



CYMRU OLDER PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

October 2017



Contents

Foreword by Chair

Introduction

Context

The Board

Reporting on Key Objectives

Finances

Conclusions

Appendix 1



Foreword by Chair

I am delighted to be introducing this Annual Report and to inform you that after much hard work COPA has achieved charitable status. It will create a new membership model at local, regional and national levels to improve the impact we can have working for older people across Wales.

As the reductions in funding of the public sector are having an increasingly significant adverse effect on the resources to engage effectively with older people, an alternative approach needs to be forged. Self-determination and older people representing the best interests of older people more generally must be given a fresh impetus if the voice of older people is to be heard and not marginalised. It is only through growing the infrastructure that enables older people to represent their own interests as we have with COPA, that progress will be made.

COPA is a group that has existed under different names and in different forms since 2001 working under the umbrella of the Welsh Governments' Strategy for Older People in Wales. As such we have a strong tradition of influencing policy and practice for older people in Wales. COPA is now at the next stage of its development making the transition to a genuinely independent organisation – a voice for older people lead by older people. COPA becoming a registered charity operating within the terms of charity law is a significant change and as a charity we will be able to apply for and attract funding from a variety of sources that previously have not been open to us. Whilst it is hoped to continue to attract Government support, our aim is to become self-sufficient over time.

The new Board of Trustees will meet shortly to develop its priorities and a new Business Plan but it will be essential for us to focus on effective communications with older people – two-way communication with the local and regional forums and other older people's organisations. We also need to be able to better influence how decisions affecting older people are made and ensure their voice is heard at the initial planning stage of national policies and initiatives not when it is all tied up and settled. COPA has an exciting future and we will do our best to keep you well informed as we progress as a new charity – the first run by older people for older people in Wales in many a year



Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has helped COPA on this important journey including Members past and present and the Board of Trustees. Special thanks go to our Honorary Secretary Dr Alan Hatton-Yeo MBE who has done such a wonderful job in supporting us so strongly over the last few years and to whom we owe a huge debt of gratitude

Gaynor Davies

10 October 2017

Introduction

1. The year of 2016 - 2017 was a significant and challenging period for Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA) as it was a period of transition to becoming a registered Charity. This was successfully achieved in September 2017 and is subject to formal ratification at our AGM on 10 October. This Report is therefore **not** a formal Annual Report as required under Charity Law but at this stage it just aims to keep our Members and Stakeholders informed and to record our journey to achieving charitable status and in so doing strengthening the voice of older people across Wales.

Context

2. COPA has been recognised by Welsh Government as the national group for older people forums in Wales and they have provided small scale development funding since 2014 and are presently providing resources for the changes underway to ensure COPA becomes a stronger and more democratic organisation.
3. COPA brings together the views, opinions and concerns of local older people's forums and organisations to the national, all-Wales level, so as to strengthen the impact of, and provide coherence to, the representations made to Government and others. COPA is a group that has existed in different forms and titles since 2001 working under the umbrella of the Welsh Government's Strategy for Older People. As such it has a strong tradition of influencing policy and practice for older people in Wales. It is now at the next stage of its development to become a genuinely independent organisation – a voice for older people lead by older people. It has been agreed that COPA cannot be a genuine independent voice for older people in Wales if it is organised by Welsh Government. COPA has a strong agenda to challenge ageism and the recognition that older people need to be empowered and enabled to make their own decisions and built on the evidence of what is most effective in giving everybody the optimal opportunity to age well.



4. The future direction of COPA had been formulated following extensive engagement with Members and older people's groups across all parts of Wales, through Workshops and agreed at the 2016 AGM. COPA Board members have also engaged with Older Peoples Forums during 2017 to update and debate the future of COPA directly with older people. The changes being made are therefore a product of a dialogue with older people and relate directly to what they said they wanted to see happen. Becoming a charity will be a significant achievement providing a stronger infrastructure to represent older people and will open up new avenues to seek funding.

