



Report of the SEEFA Convention *SHAPING OUR OWN FUTURE*

Richmond House, Whitehall
2 November 2015

Foreword

The *demographic time bomb* – it's an all too familiar story: the notion that an ageing society is a major social and economic threat. In this story older people are seen as dependent on working age people, make no contribution to and have little value in society.

Based on what the later life experts in our Policy Panel have told us, SEEFA believes it is time for a new narrative - one that:

- challenges the perception that ageing and longevity are nothing more than a socio-economic problem and that people in later life are a burden on the rest of society;
- confronts the negative portrayal of older people and the underlying ageism within wider society;
- contributes to a better understanding of the real implications of an ageing population in a changing society;
- clarifies the contribution made by people in later life;
- calls for *activism* in later life and more involvement in the shaping of the communities in which we live.

Our Convention, therefore, aimed to generate a discussion from which this new narrative can emerge and go on to form the basis of a **message** to all those involved in policies and decisions that affect the day to day lives of people in later life. The more **voices** we can reflect, the more powerful this message will be.

A major question lying at the heart of the Convention was whether perhaps the time has come for people in later life to see themselves as part of an **activist movement**, and, with the help of this new narrative, to be proactive in securing a more valued place in society.

Peter Dale
Chair, Board of Trustees
SEEFA

The Convention Contributors

Dame Philippa Russell DBE, SEEFA Trustee: Chair

David Brindle, Public Services Editor, The Guardian: Facilitator

Lord Geoffrey Filkin, Chair of the Centre for Ageing Better

Nick Wilson, founder Member of SEEFA

Julia Pride, SEEFA Trustee: Convention Organiser

The Discussion Panel:

Jadine Glitzenhirn, SEEFA Member

Professor Leela Damodaran, Professor of Digital Inclusion and Participation at Loughborough University

Jeremy Porteus, Founder and Director of Housing LIN (Learning and Improvement Network)

Guy Robertson, Director of Positive Ageing Associates

Professor Stephen McNair, founder of the Centre for Research into the Older Workforce at the University of Surrey

Dr Jonathan Collie, co-founder of 'The Age of No Retirement', a design-led movement for age-positive social change

The Audience:

SEEFA members and invited guests

Summary of the Convention Proceedings

Introduction

SEEFA Trustee Dame Philippa Russell, opening the proceedings, invited delegates to use the Convention as an opportunity to lay the foundations of a new narrative on ageing. First, she called for more thought to be given to definitions of ageing and a more considered use of language in discussing issues relating to later life. Chronological definitions of age are unhelpful; perceptions of age change over time; is it even possible to talk of older people as a common interest group?

Secondly, she hoped that the Convention would highlight the extent to which negative perceptions of older people are commonplace and serve to influence how society responds to ageing. Such negative perceptions result in older people being 'compartmentalised' within a society where there is little in the way of inter-generational understanding, activity or contact. Ageing if seen as a natural and more positive part of life may be better understood and more accepted by younger people, who in turn would not be so inclined to reinforce the view that ageing is a social problem.

Finally, Dame Philippa hoped that the Convention would develop some key messages to form part of any new narrative: most people are fortunate enough to age well, to sustain past interests and form new ones; people in later life are assets in their communities, both in terms of their past contributions and in terms of what they continue to offer – as carers, as volunteers, as cohesive elements in families, as citizens, taxpayers, workers, culturally, economically The Convention is an opportunity to give voice to the rising frustration that, in spite of their contribution, older people are not sufficiently valued by society. The message needs to be loud and clear that it is about time they were.

An overarching theme for the Convention was why we need to shift society's perceptions of ageing. We were concerned to demonstrate that discrimination and negative portrayals of ageing are both commonplace and affect how individual people and society respond to later life issues. We were also concerned to demonstrate that many older people are excluded and disadvantaged within wider society and to pose the question: do older people themselves need to take more responsibility, become more organised, in order to assert their value and contribution.

SEEFA's approach and the need for activism: Nick Wilson

Nick Wilson outlined those themes relevant to the need for and establishment of a new narrative that had been identified through SEEFA's work, and to show how they point to the need for an 'activist' approach. The following is a summary of his presentation:

SEEFA's Policy Panel is made up of people who, from their own life experiences, are experts on later life, and who can actively engage with policy makers and commissioners to influence later life policy. We have regular meetings of the Policy Panel, the most recent of which was about housing and long term care.

