

A FRAMEWORK FOR OLDER PEOPLE'S FORUMS AND GROUPS IN WALES

ADVISORY GUIDANCE

November 2021

Foreword

Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA) is a national registered charity run by older people for older people. Its main purpose is to ensure that Older People's Forums and Groups at a local level can have their voice heard at the national level and their views represented to Welsh Government, councils and a range of other Public Bodies.

Forums could if revitalised, play an important role in supporting the implementation of local Age Friendly Communities (AFCs) and help make them a reality. Councils wanting to achieve recognition under the World Health Organisation Framework for Age-Friendly Communities could engage with their local 50+ Forum in the audit and application process to demonstrate effective engagement with older people. We believe that there

Cymru Older People's Alliance c/o Age Cymru Offices, Mariners House, Trident Court, East Moors Road, Cardiff, CF24 5TD

Registered Charity 1174518

is a synergy between Age Friendly Communities and vibrant and effective Forums in Wales that should be encouraged and supported.

Following a Review of COPA and Forums undertaken in 2020, a Forum Development Programme was agreed by Trustees as a basis for co-productive implementation with partners including Councils. One of the elements of the Development Programme was to produce good practice that could be shared across Forums to achieve greater consistency and cohesion. This guidance – a Framework for Older people's Forums and Groups - is the first product in what we hope will be a series of documents to bring together local ideas and projects for a national level audience. It is not meant to be directive or expect that all aspects will be required or achieved but it provides a basis for stronger and more effective forums to develop that ensure the voice of older people is heard and acted upon.

We hope you will find this guidance helpful and we would welcome any feedback or questions

S G Milsom

Chair

Cymru Older People's Alliance

November 2021

FRAMEWORK FOR OLDER PEOPLE'S FORUMS AND GROUPS IN WALES

Framework for the Operation of Forums and Groups

The Framework sets out the expectations and commitments needed for the operation of local forums and groups for older people at the County level in Wales. It sets out the governance, organisational and main activities of forums/groups with the aim of raising standards and establishing consistency across Wales so older people everywhere can participate on an equal basis and influence decisions that impact on their lives.

- Purpose – as an independent organisation, promote the interests, participation and engagement of older people in each County Borough and provide them with an opportunity to express, publicise and present their views, opinions or complaints. This is usually typified as self- determination by older people. Promote the creation of Age Friendly Communities in Wales and support Covid recovery.
- Constitution – agree a straightforward Constitution to ensure good governance of the Forum/Group (sample at Annex A)

Cymru Older People's Alliance c/o Age Cymru Offices, Mariners House, Trident Court, East Moors Road, Cardiff, CF24 5TD

Registered Charity 1174518

- Appoint Forum Officers – appoint officers to provide leadership to the Forum which is administered by a Steering Group. All executive powers of the Forum are exercised through the Steering Group voting members
- Meetings – hold regular meetings of the Steering Group that are minuted and invite participation by the Council and Third Sector organisations and others on an observer status. Hold an AGM.
- Membership – encourage residents in the County to become members. Make it possible for the Forum/Group to contact members directly to provide information or seek their opinion. Promote contributions from members. Keep a register of members in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1988
- Communications – raise awareness of the Forum/Group and provide information and guidance relevant to older people through a website, social media, written form, leaflets etc or through contributions to other organisations
- Projects – undertake (subject to funding and/or support) local projects in partnership with others to improve the lives of older people including intergenerational work
- Finance – Open a Bank Account. Receive grants and donations, apply for funds to carry out the work of the organisation.
- Partnership - Co-operate with other County Forums, support other groups with similar purposes. Liaise with Council officers and elected members, and statutory bodies, as appropriate, to promote the aims of the Forum.
- Consultation - comment on various policy and other documents from national and local government and related bodies so the forum's voice is heard;
- National Representation - act as the fulcrum in the 2-way exchange of opinions and information between forums members and COPA to ensure the views of older people in local forums are represented nationally and issues for older people that may have a national significance are raised;
- Cymru Older People's Alliance - participate in the democratic processes of COPA- the national voice for local forums/groups - including appointing representatives who attend AGMs, periodic meetings and participate in fulfilling the aims of the charity

Framework for the Support of Local Older People's Forums and Groups

Cymru Older People's Alliance c/o Age Cymru Offices, Mariners House, Trident Court, East Moors Road, Cardiff, CF24 5TD

Registered Charity 1174518

The Framework sets out the main requirements to ensure vibrant and successful engagement of older people through representative Forums/Groups is achieved on a consistent and equal basis across Wales. The extent to which support is sought and provided will depend on the specific local circumstances including the relationships between the Forum and Council and the degree of independence the Forum wants to achieve. It will also depend on the local policy, capacity and resources of the Council.

