

The sixth Scottish Older People's Assembly (SOPA 2014)



Press release

Date: 1 October 2014 UK Older People's Day

Lottery boost on older people's celebration day

News of a £10,000 award from the Big Lottery's Award for All is being announced by the Scottish Older People's Assembly on a very important date – Wednesday 1 October, UK Older People's Day.

It also comes just a few weeks away from the sixth Scottish Older People's Assembly (SOPA) at the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh (Friday 31 October).

This year – for the very first time – the SOPA campaign trail toured Scotland from Dumfries right up to Shetland to listen to the views of older people and ask them the BIG question: *“If you had the chance to speak at the Scottish Older People's Assembly in the Scottish Parliament, what one action would you request to benefit older people in Scotland?”*

The Big Lottery £10,000 will be spent running more of these events after the Assembly to update older people (who were not able to be there or watch online) on how their issues and views were received – as well as the actions agreed to achieve the improvements they suggested.

Tom Berney, SOPA chair said: "We're absolutely delighted with the award from the Big Lottery. Meeting people face to face in their own community has been so rewarding and fruitful. The issues raised have been wide ranging and so relevant to our aim of improving the quality of life for the increasing numbers of older people and those that will become older in the future.

“It is important that communities and politicians recognize the ‘longevity dividend’ – the asset which older people bring to society and the contribution they make to the economy.



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"That is why Shona Robison, the Minister for Pensioners Rights, has asked us to discuss and comment on future policies," he added. "The voice and experience of older people is already contributing to policy making and we now have the chance to influence its implementation."

Ms Robinson attended the last committee meeting of SOPA in Edinburgh and will give a key note speech at the Assembly on 31 October.

The top topics for the 2014 Assembly will be the experience of care, pensions, fuel poverty, isolation and loneliness.

However the issues raised at local meetings will also shape the agenda. One popular example is the need for intergenerational projects which work so successfully in sharing skills for mutual benefit and forging bonds which allow older people and younger people to understand the value they each bring to their community.

The round Scotland campaign visited Hamilton, Kirkcaldy, Dumfries, Dundee, Ayr, Glasgow, Penicuik, Stirling, Inverness and Shetland.

Themes that emerged from these meetings are:-

- Transport, travel and environment
- Retirement, pensions and money matters
- Health and social care
- Safety and housing
- Issues for the Scottish and UK Government, including the Community Empowerment Bill
- Communications, media and information.

SOPA

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Date: Friday 31 October 2014
Venue: The Scottish Parliament
Delegates: 200 older people, their representatives, Ministers, MSPs
Organiser: The Scottish Older People's Assembly Committee

***Important to note:** This one day conference will connect to the community empowerment bill which is intended to give people in communities, and those supporting them in the public sector, a range of new ways to help deliver a better Scotland.*

About SOPA 2014

- SOPA 2014 is a strong “voice” for older people
- SOPA 2014 is an opportunity for older people from across Scotland to debate key issues of interest and concern
- SOPA 2014 will demonstrate positive attitudes for and about older people, active ageing and older people's contribution to civic society, linked to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill
- SOPA 2014 will promote the equal and human rights agendas
- SOPA 2014 will use web casting and social media to reach a wider audience and demonstrate the involvement of older people in new communications
- The key outcomes and recommendations from SOPA 2014 will be reported to the Scottish Government and older people themselves.



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