Underlying all this work is SEEFA's view that older people should not be seen as a burden on society but, rather, as an asset whose experience, skills and talents are under-valued.

But we can't afford to be passive about this. If we want to change society's perception of us, we need to adopt an 'activist' approach, although there is some concern about the terminology. Some people don't much like the term 'activism'; our use of it is intended to reflect older people taking more responsibility and control over their place in wider society.

Based on a later life perspective, any new narrative on ageing will need to reflect the following:

- The starting point for any health and social care service should be to help people keep on contributing to their community and to remain independent for as long as possible.
- Good information and advice is an essential underpinning for people to play a more effective role in the management of their own health and social care.
- Effective and creative housing solutions, and advice on options, will enable more of us to stay in our own homes and live independent lives.
- The more actively involved, effectively engaged and in control older people are with their housing and care provision at all stages, the better that housing and care provision will be.
- The secret of longer working lives (attractive to some, essential to others) is to take stock of our experience, review what skills we now need to develop and plan our futures before being hit by the sledge-hammer of redundancy.
- Older workers, whether paid employees or volunteers, are of great value to the voluntary sector – because of our life experience, skills and 'resilience', and also our availability and flexibility.
- More effective use of information technology is one way of boosting older people's contribution to society: as the report from a recent SEEFA Symposium said, 'if we are to reduce healthcare costs, keep people working past 65, etc, everyone needs to be included'.
- Information technology designers in industry and the public sector should listen harder to their customers, including older people, rather than latching on to what exciting new things the technology can do.
- Tackling social isolation is key to many aspects of an active older life: better health and well-being, more active involvement in our communities, feeling valued by others and in our own eyes.
- Older people should be seen by commissioners and designers of services as experts, based on our own life experiences, and should be involved as equal partners in 'co-designing' services.

It is noticeable that many of these points are about what others should be doing to enable us to be more 'activist'. A key challenge for the Convention is what more we ourselves should be doing.

Setting the Scene: David Brindle

Portrayals of ageing and older people in the media both reflect and influence social attitudes. As an experienced journalist with a special interest in public sector issues, David Brindle had no doubt that these portrayals are largely negative:

- the media is largely pre-occupied with the cost of ageing and older people are caricatured as *dead weight* within society;
- however, older people are also perceived as being better off than younger people – indeed some commentators appear to be provoking inter-generational conflict, where older people are responsible both for the housing crisis and for taking jobs away from younger people;
- and yet, the media also offers a traditional view that younger people are *productive* while older people are *recipient*.

The stereotyping of age appears to be deeply embedded and the idea that older people are at best, helpless or hapless, and at worst, evil perhaps takes root at an early age; David reminded the Convention that you only have to look at the portrayal of older people in popular children's films.

Discussion Panel: shifting perceptions, why do we need to?

How then do negative social attitudes and discrimination affect the lives of older people? Our Discussion Panel opened up a number of key issues that: a) reinforce the importance of a new narrative, and b) need to be addressed as part of constructing this new narrative.

What do we mean by ageing and is it a problem?

*While statisticians and policymakers need to define “old” in terms of chronological age (commonly either over 50 or over 65), the term, as used by the media in particular, is a social construct, associated with physical and mental decline. Thus a healthy active MP of 65 is seen as a politician, where a man of 65 with declining physical strength and perhaps a chronic medical condition is seen as **old**.*

The only factors which distinguish older people are that they are more likely to experience poor health, and less likely to be in paid employment. For most people, both of these happen later in life than in the past, but the range of ages at which these things happen is expanding, so that some people are capable of doing things at 80 which others cannot manage at 50. Thus, when we talk about the distinctive needs of older people, we are really talking about issues of employment and disability.

*So we either have a self-fulfilling definition of ageing linked to decrepitude, in which case it is a problem, or we focus on the real issues, in which case there is no need to regard older people as a distinctive group. Arguably older people share key aspirations and needs with younger people, described by one commentator as the triple need for: **somewhere to live, someone to love, and something to do.***

Stephen McNair

The Convention agreed that being more precise in how we talk about ageing is important and that, while it makes little sense to regard all people over some arbitrary age, whether 65, 60 or 50 even, as part of the same group, it is clear that as people get older they do face a number of challenges and that there is *common cause* to be fought for.

