

Note of UK Advisory Forum on Ageing (UKAFA) meeting on 26 November 2014.

By:

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Steve Webb MP, Minister of State for Pensions set out the government's proposals for the new flat rate state pension from 2016.

There was a wide range of questions in the Q&A sessions relating to the changes.

Shelagh Marshall OBE of Future Years (Yorkshire Forum on Ageing) spoke on 'Concessionary Fares Update'. Future Years is circulating a questionnaire to "gather the views of older people about the use of bus passes in terms of their social value in helping individuals to lead independent and fulfilling lives. Other regions have been asked to join in with this and the results would be presented to the post general election government. The questionnaire had questions relating to the funding of concessionary fares, the willingness of people to contribute annually and willingness to share the costs of the bus pass in a similar way to rail passes.

Barry Wilford and Peter Frakes of the East Midlands Later Life Forum spoke on 'Money Matters and Older People'. Barry Wilford is the Chair of the Age Action Alliance Finance Group. The East Midlands Later Life Forum had held a seminar in Leicester in February 2014 with expert speakers. The Forum conducted a survey covering the six counties and three major cities. The survey had a 75% response. The 15 issues put were reduced to the five which came out as the most important.

1. Care and Supporting later life now that so many local authorities are selling their homes to the private sector and where the funding to pay for these higher charges are coming from.
2. How to pay electric/gas/food bills especially during winter months.
3. How to manage when a partner dies and income is greatly reduced, but monies are still needed to pay for the upkeep of houses, etc. and the basic state pension does not keep pace with inflation.

4. Savings and investments constantly decreasing due to low interest rates.
5. Where to go for sound financial advice which is independent and not connected to having to sell something.

Peter Frakes had carried out work in Derbyshire among 14 over 50s groups. He confirmed the five main issues were raised and that the “perception was that the government was not really concerned about older people in England”. The other devolved countries had a Minister or a Commissioner to raise their concerns.

They said the results were reflected over the whole of the East Midlands. It is intended to work on the project and make a presentation to the post–general election government. He suggested that the other UKAFA Forums take up the issues. They agreed that while looking at how to manage money, we should also address the issue of people who do not have money.

Sara Mason (DoH) spoke on ‘Dilnot Care Cap’ – policy development to build the cap on care costs system’.

- Sara talked about why changes were being made and explained the care funding system, i.e. care and support has never been free but most people do not realise this.
- The current system is no longer fit for purpose.
- Average life expectancy is now 80 and rising.
- Those unlucky enough to have high care needs for a long period risk losing everything they have to meet that cost.

The funding reform was about protection from the risk of catastrophic care costs, limits of the amount people have to pay towards their care and supported needs and extending the point at which help is available and partnership between the individual and the state that is fair for all. She followed this with the time-line of events leading up to April 2016 when the Funding Reform comes into force, tackling policy dilemmas in the partnership, extending the means tested support and what this will mean. Everyone receiving care and support will be metered towards the cap e.g. people supported by their Local Authority via a personal budget, Self funders via (Independent Personal budget). DoH will be responding by working with adults differently starting with the Dilnot principles, addressing the challenges and recording progress and outcomes.

Clint Elliot, Age Action Alliance spoke on **Age Platform Europe** whose members are made up of a cross section of large and small organisations. They hold bi-annual meetings where they exchange

views and best practice. They have regular contact with MEPs. Their goal is to work towards an age friendly EU which supports the active participation of all age groups and an Age friendly EU by 2020. They have discussed Elder Abuse, the quality of long term care. Age's projects relate to Long Term Care, Active Ageing and Healthy Ageing.