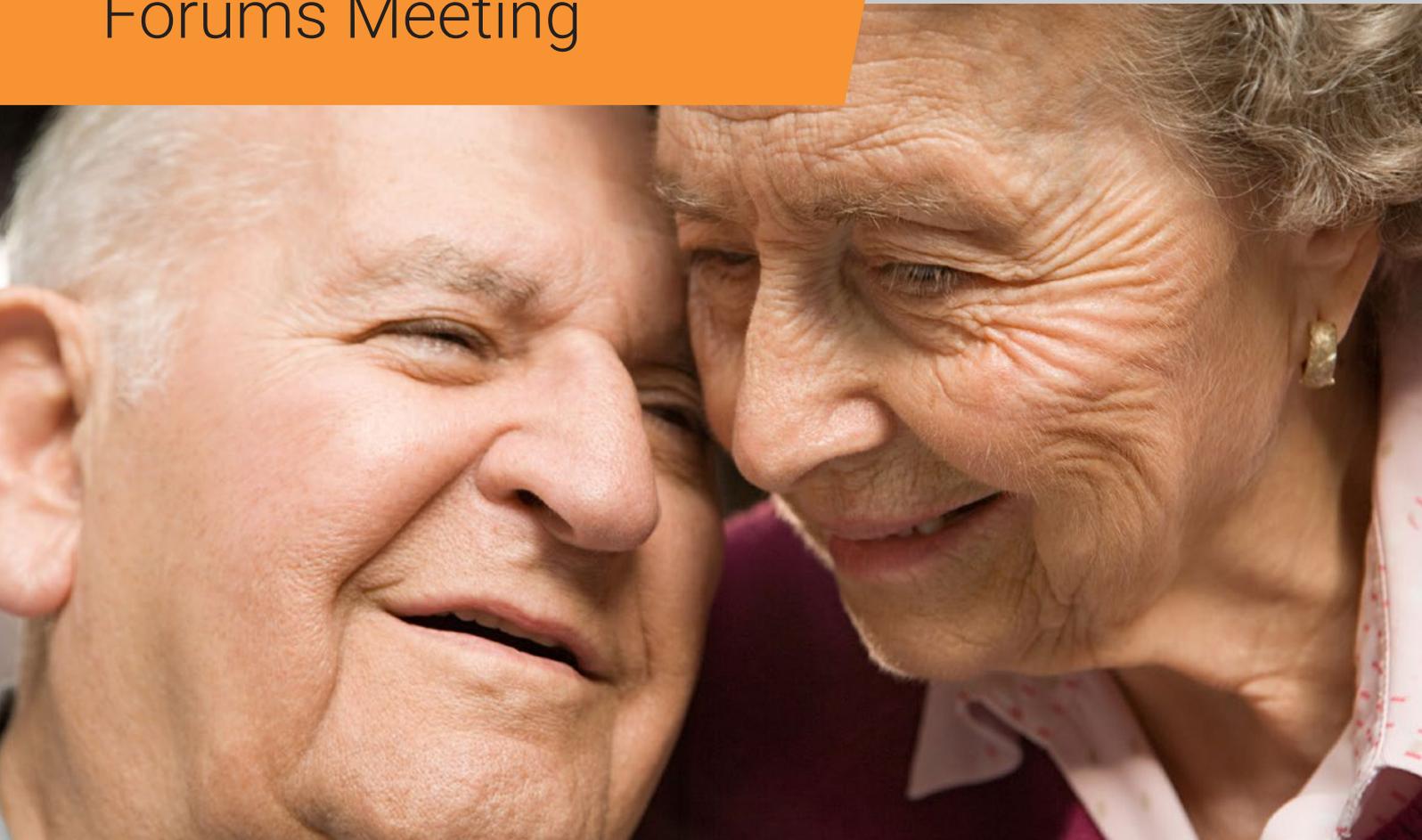


Liverpool City Region Older Persons Forums Meeting

Wednesday 7th March 2018
Museum of Liverpool



The meeting came about as a result of coalition of older people's organisations from each of the six constituent boroughs:

Age Concern Liverpool and Sefton;

Halton Older People's Empowerment Network;

Knowsley Older People's Voice;

Sefton Older Persons' Forums;

St Helen's Senior Voice;

Wirral Older People's Parliament.