Ageing is part of life; there is, however, a tendency to label and compartmentalise people in terms of which generation they belong to . If ageing is seen in terms of decline, then the older generation will be separated off from the rest of society. If we take a 'life course' view and resist the labels, then there may be more focus on people's capabilities, and age per se will cease to be perceived as a problem.

Jonathan Collie

Challenging the myths

Social attitudes to ageing are based on many assumptions about older people that simply aren't true. The so called *baby boomers* are a particular group about which a number of such assumptions are made; the Convention was invited to consider a publication produced by the Ready for Ageing Alliance, *The Myth of the Baby Boomer*:

http://www.cpa.org.uk/cpa/docs/R4AA/R4AA_the_myth_of_the_baby_boomer.pdf

This publication exposes a number of myths about education, finance, work, health, housing and leisure. A wider realisation of the truth about ageing may perhaps help society to respond more positively to the needs of people in later life.

Older people give more than they get!

In spite of widely held assumptions about the health, social care and pension benefit costs of an ageing population, older people are net contributors to the economy. And this contribution is significant, estimated currently to be £40 billion a year rising to £77 billion by 2030 (WRVS).

Guy Robertson

Age and the workplace

Something to do!

Work is important at whatever age – it provides meaning and purpose and the opportunity for social engagement. Given that well-being is linked to continuing employment, it is hardly surprising, therefore, that people do generally want to work

for as long as they are able.

If the way in which people age is changing, with perhaps the impact of disability and functional limitations being felt across an expanding age range, then there needs to be corresponding change in the workplace. But it's not clear that this is happening; work continues to be seen as a climb up a ladder to a point where at a certain age, people are either pushed, or decide to leap, off.

There need to be changes in the work place culture and in employers' perceptions of ageing. Can we afford to lose the skills, experience and expertise of older workers? Can we see older workers as assets, perhaps to be deployed differently in the later part of their careers, for example as mentors or advisors? Current attitudes to ageing coupled with a traditional approach to career progression and retirement result in too many older people who want to work not being able to, or having to settle for part time low paid jobs. Any new narrative needs to reinforce the capabilities of older people, and the benefit that results from continued employment both to individuals in terms of their improved health and well-being, as well as to society as a whole.

Stephen McNair
Jonathan Collie

Age and technology

In our Digital Society it is increasingly the case that digital inclusion is key to social inclusion. This means that we need to promote the digital participation of all groups in society – including older and disabled people.

Extensive research including the NDA Sus-IT (New Dynamics of Ageing and Loughborough University) project has shown that there are two crucial factors that underpin successful digital participation: one is good IT (information technology) support and the other is good design.

Like IT users of any age, older people need and want IT support both to become and to remain users of the internet and information and communications technologies. Yet the evidence all around us shows that there is wide-ranging discrimination against older people in the quality of IT support typically available to them. What we have is a bizarre and highly perverse contrast between, on the one hand, the well-resourced and good quality of IT support available as a matter of course for the majority of those in the workforce who tend to be IT literate and confident, with strong social networks and, on the other, the almost non-existent support for the much more IT disadvantaged 'home alone'.

There is a pressing need for better IT support in the community comparable to that available for most employed people – but tailored to the needs and characteristics of older people.

Leela Damodaran

Our new narrative needs to draw attention to the challenges that many people face as society becomes increasingly dependent on the use of technology. The problem is not

just about lack of skills and understanding concerning the use of IT; there is an emerging culture gap in terms of engaging with a complex technological world. Not only is there a need for individual learning and support, organisations must be helped better to understand the needs of people in later life, and adapt their behaviour as well.

Positive ageing and citizenship

Ageism is no joke!

The emotional and psychological aspects of ageing are often overlooked. How people feel about themselves and their lives makes a real difference to health and well-being. A recent study in America found that people who had a positive approach to life had a greater life expectancy (more than seven years) than those who had a negative outlook.

Ageism in society is likely to contribute to an individual's negative outlook and hence impact on health and well-being. We must, therefore, take ageism seriously. A society which views older people as citizens and assets is more likely to enable individuals to have a positive outlook and hence to be more resilient.

The promotion of active citizenship, however, does not appear to be on the agenda in the majority of communities. While there are some attempts at consultation, this is not the same as engaging with people with a view to empowering them to participate in the processes that affect their lives.

