



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing meeting: 4 February 2020

Minutes from the Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing meeting held on 4 February 2020 at Future Inn, Cardiff, Hemingway Road, Cardiff, CF10 4AU.

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Agenda item 1: Welcome and introductions

1.1 Chair (VL) introduced herself to the group and welcomed everyone to the meeting; re-enforcing that MAFA has an exciting and important opportunity to provide counsel to the Welsh Government (WG) on such a significant policy development. It was agreed that there is a huge amount of expertise around the table who are well placed to deliver robust and practical advice.

1.2 Everyone introduced themselves and apologies were noted.

1.3 Apologies were also given from the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services, who has made clear that she wants challenging but robust work from this group to ensure that the strategy and WG meet the needs of older people now and into the future.

1.4 VL would also like this group to be open and transparent and that any advice given is acknowledged and acted upon.

1.5 Another meeting of MAFA is to be arranged to coincide with the public consultation of the Strategy for an Ageing Society (summer 2020) and it is hoped that the Deputy Minister will be in a position to attend.

1.6 VL introduced a group discussion (10 minutes) on Code of Conduct and Terms of Reference, with tables providing feedback at the end.

Agenda item 2: Terms of Reference / Code of Conduct

2.1 Following table discussions, the subsequent points / questions were raised:

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- KD explained that the OPC has “observer” status on the group as the Commissioner needs independence; however their remit is also to hold WG to account.
- MAFA needs to be an all-Wales group – if we are just in Cardiff how we will achieve this?
- How long will MAFA run for? How long is the term of office for individuals?
- There needs to be an explanation on the difference between the old and new MAFA.
- There needs to be more than just 2 meetings per annum. Meetings need to be longer and there should be more discussions and not speakers.
- Question raised on split of older people as it was noted that it didn’t seem equal in this meeting.
- Could a list be shared of the organisations that have been invited / agreed to attend – EH TO SHARE
- Is there a need to strengthen membership?
- We should be representing everyone on the street, not just representing our individual organisations.
- Need to learn lessons from previous MAFA and not make same mistakes.

2.2 In response to some of the points raised above, RL said that we haven’t followed a “set model” of advisory groups for this MAFA; we want to be different. There is an expectation that the new MAFA has representation from key groups /organisations who are best placed to deliver the Strategy for an Ageing Society. Working together is a big part of the requirement for this group.

RL referred to the older people’s seminars that are being organised by Age Cymru as our mechanism to reach ground level / people on the street. There is a need to ensure that MAFA has a very clear expectation of what the next seminar should entail. There perhaps needs to be more of a join-up between the MAFA group and the seminars.

In reference to the concern around the 50/50 split of older people and organisations, RL confirmed that invites were sent to individuals and

organisations in order to ensure this 50/50 split. We feel we have achieved that.

2.3 Terms of Reference will now be revised to take account of the points raised above and sent back out to the group to agree – EH TO ACTION.

2.4 Ground rules for the group were agreed.

Actions

- EH to share a list of the organisations that have been invited / agreed to attend this new MAFA. To be sent out with the note of this meeting.
- Terms of Reference to be revised and send back to group to agree. To be sent out with the note of this meeting.

Agenda item 3: Strategy for an Ageing Society

3.1 RL provided a background to the creation of the Strategy for an Ageing Society:

Since June 2018, a considerable amount of engagement work has been carried out to inform the development of the strategy. This has included the creation of 5 working groups to focus on transport; housing; participation, planning for the future and making rights real for older people. The focus of each working group was agreed by the previous MAFA. Each working group produced a report which formed the basis of the draft Strategy for an Ageing Society.

Members of the working group included older people, leading academics and representatives from third sector organisations and the statutory sector. We also commissioned Age Cymru to hold focus groups with members of the older BME and LGBT communities.

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3.2 Over the past 18 months Welsh Government (WG) have engaged with over 1000 people. Officials also engaged, and continue to engage, across-government with colleagues in relevant policy departments that will have an impact on the strategy.

3.3 It was clear from this engagement that the Strategy must adopt a rights based approach. Another area people wanted to see was the adoption of Age Friendly Communities. Both of these topics have been addressed.

3.4 Consideration also has to be given as to how we are going to monitor the Strategy? How will it make change? RL referred to the development of the UK Age Watch Index – Welsh Government have commissioned Dr Martin Hyde of the Centre for Ageing and Dementia Research to produce this. This gives a picture of where Wales is positioned on key areas against the rest of the UK. It shows that Wales is doing well in connectivity / community. However, we are not doing so well in psychological well-being. Mental health is now a priority area along with what older people have told us – access to GPs, transport, hospital transport (will be added), etc.

