

Cross Party Group Older People, Age and Ageing

Wednesday 13th March 2019 13.00 - 14.00

Committee Room 4 Scottish Parliament

Minutes

1. Present

MSPs: Sandra White, Clare Adamson, Annie Wells

Organisation	Name
The Food Train	Nigel Lack
Intergeneration National Network	Pat Scrutton
Royal Pharmaceutical Society	Helen Reilly
	Michelle Mapp
Scottish Parliament	Maeve Trohear (on behalf of Jeremy Balfour MSP)
Generations Working Together	George Kay
Scottish Older People's Assembly	Caroline Clark, Diana Findley
Scottish Seniors Alliance	Bill Johnston
Scottish Pensioners Forum	Elinor McKenzie
Action on Hearing Loss Scotland	Alan Daziel
Edinburgh Association Community Councils	Ian Clement
Trust Housing Association	Rohini Sharma Joshi
Glasgow City Council	Michelle Mundie
Energy Agency	Liz Marquis
Outside the Box	Anne Connor & Christine Ryder
Scottish Parliament MSP's Assistant	Amanda Gordon

Welcome

Sandra White welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from: Arwind Salwan, Paul Eadie, Lucy McCracken, Alistair Ross, Andrew Senew, Rose Jackson, Elizabeth Baikie, Sue Northrop, Anne Gallacher, Robert McGeachy, Ian Wallace & Alan Spinks.

2. Scottish Parliamentary Policy on Inclusion

Sandra reminded the group about the policy.

3. Note of previous meeting

Minutes of the Joint Food & CPG on Older People, Age and Ageing meeting held on the 16th January 2018 meeting were accepted as accurate. It was agreed that this was a very interesting meeting with good discussions and several action points.

Sandra commented that the presentation from Brian Slater at the last meeting of the Older People CPG in December was excellent and clarified lots of points.

4. Matters Arising

Joint meeting with CPG Food

- The Convenors are writing to the Equalities Minister inviting her along to speak to both groups. This will be in the next parliamentary session.
- A letter has also been written to the Cabinet Secretary for Health
- So far there is no mention of food and the importance it plays in a draft policy framework. A letter from the CPG will be sent to the Minister to highlight the importance of these needs.

Matters on Health & Social Care

- Sandra to raise concerns of the group on maintaining social connections and the impact on people's health with Health and Sport Committee
- Look at organising an extra meeting on the subject and invite members of the Health Committee along

5. Presentations

The group heard short presentations from the invited guests, which were followed by a question and answer session.

Michelle Mundie, Housing and Regeneration Services, Glasgow City Council. Michelle explained that Glasgow City Council is extremely concerned by the change in the vulnerability age threshold from 60 to 75 as the life expectancy for Glasgow residents is much lower despite improvements in life expectancy for men and women in the last 15 years. Although improvements have been made, life expectancy in Glasgow remains significantly lower than in Scotland. The average life expectancy in Glasgow is 71.6 years for men and 78 for women.

The Equality Impact Assessment accompanying the Fuel Bill provides an analysis of the current and proposed definition of fuel poverty using 2016 SHCS data. This shows:-

- A reduction in the total number of households in fuel poverty from 649,000 to 584,000.
- A reduction in the number of older households considered fuel poor from 311,000 (40.6%) to 174,000 (22.8%).
- A reduction of fuel poor households in the owner occupier sector from 296,000 (37.1%) to 140,000 (17.6%).

- A significant increase in the number of family households in fuel poverty from 66,000(12.2%) to 118,000(21.6%).

Glasgow City Council has compared the findings from the most recent Scottish House Conditions Survey (2015/17) which takes account of the change in methodology and compared this to the previous survey (2014/16). This shows:-

- An overall reduction in fuel poverty in Glasgow from 27% to 21%
- Family households in fuel poverty reducing from 24% to 11% (13% reduction)
- Older households in fuel poverty reducing from 32% to 27% (5% reduction)

What this means for Glasgow is that fuel poverty is still much more concentrated in older people households.

Whilst Glasgow City Council agrees in principle with the proposal to set a new statutory target to eradicate fuel poverty however it anticipates difficulties with the delivery, particularly to older people including older people are reluctant to provide financial information; they can't always be bothered with the hassle even if it means a reduction in their fuel bill; don't believe they qualify for schemes or don't want to be a burden; they are reluctant to borrow funds for measures; they get anxious about people coming into their home and have difficulty with the number of different people who may come into their home to install an energy efficiency measure it could be up to 7 different people.