Guy Robertson

Slough Forum promotes a positive approach to ageing, encouraging older peoples' voices to be heard and older people to be co-producers of their own health rather than passive recipients.

Jadine Glitzenhirn

*What do we want to do with the outcome of greater longevity – the **extra ten** (years) of healthy life many of us can now expect? Instead of the demographic time bomb approach we as individuals and society as a whole need to start focusing on the positive aspects and exciting potential the extra ten gives us.*

Jonathan Collie

Age and housing

Somewhere to live!

Control over where you live should not disappear with age. A shortage of integrated, personalised advice and information services means that's the reality for too many older people. Often, they and their carers, are unaware of the range of housing options available to them.

Too often a sudden crisis – such as a stroke, a fall or the loss of a carer - can result in a premature move to institutional settings such as residential care.

A first step to raising awareness of the housing and care options available – such as aids and adaptations, extra care housing and telecare and telehealth – is signposting people to the information and advice services we already have.

In 2011, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Housing and Care for Older People also argued in its Living Well at Home report that local authorities should be encouraged to coordinate the provision of face-to-face housing information and advice for older people.

More recently, Care & Repair England set out a one-stop shop model for integrated advice based on a personalised approach. This would provide older people with advice on:

- *housing options for 'staying put'*
- *housing options for moving*
- *finance options such as equity release and*
- *care and support options.*

Such an approach is about helping older people find solutions that meet their specific housing, health and care needs. There is overwhelming evidence that looking at each of those key elements in isolation is bad news for the individual and for the public purse.

The 2014 Care Act requires councils to provide information and advice around the broader care needs of their vulnerable residents.

Commissioners and providers should be involving enthusiastic older people in developing and testing such services. That's how we'll get integrated and personalised information and advice of the sort set out above.

We then need to promote the services. We need to ensure they are accessible through using a range of platforms – from traditional leaflets to helplines and websites. Only in that way will older people remain in control of one of the most fundamental elements of our lives – where we live.

Jeremy Porteus

In the face of recent claims that older people are responsible for the housing crisis and calls for them to vacate their comfortable large homes, our new narrative needs to be clear about the right of people to remain living independently in their own homes for as

long as they want to. Social attitudes based on a more positive view of ageing and the recognition of the value and contribution of older people may result in a greater commitment to the provision of more appropriate housing options for older people, such as extra care housing.

The need for activism

Many people argue that older people should not be treated as a separate group – if anything, the diversity of their life experiences makes older people even more diverse than younger ones. On the other hand, the idea of creating a separate voice for older people is based on the notion that all older people are bound together by a common interest, or perhaps grievance.

Stephen McNair

Activism is a response to issues that affect a significant number of people who are in some way disadvantaged by the prevailing social norms; often but not always it is a response of a minority group within society. In the past few decades we have seen activism successfully responding to gender inequality, racism and discrimination against disabled people. Why then has there been no activist movement to support those in later life who continue to face ageism and discrimination?

In the face of an increasingly hostile approach to ageing, with some commentators presenting a young versus old view of society, is there a need for older people to be more assertive about telling the real stories of their lives? Should we, as well as creating our new narrative and debunking the many myths, be seeking ways of ensuring that our voice is heard? Do we need to cease our acceptance of the old age industry in whose vested interest it is to represent us as needy and dependent?

Activism is about planning our future.

Jonathan Collie

The Centre for Ageing Better: Lord Filkin in conversation with David Brindle

There has been a rise in the level of discussion about ageing, but limited progress in terms of developing a positive narrative. There is no lead from Government in terms of challenging the largely negative portrayal of our ageing society; it appears to be nobody's job to create a joined up policy response to the social impact of increasing longevity, let alone one that recognises that older people are assets not problems.

The Centre for Ageing Better (CfAB) is a 'what works centre'. Its aim is to identify what older people need to have a better life, what will make a difference to individuals. Based on examining evidence of a wide range of projects and activity and the circumstances of

older people, it will be better placed to identify what changes need to be made. Areas to be looked at will include: money, health, relationships and activity, whether paid work or volunteering. It's clear that having 'something to do' contributes to health and well-being.

The voice of older people is an important part of the CfAB agenda and the Centre is reaching out to a range of different organisations and groups. It is important that this voice is both heard and better understood, particularly to help re-position the emerging and unhelpful young versus old debate. Society needs to understand that the concern is not simply about the current cohort of older people; we need to think about what the future should hold for today's younger people as they age. More and more we need to stop thinking about older people as passive recipients of services or benefits and more as productive individuals and social assets.