3.5 Question was asked as to how does this differ from the previous strategy? There is a huge societal change we are going through so perhaps this is pitched a little differently to the previous strategy. Once the Strategy has gone through the consultation process an action plan will be produced; this will be a lot punchier, a lot shorter than the strategy. This will be the process of how we move things forward.

3.6 PP referred to a personal situation which showed failings in hospital transport. Everybody is talking about this subject but no-one appears to be doing anything. KD explained that the OPC will be publishing a report this month which is evidenced based and is clear about what needs to change. Age Cymru have also been doing some work around this.

3.7 KD also referred to training for transport staff and said this is another area

that their office has been working on. Standards will hopefully be launched in March.

3.8 SM welcomed the strategy, but would like the Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA) to be more involved to make it the best it can be. He thinks there are gaps; there are statements that could be stronger. The strategy for Older People and Strategy for an Ageing Society are completely different and better links need to be made. It's not just about today's older people but tomorrow's older people. It is encouraging to see that we are not defining age by a numerical digit. It's not a one size fits all; people's experiences are different depending on their life experience.

3.9 JW said that the intergenerational aspect is critical. Younger people have parents and grandparent, etc. Shouldn't pitch one against the other. CR asked whether this is overplayed as he doesn't get that experience in real life. VL referred to the influence of the media. PP added that we are not just fighting for ourselves but for the next generation when they reach older age.

3.10 A question was asked as to whether the strategy is too long? It also needs colour/pictures, etc. As part of the consultation we should try and involve the Youth Parliament to get younger people involved. The first thing that people should read should be the 4 aims.

3.11 LW said that there needs to be more emphasis on the need for financial support for voluntary groups. WG and local government are putting more and more onus on the voluntary sector and they are not being supported financially.

3.12 GD said that there should be more of a focus / narrative across the document around prevention.

3.13 DJ confirmed that she was pleased to see a rights-based approach being adopted across the strategy, however expressed concern that there is still endemic discrimination in nation systems, for example the pension system,

health and care system; there is still an expectation of women to adopt the caring role in families.

3.14 It was agreed that members don't just want talking shops, or words on paper, there is a need for action leading to change.

3.15 MCM referred to BME elders, saying that she felt that there had been a lack of consultation with this group. There are issues in care homes for BME elders. WG have funded us (Race Equality First) to provide a project on this very issue (via the Sustainable Social Services 3rd Sector Grant). This needs to be linked up with the strategy.

3.16 It was mentioned that housing conditions for older people living in their own homes (private sector) are not really covered in the draft Strategy. This is where older people can't really afford to make repairs in their own home.

3.17 It was also felt that human rights is a gap. SM referred to the Older People's Right's Bill. When this was rejected there was a promise of a wider piece of legislation – there has been no mention of that since? RL said the bill is not mentioned, but the wider work is – the draft Strategy refers to the piece of research that has been undertaken. This has not gone away, it's been a long time coming. Reference to this research needs to be made stronger.

3.18 Paying for Care is another gap. This is a crucial issue for older people.

3.19 There needs to be a mention of older single men. Research has shown that this is a cohort.

3.20 Reference was made to the Dublin Declaration – in older people's communities this is not helpful as nothing has really happened with this. It has not had the impact that it should have had. This should be taken out.

3.21 PP said we need action now, and asked how long are we going to sit here and talk before action is done? VL explained that some actions will probably

happen quickly and others will take a longer time to materialise.

3.22 SM said there needs to be cross-party buy-in. There needs to be a commitment by the WG for this document. We also need to know where we are going and what are the cost implications? VL said that the fact that this is a WG strategy should give the commitment that the government is obligated to take this forward.

3.23 MJ referred to Paying for Care – Vaughan Gething is making statement this afternoon which will cover 1) charging, 2) workforce, 3) expanding the scope of social care – extra care, for example.

3.24 It was noted that the strategy was missing any timescales. RL confirmed that it will have timescales, but the strategy is about driving a cultural change in how everyone views ageing – seeing it as more positive. We want this to set a broader landscape and not attach a rigid timescale. However, to know where you want to go you need to know how long it might take you to get there.

3.25 PP said that the first Strategy for Older People was launched in 2003. It is now 2020 – we are still sat here talking. We need to stop talking and start action. Older people do not have time on their side.

