

Update on London Age Friendly Forum (LAFF)

The London Age-friendly Forum (LAFF) brings together organisations across the capital led by and working alongside older Londoners to raise awareness of ageing in London and campaign for a more age-friendly city. A steering committee meets monthly and has representation from Age UK London, Wise Age, the Greater London Forum for Older People, Positive Ageing in London, U3A London region, National Pensioners Convention London region and the Civil Servants Pensioners Alliance.

The Forum has held regular meetings with the Deputy Mayor for Communities and Social Justice at the Greater London Authority and had convened cross-party roundtable meetings for London Assembly Members. Since its foundation in 2020 LAFF has contributed to and scrutinised the Mayor of London's Age-friendly London Programme, the Mayor's A Fairer City programme, and the work of the London Recovery Board (nor London Partnerships Board). Two members of the steering committee act as age-experts on the Mayor's Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group.

I took over from John Bent as the u3a's representative on the Forum at the end of last year and have welcomed the opportunity to be involved in this important body.

The major issue for the Forum currently is the Mayor's Age Friendly Action Plan which is currently in draft and out for consultation with interested bodies including LAFF. This action plan has now been under development for a considerable time and the original timescale for launching it has slipped. LAFF has fed back extensively on the draft and with a desire to be as constructive as possible, but feels that ‘

- Although some actions proposed are good some are not designed with older people in mind and may not be as age friendly as intended as a result
- It feels too generic and more like documentation on existing and planned GLA strategies rather than an action plan that older adults can hold the Mayor to account on
- There is insufficient emphasis on objectives and measuring the difference the plan will make to older adults. LAFF wants to make London age-friendly supporting the commitment made by the Mayor in 2016 and this can best be achieved by having a strategy measured in terms of its success.
- The Mayor should be urged to see its launch as being an important part of his calendar so that older people can see his

personal commitment to the plan. Action on development of age-friendly action plans is much further advanced in other UK cities for example, in Manchester where their contribution to tomorrow's older people's day is creating an Older Peoples Equalities Panel

LAFF is also considering establishing itself on a more formal basis to enable the Forum to (a) make financial bids (b) to grow our membership and coverage of relevant bodies in London and (c) increase our visibility through the establishment of a dedicated website.

Apart from the main business of the Forum, it has been valuable to learn about the following developments in London which may be of interest to u3a members:

- Older People Best Practice webpage produced by London Councils - <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/health-and-social-care/older-people-best-practice-london>
- The Deputy Mayor's International Day of Older Persons blog <http://www.ageuklondonblog.org.uk/2022/09/30/international-older-peoples-day-2022/>
- The GLA Survey of Londoners 2021-2022 <https://data-london.gov.uk/dataset/survey>
- Age UK London's 2022 Poverty and Older Londoners Report - www.ageuk.org.uk/london/about-us/news/articles/2022/poverty-report/

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