Do we need to have an 'ageing movement' in the same way that the disability movement has been successful in achieving large scale social change? While there are organisations which are effective in representing older people there appears to be an absence of a 'by older people, for older people' organisation.

Constructing a new narrative – positive ageing and activism; what do we need to do?

A number of ideas or steps were identified by the Convention's panellists as part of a discussion about what we need to do to construct a new narrative. What follows is a summary of the key points; some are ascribed to individual panellists, others reflect the general discussion that took place.

Activism?

So should we be trying to create a 'voice' for older people? If we do, do we increase the risk of intergenerational tension – strengthening the (largely spurious) arguments that the old are taking resources from the young? What would perhaps be more appropriate, would be measures to strengthen intergenerational solidarity, to reduce age discrimination in the workplace, and to tackle mild and chronic disability.

The work place

Social change is often the result of big decisions, in particular legislation, e.g. seat belt legislation, the smoking ban. While age discrimination legislation has had a limited impact, real change is emerging in the workplace as a result of changes affecting retirement. As this change gathers pace the work place has the potential to support a more positive approach to ageing, so it becomes more commonplace for older workers to occupy valued roles, contributing perhaps in different ways as their careers approach the latter stages. A practical step would be for mid life career reviews to become standard practice.

Stephen McNair

Community engagement

Present all local authorities with a new narrative and ask what they're doing to engage older people and how they are providing leadership to build effective communities.

For real action to happen, councils need to:

- recognise ageing as a key strategic priority*
- put in place leadership arrangements to ensure corporate governance*
- proper approach to engaging with older people*
- adopt an asset based or citizenship approach*

Emotional and psychological aspects of ageing

People feeling better about themselves is likely to lead to greater health and well-being and increased longevity. Having a positive self image is likely to mean that a person will be viewed more positively. Building resilience among older people through the use of, for example, talking therapies such as CBT (more commonly applied to younger people), will contribute to positive ageing.

Guy Robertson

Housing and design

Take infrastructure seriously – design for later life, appropriate housing and built environment. Perhaps the new committee chaired by Lord Adonis which advises on infrastructure projects should be made aware of issues relating to ageing.

Jeremy Porteus

- *Change the language, change the stories! Develop a language and sense of better understanding of what we're talking about*
- *Develop the new narrative with younger people in mind; an intergenerational approach is needed*
- *Listen to people, see the person (any new narrative should ensure that service providers understand this and the need to be consistent)*
- *Dispel the myths*
- *Age is opportunity*
- *Age is part of life and a life course approach might reduce the negative portrayals of ageing*

- *Convert grey power into real power*
- *Need for SEEFA and all organisations concerned with promoting positive ageing, to seek partners and allies*
- *As individuals, older people should become active in some way in our communities*

Contributor Pen Pictures

David Brindle

David is Public Services Editor of the Guardian. He specialises in social policy issues and has won a number of awards for his coverage of health and social care and the voluntary sector. He is a regular conference chair and speaker. He is chair of NDTi, a not-for-profit organisation working to improve support for people at risk of exclusion, and is vice-chair of Richmond Fellowship, a leading charitable provider of mental health and addiction services. He is a member of various advisory committees, including those of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and the School for Social Care Research. He is a visiting fellow at the Centre for Citizen Participation, Brunel University.

Jadine Glitzenhirn

Jadine is a retired Tourism Consultant, a committee member of Slough Older Peoples' Forum, Co-Chair of the Slough Carers Partnership Board; a member of Neighbour Services Resident Board; a member of Carers UK and the South East England Policy Panel on Later Life and Ageing. She took unplanned retirement 7 years ago to care for her mother, now aged 92. She has been a carer for 7 years. In her caring role she has firsthand experience of what it is like to be on the receiving end of a variety of local services, including health, care, housing etc. Through her first hand knowledge Jadine now works hard to try to make things better for current and future generations.

Professor Leela Damodaran

Leela Damodaran, FAcSS, MloD, is Professor of Digital Inclusion and Participation at Loughborough University. She also leads the Digital Technologies and Social Inclusion (DTSI) Group and works as an independent policy advisor. She specialises in the behavioural aspects and human use of information and communications technologies (ICTs), planning of change and transition, strategies for social and digital inclusion, citizen engagement and participation. She is particularly interested in working with communities and grass-roots organisations to promote successful digital participation of older people.