The Board

5. The Board – see appendix 1 – has meet regularly over the last 12 months with structured agendas and a Work Plan and objectives to manage our business. The last 12 months had been dominated by a dialogue with the Charity Commission to enable COPA to become a registered charity. This has meant that the Board have had to devise, debate and agree a raft of detailed policies and other documents to enable the application for charitable status to proceed. Additionally, COPA have taken on a limited range of activities to address priority issues for older people and undertake a dialogue with Government about how these should be progressed – see below. Throughout this process the Board were very much aware of their interim status and therefore were vigilant to ensure they did not compromise the position of the new board of Trustees incoming from October 2017. The work undertaken was designed to provide a foundation for COPA and its strengthened membership once charitable status had been achieved. At this point we would like to acknowledge the sterling work of the late Pat Charles who sadly died in July 2016 and who as a COPA Trustee made a major contribution in shaping COPA's future direction.

Reporting on Key Objectives

6. The COPA Board have addressed a wide range of issues over the last year and a short summary of the action taken is provided for the main objectives in the agreed Work Plan for 2016-17.

Constitution

In November 2016, the COPA Board of Trustees agreed for the first time a formal Constitution to shape its future. This new constitution is vital, not only to satisfy Charity Law but as a statement of self-belief about COPA and to express the foundations of the new organisation on a consistent and coherent basis. It was subsequently revised to meet Charity Commission requirements and agreed at the Board meeting in August 2017.

Membership

The process to democratically elect COPA members at a regional and national level was agreed to create a democratic and representative organisation and move away from a more ad hoc and inconsistent selection route to membership and leadership. In each Council area - Older Peoples Forum or Group - appoint 2 members to the COPA regional committee. Then each regional committee agree 2 of its members to stand as COPA Trustees. All 44 regional members (i.e. 22 x 2) will be voting COPA members and attend the AGM but only 12 (i.e. 2 from each of 6 regions) will be trustees. The normal term of office for a voting member will be 2 years however people may stand for re-election at the end of each term of office. A Voting mechanism was devised and communicated in the event of competition for Trustee status in any region.

COPA Members Meetings

Maintaining a dialogue with the current COPA Membership during the transition process to the new structure has been an important priority for the Board. Meetings of the membership were held in both North and South Wales on two occasions in the last year. Many of the current Voting Members have been supporting COPA over a number of years and their contribution is gratefully acknowledged now we are moving to a different membership model.



Communications

A small Communications Sub Group was created, led by the Vice Chair, to ensure that there was an effective process to provide information about the changes COPA were undertaking to older people's forums and other stakeholders across Wales. A COPA Narrative briefing and Frequently Asked Questions brief were produced together with a new leaflet and logo. A COPA bulletin was produced as a fore-runner to a regular Newsletter. An article about the new direction of COPA was also produced and will be published in the Journal 'Working with Older People' in October 2017. In respect of communications within the new COPA and by creating a regional structure it is hoped to create a "virtuous circle" of dialogue between the local, regional and national levels. This is intended to ensure more effective communications and minimise the need for travel to meetings. The Board also started to use utilise new technologies for discussion between meetings and to reduce the need for travel, room bookings etc.

Age Friendly Communities

As part of the Ageing Well in Wales Programme led by the Commissioner for Older People in Wales, COPA has co-produced with the Commission "Making Wales a nation of age-friendly communities" - this guide has been produced for local communities who want to take action to become more age-friendly. It provides external resources and it is designed as a standalone tool to be used by communities across Wales. The model presented in this guide will be supported through the development of a national Age-Friendly Recognition scheme that is being jointly developed by COPA and the Ageing Well Network

Capacity Building and Engagement

The Welsh Government gave COPA funded support through Volunteering Matters to undertake a programme of work to build capacity and become an independent organisation. As part of this work COPA has led a national engagement programme to identify the priorities to inform the refresh of the National Strategy for Older People. The engagement programme had 4 elements:



1. COPA representatives held focus group meetings and workshops with older people's fora across Wales.
2. The EngAge project workers identified and engaged with groups where older people were members because of their interest not because of their age. In this way, it was aimed to gain the views of older people who were not actively involved with a local forum and may not see themselves as old. This took place in a sample of 6 Local Authority areas:
3. The Engage workers, employed by Volunteering Matters, conducted street interviews outside venues such as Leisure Centres and Supermarkets in their target authorities.
4. An on-line survey, disseminated nationally including through the Strategy Coordinators, to gather the views of digitally included people over 50.

