

Scottish Older People's Assembly Newsletter



10 June 2013

The Scottish Older People's Assembly is a "voice" for older people. It is a collaborative way to promote concerns to the Scottish and Westminster Governments, and to support or challenge legislation and policies which have a bearing on the quality of later life in Scotland.

Welcome

Welcome to the first newsletter from the Scottish Older People's Assembly Committee. Our aim is to keep you posted about developments since the Assembly in November 2012 and the next Assembly on Thursday 5th December 2013.

SOPA 2011 and 2012



During the past two years the SOPA Steering Group was led by Agnes McGroarty, Chairperson of the Scottish Seniors Alliance. Agnes valiantly guided both Assemblies that included the use of new technology to reach a wider audience in Hamburg, Australia and Ireland. We heard that for older people the world over, our concerns are similar.

In December 2012 the Steering Group was invited to submit an application to the Scottish Government for funding SOPA in 2013. This included the Government request to review the Older People's Consultative Forum and ensure

a connection to the regional assemblies run by *Age Scotland*.

In January 2013 the application was submitted by the City of Edinburgh Council on behalf of the Steering Group to the Government's Equality and Communities Division. It contained ideas of increasing the promotion of equality and opportunities for engagement, participation and hearing the voices of older people. At a meeting with Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing Alex Neil, the Steering Group heard that it had been successful.

Workshops

In line with the principles in the application, workshops in March and April, organised by the City of Edinburgh Council, set out to work with the group charged with arranging the Assembly.

The March workshop was facilitated by the University of Strathclyde and involved Scotland's Regional Equality Councils, to build on existing skills in playing effective roles in citizenship, democratic and equality values.



It also involved the group producing ideas on how it could operate to contribute to government policy and take forward issues of concern raised at the Assembly.



The April workshop involved Edinburgh Napier University who presented their work, commissioned by SOPA, to identify gaps and priorities in engagement and co-productive working involving older adults. This information when finalised will be used during the Assembly in December 2013. There was more discussion too on the review of the Older People's Consultative Forum and arrangements for SOPA 2013.

Agreed Way Forward

Further discussions during May resulted in the following agreement:

To preserve and build on the SOPA name and branding, the term '*Consultative Forum of Older People*' will cease to be used. In its place will be the '**Scottish Older People's Assembly Committee**' (now extended to include all equality domains). Its role and function are identical to the 'Forum' - that is to,

- meet with Ministers and high level civil servants on a quarterly basis
- hear about and influence policy and legislation and
- arrange the annual Assembly.

As the original membership of the Forum and the SOPA Steering Group was one and the same, this action is a logical step and provides clarity.

The post of Chairperson for SOPA and the Committee was advertised through its members in May. It is hoped that a Chairperson will be chosen before the end of June 2013.

The Regional Assemblies organised by Age Scotland groups will be encouraged to draw up a

programme to include the concerns of older people from each area. Feedback from each area will be presented to inform the agenda of the Assembly.

SOPA and its Committee will work on issues and concerns raised by people to help to direct them in a constructive way to make a real improvement to the quality of later life.

Specific roles of the SOPA Committee and its members are to:

- represent older people in their constituent groups
- convey their views and experience during Committee meetings, consultation or other events
- communicate these views to the Scottish and Westminster Governments, public sector bodies and agencies.

The above means that the work of the Assembly and its Committee is to relay key messages from people at grassroots level to the Scotland-wide Assembly for Ministerial attention and action. This process ensures that the messages from older people are strong, coherent and consistent.

SOPA and its committee will not align with any political party. It will campaign for or against policies with a bearing on the quality of later life.

The work of SOPA and its Committee does not prevent any group from undertaking its own work with and on behalf of older people or communicating with the Scottish Government.

Agnes McGroarty reflects on her time as chairperson



"I feel pleased and privileged to have been the chairperson of SOPA for two years. The events were challenging, interactive and responded to delegates' wishes. Both assemblies gave the

participants a chance to come together, learn of developments and speak of positive and negative experiences. I am particularly gratified that the Assembly's decision in 2012 to support the 'Vote of No Confidence in the Care Inspectorate' has resulted in new opportunities. I give my very best wishes to the new chairperson and feel confident that the voice and experience of older people will continue to improve quality of life for all."

SOPA Committee

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Delegates at SOPA 2012

Scottish Trades Union Council: Eric Souter

Trust Housing Association (Equality Scotland): Rohini Sharma Joshi rsharma@trustha.org.uk

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Highland Senior Citizen Network



Highland Senior Citizens Network

<http://www.hscn.co.uk/>

2012 Assembly Vote:

HSCN's vote of 'no confidence' in the Care Inspectorate resulted in a letter to Alex Neil MSP. His response did not adequately address concerns and indeed raised issues about what ministers think is an acceptable standard of care and value for money. This is being pursued with him directly and with the Scottish Parliament through a local MSP.

'Nothing about us, without us'

In 2012 HSCN was awarded funding from the Change Fund ('Reshaping Care' Agenda) to develop ways to ensure that older people's voices are heard wherever decisions are taken about service provision. Consequently, an engagement and development officer was appointed to actively develop the network to ensure the HSCN motto 'Nothing about us, without us' becomes a reality and not just an aspiration. Another appointment of a researcher allows good and bad experiences of care to be identified. Hopefully, practice will be influenced through the HSCN representation on NHS Highland planning and development groups.

'Moose in the Hoose' on YouTube



The film shown at the Assembly has accumulated almost 500 hits on YouTube - <http://youtu.be/1Y3LBw2p1IQ>

The social and emotional benefits for Edinburgh care home residents and ACE IT Computer Project volunteers are illustrated in the film. Although it is incorporated into the webcast available on the [SOPA 2012 webpage](#), uploading it to YouTube has made the concept available to a much wider audience. Using this free website to promote good projects is a strategy available to all organisations.

Meeting with Alex Neil MSP and Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing



As agreed, a meeting has been arranged on 19th June between the SOPA Committee and Alex Neil to raise issues of importance. The minister will also be attending the Assembly in December.



Scottish Older People's Assembly
Edinburgh International Conference Centre
Thursday 5 December 2013

DATE FOR THE DIARY

Scottish Older People's Assembly 2013

Thursday 5th December

Registration 9.30 for 10.30 - 16.00

Edinburgh International Conference Centre

BOOKING

There are 200 places at the Assembly. The Committee will arrange for invitations to be sent to groups across Scotland through their networks. Individuals can also register an interest using the following email address acfaa@edinburgh.gov.uk.

Send contact details and state if you are linked to an organisation. In November you will be notified as to whether you have been allocated a place. The aim is to have a broad spread of people representing different interest groups. Come prepared to participate in this free interactive event.

SOPA LIVE

The Assembly will be streamed live on the 5th December. If you cannot come to Edinburgh, you may wish to organise a group to watch the event on the Internet at a suitable location.

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