

Partnership Board Member Briefing Note

The Age Action Alliance is the first national initiative of its kind - an independent partnership of over 300 organisations, spanning all sectors and adopting a new approach to the opportunities and challenges of an ageing society.

Alliance Members recognise the need to work collaboratively to develop practical action to improve the lives of older people, particularly the most vulnerable and excluded.

The Alliance seeks to match members with shared interests so they can share and pool their knowledge, exchange ideas and expertise, while building on good practice in order to develop solutions to the issues faced by older people.

The views of older people are of primary importance and crucial to the success of the Alliance, whose Vision is informed and driven by older people. The Alliance is guided by a Partnership Board, 50% of whose membership is drawn from the English Forums on Ageing and older people from the devolved nations. Older people are also represented on all of the working groups.

Ageing population – demographic information

People in the UK are living longer than ever before. Over the last century, average life expectancy has increased by thirty years and will continue to increase. Fifty years ago one child in ten could expect to live to be 100, today it is one in four. In the UK there are now more people over State Pension age than children under 16. An Ageing society isn't coming tomorrow – it is with us today. Too many of today's older people find themselves in unsuitable housing, facing deprivation, isolation and exclusion. In the UK, 3.1 million people aged over 65 say that they go longer than a week without seeing a friend, neighbour or family member.

Benefits of Alliance membership

- Members work together to use their diverse skills to particularly improve the lives of the most disadvantaged older people and prevent deprivation in later life.
- Members tackle issues by pooling expertise, sharing resources, communicating ideas and championing new ways of working to make a real difference to people's lives, enabling older people to act for themselves where they can or providing support where they can't.
- Members receive regular updates and bulletins from the Alliance and have the opportunity to take an active role.
- Members are provided with the Age Action Alliance's own visual identity, for use on members' own websites, in order to champion the Alliance with others.

[The Age Action Alliance Declaration](#) sets out:

- The Alliance Vision (see below)
- What the Alliance is.
- Why the Alliance has come together at this time.
- What the Alliance is setting out to achieve.
- How the Alliance will work.

The Membership Agreement sets out what members are expected to do:

- Support the vision and values of the Age Action Alliance.
- Act as an ambassador to promote the Alliance and encourage others to join.
- Agree to share contact details with other Members.
- Receive communications and information from the Alliance.
- Strive to involve older people in the design, delivery and evaluation of Alliance work .
- Seek out opportunities to collaborate.
- Share information and good practice with the Alliance

In return Age Action Alliance Members will:

- Receive regular communications from the Secretariat.
- Have the opportunity to share information with other members.
- Be entitled to refer to our membership of the Alliance in our own communications, and use the Age Action Alliance visual identity

Work of the Alliance

Most of the activity of the Alliance takes place within its Working Groups. They prioritise action in areas older people have told us matter to them most and strive to involve older people in the design, delivery and evaluation of action. Any Alliance member is free to start a new work group. Current work themes are as follows:

- Age Friendly Environments
- Safe Warm Homes
- Attitudes to Ageing
- Digital Inclusion
- Excluded Groups
- Healthy Workplaces
- Loneliness & Isolation
- Public Health & Active Lifestyles
- Money Matters
- Transport
- Social & Economic Participation of Older People
- European issues
- Older People's Day
- Research

As a result, some early practical successes for the Alliance include:

- The Department of Energy and Climate Change and National Energy Action have used the Alliance to develop and shape early engagement in preparation for the "Green Deal". The Group also produced a widely praised Warm Homes Guide on the range of support available to prevent fuel poverty.
- The Healthy Workplaces Working Group is drawing together employer best practice on effectively managing the health of an ageing workforce to support business performance as well as the well-being of older people, at work and into later life.
- The Association of British Insurers are working with the Alliance's Older People's Reference Group, to better understand the challenges facing older people when trying to obtain insurance cover.

The Purpose of the Partnership Board is to ensure the Alliance's vision remains at the centre of all its activities

Age Action Alliance Vision:

The Alliance is informed and driven by older people themselves. Its Members share the vision of improving older people's lives; creating neighbourhoods where all older people are secure, valued and able to make a contribution to their local communities and wider society. The Alliance wants to ensure that older people are:

- *Visible, valued and heard*
- *Can make informed choices about health & wellbeing*
- *Live in safe, warm homes*
- *Have strong networks of friends, family and community support*
- *Are able to access information and services they need*
- *Live in age friendly places where their needs are met*

Role of Partnership Board

The new Partnership Board is a merger of the previous Steering and Reference Groups, made up of (at least) 50% older people and 50% organisational representatives, which will meet every four months. This model was considered most appropriate as it ensures that older people are central to the Alliance and able to steer its activities and retain its focus.

At the first meeting of the Partnership Board members identified the following characteristics as the Board's role:

- Oversight
- Connectivity
- Strategic Direction
- Problem solving
- Defining
- Promoting – ambassadorial role
- Identifying capacity beyond secretariat
- Making the work of the strands more visible
- Managing communications and the wider perception of the Alliance

And the associated skills and behaviours required of Board members as follows:

- Enthusiasm
- Leadership
- Insight
- Vision
- Enabler
- Positive Communicator
- Ambassador
- Team player

As such, members of the Partnership Board will be expected to actively champion the Alliance and to make time to work with the Secretariat on key issues outside of the main meetings. A regular time commitment and enthusiasm for Alliance success were seen as important contributions for Partnership Board members.

Key Alliance Communications:

- Members weekly update email and "Connections" monthly news bulletin
- The Alliance [website](#)
- Powerpoint presentation: [Understanding the Alliance](#)
- Trifold leaflet: [About the Alliance: an Introduction](#)