

## **Action Note**

### **Scottish Older People's Assembly Committee Meeting with Shona Robison Cabinet Secretary for the Commonwealth Games, Sport, Equality and Pensioners' Rights Thursday 24 April 2014 @ 2.45pm to 4pm Scottish Parliament**

#### **Participants**

**Shona Robison**, Cabinet Secretary Commonwealth Games, Sport, Equality and Pensioners' Rights Scottish Government

**Tom Berney** – chairperson Scottish Older People's Assembly, chairperson of University of Third Age, Scotland and East Kilbride and former Westminster civil servant.

**Helen Biggins** – chairperson of Seniors Together, South Lanarkshire, member of South Lanarkshire Carers Network and former Provost of East Kilbride.

**Catherine Hewit** – Disability, BSL, Older People, Equality, the Scottish Government

**Mike Liddle** - Integration & Reshaping Care, the Scottish Government

**Margaret Murdoch** – chairperson of Scottish Pensioners Forum and Fife Panel of Older People

**Glenda Watt** – Scottish Older People's Assembly Co-ordinator and Strategy Manager, Health and Social Care, The City of Edinburgh Council

**Apologies** - Agnes McGroarty, SOPA Committee

Ms Robison welcomed everyone to the meeting, extending best wishes from Alex Neil and inviting Tom to chair it, if he wished. He agreed to undertake this task and congratulated the Minister on her appointment as Cabinet Secretary.

#### **Tom Berney's opening remarks**

- Tom Berney thanked Ms Robison for the chance to meet with her. He spoke of the activities undertaken by SOPA during 2013/14 and the connections developed by SOPA at a local level in different parts of Scotland. He presented the Minister with the 2013 SOPA Report containing information from many older people on the inequity of pensions, the impact of welfare reform upon them and other issues that had been raised during three SOPA seminars. He presented a copy of SOPA's

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History, which included reference to Ms Robison's meeting with the Older People's Consultative Forum in April 2008.

### Issues raised by Shona Robison

- The Minister said that the Scottish Government is delighted to award £40k to SOPA for its activities in 2014/15 and that she gives her commitment to support its work.
- Regarding her role of Cabinet Secretary on Pensioners Rights, she plans to raise the voice of older people in the Cabinet, act as a conduit for different matters that impact on older people and co-ordinate issues produced by SOPA. For example, if SOPA raised concerns about health and social care she could speak with Alex Neil in his position as Cabinet Secretary for Health and Well Being.
- During future quarterly meetings with SOPA, Ms Robison asked that the meetings have a clearer focus on a specific area and to give adequate time to have a debate such as pension issues. On matters requiring updating from various sources in the Scottish Government, these could be provided in advance of the meeting.
- The Minister asked that the next meeting with SOPA take place after the Commonwealth Games on or around 3<sup>rd</sup> August taking note of the restrictions imposed on politicians prior to the Referendum, and subject to her diary commitments

### Issues raised by SOPA

Tom Berney thanked the Minister for the continued financial report and asked for an update on the topics raised with the Cabinet Secretary Alex Neil on 21 November 2013. These were as follows:

**The issue of no traffic signage between Hairmyres and Monklands hospitals was first raised with Nicola Sturgeon in 2011. SOPA requests that as AA signs are quickly produced and removed for big events, could similar signage be provided for people accessing the hospitals?**

- The Minister and officials from Scottish Government provided a response from Transport Scotland. That "people accessing the hospital should undertake basic route planning in advance of the journey and that the Traffic Scotland website <http://www.trafficscotland.org/index.aspx> provides up-to-date information on current traffic conditions and future planned road works and events. It was also suggested that NHS Lanarkshire could provide travel information for people at each hospital"
- SOPA said that it seemed unreasonable that an issue that had been raised at every level of government was so difficult to achieve and hoped that the Cabinet Secretary could influence some progress on it.

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Ms Robison replied that the SOPA concern be returned to Transport Scotland and if there was no progress, she would raise the issue with Keith Brown, Minister for Transport.

### **Liverpool Care Pathway**

#### **SOPA was concerned that medical people had received an incentive to “send people off”**

- The Minister stated that Professor Craig White was appointed the Chairperson of the End of Life Care. Its remit had been agreed and there were now discussions on links with the National Advisory Group on Palliative Care. This will include an engagement structure and arrangement to include SOPA.

#### **SOPA seeks Ministerial support at its event in the debating chamber of the Scottish Parliament on 31 October 2014 and from time to time at its Committee meetings.**

- The Minister gave a tentative commitment to attend SOPA on 31 October. She noted that the event was after the Referendum and therefore asked that flexibility be built into the SOPA programme as issues on pensions in an independent Scotland (subject to a Yes vote in the Referendum) could be dealt with at the event. She agreed to attend SOPA Committee meetings occasionally.
- SOPA said they appreciated the need for flexibility this year but were constrained by the need to reach firm advance arrangements with the Parliament staff.

