

Ageing and Housing: Older People's Housing Champions National Network Meeting

Notes of national network meeting 3 June 2014

Esmee Fairburn Foundation Kings Place 90 York Way London N1 9AG

PRESENT

Vera Bolter (chair), Terry Sullivan, Tony Watts, Bill Rollinson, John Welham, John Simmons, Julia Pride. Ellen Lebethe, Anne Bailey, Joe Oldman Age UK (Item 7)

IN ATTENDANCE

Sue Adams, Jane Minter. Sarah Vernau from Care & Repair England

APOLOGIES

Anne Bailey

Item	Discussion and action agreed
1. and 2. Welcome and apologies	Anne Bailey was welcomed to her first meeting. Apologies were received from John Welham and Peter Coeling
3. Minutes	Minutes of the meeting on 12 March were agreed as a correct record
4. Matters Arising	<p>P 1 Item 5 - the terms of reference of the Derby group had been circulated</p> <p>P 2 Item 5 - East conference <i>Jane will follow up plans for the East conference as Peter was not at the meeting</i></p> <p>P 4 Item 7 - details of the First Stop projects had been circulated</p> <p>P4 Item 10 – <i>Jane will follow up the Cambridge University contacts with Peter</i></p>
5. Local and national action in housing	<p>North West held a conference on housing in April which was not as well attended as had been hoped though some good contacts had been made. Work was continuing on engaging people on housing issues via existing groups and there was some debate in the region about how best to get people talking about the issues. <i>The conference report will be circulated to the group</i></p> <p>W Midlands One area being considered in thinking on housing and ageing in the W Midlands is the idea of developing dormer bungalows (work had been carried out by Quattro design) with policy changes that could help like stamp duty removal. A conference is planned on housing later in the year partnering the Housing LIN. They have collected local housing strategies which are disappointing in relation to ageing and housing in particular private as opposed to social housing. Work on the production of key questions to ask local candidates is underway for local forums in the run up to the election. W Midlands are also hoping to get lottery funding for their ageing well project focused on isolation which will be decided in July.</p> <p>South West a conference on independent living is planned for the autumn in Weston Super Mare which will have housing as one of the issues. There is an Age Action Alliance SW group now set up which has attracted some housing providers and a conference on volunteering is also planned. It was suggested that Silverlinks in Bristol could present at this conference. Tony identified two other areas where work was being developed – technology and energy and in particular 'breathable homes'</p>

London (Lambeth) There was concern that older people were not figuring in regeneration plans such as those in Vauxhall Cross and a need to develop better local scrutiny of health plans to ensure housing issues are considered. (e.g. through local Health Watch) One issue that pervades many local policies, which has to be constantly tackled, is that there is more to housing than being a building.

Y and H (Leeds) The older people's forum has produced a draft housing plan but it remains hard to get the local council engaged given the cuts and the tendency to focus on social housing. Leeds Ageing Well Board which liaises with the Health and Well Being board had some success in getting housing on the agenda and, through work on equalities, housing is being considered by Leeds Council. It was noted that this work was more effective with local councillors than officers. The Housing Minister visited Leeds Care & Repair recently so there was a chance to talk about the issues for people in private housing and a meeting is being planned with Rachel Reeves (Shadow Secretary for Work and Pensions and a local Leeds MP.)

E Midlands (Derbyshire) Some work is on the agenda to get other local areas interested in the Derbyshire model which has brought housing, health and social care together in an interagency group working to the Health and Well Being Board. On the positive side John circulated Derbyshire's booklet on Healthy and Warm in Derbyshire for information. On the negative side there was concern about the withdrawal of housing support and other preventive services such as home helps. Work is being developed to look at 'paid for' carers home support services and in two district councils there was some interest in developing accessible housing but only in the public sector which was disappointing.

South East. It was noted that SEEFA was now registered as a charity. In terms of planning this year the Policy Panel is focusing on older people as consumers aimed at turning the debates around and looking at the barriers to a consumer led approach in areas such as housing, transport and IT. Linked to this the network are promoting older people as contributors. SEEFA focused, at the last panel, on engagement issues and, in relation to housing, members have expressed their fury at the focus many put on downsizing as the solution, express real concern about the link between poor housing and poor health and want to see older people's housing circumstances and choices much more central in health and housing nationally and locally.

