should share information on possible funding sources and explore what Euro funding might be available.

Ken Cooper updated the Chairs on progress with the DfT Mobility Questionnaire. He said that, to date, there had been few responses with YH promoting the most. We needed to clearly demonstrate the value of this older people's network. He therefore asked us all to give another push. This was **agreed**. I have since spoken about as part of my input as a speaker at the Leeds CC Equalities Conference on 15<sup>th</sup> November.

There was then a discussion about the Cold Weather Plan led by Peter Coeling. There is a national plan and all LAs have to have one. It was said that Healthwatches should be involved in them to ensure that the needs and concerns of older people were being adequately addressed in these plans.

Alasdair MacKenzie did an excellent overview of the Parliamentary Outreach Service and I have a full set of slides (only in hard copy as yet) should anyone wish to see. He outlined the many ways in which it was possible to influence government policy through, for example, input to Select Committees, suggestions as Bills are being drafted, promoting PQs. Select Committees are particularly keen to receive views beyond those from the usual suspects. EFAs needed to build up a relationship and alert Select Committees to our role and our expertise.

The final substantive Agenda Item was a presentation by Maya Freedman from DECCs Fuel Poverty and Smart Meters Team. She ran through the redefinition of Fuel Poverty and the work being done on developing a Framework for Future Action on Fuel Poverty. Future emphasis given limited resources will focus on those with higher than average fuel bills and with lower than average incomes. Means to be used to address the problems will include more targeted benefits and things such as more efficient combi/condensing boilers and better insulation etc. She asked if we could suggest organisations that she could usefully liaise with in working up the strategy. We suggested NIH, Care & Repair England, LGA, Parish Councils and the Fire & Rescue Authorities as good examples of organisations that she could engage with. Again I have a hard copy of her slides should anyone wish to see.

Under AOB there were a number of issues raised:

- NE are arranging an Age Friendly City Conference at the end of this year
- WM are analysing the results from a "how was it for you?" survey. **Action:** To be shared with EFA Chairs. A Housing LIN Conference is to be held next Summer involving the WMLIN, the WM Later Life Forum and the Older Peoples Housing Champions.

- NE tabled a brief report done with Newcastle University on “ Older Person Friendly Seating” which is being introduced across the City.

John Welham

Vice-Chair, Future Years

18<sup>th</sup> November 2013