

Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing (MAFA)

Meeting – 30th June 2020, via Teleconference, 10am-11am

MEETING NOTE

Attendees:

Barry Stephens, Active Wales
Aileen Haskell, Civil Service Pensioners Alliance
Vicki Lloyd, Chair of MAFA
Rachel Lewis, Welsh Government
Emma Harney, Welsh Government

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Vicki Lloyd welcomed everyone to the meeting - it is important to ensure that this meeting via telephone continued, so that those MAFA members who are unable to join the online meeting are still able to feed in their views and receive updates on key business and policy developments.

2. Group discussion – Planning for recovery; supporting older people beyond the Covid-19 outbreak

KEY POINTS AND ACTIONS

It is important to start thinking about the “recovery” phase whilst planning for the next 6 months. In particular, WG are keen to hear about:

- Your experiences during the past few months;
- what people are missing;
- your thoughts and impacts on what it has been like for you; and
- what should the WG priorities be going forward?

The following points were made by attendees:

- There are mixed feeling amongst older people in the community; some are very frustrated and lonely, whilst others are having positive experiences of lockdown. As lockdown is slowly being lifted, many older people are afraid. They do not want to leave their “safe” environment to venture outside. Many members of Active Wales are lacking confidence and the organisation is planning some socially distanced face to face meetings in September as many Active Wales members are not online and so have not had much, if any, face to face contact during lockdown.
- The availability of public toilets is a huge issue for older people, especially now they are starting to go out again. There is a great sense of anxiety around this.
- The numbers of people volunteering may drop away when people return to work, however many people in the Llanharan/Llanharry area are still volunteering after work and that is working well. CVCs are monitoring rates of

volunteering in some areas. Local resilience groups should be continued into the future with adequate support systems in place.

- There is a lot of confusion among older people caused by mixed messaging – Welsh Government should work more closely with the media.
- It should be made mandatory for masks to be worn on public transport and in shops. This may make older people feel more comfortable. However both attendees wished to applaud WG for exercising more caution throughout the pandemic and many older people have also welcomed this approach.
- Public transport and community transport are areas of concern along with elder abuse, health and general living, the reduced number of ATMs, closure of post offices, access to cash and financial scams. WG should gather people's views on these issues as soon as possible to make a change for the better.

Is the pandemic increasing intergenerational tensions?

- Young people think that older people are comfortably enjoying their retirement, however it is not like this for many retirees. The younger generation may think they are indestructible but should be asked to wear masks as most are choosing not to.
- There seems to be an issue around messaging and communications. Younger people are feeling that they have to change their life in order to accommodate older people.

Vicki Lloyd responded to above comments by saying it isn't necessarily younger people who feel like this, but the media messaging is suggesting that "younger groups are out and flouting the rules" and that "older people should be prioritised and protected". How people are actually feeling seems different to the messaging - for example, young people will want to protect their grandparents and older relatives.

A WG led online summit is being planned for the autumn which relates to loneliness and isolation and intergenerational solidarity.

All agreed it is imperative that we all work effectively together; we are all working to improve the lives of older people. Both local authority forums and national organisations work much better when working together.

Age Cymru is working with Cymru Older People's Alliance to produce an engagement survey on older people's experiences of lockdown which will be issued shortly. It will be undertaken in a number of different ways in order to accommodate those individuals who are digitally excluded. Age Cymru speak with a lot of individuals via their phone line, so as well as being undertaken digitally it will also be included as part of a physical telephone conversation.