

Chairs of English Forums on Ageing 28th May 2014

Attendees

Peter Coleing	East of England - Future East (Chair) (am only)
Anne Bailey	West Midlands Later Life Forum
Kevan Larkin	Future North West
Liz Mandeville	East Midlands Later Life Forum (phone – am only)
Shelagh Marshall	Yorkshire & the Humber – Future Years
David Shalit	Positive Ageing in London (am only)
Bill Ions	Years Ahead
Marjory Broughton	South East England Forum on Ageing Vice Chair
Brian Warwick	South West Forum on Ageing
Russell Taylor	DWP (part)
James Attree	DWP (part)
Ken Cooper	DWP – Notes

Apologies

Peter Dale	South East England Forum on Ageing
Tony Watts	South West Forum on Ageing

Welcome and Action Points

1. Peter welcomed the group and distributed the Notes from the last meeting.
2. Marjory asked whether there was an answer to Mervyn's question about the effect of the loss of the Audit Commission (para 26). A short discussion took place during which David said that the local authorities had an Ombudsman. It was pointed out that this did not cover all the functions of the Commission.
3. Marjory asked whether the group could have a document outlining who now has these responsibilities. **Action Point: Ken to ask LGA who is now responsible for the functions previously carried out by the Audit Commission.**

Agenda Funding for 2014-15

4. As Tony was unable to attend the meeting, Peter notified the meeting that the requested contribution from the Forums to cover AGenda costs for the coming year would be £100 each. This was a reduction from the previous contribution of £250 partly because the former covered initial set up costs, but also because other commitments had led to less issues being produced than normal.
5. Brian asked why the Age Action Alliance private sector members did not contribute. Ken pointed out that AGenda was the Newsletter of the English

Forums, and nothing to do with the Alliance, although Tony did use information from there and other sources in the absence of Forum contributions.

6. Brian felt that with AAA membership growing, this should still be pursued. Peter said that it should be raised at the next Partnership Development Group meeting.
7. Liz asked what the Forums contributions actually went towards; was it for the website, or expenses before information goes on the website? Peter said he would ask Tony for a breakdown of costs for the next meeting.
Action Point: Peter to ask Tony to provide a breakdown of the AGenda budget for the coming year for the next meeting.

Preparing for the General Election

8. Peter added an additional item into the agenda as he thought that it would be beneficial for the Chairs to consider how best to influence/challenge the political parties in the run up to next years General Election.
9. Peter said that he would like each of the chairs to provide him with the main issues affecting older people in their regions, from which he would produce a paper which could be discussed amongst the group. The Forums were not campaigning or lobbying organisations, but there was a need to set the agenda over the coming year so that the main parties were aware of the concerns of older people. He thought that at future meetings, speakers could be invited that they could begin to influence.
10. Brian said that the South West Seniors Network Conference had recently written to the leaders of the three main parties and had received positive responses from all of them. Brian agreed to circulate the responses to the group. **Action Point: Brian to forward copies of the responses from the party leaders to the group.**
11. Shelagh suggested that someone from Public Health England be invited to speak to the group. Marjory thought that CQC and Monitor could be invited, whilst Brian thought that Norman Lamb should be asked to attend.
12. Liz said that in putting the proposed paper together, they would need to be clear what they wanted to get out of it. It should be noted in any paper that it is based on the responses of the nine English regions with their wide support base within the regions; a network that would be very useful in engagement.
13. Shelagh said that the role for all the forums was to collect evidence to support the issues that mattered to them. Initial thoughts on topics included Housing, Finances and the Care agenda. **Action Point: The Chairs should discuss with their forums and email suggestions to Peter. Peter to pull topics together in a document and send to group for comment prior to the next meeting.**

