

Scottish Older People's Assembly, Tranent

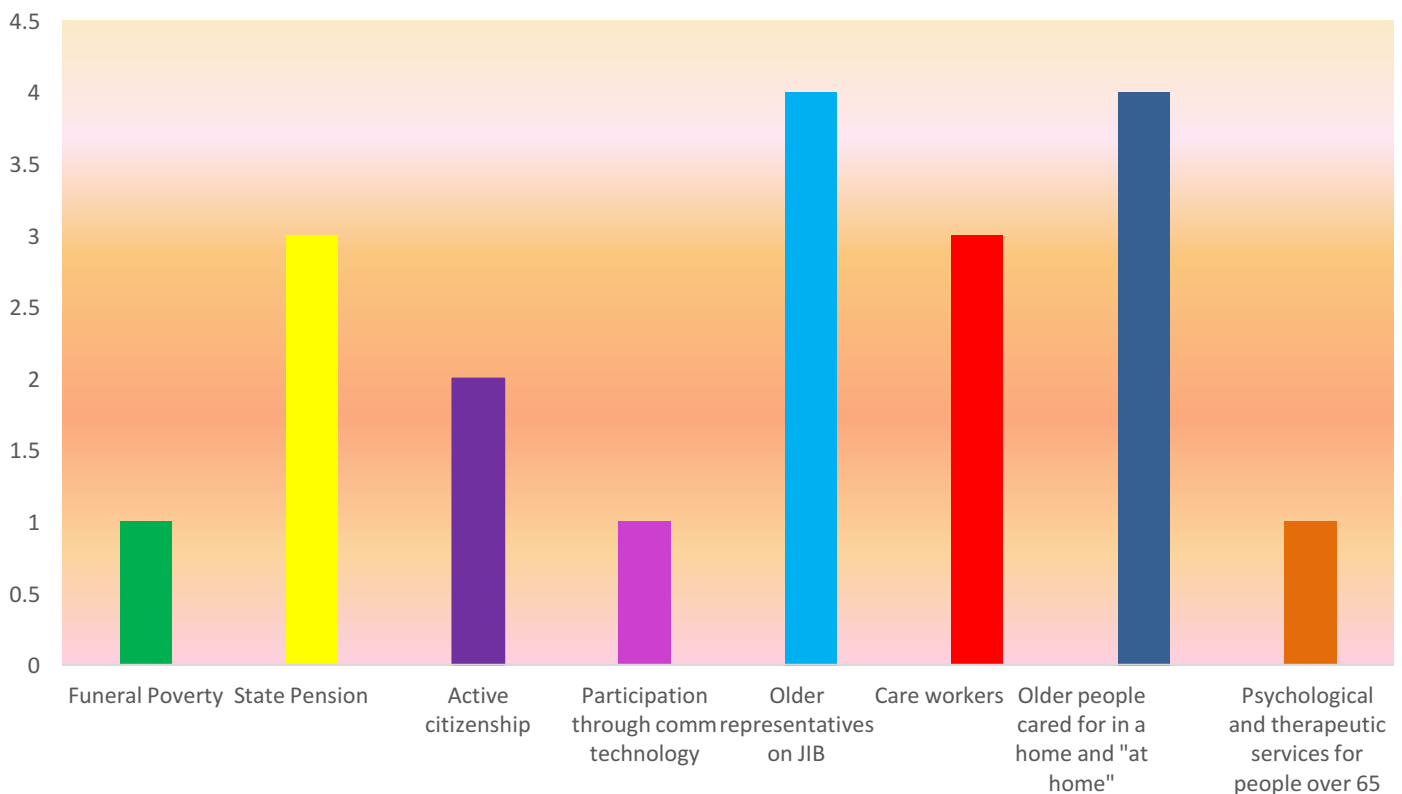
SOPA together with Dementia Friendly East Lothian hosted its third gathering of older people. This time the event was held in Tranent as part of a series of meetings around Scotland between July and October 2016. The format included a welcome by Deputy Provost Jim Gillies and Iain Gray MSP, and a presentation by Tom Berney, SOPA Chair, on the growing role of SOPA in supporting and challenging policy. 20 participants discussed their concerns, the SOPA Campaign issues 2016, and then their priorities on the campaign list.