Leela is a representative of the academic sector on the Digital Inclusion Delivery Board (DIDB) of the Government Digital Strategy team in the Cabinet Office and has recently completed a term in the associated role of Chair of the Research Working group.

She is a member of the Action Group on Technology and Ageing of the South East England Forum on Ageing (SEEFA).

Jeremy Porteus

Jeremy is Founder and Director of Housing LIN (Learning and Improvement Network). Until 2011, Jeremy was the National Programme Lead for Housing at the Department of Health (DH) and responsible for its £227million Extra Care Housing capital grant programme. Since leaving the DH, Jeremy has established the highly-respected Housing LIN. He is a member of the Prime Minister's Challenge on Dementia Health and Social Care Champion's Group and is also Chair of the Homes and Communities Agency's Vulnerable and Older People's Advisory Group (the government social housing investment body in England).

Guy Robertson

Guy Robertson is Director of Positive Ageing Associates, an organisation specialising in promoting positive approaches to later life at both the personal and organisational level. Guy is a committed commentator on ageing issues with a long career in working to improve the quality of services provided to older people by social services, the NHS and voluntary organisations, his main focus being on positive ageing. He advises and supports people approaching later life to look at the emotional and psychological aspects of ageing. Guy is spearheading the promotion of tips and techniques for people to use to address this important aspect of life. Indeed he has developed a ten step programme to help people to age positively -How to age positively: a handbook for positive change in later life.

He was Head of the Ageing Well Programme (which supported councils to prepare for an ageing society) until its conclusion in 2012. Previously Guy has led work on prevention and early intervention at the Department of Health, within the Older People and Dementia division, and in particular, led the support to the Partnerships for Older People Projects (POPP) programme.

Professor Stephen McNair

Stephen McNair is now "semi-retired". On behalf of the UK Economic and Social Research Council, he now chairs the Scientific Advisory Committee of a project to coordinate academic research on demographic change across Europe. He is an Adviser to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's programme on "Generations, Work and Poverty", and a Senior Research Fellow of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE). He is Secretary to the National Older Learners Group and a member of the UK Advisory Forum on Age. In 2003 he founded the Centre for Research into the Older Workforce at the University of Surrey, where he was Professor of Education, and for several years he was President of the National Association for Educational Guidance for Adults. Prior to that he spent most of his career in adult learning, and careers guidance, as a manager, researcher and policy adviser in higher, further and vocational education.

Dr Jonathan Collie

Jonathan is a passionate social entrepreneur, committed to improving the way society recognises and values the incredible wealth of experience, talent and capabilities of over-50 Britain. He is the co-founder of 'The Age of No Retirement', a design-led movement for age-positive social change - towards a stronger age-neutral multigenerational society where every citizen regardless of age has the skills, support and opportunities necessary to live a full, productive and fulfilling life. He is also the founder of Trading Times, a web service that connects skilled over-50s with flexible, local, paid work opportunities.

Lord Geoffrey Filkin

Geoffrey Filkin has worked throughout his career on improving public services and he has a wide understanding of policy and government at local and national levels plus experience of all three sectors. He was a Chief Executive in local government, then CEO of the Association of District Councils. He then entered the Lords and served as a Government Minister. He then chaired two Select Committees in the Lords.

He has founded several charities and think tanks and proposed and chaired a Lords Select Committee to investigate the implications of our ageing society. Its highly influential report, *Ready for Ageing*, was published in March 2013. He now sits on the cross-benches in the Lords, is the Chair of the Centre for Ageing Better and has led its foundation and funding by the BIG Lottery Fund.

Nick Wilson

Nick was a founder member of SEEFA (and its predecessors) and leads on its older workforce programme. As a non-exec with his local NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, he is particularly interested in patient involvement and 'activation'. He is a Trustee and Governor at Treloar School and College for disabled young people. As an independent consultant for the past nine years, he has focused on skills, employment, social care, disability and the older workforce. His earlier career was as a civil servant in the government departments responsible for employment and education, latterly as a Director in the Government Office for the South East and at the Learning and Skills Council in Surrey.

Peter Dale**SEEFA November 2015**