Freedom Bus Passes

14. Shelagh raised the issue of Bus Passes. She said that with transport funding cuts across the board in Yorkshire, the issue was becoming very difficult. Many forum members questioned the use of a bus pass when there were no buses! Government has said that there will be no debate on concessionary fares until after the Election, but the Forums should use their influence to start a national debate before then. She provided a table giving the reimbursement for concessionary fares to bus operators in the English Counties (see attached)
15. It was recognised that although many urban areas had problems, the issue particularly affected rural areas where some communities had little or no public transport facilities.
16. Anne said that in the West Midlands Ring and Ride schemes played an important part. Brian said that in Wiltshire, an agreement with the local authority has resulted in no change being given in car park machines. A portion of the charges goes towards subsidising transport in the county
17. Kevan said that most of the reductions in funding for bus subsidies are the Shire Counties; and it is the LA formula that needs challenging. Shelagh asked whether as a result of the discussion, the group could write to the Government to ask when they were going to implement the results from the last Census figure. Brian said that they should write to the Secretary of State for Transport,
18. The consensus was that if the response from DfT was that nothing would be done until after the Election, they should write to the party leaders for a commitment that they will implement it. **Action Point: Group to write to the Secretary of State for Transport to ask about the census figures. [DN: who will take this forward?], and depending on response; write to the party leaders. Shelagh offered to draft a letter to The S of S about concessionaries not being useful if there's no public transport.**
19. Anne said that in the Care Act there is a requirement to provide preventative services. Particularly in rural areas, transport, or lack of it, was a major factor in the achievement of this. The group should find out from LAs what they were intending to do to meet this requirement. **Action Point: Chairs to ask their forums to approach LAs to establish how they intended meeting the preventative requirement from the Care Act.**
20. Brian agreed to supply the group with details of how the car park scheme in Wiltshire worked. **Action Point: Brian to supply details of the Wiltshire car park charge scheme.**

Standards of Later Life Care

21. Brian said that he had raised this item as there were significant differences in care across England. The South West is larger than Wales and has a greater population, but £50m more going into care across the UK. The Forums need to be pressuring government as to why the Shires are not getting the required funding to allow equality in care. The current structure as defined by Treasury is fundamentally wrong.
22. Marjory said that many doctors think that they have the right to decide on whether to resuscitate.
23. Anne said that Better Care has been a disaster with lots of money wasted funding this bid.
24. Kevan said that the group should try and get a copy of the review that **Dr ? [DQ: Kevan, what was the Drs name?]** did into the Liverpool Pathway.
25. Shelagh said that NICE had produced a report about the number of nurses required to provide the required levels of care. Need to put pressure on government to provide evidence on whether this is being met. **Action Point: Peter to send invite to Norman Lamb to attend the Chairs meeting to address care issues raised at the meeting.**
26. Anne said that West Midlands were engaged with CQC who have come to meetings to discuss their inspections and future work.
27. Marjory said that SEEFA hold listening events which ask older people about their experiences (which must be relevant to the topic and within the last 12 months). This feeds into CQC and SEEFA gets a small amount of money for doing this.
28. Peter said that there was a need to promote CQC's Freephone number.

Secretariat

29. Ken notified the group that with effect from this meeting, DWP would not be able to provide secretarial support for the Chairs Meetings. This was due to the issues outlined by Helen at the last meeting regarding team rotation and a reduction in overall team resource. Ken said that he was due to rotate before the next meeting, and that although he was due to be replaced, it was not guaranteed, and the reduction in resource would mean that any replacement would need to cover additional duties.
30. There was a brief discussion around the issue. Ken suggested that given there were nine forums, if each one took it in turn to cover the secretariat function, they would only need to cover it approximately every two years.
31. Anne suggested that they consider investigating Teleconferencing and Skype conferencing. Peter said that he would arrange to discuss the situation with Helen. **Action Point: Peter to discuss Secretariat situation with Helen.**

Briefing Papers

32. Russell joined the meeting and introduced James, who has been with the team on a work placement. Russell said that as part of his time with the team, James had produced four briefing papers on Olympic Legacy, Public Health England, Heatwave Plan for England 2014, and Police Commissioners, for the group.
33. Russell asked whether or not the group thought that these were useful documents and if so, would they like to receive further papers. Russell emphasised that these would be very much an Ad Hoc thing as items for a briefing would depend upon supply.
34. The group thanked James for the reports and unanimously agreed that future Briefing Papers would be useful. Russell agreed to forward notes to the group as they became available

(Peter had to leave at lunch and Shelagh took the Chair.)