Results from 14 returned standard forms.

This question was addressed: *"In terms of SOPA's Campaign Issues 2016 which of the following actions would you support by inserting 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, against the list below? 1 being the top priority"*.

Some people gave priority 1 to more than one Campaign Issue. All of the priorities are included in the totals shown below in Figure 1.

Fig.1



SOPA Campaign Issues are below, with the number of votes for each one (priority 1) in brackets:

- Reduce funeral poverty through funded developments and promotion of social enterprise funeral arrangements (1)
- Raise awareness of the negative impact of major changes to the State Pension (3)
- Promote the need for funded programmes to encourage active citizenship in later life (2)
- Improve participation of older adults through funded use of communication technology (1)
- Seek to have older representatives on all Joint Integrated Boards (4)
- Emphasise the need for care workers to be respected, well paid and trained to highest standard (3)
- Highlight the importance of improved quality of life for older people cared for in a home and 'at home' through links to the community (4)
- Psychological and therapeutic services for people over 65 should be funded on a par with 'adult' services (1)

Comments on the meeting

15 participants completed an evaluation form and of this number:

- 80% valued the meeting as very useful and extremely useful
- many appreciated getting good information, finding out interesting stats about older people and the issues affecting them, networking, meeting other people and discussing relevant topics
- some participants mentioned the lack of attendance by older people and the technical issues
- two participants felt that not enough was said on the detail of the achievements or specifics of the contribution to national policy; and that campaign results/progress should be highlighted
- one person felt the group work required a longer meeting
- one person suggested SOPA could be improved in the future having more participants and more opportunity for individuals to have stalls fully demonstrate/illustrate what they do.

"Lots covered in a very concise and effective way. Liked momentum of meeting - interactive, good participation."

"Informal atmosphere which made people comfortable to chat easily."

"General discussion on matters of concern to those attending."

"(What I liked best about SOPA meeting was) the opportunity to find out what is happening in other parts of Scotland and how it relates to East Lothian."

"Useful networking for the project I run. Interesting to hear an overview of outcomes SOPA has achieved to date."

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Points covered by Tom Berney and participants:

- ✓ SOPA's success in listening to older people at grassroots and taking their concerns to Scottish and Westminster Governments.
- ✓ SOPA's contribution to national policy.
- ✓ SOPA's determination to tackle inequalities and discrimination towards older people.
- ✓ SOPA's purpose is to enable and encourage older people to speak of their experiences and concerns
- ✓ Poor standard of care, poor services for older people with depression and palliative care.
- ✓ UK pension and retirement compares badly with other countries; discrimination against women.
- ✓ Housing developments in East Lothian: the houses won't be suitable for older people.
- ✓ Issue of discharge targets and the pressure that is put on integrated boards; issue of carers being underpaid.
- ✓ About 60% of voluntary work done in Scotland is by older people.
- ✓ Work of Ace IT, a local charity in Edinburgh specialising in computer training for older people.
- ✓ Age in Mind, a campaigning project funded by See Me, Scotland's attempt to end stigma against mental health problems. It is the only project funded in Britain, possibly in Europe, looking at aging with a mental health problem.
- ✓ The Scottish Government will acquire responsibility for 11 new benefits, amounting to £2.7 billion a year. Among the benefits devolved are Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Carer's Payments, Attendance Allowance, and Cold Winter Payments. A lot of them relate to older people. There will be a long consultation on the future of social security in Scotland.
- ✓ Mind for You supplies supported holidays throughout the United Kingdom for people with dementia and their carers to go together.



Tranent meeting on 15 August 2016