

Notes from:	UK Advisory Forum on Ageing 18 March 2015
<p>Chair:</p> <p>Members:</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Apologies:</p>	<p>Lis Robinson, Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)</p> <p>Nancy Davies, representing Strategy for Older People, Welsh Assembly David Shalit, London Forum Jean Gaston-Parry, South East Forum John Welham, Yorkshire & Humberside Forum Gilly Crosby, Centre for Policy on Ageing (CPA) Howard Lewis, representing ChangeAGENTS Network UK Limited David Hill, Welsh Senate of Older People Nicola Venus-Balgobin, SENSE Steve Robinson, Beth Johnson Foundation Kevan Larkin, Future North West Brian Warwick, South West Seniors Network Gerry Calder, Future East Claire Keatinge, Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland Bill Ions North East Forum Helen Dimmock, Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) Gilly Crosby, Centre for Policy on Ageing (CPA) Michael Bond, East of England Forum</p> <p>Madeleine Elliott, Years Ahead (North East Forum) Dr Jonathan Collie, Trading Times</p> <p>Rt. Hon. Steve Webb MP , Minister of State for Pensions Rt. Hon. Norman Lamb MP, Minister of State for Care and Support Mary Pattison, Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) Dot Gibson, National Pensioners Convention (NPC) Barry Wilford, East Midlands Forum Chris Ball, TAEN Michael Monaghan, Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament Norman Jemieson, North East Forum Phil Hayes, Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Phyllis Preece, National Partnership Forum for Older People, Wales Raj Joggia, Kensington and Chelsea Forum for Older Residents Tom Berney, Scottish Older People's Assembly Mervyn Kohler, Age UK Alan Beazley, Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion</p>

Secretariat:

Louca Hepburn, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

**Welcome and DWP Update
Lis Robinson, DWP**

Lis welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the agenda. She emphasised to members that the main focus of the day was the review of UKAFA and encouraged members to make the most of the opportunity for discussion.

**Loneliness and Isolation Task Group Report
Bill Ions and Madeleine Elliott, Years Ahead**

We live in a society where over half of all people over 75 years of age live alone, and almost five million people say that television is their only form of company.

There is robust research evidence to show that loneliness has a negative impact on health. The effects on mortality are similar in size to cigarette smoking and obesity. It is therefore costly to the individual and to society.

The Loneliness and Isolation Project, introduced in this session by Bill Ions, is one of two task groups set up by Years Ahead, the North East Forum.

Madeleine Elliott, who is responsible for the Project, gave an overview of the report findings, a copy of which is attached to these notes.

The aim of the Project is to build the evidence base and raise awareness of what works in future-proofing life against loneliness. The task group looked at services across the North East region, the risk factors for loneliness, and then set out recommendations for individuals, for business and for government.

Following the presentation the following additional points were raised:

- The dangers of moving to a rural area following retirement, without thinking of the consequences of no longer being able to drive.
- There are many good examples of existing individual and community good practice that target loneliness and isolation, and these positive examples should be widely highlighted so they can be rolled out to other areas.

Nicola Venus-Balgobin, SENSE

Nicola is leading a project funded by the Department of Health's Innovation Excellence and Strategic Development Fund, to raise awareness of hearing and sight loss in later life.

There are 250,000 people aged over 70 with dual sensory loss, and those people can find it difficult to get out and about in the community, keep up to date with news and current affairs, and maintain relationships and friendships. Apart from the human cost, lack of support can lead to higher costs later on for individuals and families.

This project has established a number of practical actions which include a package of training targeted at health and social care providers, a sensory champion scheme, and top tip guidance 'Enjoy life' which is available both as a booklet and online..

The project has now reached 88 organisations and almost 2,000 people. If you are interested in getting involved or finding out more please contact Nicola

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Brian Warwick and Tony Watts, South West Forum

How do we improve engagement across Government to meet the challenges of an ageing society

Brian Warwick opened the session by setting out some information about the South West region and some of the unique issues it faces, not least the highest migration from the South East from April to September each year, and the acute problems such as transport issues, that result.