A steering group was formed to plan the meeting, which was then organised by Justine Shenton of Sefton Older Persons' Forums. The meeting was kindly sponsored by the Happy Older People's Network. It was chaired by Andrew Booth, Chief Officer of Sefton Advocacy, and formally opened by Steve Rotheram, Liverpool City Region Mayor.



ATTENDEES

65 people attended representing a wide variety of organisations:

Age UK Mid Mersey;

Alzheimer's Society;

Care and Repair England;

Centre for Ageing Better;

Church of England Liverpool Diocese;

Formby CVS;

Happy Older People's Network;

Knowsley Council;

Liverpool City Council;

Liverpool City Region Mayor;

Liverpool Making it Happen Group;

Merseyside Pensioners Association;

Museum of Liverpool;

Sefton Advocacy;

Sefton CVS;

Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council;

Sefton O.P.E.R.A.

UK Age Friendly Network;

University of Cambridge;

University of Liverpool;

Wirral Council Public Health.

WORKSHOP 1

What would an Age Friendly City Region look like?

Ange Jones, Age-Friendly Communities Network Manager at the Centre for Ageing Better, explained the process through which an area can apply for age-friendly status. She discussed some examples of age-friendly initiatives from her Network members.

Workshop participants considered what an age-friendly city region might look like:

General

- An age-friendly region has to be meaningful both locally and individually.
- Older people are not a homogeneous group.
- Partnership, communities, business services & young people - an 'all together' approach.
- Good communication - good opportunities for engagement.
- Investigate interaction with all groups (e.g. schools)
- Partnership is the key to getting older people involved - e.g. partnership of health and social care.
- Access to health care is moving online and is not always accessible to some older people.

Services

- Best practice from business should be commended and rolled out to other businesses. Age Friendly Business Awards?

- Mystery shopper idea for older folks? Results may be encouraging or show need for improvement.
- Access to good housing for life.
- A lot of variation in the city region around transport.
- Lack of public toilets an issue.
- Plenty of seating needed in places like shopping centres

Local environment

- Street design, surfaces and lighting should be designed bearing in mind older people.
- Examples of age friendly practice include dropped kerbs and accessible buildings.
- Looking out for older people with safety measures.
- Bins left out for collection can create problems for older people.
- Local areas should have meeting spaces and focal points to tackle isolation (e.g. library).

Involvement and activities

- Set up a 'buddy' system for age friendly activities.
- Older people need to be involved in the strategy.
- Need an action plan that involves older people.
- Encourage education and learning.
- Active lifestyles can be difficult to maintain with a disability.

Home

- Home safety initiatives such as falls prevention.
- Local housing strategies are needed so that housing is included in health and social care

Action

- Question what we are going to do after today.
- There needs to be community consultation and discussion of older people's issues.
- The forums should show pathways to ACTIONS.
- LCC signed up to age-friendly cities in 2012 with 'Older People Making It Happen'. Could LCR sign up to the

global age-friendly network? How would this be sustainable?

- We could develop an action plan with each borough taking the lead on a particular domain
- In Sefton older people set out their own strategy for older people based on needs and issues they had identified.
- Use existing networks to make it happen.
- Steering group needs setting with key people around the table.