- Coordinating Support by Councils is provided through close partnership working with the Forum/Group officers for the engagement of older people. Facilitate contributions from across relevant Departments to ensure the interests of older people are recognised and reflected in relevant policies and services.
- Funding – provide small scale funding to enable the Forum/Group to achieve its ambitions on a basis of reciprocity in recognition of the benefits and added value the Forums/Group provide in respect of supporting Council objectives
- Attendance by Council officers by Department is arranged as relevant to the agenda of the Forum/Group and that they receive appropriate information to help achieve an effective dialogue
- Attendance by the Older People's Champion, Councillors is facilitated on a regular basis, ensuring they are appropriately briefed to contribute effectively
- Partnership – ensure that a coherent contribution is made to Forums/Groups by facilitating the contribution of other relevant Council groups such as Carer's, dementia, healthy living etc and through communication networks
- Projects - Joint working with Forums/Groups on projects that have mutual benefit and promote both the work of the Council and the Forum/Group e.g., inter-generational, Care Homes, Sheltered Accommodation, Safeguarding, ageism, loneliness and isolation etc
- Accommodation – provide or facilitate where feasible, the availability of a room and related support for meetings of Forums/Groups where required
- Support for special events is provided where feasible e.g., AGMs, conferences and seminars etc
- Advice and training e.g., Information Technology, website, social media is provided where feasible to promote digital inclusion of older people in the County
- Ownership of the member database by the forum is recognised and supported to ensure compliance with GDPR.

Annex A

Sample Constitution for 50+ Forums

Constitution for the

1. Name

The name of the group is "50+ Forum. "

2 Aims and Objectives

To promote the interests, participation and engagement of people aged fifty and over in County Borough and provide them with an opportunity to express, publicise and present their views, opinions or concerns. The Forum will aim to contribute to an improvement in the quality of the lives of County Borough residents and, particularly, help to address the effects of isolation, loneliness and poverty. To provide information relevant to residents of the Borough particularly to those over 50 and friends and relatives who care for them. The Forum will support Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA) and the Commissioner for Older People in Wales (COP), particularly with the development of Age and Dementia Friendly Communities (as defined by the COP) across the borough. It will also communicate with the local Council and with the Welsh Government (usually through COPA with the latter).

The Forum will be non-party political, non-sectarian and will be committed to non-discriminatory practices and equal opportunities.

3 Processes

The Aims will be fulfilled by identifying any area where the Forum can influence the improvement of the well-being of those residents ofCounty Borough that are over 50 years old. This will be achieved by:

- seeking the views, ideas, opinions and even complaints of residents.
- publicising the existence, role and achievements of the Forum. The Forum can:
- Raise funds, receive grants and donations.

Cymru Older People's Alliance c/o Age Cymru Offices, Mariners House, Trident Court, East Moors Road, Cardiff, CF24 5TD

- Apply for funds to carry out the work of the organisation.
- Co-operate with and support other groups with similar purposes.
- Share information but will not provide advice.
- Liaise with Council officers and elected members, and statutory bodies, as appropriate, to promote the aims of the Forum. The Forum will endeavour to influence policy and practice concerning current and future older people at a local, regional and national level.

4 Membership

All residents of the Borough who are over 50 are entitled to be represented by the Forum. Membership ofCounty Borough 50+ Forum is open to anyone who is resident in or employed in the County Borough ofand is fifty years of age, or older, or proactively committed to improving the lives and services for the 50+ residents in County Borough. By registering for Membership, a resident makes it possible for the Forum to contact them directly to provide information or seek their opinion. Representation on behalf of residents by the Forum is NOT limited to those that have registered for membership. The Forum will keep a register of members in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1988.

Where data is provided, the register will contain name and address; email address and phone number. Members may request removal of their details from the register at any time. Best endeavours will be used by the Forum to keep the register up to date and ensure deceased members are taken off the register.

5 Management

5.1 The Steering Group

The Forum will be administered by a Steering Group (SG). All executive powers of the Forum are exercised through the SG voting members. Normally the SG will be limited to no more than 15 voting members, elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Where nominations received by the Forum and deemed by the current SG to be appropriate exceed 15, criteria to be considered for nomination should include: Location; preference for nominees from wards that have no representation. Commitment; preference for nominees that are prepared to commit to helping with Forum programmes/projects. Applications may be made between Annual General Meetings to join the Committee. Such applicants are welcome to join but, initially, would not be voting members. Where the number of elected voting members is less than 15, the Committee may pass a motion to accept a new member as a voting member. Eligibility There are no residential or age restrictions for Steering Committee members. The only exception is the Chairman who must be over 50 and reside in the Borough. The Steering Group members must be proactively committed to improving the lives and services for the 50+ residents in County Borough. Relevant experience

The Steering Group may invite anyone it sees fit to attend and participate in any of its meetings, but such invitees shall not have a vote. A membership form is permanently available on the Forum website that includes an invitation to get involved with the Forum. Prior to the AGM, the possibility of joining the SG will be advertised using

whatever means the Forum judges can be met appropriately from the Forum resources and finances.