Other more general reasons include the funding of essential repairs. There is no point in installing loft insulation if there is a hole in the roof. The condition of pre 1919 properties in Glasgow is a particular issue regardless of the tenure and age of the occupant. Some tenements require in excess of £500k of essential repairs which can be more than the value of the property. This is before any energy efficiency improvements. Negative equity and lower incomes in the owner occupied sector. There is an expectation that owners will pay for energy efficiency measures to their property however negative equity and low incomes makes it difficult to participate in improvement schemes. New rules on properties owned by private landlords mean that energy efficiency measures cannot be installed to more than one property owned by a private landlord. If the landlord has more than 4 properties, they are not eligible for grant funding at all. Mixed tenure blocks add complexity and challenge to area based schemes and some non-traditional properties require a more expensive structural solution. A full grant will only cover about 1/3rd of the cost leaving the owner to find the rest but only saving approximately £350 per year meaning the payback for the measure would be about 50 years.

Michelle finished by saying that so far Glasgow City Council has delivered energy efficiency measures to over 11,031 properties at a cost of over £95m saving each household on average £300 per year on their fuel bills.

Liz Marquis, Director of the Energy Agency. Liz explained that the Existing Homes Alliance is a broad coalition of housing, environmental, anti-poverty, energy advice and industry organisations arguing for an ambitious programme of low-carbon refurbishment of Scotland's homes. The intention is to reduce fuel poverty and cut greenhouse gas emissions.

More than a quarter of Scottish households are still living in fuel poverty, this is similar to the proportion who faced cold homes a decade ago. Over a million homes fall below the energy efficiency standard needed for our health by raising all homes to a higher energy performance standard more households will be out of fuel poverty and fewer people will be at risk of falling into fuel poverty.

The Energy Agency has been delivering insulation schemes for many years. We currently manage the Scottish Government Council funded schemes in south west Scotland. In the last seven years the Energy Agency has delivered 6,500 installs (predominantly external wall insulation) utilising £48.5 M of public funds on all house tenures.

The 2016 report of the Scottish Rural Fuel Poverty Task Force recommended that an additional form of support should be provided to help those living in rural areas to move out of fuel poverty.

Liz explained in Dumfries and Galloway a 2 year funded project is making huge impacts, they are using local contractors and the project provides additional help and support. The monitoring and evaluation is carried out on the back of the Area Based Schemes but are a result of close working with the health sector who carry out detailed data analysis. As mentioned in Michelle's presentation about multiple visits for the funded schemes we are very clear that a named project worker acts as the main contact point for the householder. The householders are often vulnerable and live in areas of high deprivation.

Liz finished off with an example of how the Energy Agency helped one gentleman: The Home Energy Assistance Scheme received a referral from Home Energy Scotland for a householder they were unable to help. A gentleman had inherited the property he lived in some years ago but had no heating or hot water. He was living in one room with an electric fire as his only source of heating and the cost of this was more than he could afford. The majority of rooms in the house also suffered from condensation issues as they were not being heated. After receiving the referral a project officer contacted the gentleman to arrange a home visit with himself and a support worker. Qualification of the scheme was established and an Energy Efficiency Report (EPR) on the property was produced which gave a SAP rating of 29. The boiler was old, inefficient and broken and there was no room thermostat. Contact was made with Gas Safe heating engineers to obtain quotes. Within one week quotes were received and a local contractor was instructed to go ahead with the work. Four days later the boiler and room thermostat were installed and old inefficient lightbulbs were replaced with 10 LED bulbs. A return visit from the Project Officer offered assistance on using the boiler and controls. The gentleman is delighted with the improvements which have been life changing. He is looking forward to being warm in his own home at a cost he can now afford. He is also looking forward to being able to use the other rooms. This scheme, funded by Dumfries & Galloway Councils Tackling Poverty funding, has improved this gentleman's quality of life by making his home warmer and taking away his worry of trying to be warm and comfortable. His SAP rating has now increased to 42 and he no longer has condensation problems.

The presentations were followed by a discussion on the current housing strategy, environmental issues, the data being captured, funding of these schemes and how future proof it and private landlords.

6. Routes for representation of Older People

It was agreed that this topic deserves time for a full discussion and will be a main item for our next meeting.

7. Topics for future meetings

The topics for the next meeting will be Routes for Representation of Older People and Insurance prices for older people. We would really appreciate hearing the views of members on either topic prior to the meeting to ensure we cover what matters to the group.

8. AOCB

Alan Dalziel from Hearing Loss Scotland shared copies of a new resource: Combating Sight and Hearing Loss, copies can be downloaded from <https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/about-us/our-work-across-the-uk/scotland/services-in-scotland/hearing-forces/combating-scottish-veterans-sight-and-hearing-loss/>

Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 12th June, 13.00 to 14.30