North East (Newcastle) Work on developing a model to identify what integration looks like from the point of view of the consumer continues but with real concerns developing about access to DFGs given the changes. There is little movement on housing and ageing strategically in Newcastle at the moment and whilst there has been a stay of execution for the handyperson's service (run by Mears) for a year there are worries about the future. ***Sue and Vera agreed to discuss possible options as C&RE may have some (though small) resources to do bespoke work in the north.*** In discussion it was felt that links with falls prevention was important in relation to handyperson services and that some evidence exists. ***Bill agree to***

	<p>send work from Leeds on this to circulate and DCLG had published an evaluation of handypersons https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-evaluation-of-the-handyperson-programme--2 It was noted that the project on ageing in place being undertaken by three universities will report soon though there is some cynicism that older people are being asked what they want at a time of continued service loss. Representations on housing and ageing are being made to the urban action plan including written representations and sessions on housing.</p>
6. Care & Repair England news	<p>Northern worker Wendy Cocks is to continue three days a week as the northern worker for C&RE Private sector disrepair A report using a case study approach will be produced in the autumn identifying the importance of supporting older people to tackle poor housing/repairs. Photo films will also be produced. Living Safely and Well at home brochure Network members were encouraged to promote the brochure Developing evidence – home adaptations A seminar was held with academics and other stakeholders which has led to three clusters of people developing plans for research including work on the impact/benefits using randomised control, decision making for life and modelling work on the health benefits of adaptations</p>
7. Age UK and housing – position statement and plans	<p>Joe Oldman of Age UK presented a summary of the forthcoming Age UK campaign report on housing. In particular he drew the network’s attention to the following issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of older people in mainstream housing so committed to Lifetime Homes • Concerned about bad practice in existing retirement housing so identified some solutions including a regulator for retirement housing • Need to reform planning for all housing sectors • Recognise housing wealth inequality and regional variation • Focus on need to tackle issues in private rented housing • Importance of funding housing options advice services <p>Following comments from the group on the evidence base and input from older people Joe asked for any further comments or ideas to disseminate the report and recommendations locally to be sent to Jane</p>
8. Silverlinks project	<p>Sarah updated the network on the success of Silverlinks and set out next steps using BIG Lottery funding for a further 4 years. This included continuing to expand work in Bristol and Leeds, appointing a training and information development officer, working with two further high level partners to set up a Silverlinks service (one area will be Nottingham and Nottinghamshire with Age UK) and with others to deliver aspects of Silverlinks activities. Following discussion it was agreed that Sarah would follow up options with the Wirral, South West, South East, Newcastle and London (with a co-housing group and possibly via Age UK London). It was also suggested that once local councils knew of the success of their bids for lottery funding to counter isolation, it might be sensible for Silverlinks to approach them as Anne</p>

	<p>suggested that in the W Midlands work on volunteering would be an integral part of this project if successful.</p> <p><i>Sarah will follow up local champions where interest had been identified</i></p>
9. Manifesto calls	<p>Comments on the current draft were as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need to couch in terms of a business case for investment in housing • focus on the role of community and neighbourhoods not just housing • make 'a new case' about the role of housing and pitch the manifesto as about solutions not problems • recognise regional difference • choice and aspiration remain important – what older people want • Suggested title/subtitle is 'planning homes for healthy communities' • Bill suggested Leeds as a good case study on housing information <p><i>It was agreed that Tony and Jane would work on a further draft to circulate to have something ready for the autumn</i> <i>It was also agreed that a smaller meeting with the Housing Minister might be useful in the autumn once the manifesto is agreed</i></p>
10. UKAFA meeting	<p>It was noted that Tony Watts, on behalf of the network, had been offered the opportunity to raise housing and ageing issues at the next UKAFA meeting. It was agreed to follow the Manifesto calls agenda and galvanise support for raising the profile of housing.</p>
11. DCLG issues	<p>Sue advised of the Policy (Demos) and Research (URS) work for DCLG funded as part of a Cabinet initiative on good policy making. It was noted that Sheila Macintosh, who had worked on adaptations issues, was doing some of the research with URS which was good news. The work would be concluded by August and it was noted that Sue would be attending various round tables. Network members – Tony and Vera - had been approached to be interviewed. Some concern was expressed that research in three localities would be in Birmingham, London (Barnet) and N Somerset with no northern area included. Sue hoped that the focus policy would be broader than equity release and specialist housing. It was felt network members should use any opportunity to influence the Housing Minister during this period so visits and meetings would be useful to raise the key issues identified (See Item 9) .</p>
12. Any other business	<p>Sue agreed to send network members a list of key Ministers and politicians so that local areas can begin to influence the thinking with the election due</p>
13. Date of next meeting	<p>25 November 11.30 – 3.30 venue (London) to be advised</p>