

SEEFA MEMBER BRIEFING

Review of SEEFA's activities and achievements April 2016 to September 2017

SEEFA aims to making later life better for current and future generations. During the period April 2016 to September 2017 people with personal experience of ageing have spoken out about what is important. This has formed the basis of our work.

SEEFA's priorities

- **A new narrative on ageing.** Following SEEFA's Convention and a subsequent Policy Panel in early 2016 substantial work has taken place to develop our thinking on *a new narrative on ageing*. We are shocked that people can be stigmatised and blamed on the basis of age and can be treated less favourably. A new narrative is needed which is based upon a positive portrayal of ageing and which values all people whatever their age.

The key messages of the new narrative have provided a basis for all our work and have been widely debated, explained and promoted across a range of policy makers, service providers and businesses. A publication has been produced and the new narrative has been adopted nationally. As well as integrating this message throughout all our work we plan a further major publication which brings to the fore current evidence to support the need for a new narrative on ageing.

- **Intergenerational understanding and cooperation.** We'd like to see all generations working together for a better later life now and in the future. We don't like to see false age divisions and generations being pitched against each other. Negative age stereotyping is harmful and should not be happening. Our ambition is that all generations value the contribution made by an ageing

population. We want to emphasise the gains to be made for us all if generations work together to complement each other.

- **Effective engagement.** If later life perspectives are included in decision making the decisions will be better. This applies to policy making, service provision, commercial enterprise, health care, housing etc. It is far too easy to ignore those who are vulnerable, hard to reach or from communities which do not have a voice. We are striving to include these perspectives in our work.
- **Age friendly businesses.** The ageing population presents major business opportunities and yet older people say they can feel sidelined or not properly catered for. We feel that negative and inaccurate perceptions of ageing are at the heart of the problem and wonder if customer service, product design and marketing can be delivered more appropriately to improve the experience of older consumers.
- **Later life digital inclusion.** We continue to be concerned about how digital exclusion disproportionately affects older people. Since the Symposium in March 2015, which laid the foundation for how the older digitally excluded population want to be engaged, we have focussed on practical ways to grow internet knowledge in a sustainable way. There are far too many older people who cannot benefit and

indeed are being disadvantaged because they don't have broadband and digital skills. Moreover, due to the rate of digital change and the emphasis upon the youngest users, digital exclusion could be here to stay.

- **Inclusive service design.** We continue to push for experts with experience of later life to have a say in the design of products and services. We'd like to see more 'co-production' where service commissioners involve service users as equal partners in design and delivery.
- **Improved housing and health.** We have had a big push on improving later life housing. We are part of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Housing and Care, we are Housing Champions and we are active members of the Housing and Ageing Alliance. A disproportionate percentage of older people live in inadequate housing and we know there is a clear link between poor health and poor housing.

These are just some of our work themes during this period. We have developed key issues on many subjects and these can be viewed on SEEFA's website:

<http://www.seefa.org.uk/policypanel.html>

How SEEFA has been working

SEEFA works by creating opportunities for older people to come together with policy makers and service providers to share perspectives and views on issues they have in common. We aim to improve later life for current and future generations, collecting and sharing examples of good and bad practice. Between April 2016 and September 2017 we have worked hard on this. Below are some of the examples of how views have been shared:

1. On 1st July 2016 we held a Policy Panel at the Palace of Westminster to look at later life engagement and how the older voice can help influence policies and services for the better.

2. In August 2016 we met with the Cabinet Office to assist the development of a new government strategy on volunteering.
3. In September 2016, together with Carers UK, we met with the Department of Health to discuss the Carer's Strategy and assist them include an older carer's perspective.
4. We held a Policy Panel in October 2016 to determine key issues for the older consumer.
5. We then followed up on this by holding a Symposium at the House of Lords on 20th March 2017. This was part of a joint project with South East Age UKs aiming to improve the experience of older consumers. At the Symposium we held a debate hosted by Lord Filkin and chaired by David Brindle. A major publication is available on the subject and we hope people will take the issues forward in their neighbourhoods and organisations. Further work is planned e.g. at the Policy Panel in September we'll be exploring whether businesses and consumers benefit when employers attract and retain older employees.
6. In January 2017 we held a Policy Panel to explore intergenerational issues and in particular how people of all generations can work together to improve later life now and in the future. Throughout the year we have integrated intergenerational perspectives into all our work.
7. In July we produced a response to the Queen's speech:
<http://www.seefa.org.uk/SEEFAs%20commentary%20on%20the%20Queens%20Speech%202017.pdf>
8. With partners we made a concerted push on the later life housing agenda. We have responded to the call for views, drawing attention to the unmet housing need in the light of an ageing population. We have met with the Department of Health, Cabinet Office and DCLG on this and we are working with Care and Repair and the Housing Champions to push forward the case for better, more suitable housing and greater engagement with older people. A sound body of evidence is now emerging which links health benefits to good housing.

