

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

## Minutes

24<sup>th</sup> April 2014

### 1. Present

Present- Sandra White MSP (Convenor), Esther Rantzen MBE (The Silver Line), Isabella Goldie (Mental Health Foundation), Alison MacInnes MSP, Marco Biagi MSP, Fiona MacLeod MSP, Hannah Lister (Age Scotland), Andrew Senew, Rhoda Grant MSP, Lawrence Cowan (RCN), Rose Jackson (STUC) Brid Cullen, Robert Duff (Trust Enterprises), Anne Gallacher (Luminate), Anne Grindley (Contact the Elderly), Ann Proudfoot, Brian Sloan (Age Scotland), Katie Docherty (Age Scotland), Sophie Andrews (Silver Line), Jenny Ackland (Age Scotland), Amy Woodhouse (Mental Health Foundation) Yolanda Strachan (Age Scotland), Deborah Cunningham, Ann MacInnes (Co-housing), Joan Fraser (Housing Options Scotland), Moira Bayne (Housing Options Scotland), Owen Miller (Alzheimer Scotland), Philippa Faulkner (HIV Scotland), Paul Adams (Age Scotland), Shirley Heeps (Fife Elderly Forum), Mike Liddle (Scottish Government), Helen Welsh (Faith in older People), Rob Mackie (Pagoda PR), Donald Jarvie (Scotland Futures Forum), Brian Johnstone (Home Instead), Alan Spinks, Sandra Robertson (Independent Age), Bruce Nicol (Marie Curie), Kellie King (SIAA), Valerie Carr (we are snook), Elizabeth Bryan (Age Scotland)

### 2. Minutes from last meeting

The minutes from the last meeting were agreed.

### 3. Speech by Isabella Goldie, Head of The Mental Health Foundation, Scotland

Isabella began the meeting by setting the context of the hard-hitting impact that loneliness and isolation can have on older people. She made sure the group was clear on the stark differences between isolation and loneliness. Isolation, she said, refers to a separation from social or family contact, lack of community engagement or connection to services. Loneliness is subjective— it's about how people feel about perceived isolation.

**(NB The presentation by Isabella is attached)**

### 4. Speech by Esther Rantzen MBE, The Silverline

Esther spoke of isolation being associated with loss 'It can be loss of a partner, it can be loss of a job, it can be loss of sense, sight or hearing, it can be loss of a driving license, and it can be loss of mobility.

"But what it does, it draws in the horizons of your life and your front door becomes a barrier that becomes more and more difficult to cross because what it erodes is self-esteem and confidence."

Across the UK, the Silver Line is a trusted, friendly and free number for information, advice and friendship for older people. Esther described one gentleman who, after his first call, described the feeling of 'belonging to the human race' again. The impact that one call a week can have on someone's life can be that huge.

The significant and positive contribution that older people play in society is quite often overlooked. Esther was keen to highlight this-"They are our national treasure, they are our resource - not just a series of problems. Have a look at the number of volunteers of 65-plus who keep our society going. Please do everything you can to lift the self-esteem of the older population" she added

The meeting ended with a clip from Bob, a chatty 92 year old chap who was feeling desperately lonely after being widowed. He now calls The Silver Line

## **5. Future Meetings**

Future meetings of the CPG will be held on-

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 1pm Committee Room 2

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 1pm Committee Room 1

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2015 1pm Committee Room 1