3.26 SM asked whether the group are able to send their comments to the team? RL said yes and also referred to the 3 months consultation where we will have a further meeting.

3.27 JW asked whether the human rights aspect could be strengthened. Human rights have a legal obligation behind them. This is not aspirational, this is law.

3.28 LC questioned the fit, particularly with his organisation (One Voice Wales; Town and Community Councils). He asked how he would go back to his local executive and explain to them tell how they fit into this agenda? There are lots of references in the document for funding, but it is not evident how MAFA is going

take this forward (referred to funding linked to MAFA). What are we working with? Role of older people and democracy – county and community councillors are 65/68 respectively. Community and Town Councils are not funded by WG. RL confirmed that WG need to work more fully in this area.

Agenda item 4: Feedback from seminars/ discussion

4.1 RL explained the premise behind the seminars, saying that the intention is to provide an opportunity for older people to reflect on how things affect their day to day lives. The seminars were advertised locally through GP surgeries, local organisations, etc. The intention is to get different voices; voices from those people who don't usually get involved in government business.

4.2 Transport was highlighted as an issue; particularly in North Wales. Housing was also identified as a really important “what matters to me” issue.

4.3 There was a suggestion that there should be 2 separate reports – one for north and another for south – there needs to be a true reflection. You are not comparing like with like; these areas/regions are very different. RL said the report could include a section on what was different between areas and also what was similar as it is interesting to see the similarities but acknowledged that the differences must also be highlighted.

4.4 The group agreed that it was reassuring to see that the issues that have come up in the report are the ones that we are focussing on.

4.5 CJ referred to the comments regarding housing, saying that there is such a lot of re-enforcement in what we are looking at, e.g. downsizing; being property rich and cash poor.

4.6 SM referred to the section on planning for retirement – this can depend on people’s individual circumstances. How do you achieve this?

4.7 MH said that Wales has the highest number of people over 50 who are out of work. Age Cymru has undertaken some focus groups around this issue in job centres.

4.8 The question was asked as to whether there is there a way of differentiating issues that are emerging such as pensioners in poverty etc. away from the traditional issues such as transport, health, social care, etc.?

4.9 Reference was made to some women in their early 60s – either their husbands have left them or have passed away in their 50s and 60s; these women now have to go to work. These are women who have never had a job, have raised their families, etc.

4.10 LW said that she couldn’t see anything nothing in the strategy on scams.

Agenda item 5: How will MAFA influence change?

5.1 The group agreed that they are dealing with some big questions – ageism, etc. We need to bring all parts of society into this.

5.2 RL confirmed that the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Service is really committed to these issues; there is actually a very high commitment across government.

5.3 It was agreed that the groups’ role to hold people to account is important.

5.4 It was also agreed that a large part of the role of the group is to help us bring this document to consultation and each group member will encourage everyone to feed in from their respective organisations.

5.5 The group can be directive to make sure that issues that need to be discussed are brought to the table, (set agenda).

5.6 The strategy needs to be comprehensive and pithy and focussed at the same time. The vision needs to inspire but needs to be inclusive to everyone; all parts of society, all services, etc.

5.7 It was agreed that the group should be taken out of Cardiff and into community venues across Wales (?)

5.8 There needs to be thought given as to how we find creative ways to keep the momentum going in between meetings.

5.9 PP asked MJ whether MAFA can have an extra meeting a year. MJ agreed to look at this.

5.10 SM asked how we are going to sustain cross-government working whereby policy teams across government do not just provide contribution to the strategy which doesn't get put into practise. MJ referred to a WG challenge session that was undertaken with senior officials across government. In this session each senior official committed to policy within their individual areas which would contribute to the success of the strategy.

5.11 MH asked how MAFA would maintain contact within the group in terms of GDPR. Can we contact each other? WG TO FACILITATE THAT need to get consent from group to share contact details.

Agenda item 6: Summing up and close

6.1 VL said that she felt that this had been a very positive meeting and thanked everyone for their contributions.

6.2 RL added that WG will now revise the terms of reference etc. and send back out. She said that she felt that the group had undertaken a very productive session on the strategy, and that it was good for MAFA to be able to provide input prior to the public consultation.

6.3 Next steps: the draft strategy to be launched for public consultation. In the meantime, please send in your comments. We aim to publish the final Strategy by the end of year.

6.4 Secretariat will send out the list of organisations (full membership) with note of this meeting.

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