



SEEFA Member Briefing August 2016

We thought SEEFA members might appreciate another short written briefing. Further information is available from any member of the SEEFA Executive Group or you could have a look on the SEEFA website at www.SEEFA.org.uk. *Please talk to us if you have later life issues you want raising or if you have examples of good and bad practice.*

1. **SEEFA's call for 'a new narrative on ageing'**. Work is continuing on SEEFA's call for a new narrative on ageing: one which values later life contribution and challenges negative perceptions of ageing. We have produced a leaflet with evidence to support our contention that there are gains for all of us if the generations work together to complement each other. We have numerous recent examples of negative portrayals of ageing in the media and the ageing population continues to be seen as a problem rather than an asset. We hope the evidence we have collected will support work with local groups and forums. If you'd like hard copies of the leaflet please let us know: juliapride@gmail.com.
2. **Age Friendly Businesses**. This is an important joint project with South East Age UKs to look at the opportunities and challenges for businesses in the light of an ageing population. Older consumers may feel left behind in a fast changing marketplace and we want to make suggestions for improving business practices. We plan events to develop the key issues and these will feed into a high profile Symposium in the spring of 2017.
3. **Policy Panel on Later Life and Ageing**. We have a special Policy Panel coming up on 22 August. The Cabinet Office has asked for help scoping a new government initiative on volunteering and they would like input from those of us with experience as older volunteers.
4. **Later Life Digital Inclusion**. Our emphasis continues to be on including a later life perspective when planning digital inclusion initiatives. Since the Symposium last year, which laid the foundation for how the older digitally excluded population want to be engaged, we have focussed on how to grow internet knowledge in a sustainable way. We have linked with local digital and residential groups in Brighton & Hove and have advised on engaging older people. Through our local contacts we have started to deliver 'awareness' and 'using gadget' sessions to older residents across the city. In a few months we will take stock, but the aim is eventually to have a core of older people who can continue this process.

In doing this work, it is very useful to know of helpful, independent and easy to navigate resources that older people can access online. One good example is the DropBy social contact website that is much simpler than Facebook and has been acclaimed by older people. If you have any examples please let Mike Bojczuk know: mike_bojczuk@yahoo.co.uk.

5. **SEEFA's strategy on influencing policy makers**. SEEFA has a strong track record of putting forward a later life perspective on a host of government policies and initiatives.

Following the Policy Panel on engagement in July we've decided to extend our range of influencing methods and have started using additional parliamentary channels (such as the All Party Parliamentary Group on Housing and Care for Older People). In order to be influential we need your views. *Please do let us have them and we can feed them in directly.*

6. **Response to the Government consultation on the Carers Strategy.** SEEFA is also in direct contact with the Department of Health on the Carers Strategy. Please let us have views and evidence before the end of August deadline. SEEFA is meeting with the Department of Health in September and we are trying to arrange a Policy Panel on this subject for later in the year.
7. **Influencing service design.** We continue to push for experts who have experienced later life to have a say in the design of products and services. As you know we'd like to see more 'co-production' where service commissioners involve service users as equal partners in their design and delivery. We have a recent example of this from Gosport Older Person's Forum. If you'd like more information please let us know and we'll put you in touch.
8. **Social media.** We are now on Twitter. You can follow us: @seefauk.
9. **National links.** SEEFA continues to support the setting up of the new independent England wide body which we see as an important national champion for ageing issues. We've had a very positive response so far from a range of policy makers who are welcoming our ideas. If you'd like further information on this please let Marjory Broughton know (marjorybroughton@gmail.com).
10. SEEFA is of course continuing to operate as a registered charity and from the end of September 2016 will be independent of the DWP.

SEEFA appreciates all your help and support!

Julia Pride, on behalf of SEEFA: juliapride@gmail.com, 07771941290

SEEFA is the South East England Forum on Ageing. Our aim is to bring people together to influence later life strategies, policies and services to make life better for current and future generations of older people. Our objectives are as follows:

- **To raise awareness of issues around ageing and later life**
- **To share good practice and innovation, news and information**
- **To review and inform strategies and policies that will impact on later life**
- **To promote the engagement of older people, partners and policy makers**
- **To challenge ageism and promote social inclusion and independence for older people as citizens**

The SEEFA Agenda

Summary of SEEFA's key messages

Ageing itself is not a social and economic problem. It is an inter-generational issue, presenting both opportunities and challenges.

Ageist attitudes based on misunderstanding about the value and contribution of older people and perpetuated in the media must be challenged. Negative attitudes and behaviour cause real harm.

People are unique individuals, each with a different story. We need to recognise the diversity of ageing, not 'lump' everyone in together.

All older people including those from minority ethnic groups, LGTB, people with specific health needs and disabilities etc should be treated as individuals. Measures should be taken to engage properly when planning services, to listen to older people at the point of delivery of services and to seek and act on feedback.

Older people are not an economic burden but are net contributors to the economy

Taking all their various contributions together, people aged 65 or over are calculated to be making an annual net positive contribution of £40 billion to the UK economy (i.e., net of the costs of pension, welfare and health support). By 2030 this positive net contribution is forecast to rise to £77 billion.

Older people are active citizens and assets within their families and communities.

Older people make a massive contribution to society as carers and volunteers - an annual average of 75 hours in charitable work and 73 hours in voluntary community work, valued at over £11 billion. They also provided on average 326 hours in free care for grandchildren, parents and other family members, an annual contribution valued at over £15 billion [Source: MGM Advantage's *Retirement Nation* report (2012)].

Equal access to employment opportunities for older people will benefit business and society as a whole.

Employing older workers brings tangible economic benefits to the country, to employers and to the workforce as a whole. Negative attitudes to older workers continue to represent a major barrier.