

The Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Older People, Age and Ageing

Minutes

Wednesday 22nd April 2015

Present

Present- Sandra White MSP(Convenor), Hannah Lister(Age Scotland), Valerie Carr(Snook), Tom Berney(SOPA), Anne Grindley(Contact the Elderly), Tessa Law(Housing Options Scotland), Nanette Milne MSP, Dorothy Smith, Moira Sunter, Mike Liddle(Scottish Government), Robert Thomson(Care and Repair Scotland), Pat Scrutton(Intergenerational National Network), Muriel Mowat(Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance), Ann Proudfoot(Hollies Day Centre), Alex Stewart(Tax Help for The Elderly), Andrew Lindsay(Big Lottery Fund)

Apologies- Yolanda Strachan(Age Scotland), Alison Clyde(Generations Working Together), Susan Cameron-Neilson(Royal Pharmaceutical Society), Anne Browning(Older People's Services Places for People Scotland Care and Support), Daryll Archibald(The Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy), Aidan Collins(HIV Scotland), Alison McInnes MSP, Jennifer Burns(NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde), Alan Spinks(National Federation of Occupational Pensioners), Shirley Heeps(Fife Elderly Forum) Anne Gallacher(Luminate)

2. Convenor's Welcome

3. Minutes from last meeting

Sandra White suggested there may be merit in discussing the provision for the BSL interpreter again at the next meeting in June. This was agreed.

4. Anne Grindley-Contact the Elderly-'50 Years and 27,659,238 cups of tea!'

Anne discussed Contact The Elderly in its fiftieth year. She stated it is the only national charity solely focussed on tackling isolation through regular face to face contact. She said Sunday was the loneliest day and that there is a monthly meet up on Sundays to try to tackle this isolation. Contact the Elderly is constituted entirely of volunteers and volunteers get great benefits for being involved. They are grateful for Scottish Government funding and rely on donations and legacies also.

Sandra White MSP thanked Anne for her contribution and suggested she would mention Contact the Elderly's work in her position as deputy of the Equal Opportunities Committee, which is meeting on the morning of 23rd April.

Tom Berney asked why there was a waiting list of 1,200 people for Contact the Elderly and also, in his capacity as chairman of U3A, whether Contact had ever had any discussions with U3A. Anne responded by saying that there are so many waiting as they need more volunteers for the demand but that more volunteers are now being trained up.

Nanette Milne MSP asked in any of the 88 groups in Scotland are within her constituency (North East Scotland). Anne replied in the affirmative and said the local organisers for Contact can be found via the website.

Sandra White MSP suggested that it might be good to table a motion in the parliament to celebrate Contact's fiftieth birthday. Anne agreed and said any time this year was OK to do so as Contact is having a whole year of celebrations for its birthday. Andrew Lindsay was asked by Sandra White if the Big Lottery considers this something they could fund. Andrew said it is certainly an area they could consider and that he will swap details with Anne at the end.

5.AOCB *The technology for the next presentation was being organised, so Sandra took AOCB at this stage*

Dorothy Smith says she doesn't like the name of the CPG and could it be looked at again. She also asked about the frequency of meetings and how they were advertised. Sandra White explained there are usually 4 meetings a year and those in the room are usually representatives for specific older people's organisations, or health organisations etc. Tom Berney from SOPA spoke of the older people's assembly and suggested this might be a better forum for Dorothy. She agreed to speak to Tom at the end about it.

5.Valerie Carr-We are Snook-RITA-Responsive InterActive Advocate

Valerie presented on RITA(Presentation linked to email)

Questions were taken after the presentation. They included one from Anne regarding the evaluation of RITA and Valerie said they had done some initial evaluating but that more was needed in order to develop a more detailed prototype. They are

hoping to secure two more years of funding by the end of the year. She said RITA had received 'Marmite' reactions- you either love or hate it. RITA was not envisaged to replace face to face care and contact but rather as a supplement to that.

Dorothy Smith asked who the target market is for it. Valerie replied that it was hoped health and social care providers would use it, in a way that is an add-on existing telecare techniques. They are trying to build RITA to the lowest possible platforms like tablets and TVs to keep it cost effective.

Muriel Mowat suggested she was uncomfortable with the name as RITA isn't really an advocate as the name suggests, but rather more of an advanced statement. Valerie said that the system RITA is built on knows your preferences and builds them up on your behalf over time so does become able to make decisions on your likes and dislikes, hence the word 'advocate' Robert Thomson asked about whether the user answers a questionnaire, or whether it stores statements. Valerie said it builds up a diary of who the person is over time. The data and any personal data is owned by the person themselves and not the people who make RITA. It is as intelligent as you make it. Alex Stewart asked whether it was for dementia patients and if so, how would they remember with their impaired short-term memory who RITA is, or where the avatar is in a home (battery may run out on device it is being used on too, for example). Valerie said it is not just aimed at those with dementia it is envisaged young people would use it throughout life to 'build up the picture' of their lives so that it is ready for a time when they may need to use it due to cognitive impairments. It is speech activated, hence alleviating the problem of accessibility of RITA to those with dementia. Tom Berney asked if it could be linked into Skype, for example. Valerie said they were working on that. Sandra White asked about the timescale for RITA. Valerie said they hoped to have a more functioning prototype in place by 2020, funding permitted. She hoped they would see it in an integrated health and social care model, for example, people could choose it as a route for the Self Directed Support money.

6. Convenor Closes meeting

Date of Next Meeting- Wednesday 10th June at 1pm, Committee Room One