WORKSHOP 2

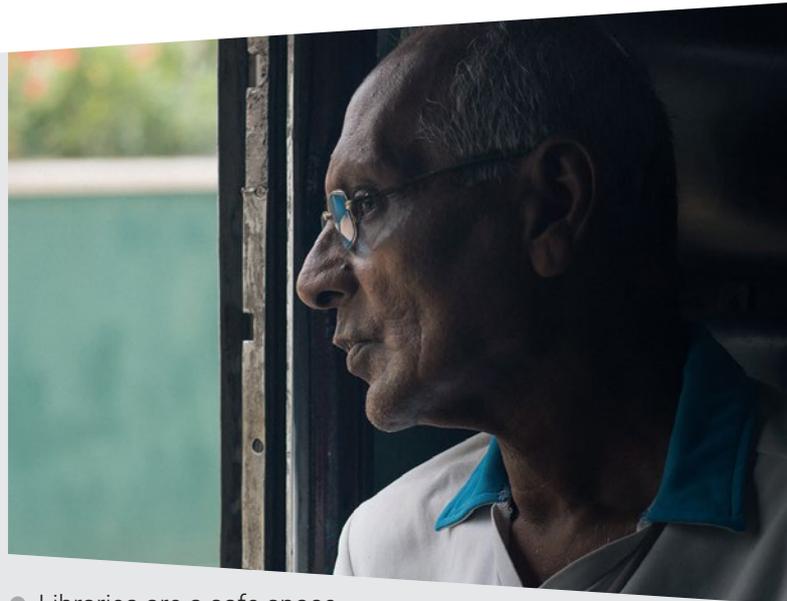
Digital inclusion

David Aspin, Older People's Involvement Officer at Knowsley Older People's Voice, introduced the Position Statement on digital inclusion developed by Knowsley. David explained that his Forum supported and encouraged older people to take advantage of the benefits of new technology but recognised that some did not wish to do so. Where older people did not wish to access information or services in this way, alternatives should be available.

Workshop participants discussed the pros and cons of digital technology for older people:

Pros

- The social aspect of apps like Facetime can be helpful if a person is housebound.
- Isolation can be reduced.
- Shopping can be done online.
- Surfing the internet can be helpful, e.g. finding out about the weather.
- Reminders for health appointments by text can stop missed appointments.
- Voice-activated components are developing quickly so people can choose either to type or to use spoken commands. This can help where dexterity or vision is an issue.
- There are initiatives such as 3's Discovery Project which promote digital inclusion by helping people use any technological device they own.



- Libraries are a safe space to learn with trained staff.
- Educational.
- Health benefits from the use of apps.
- Travel information easily accessed.

Cons

- Some geographical areas have poor connections in the City Region.
- Cost of broadband.
- Some people are resistant to using new technology or may not wish to join in.
- Fear of 'hitting the wrong button' and making a mistake.
- Internet scams or phishing emails. There are risks associated with technology and some people will be vulnerable. Safety online is a concern even for adults.
- People on lower incomes may feel excluded if they cannot afford a smartphone or other technology.
- Will 'normal' contact between people be affected if they become used to digital interaction instead.

- Some services are only available online (e.g. toll payments for the new Mersey Gateway bridge) or no longer accept cash.
- What happens if power supply is lost?
- There needs to be more training for older people in digital skills but this may not be funded.
- Websites are not always user friendly.
- People may not be aware of what is available if this is only done online.
- Technology should not be a replacement for face to face contact.

WORKSHOP 3:

Minister for Older People - what would this achieve?

This topic was introduced by Councillor Paul Cummins, Older People's Champion, Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council. Paul is also the Chair of the North West Older People's Champions Network which is leading the campaign for a national Minister for Older People.

Workshop participants made the following comments:



- A Minister or Commissioner could help to get older people's voices heard. 'Nothing about us without us'.
- A champion could speak up and raise individual issues.
- They could counter negativity about older people and help create a more positive image of older people.
- Raise awareness of pensioner poverty.
- Issues of fairness could be addressed - e.g. older carers cannot get Carers Allowance; changes to women's pension age.
- Older people to be seen as an asset and not a burden.
- Someone at Cabinet level has the power to take things forward.
- Northern Ireland has a Commissioner for Older People - that may be what we need.
- We also have a Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work.
- Older People have vast experience and are the majority.
- Should we have an online petition for this?
- We are fighting for the future, not just older people today.
- We need wisdom and shared commonalities between older people and younger people - fighting together for social justice. We don't want the generations fighting each other.
- We need employers to be involved.
- We need to tackle Pensioner Poverty.
- Another approach would be to give the Minister for Loneliness a wider remit.

Conclusion of the Meeting

Participants agreed the following key points:

- Liverpool City Region should work towards and apply for Age-Friendly status;
- The meeting supported the campaign for a national Minister or Commissioner for Older People;
- The meeting approved the Position Statement on Digital Technology, with older people encouraged to take up new technology but not forced to do so as a result of traditional alternatives being withdrawn.

98% of respondents to the evaluation believed the meeting was relevant to their area and felt there should be further city-region meetings to discuss the needs of older people.



Report by
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