#### **Association of Directors of Social Work reviewing the approach of using “15 minute visits” and the Scottish Government Report on the future of residential care.**

- Mike Liddle reported that the review on the use of 15 minute visits is not complete. Ms Robison asked that SOPA be informed of any outcomes.
- Mike Liddle referenced The Future of Residential Care for Older People in Scotland March 31, 2014  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/02/6217>

“The above report examines at a strategic level the key purpose and desired structure of residential care services fit for the aspirations and needs of future generations. Since the development of the National Care Home Contract in 2006, we have witnessed standardised contracts and more transparent and consistent approaches to funding care. This has largely overcome the variation and complexity in the contractual relationship between the individual, provider and local

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authority. Considerable progress has been made in procuring care in care homes and improving outcomes for service users. However, the current mix of services within the care home market is not producing optimum outcomes when viewed from a whole system and care user's perspective."

### **As Alex Neil stated that consideration is being given to paying the living wage to care workers, SOPA asks, if there progress on this issue?**

- Tom Berney reported that while participating in a meeting in Inverness he had received news that all care providers in the area were to pay the living wage. However this was not the case elsewhere.
- The Minister explained that the arrangement in Inverness was likely to have arisen through negotiation and agreement with all local care providers thereby mitigating the need for competition. She further explained that Alex Neil had met with key care providers such as Four Seasons, BUPA etc on contract negotiation and that Nicola Sturgeon had reported that EU rules prohibited overall agreements. As a consequence, the First Minister will raise this important issue with the European Commission. She also advised that SOPA could be involved in the Carer's Bill that Michael Mathieson was taking forward.
- Margaret Murdoch voiced her concern at the growing number of food banks in Scotland and the fact that few older people are perceived not to be using them, possibly due to pride.
- The Minister agreed that it was a shocking state of affairs. She said that Margaret Burgess (Minister for Housing and Welfare) is leading on the Welfare Reform issues and that she would ask for this concern to be addressed and that SOPA would be informed of developments. She asked that a briefing update on what work has been undertaken so far to assist be issued to SOPA. David Hamilton will pursue this.

### **Dangers of electronic cigarettes. What is the Scottish Government's position on the increased sale and use of electronic cigarettes?**

- The Minister said she was aware that tobacco companies are promoting their sale and targeting young people. Michael Matheson (Minister for Public Health) is looking into this concern but there is very little evidence on the effects of electronic cigarettes. They are banned within venues at the Commonwealth Games.

### **Lochaber Integrated Transport Pilot Project. Is there an update from Transport Scotland?**

Research was conducted during September to November 2012 to establish the nature of the existing transport provision in Lochaber. It is understood that the Scottish Government may be looking to develop a Pilot Area(s) in relation to integrated transport for health and social care. Scottish Government officials have been made aware of the Pilot in Lochaber.

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- The Scottish Government will provide a written response to this query.
- SOPA also raised a related matter of access to new buses for disabled and elderly people and asked if there was a government regulation covering it.
- The Minister agreed to advise SOPA of the present position

### Issues arising from SOPA 2013

**Hardships encountered by grandparents as kinship carers and family impacts of welfare reforms affecting older people. SOPA seeks assurance that no older person is disadvantaged in supporting their families or by family in receipt of welfare benefits.**

- The Minister said there is a review of financial arrangements for Kinship Carers, that there is better understanding of their plights and that extra funding had been supplied to Citizens Advice Scotland to help Kinship Carers navigate their way through different financial arrangements. Cathy Hewit said that she could facilitate a connection between SOPA and a relevant government official on these concerns and that briefing provided for the meeting with the Minister on the Scottish Government's position on kinship carers would be forwarded to SOPA for information. David Hamilton will do this.
- **Role of older people in the engagement and co-production of services.**

A report commissioned for the SOPA Committee - 'Identifying Priorities and Gap Areas in Engagement and Co-productive Activity: A mapping exercise' (Edinburgh Napier University, 2013), identified to what extent organisations are currently engaging directly with older people to shape their services. It concluded that participating or being engaged does not necessarily mean that people have a clearly heard voice. There is variation too in the way in which people are involved or want to be involved. Therefore, more openness and participation are not necessarily linked to greater empowerment. This being the case, SOPA would like to see the Community Empowerment (Scotland) benefit older people.

- Helen Biggins said there could be greater clarity on the consultation and engagement with older people on policy implementation. In the context of the implementation of Reshaping Care for Older People, she asked that it be mandatory that older people be engaged in the decision making and operational management on the implementation

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of such policies. Using “the third sector” was not good enough and in many circumstances omitted the direct involvement of older people.

- Margaret Murdoch provided a graphic example of poor hospital discharge practice.
- Tom Berney said that SOPA was expected to link to the Community and Empowerment Bill during its event in the Scottish Parliament. Therefore there was an opportunity to develop and consolidate the involvement and engagement of older people at a national and local level in the development and implementation of policies.
- The Minister named Derek Mackay, Minister for Local Government and Planning as leading on the Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill. She agreed to take a note of and pick up on these issues.

Tom Berney thanked The Minister for meeting SOPA. He said that her description of her new role looked very helpful and that he and the SOPA committee looked forward to further consultations with her.