The South West Forum has recently been sounding out the political parties to find out their manifesto pledges around ageing society. Despite differing views, members believe the overall correspondence implies that UKAFA will continue after the election, and so the question arises whether UKAFA is influencing Government as it should.

Brian and Tony, in a joint presentation, pointed that looking back at the original Elbourne report and how UKAFA started, it is possible to see where UKAFA has lost its way from the original findings and recommendations. They noted in particular:

- There should be a Minister for the Ageing Society, into which UKAFA can feed on a highly effective and efficient basis.
- EFAs need to have more influence in regions, where they can help LAs and

health bodies perform more effectively.

- The engagement of all relevant departments with policies relevant to the agenda needs bringing up to the level of that of DWP
- UKAFA needs to have a much more powerful voice, and should be involved with civil servants at the outset of policy making, this would add value and help government to design and deliver better quality services. For example members could work with civil servants on a workshop, (task and finish basis) on specific policies and strategies.
- UKAFA meetings should be more focussed, arranged around a single theme to avoid dilution of message, and should make better use of the 750 organisations that make up the Age Action Alliance.
- UKAFA needs to be adequately funded and resourced.

Following the presentation the floor was opened for discussion and the following additional points were raised:

- In Wales, older people been able to successfully influence policy from an early stage, for example working on the appointment of the Commissioner.
- The importance of equity of engagement across the regions.
- Questions from the regions should be submitted in advance of UKAFA meetings to Ministers to enable them to answer fully at the sessions.
- Some members believe there should be an independent Commissioner for England

**Dr Jonathan Collie
Trading Times**

Dr Jonathan Collie attended to encourage participation in the latest Age of No Retirement event which is taking place 27- 29 April at the People's History Museum in Manchester. This is a live showcase event that will debate themes of intergenerational integration, new models for work and life, and design-led change.

From these debates, 24 prototype projects for action will be created, detailed in a newspaper which will be a recipe for action.

Jonathan asked members to share information about the event across their networks. It is free to attend.

Volunteers are also required to lead the debates. All relevant details are on the Age of No Retirement website ageofnoretirement.org, but please contact Jonathan for

further details if required. Jonathan@tradingtimes.org.uk.

UKAFA Members present recommended the event, having attended the previous extremely successful Age of No Retirement event in London.

Helen Dimmock, DWP UKAFA review

Helen introduced the UKAFA review session, which took the form of a syndicate discussion. To focus discussion, members were provided with a review paper setting out a number of questions to consider.

These ask how far UKAFA has met its original aims, and what would make it more effective. The paper (attached with these notes) also lists the original Elbourne recommendations, together with key points from the government response. Copies of comments submitted by absent members were also provided.

Helen reminded members that they *are* UKAFA, so any asks of UKAFA are made of themselves. She referenced a previous review where volunteers were sought to lead on specific areas but none had been forthcoming.

The main points following discussions are below. The additional points made, together with written contributions provided by members, will be used as part of a formal written review being compiled by Louca.

As this will be shared with incoming Ministers, members asked if they could see the draft review for comment before it is finalised.

Key points following discussion::

- To establish a clear and agreed methodology for meaningful engagement with Ministers and ensure we have continuity to keep track of progress
- To have engagement with all Ministers with portfolios relevant to the important issues of concern to older people
- There should be a head of UKAFA – a national spokesperson who can, for example, respond to media
- UKAFA should have a clear structure and a manifesto that sets out its thinking on key issues
- UKAFA has lost its way - a working group needs to be set up to re-calibrate,

using GO science methodology.

- UKAFA needs a business plan
- UKAFA should include different generations, not just older people.
- Key issues should be identified and agreed before Ministers attend meetings.
- Future priorities should be identified 6-12 months in advance and a system in place to ensure the appropriate Minister attends to respond.
- Each UKAFA meeting should have just one main theme.
- Each Government Department should have a nominated representative, including Cabinet office

Close
Lis Robinson, DWP

Lis thanked all the day's speakers for their time and commitment; and reminded members to complete their feedback forms. Members were reminded that no further UKAFA meetings will be booked until Ministers have made a decision on its' future.