This report has identified a range of issues important to older people including transport, isolation and loneliness, access to information and advice, increasing loss of local services as well as the vital role of health, housing and social care; the report has now been submitted to the Welsh Government to inform their formal consultation on the Strategy for Older People.

Joint Working with the Older Peoples Commissioner

As well as on-going joint activities, the Board has met with the Commissioner for Older People in Wales, Sarah Rochira to discuss the new direction of COPA and other issues impacting on older people. The Ageing-well Programme has also been an area of excellent collaboration with the Commission. We would like to thank Sarah and her team for the invaluable support given to COPA over the last months.

Establishing a Dialogue with Government

The Board has had a good on-going relationship with Welsh Government as part of its funding arrangements. The Board has also had a meeting with the new Minister for Public Health and Social Services in Wales who is also the "Older People's Minister". This has

enabled direct representations on issues such as the future of the Strategy for Older People in Wales, the Commissioner for Older People recruitment, isolation and loneliness of older people, transport, health and social services as well as how national older people's organisations in Wales are funded. The Board have also written to the Minister to follow up the discussion with her and seek a progress report on the important issues we raised. A further meeting of the COPA Board has been requested with the Minister or her officials for later in the Autumn.

Finances

7. Total funding for 2017-18 agreed by Welsh Government is £12,800 comprising £8,400 for meetings and travel and £4,400 for general expenses. There are robust and effective arrangements for the monitoring and accountability for this expenditure through policies and processes agreed by the Board. One of the co-opted Trustees is Treasurer and oversees these arrangements and reports to the Board on a regular basis. Any risks to the achievement of objectives and related expenditure are identified and addressed on an on-going basis. A partnership agreement between Age Cymru and COPA has been established for the period until COPA achieves charitable status and establishes its own bank account. This is a transitional arrangement so the process has been structured to reflect that at the point that COPA is ready to take full responsibility for funding, a new agreement will be drawn up to enable Age Cymru to transfer funding for the remainder of the current financial year, phased to match the Welsh Government payment schedule to Age Cymru, to COPA

Conclusions

8. COPA's strongest public benefit is enabling older people to have the confidence and access to change the conversation about ageing in Wales to one that is lead from the experience of older people about their needs and what works best for them. The first step, over the next year will need to see COPA establishing its policies and processes to match the challenging requirements of



being a charitable organisation to enable these aims to be achieved.

9. It is vital to improve communications, to raise awareness of and interaction with and within COPA as the national body for local fora and groups. COPA will want to be able to influence how decisions affecting older people are made and ensure their voice is heard at the initial planning stage of national policies and initiatives not when it is all tied up and settled. This includes improved COPAs dialogue with National Assembly for Wales Members – AMs - to raise their awareness of issues impacting on older people. COPA are not in any way a politically motivated organisation – it is entirely neutral politically but it is essential that all sides understand the facts of the matter hearing it directly from older people.
10. Apart from the “business” objectives of being an effective charity, COPA will also need to “lift its head” to a broader agenda of influencing the age sector. COPA have good links with the other older people’s organisations through Trustees but want to improve partnership working so that there is a strong dialogue and interchange of information with sister bodies and there are consistent messages about what needs to change to improve the lives of older people. COPA believe that Working in Partnership with other older people’s organisations is the only way forward and will always aim to co-operate and engage with other older people’s organisation to ensure a coherent voice is heard from older people in Wales. The new COPA trustees will need to collaborate and open up a new debate about engagement and participation of older people of all ages and to gain the confidence of people in positions of power that we are serious about achieving a distinct change of pace and intent to take this agenda forward.
11. COPA is on the threshold of a significant and exciting change as it becomes a charity to provide a new more structured and impactful national level voice for older people to improve the



services and support they receive. There have been some notable achievements by COPA during the period of transition over recent months but now is the time for the emergence of a strengthened COPA to work with local fora and groups, other older peoples organisations and the public sector to find new ways of engaging older people in Wales so that there is a genuine dialogue about the services and support they need to remain independent and to promote a good quality of life

COPA Board, October 2017



Appendix 1

The Board

Gaynor Davies - Chair

Phyllis Preece – Vice Chair

Ken Davies – Treasurer

Sylvia Challinor

Gordon Owen-Jones

Steve Milsom

Nancy Davies (up to January 2017)

Dr Alan Hatton-Yeo MBE – Hon Secretary