Present Structure and Format of UKAFA Meetings

35. Brian circulated a paper he had prepared highlighting points from Elbourne and Empowering Engagement. **[DN Brian can I have an electronic copy to circulate with the notes]**
36. Brian quoted a number of passages from his paper to illustrate where he felt that the intentions of Empowering Engagement were not being met.
37. A discussion followed from which the meeting generally agreed on the following:
 - The current format of UKAFA did not meet the expectations of Elbourne
 - The voice of Older People was being diluted by 'Suits'; there being an undue proportion of them at the meetings, and they invariably got more opportunity to ask questions of the Ministers;
 - The 'suits' also wasted time with the Ministers by asking the same questions;
 - The amount of Ministerial time had been reduced from the original meetings, and the Ministers had not acted in the way that reflected what they had said in Empowering Engagement;
 - The Chairs of the meetings had not allowed sufficient input from Older People at recent meetings;
 - The meetings had become a succession of being spoken at by speakers with little opportunity for Older People to discuss topics;
 - Older People were not being given the opportunity to influence policy;

- Older People had originally had useful pre-meetings with a Facilitator before the main UKAFA meetings, which no longer took place;
- There should be provision within the meeting for the Forums to submit written questions in advance for the Minister to answer.

38. Ken said that some of this was not strictly accurate, and gave members copies of Empowering Engagement:

- Empowering Engagement, and the establishment of UKAFA had been the work of the previous Government. Under the current Government, Government Offices had been disbanded, and they were under no obligation to maintain UKAFA. The fact that they had, showed that they recognised its value;
- Ministerial time had not reduced, most Ministers stayed for approximately 45 minutes. Steve Webb had not missed a single meeting, but unfortunately this had not been the case with the various Ministers of State for Care & Support;
- There were not more 'suits' than older people. The make up of UKAFA is currently restricted to 30 members. There are 9 representatives from the English Regions, plus the devolved nations and older people representative groups such as National Pensioner Convention and Change AGENTS. In addition there are frequently observers at the meetings, the majority of whom are older people from the Forums;
- The 'suits' did not get more opportunity to ask the Ministers questions, and in any case, as members of UKAFA they had an equal right to speak. Those guilty of asking the same questions, tended to be older people representatives.
- Gwen tries to encourage sessions that involve table discussions, but is dependant upon the presenters and time constraints – sometimes there are so many topics it is difficult to fit in discussion time;
- Over the last 18 months UKAFA has attracted a variety of government departments who are keen to discuss with the meetings their current policies. Many of these (but not all) have been seeking the views of members in the further development of their thinking and have fed back positively;
- The Forums and Devolved Nations have been responsible for running agenda items at most meetings;
- The best way to get answers to written questions was to write directly to the relevant Minister, who would reply. It would be a poor use of UKAFA time going through a written question and its response. In any case, Ministers would only be qualified to answer question relating to their own work areas;
- There was no longer a budget to employ an Independent Facilitator. Only three meetings were held with the Facilitator, and at the time they ceased because the attendance did not justify their continuance.

39. The group still felt that there was a lack of time for discussion with the Minister and wanted to be able put question to them, in writing, in advance. They felt that two forums should present to the Minister at each meeting, and that this should rotate.
40. Brian said that during the debate about a Minister for Older People last year, Steve Webb had said that UKAFA should fill that role. Therefore it was acceptable to direct questions on ageing to him via UKAFA. [Ken: In the transcript from the debate Steve Webb says: "*I welcome the terms of the motion, which proposes that the Government should consider—we certainly should—whether that role would best be done by a Cabinet Minister with additional responsibilities. My proposition is that one response might be for the UK Advisory Forum on Ageing to have a more cross-government role. There are plenty more things we could do, but I stress that there are plenty of cross-government and co-ordinated things already being done.*" That does not translate to the Minister for Pensions being responsible for cross government questions.]
41. The meeting agreed to put forward the following statement, which restated the views of the Minister in Empowering Engagement: *'The Chairs support the case for the UK Adviosory Forum on Ageing to provide a stronger, clearer and louder voice for older people at a national level.'*
42. Ken reminded the group that the UKAFA review had been ongoing for many months, with all forums invited to participate. The Review, Evaluation and Development Group consisted of representatives from NE, Y&H and EM. Shelagh said that she would like to attend the next meeting to put forward the Chairs views. Ken said that he would let Gwen know.
Action Point: Ken to ask Gwen to invite Shelagh to the next RED meeting.
43. The group also felt that meetings two weeks before the UKAFA meeting was not long enough for them to consider questions for the Ministers. It was therefore decided to hold meetings at least four weeks before the UKAFA meeting. Ken reminded the group that the future dates for UKAFA were 3rd September and 12th November, which would mean Chairs meetings on 20th August, and 29th October at the latest.