9. We respond to all relevant Government consultations by submitting papers and passing on what we know as later life experts by experience.
10. We continue to develop our digital communications via Twitter and the SEEFA Blog. We are now on Twitter. You can follow us: <https://twitter.com/seefauk> and read the latest blog: <http://www.seefa.org.uk/blog.html>.
11. We are developing a new method of engagement: *Mature Conversations*. A pilot project will be underway soon. Watch this space for more information.

The development of the SEEFA Network

In order to be effective SEEFA needs to understand what older people think and then ensure views are heard by those who have the power to act. Through the SEEFA Network we develop links with a range of partners who help us do this. For example we have ongoing links with the Centre for Ageing Better, South East Age UKs, the Housing Champions, the Living Well for Longer Partnership Board, various academic institutions and a range of government departments. You can see a list of who we work with below. We are supported by our Academic Panel and Special Advisors. Recently we have also developed our links with businesses and the organisations representing them (such as the Institute for Customer Service).

We are constantly striving to improve our links and extend our Network. We'd like to extend Policy Panel membership too so as to ensure we have as wide and diverse a range of views as we can. In particular we'd like to invite members who do not normally have the opportunity to speak out e.g. those in residential care, people with dementia and people from under-represented groups. We integrate LGBT perspectives in all we do. We are always open to new thoughts and we welcome all who want to champion what we do.

The development of EngAgeNet

We know the importance of having national level links. Since Government funding was withdrawn from the UK Advisory Forum on Ageing (UKAFA) and the English Forums on Ageing, SEEFA has worked hard to set up the national forum on ageing, EngAgeNet, which launched in January 2017. This is a new independent England wide body which champions ageing issues. We think it's vital that there is a strong independent national level voice speaking out on ageing issues. SEEFA is committed to supporting EngAgeNet.

Continuing to champion later life engagement

SEEFA ceased to receive government funding from September 2016. However, as an independent registered charity with an active membership we are in a strong position to champion later life engagement and the positive voice of an ageing population. This, of course, means seeking other sources of funding. We want to continue to assist policy makers and service providers make later life better.

We are totally indebted to SEEFA members who via the Policy Panel and other events express views and identify key issues which can be put forward with confidence to policy makers and others who make decisions which affect our lives. In order to be influential we need your views. Please do let us have them and we can feed them in directly.

SEEFA's strategy on influencing policy makers

Here is a list of some of the many bodies with whom SEEFA has linked over the last 12 months. This is of course in addition to the regional and local bodies and forums at which we regularly speak. During the period in question the SEEFA Executive contributed to the following:

- EngAgeNet
- The Age Action Alliance, including several Age Action Alliance meetings e.g. the Partnership Development Group; Digital Inclusion Group; Loneliness and Isolation; Transport Working Group
- The Centre For Ageing Better
- The All Party Parliamentary Group on Housing and Care for Older People
- The Housing and Ageing Alliance
- The Housing Champions
- The Living Well for Longer Partnership Board
- The Diversity Leadership Panel at Guys Hospital, Kings College London.
- The Cabinet Office
- Age UK's Policy Sounding Board
- The Department of Health
- The National NHS Leadership event - focussing on patient and carer activation and peer leadership
- Joint conversation with Civil Servants on employment for older people and housing options for older people
- The CQC Policy Development Group
- The International Longevity Centre
- The ESRC and the Centre for Analysis and Social Exclusion.
- The Chiron Project
- Government Office for Science

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. SEEFA hosts the SE England Policy Panel on Later Life and Ageing. SEEFA's 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**