5.2 Officers The officers of the Forum shall be elected at the first meeting of the SG after the AGM. Officers are expected to commit to serving until the next AGM, although it is understood that extenuating circumstances may arise that result in early resignation. The Chairperson and Vice-chairperson must be elected from SG voting members. The willingness of these officers to be nominated as voting members for COPA should be considered as part of the selection criteria. The only criteria for filling other posts are that the SG are convinced that they are committed and have appropriate skills. Where possible, if appropriate and sufficient candidates exist, the officers of the Forum shall be: The Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson. The Treasurer. The Secretary. The Events coordinator. The Membership Secretary. Communications Secretary (Website and social media) The Steering Group shall have the right to appoint any member of the Forum to any other post it deems desirable and appropriate.

5.3 Quorum

At least one third (rounded up) of SG voting members, including at least one (1) of the elected officers, must be present for a valid Steering Group meeting to take place. In the absence of the Chair or Vice chair, the voting members present would elect the Chair for the meeting.

5.4 Meetings

The Steering Group shall meet at least four times a year. Should it fail to do so, then a meeting shall be called for the SG to discuss the way forward. The SG may make reasonable rules to help run the Forum as long as they do not conflict with this constitution or the law.

5.5 Voting

Voting at Steering Group meetings shall be by show of hands on a simple majority basis. If there is a tied vote then the person chairing the meeting shall have a second vote.

5.6 Steering Group

Minutes All meetings must be minuted.

5.7 Termination of Forum membership

The Steering Group (SG) may, by resolution passed at a meeting thereof, refuse, terminate or suspend the membership of any member, including officers, if in its opinion her/his conduct is prejudicial to the interests and objects of the Forum, provided that the member shall have the right to be heard by the Steering Group before the final decision is made. There shall be no right of appeal.

6 Finance

6.1 Banking

Any money obtained by the group shall be used only for the group to fulfil its aims. Such expenditure must be approved by voting members. If necessary, approval may be

obtained by email. Any bank accounts opened for the group shall be in the name of the group. Any cheque issued shall be signed by any two nominated signatories. The treasurer shall be a nominated signatory.

6.2 Budget

The SG will ensure that the group stays within the budget. To that end a brief statement of the current financial position shall be provided by the treasurer to each meeting of the Steering Group. Accounts will be presented annually to the AGM and verified.

7 Publicising the existence, role and achievements of the Forum.

The Forum will employ a number of means to keep and advance the profile of the organisation to maximise the number of residents that are aware of its existence, role and achievement. This may include entertainment events, digital communications (for example, website, social media, and emails) and written material (newsletter, letter, leaflets). The precise means utilised will depend on available resources and finances which must be managed judiciously by SG voting members. The SG may hold general public meetings to consider the regeneration and development of any topic according to the group's aims. They may invite any speakers deemed appropriate to such meetings. The SG must approve any expenditure involved (see also 6.2).

8 Annual General Meeting

8.1 Frequency and Notice

The Forum will hold an AGM at not more than 15-month intervals. Notice of the AGM will be disseminated as widely as possible, using a range of media. The SG voting members will consider the financial implications when deciding the media to use. Communications will be available to the public no less than 14 days prior to the meeting. Any proposed changes to the constitution must be communicated at this time or earlier. The number of places available at the meeting will be limited. Those wishing to attend, including those standing for (re-)election, must apply for an allocation.

8.2 The Business of the AGM

Chairperson's report of the year's activities
Treasurer's report of the annual financial statement
Proposals to amend the constitution. (Re-) election of SG voting members
COPA update. Other business, as appropriate, approved by the SG voting members.

8.3 Quorum

The AGM will be quorate if attended by 5 persons, of whom at least 3 are current voting members. If a quorum is not achieved, the meeting will be suspended. The Chairperson will consult the SG voting members and will reconvene the AGM at an agreed time, allowing adequate notice for the revised date to be widely communicated.

9 Dissolution

If the number of voting members falls to 7 (seven) or less the remaining members will seek to recruit further volunteers to join the Forum using appropriate means to advertise (see para 7.). If additional volunteers become available, the Forum will convene an AGM for the purpose of formally electing new voting members. Ultimately, if there is too little interest in generating new volunteers the remaining voting members may decide to
Cymru Older People's Alliance c/o Age Cymru Offices, Mariners House, Trident Court, East Moors Road, Cardiff, CF24 5TD

dissolve the Forum. Any remaining assets will be disposed of by donating to a charitable organisation, where possible.

Approved Date.....

Name.....