

Notes of national network meeting 11 June 2013
Cartwright Room, University of London, Canterbury Hall, 12 – 18 Cartwright
Gardens, London, WC1H 9EE

PRESENT

Vera Bolter (chair), Peter Coeling, Kevan Larkin, Julia Pride, John Simmons, Tony Watts, John Welham.

IN ATTENDANCE

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

APOLOGIES

Anne Bailey, Marjorie Broughton, Bill Rollinson

Item	Discussion and action agreed
1.2.Welcome, introductions and apologies	<p>It was noted and welcomed that John Welham was attending the network meeting for Yorkshire and Humberside as Bill Rollinson, who had been invited, is currently not well. Marjorie Broughton and Julia Pride would share representation for the South East. Anne Bailey would represent the West Midlands and, in future, Terry Sullivan would represent the North West. It was also noted that Vera Bolter sat on the Housing and Ageing Alliance and John Simmons on Care & Repair England's Board</p> <p><i>Jane agreed to follow up the London network for a representative and to send a contact list for the national network</i></p>
3. Purpose of network	<p>Sue set out the vision for the network which was to support older activists in housing, to raise the profile of housing and ageing among older people's groups, to identify emerging issues in housing directly from older people, to act as a sounding board for issues such as the Silverlinks project and to ensure that the voices of older people are heard in the housing policy and practice arena.</p> <p>In discussion members welcomed the network setting out the following benefits and identifying some key priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharing what is happening on the ground (positive and negative) • routed in what older people say • being effective by working together • raising the profile of housing locally and nationally • helping to find ways to make councils listen getting the LGA to engage nationally • offering support to local activists and activities via the network • looking at ways to engage with future needs – those approaching later life • talking to and engaging with the right people • targeting resources more effectively

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising resources • identifying ways of using the resources of older people themselves to purchase housing options and solutions • finding ways to engage with local services by learning and sharing • showing policy makers nationally what is really happening on the ground • sharing experience of engaging with the health and care agendas • pushing for better integration and identify housing as key to health and wellbeing and to planning for the ageing society • understanding housing markets • engaging the private sector in housing • setting the debate about moving/staying put in a rounded context • focusing on the role of planning to housing • focusing on building housing for all ages, building housing for a lifetime and building for the future <p><i>Sue concluded that Care & Repair England would aim to raise funds for local activities and national support for the network. It was noted that Paper 1 has been written as a proposal for fundraising. Any further comments on this paper should be sent to Jane.</i></p>
<p>4. Local action in housing</p>	<p>Members shared their knowledge of activities as follows:</p> <p>East is 'lagging behind' on housing issues but a key concern is the needs of the private home owner</p> <p>East Midlands held a conference supported by DWP last year on living independently and are following up with a survey. The analysis is being done and the results can be fed into the network. There is also a plan to have a network across the 8 districts in Derbyshire which would link well to a national network</p> <p>North East Newcastle Elders has done much work on age friendly neighbourhoods. In relation to housing it is looking at cohousing and the need for more specialist provision. The loss of regional structures and particularly OPAG has made links across the region complex. There is a NE Forum on Ageing linked to UKAFA and an active Housing Learning and Improvement Network.</p> <p>North West There is a working group on housing in the NW which is setting its agenda for action. Wendy Cocks (housing action support officer) from Care & Repair England is on this group and Terry Sullivan from the group would attend future meetings of the network.</p> <p>South East has prioritised housing this year and has recently held a Policy Panel debate on housing and age friendly communities which will lead to a symposium later in the year. SEEFA has also just held a symposium on health and care where housing was identified as a key issue. A report has been produced and shared with policy makers.</p>

	<p>South West held a conference in Somerset last year on housing with a report produced. Issues identified from the housing work have, in particular, been about tailoring new housing to the needs of older people and offering quality choices. There is a plan for county wide meetings this year on independent living.</p> <p>Yorkshire and Humberside The Leeds Forum is concerned that the council do not have a strategy on housing and ageing so this is being pursued alongside 'hub events' events in July which aim to challenge the council questioning officers on key issues. For the Future Years Forum housing is on the agenda for this year and one issue already identified is the alternatives to building new homes given limited resources. A recent talk from the National Development Team for Inclusion focused on this aspect.</p> <p><i>Jane agreed to share information across the network by email and post where appropriate</i></p>
5. Draft network plan	<p>The plan was welcomed and agreed. Tony suggested that Care & Repair England could be more ambitious in relation to the activities and focus of the network. What was key was giving older people a voice on housing at a time when housing was such a key issue being better acknowledged for example in relation to health and in the economy.</p> <p><i>With this in mind Sue also asked the group to send her ideas for what they might need money for which would enhance applications for funding.</i></p> <p>In discussion it was agreed that champions might want to obtain the views of older people about their key housing issues to have a local 'shopping list' drawing from the postcard idea used by Care & Repair England for the More than Bricks and Mortar report or through a simple 'survey.' It was suggested that any issues identified across the regions might form a useful part of Care & Repair England's House of Lords event which is due to take place in early December. Champions would be invited to attend and could also engage local MPs to attend. The date is the afternoon of Thursday 5 December.</p> <p><i>Care & Repair England would send any examples of surveys undertaken and its postcard campaign for use by champions to provide some key questions in gaining views.</i></p> <p><i>It was noted that a webpage would also be set up to promote the network and share information.</i></p>
6. More than Bricks and Mortar brochure and actions	<p>The brochure was circulated to the group. Copies are available to circulate to meetings and contacts. It will also be sent to all who completed the postcards and to all Care & Repair England contacts. There are also plans to send to key Ministers with a cover letter. Sue pointed out that an Inter-Ministerial meeting on housing and ageing involving DH and DCLG was on the cards and the brochure would be circulated at this event. John and Tony agreed to mention and</p>

	<p>circulate the brochure at the UKAFA meeting and suggest a session on housing at a later meeting.</p> <p>The draft initial 'ideas for local action' was noted. This would be put onto the webpage and sent to groups with the brochure. Comments and additions should be sent to Jane.</p> <p>It was agreed that local stories/case studies were key to unlocking press interest on housing issues and that champions, working with Care & Repair England, might identify these to publicise issues raised by the brochure on housing 'asks'.</p>
7. Silverlinks proposal	<p>Sarah described the work of the project and set out the plans for the next phase. The project approach and plans were welcomed by the group with the following points identified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • members saw a value in extending advice, support and information with peer support being seen as key • evidence suggests that access to housing advice is poor in some areas so the Silverlinks approach was timely • whilst there was a welcome to the life course planning part of the project Julia suggested it would be important to get the information out in a 'non patronising' way • the issue of practical support through the process of decision making was welcomed particularly around issues of downsizing <p>Sarah will keep the network informed and advised of the Silverlinks web page/blog http://silverlinksprogramme.wordpress.com/</p>
8. ActiveAgeing@Home	<p>Sue explained the background to the European initiative and the declaration which was adopted at the final EU Year of Active Ageing. Although there has been no specific action since to promote the declaration in England Sue felt that the development of the network might act as a 'launch pad' creating an impetus for 'active ageing at home'. In principle the group welcomed the plans. It was felt that this could offer a fresh approach to the issues as long as it was not seen as top down.</p> <p>A copy of the declaration will be sent to the network Any further comments on the activity plan would be welcomed and the issue would remain on the agenda for future meetings</p>
9. Any other business	There was none
10. Date of next meeting	It was agreed to look at a date in the Autumn and link it, if possible, to the UKAFA meeting schedule. It was also agreed to look at three meetings per year longer term.