Regional Updates

North East:

44. Bill highlighted the work that Years Ahead had done with Newcastle University in the design of seating suitable for older people. The design had been accepted by Newcastle City Council, and they were looking to introduce the seating in the city (see attached paper).

45. Bill also provided a paper on another piece of work they had done, the Middlesbrough Initiative, which was best Practice for Mobility Scooters. (see attached).

South West:

46. The South West had held two successful conferences:

- Housing for Older People: Extremely well attended and included housing professionals. A report is being compiled and will go on the website;
- Senior Conference and AGM: Held in Chippenham and discussed issues for older people today and the policies of the different political parties;
- A third, the Weston Super-Mare Joint Conference, will take place in September.

West Midlands:

47. Held their Annual Conference in April, with contributions from Birmingham and Keele Universities. They have an arrangement with CQC (discussed above) and the next meeting will look at Mens Health.

48. They will be holding a Housing and Older People Conference in the autumn. Panel discussions with older people and professionals. They will use the conference to launch a proposal [**DQ Anne, I missed this bit, could you fill in please**]

South East:

49. SEEFA became an independent charity 10 days ago. Currently looking at alternative and additional funding streams.

50. They have received a substantial amount of money from Age UK to put on a conference. Their Policy Panel has discussed Housing, Health, Transport, Heating, and Workforce. A joint Policy Group with Universities in SE are looking at ageing.

North West

51. Have held a workshop 'Not All Bricks and Mortar' with Care and Repair. They will be holding another conference soon on 'The effects of Austerity.'

52. Living Well/Dying Well [**DQ Kevan, what was this?**]

Yorks & Humber:

53. Have spent a lot of time trying to enable older people input to Well-Being Boards.

54. Considering splitting their Annual Conference into four separate workshops to ensure more people can attend.

55. Now have four Village Agents across two Districts.

East Midlands

56. **Liz do you want to add anything?**

East of England

57. **Peter, do you want to add anything?**

London:

58. **David, do you want to add anything?**

AOB

59. Following discussion, Shelagh agreed to draft a letter on when the census figures on demographic would be implemented. **Action Point: Shelagh to draft a letter re the implementation of the census figures on demographic growth into the RSG.**

Next Meeting of the English Chairs set for Wednesday 3rd September 2014 at Caxton House (but you may wish to bring forward to 20th August following today's meeting)

Summary of Action Points from EFA Chairs meeting

AP1: Ken to ask LGA who is now responsible for the functions previously carried out by the Audit Commission.

AP2: Peter to ask Tony to provide a breakdown of the AGenda budget for the coming year for the next meeting.

AP3: Action Point: Brian to forward copies of the responses from the party leaders to the group.

AP4: The Chairs should discuss with their forums and email suggestions to Peter. Peter to pull topics together in a document and send to group for comment prior to the next meeting.

AP5: Group to write to the Secretary of State for Transport to ask about the census figures. [DN: who will take this forward?], and depending on response; write to the party leaders. Shelagh offered to draft a letter to The S of S about concessionaries not being useful if there's no public transport.

AP6: Chairs to ask their forums to approach LAs to establish how they intended meeting the preventative requirement from the Care Act.

AP7: Brian to supply details of the Wiltshire car park charge scheme.

AP8: Peter to send invite to Norman Lamb to attend the Chairs meeting to address care issues raised at meeting.

AP9: Peter to discuss Secretariat situation with Helen.

AP 10: Ken to ask Gwen to invite Shelagh to the next RED meeting.

AP11: Shelagh to draft a letter re the implementation of the census figures on demographic growth into the RSG.