

SCOTTISH PENSIONERS' FORUM

Annual Report 2016-2017

Established 1992



CAMPAIGNING FOR A BETTER DEAL FOR OLDER PEOPLE SINCE 1992



Chairperson's Foreword

In my second term as Chairperson, it has proved yet another busy year for the Forum with our volunteers attending a variety of conferences and events to ensure older people's voices are heard.

Throughout the year we have engaged in talks with both the Scottish Government and at Westminster on issues such as safeguarding the triple lock pension, social security, health and social care, funeral poverty and just recently have been engaged in a series of talks and consultations on safeguarding the concessionary travel scheme with further meetings with Transport Minister, Humza Yousaf scheduled for later in the year.

The issue of health and social care continues to be a concern for older people with loneliness and isolation being a major worry. Through a programme supported by the Scottish Government, the forum has been working with the STUC and trade union retired member's branches, amongst others, to look into putting a proper mechanism into place when considering the transition from working life into retirement and our conference theme this year will look at these very important issues.

Also on health and social care, the SPF are in the process of adopting a *Dignity and Rights of Older People* policy and hope to have this ready for endorsement by conference.

I hope that you will see from the articles contained in this report that much has been done throughout the year in order to get your message across however there is still much more work to be done and we believe that by working with our members, and other like minded organisations, we can achieve a better and more just society for older people.

I must take this opportunity to thank Graham Smith, General Secretary of the STUC, and his staff for their continued support to the Forum and to our Executive Committee for their unwavering support to me throughout the year.

I must also thank our administrator, Eileen Cawley, whose commitment to the SPF makes her invaluable to us.

And finally, I would like to thank all of you for being part of an organisation that continues to fight for the rights of older people across Scotland. We are only as good as our members and your continued support allows us to carry out the work on what we are all trying to achieve, a better deal for older people.

Rose

Rose Jackson, Chairperson

SPF ANNUAL CONFERENCE, GLASGOW 2016



The SPF Annual Conference took place on Tuesday 7th June 2016 at the City Chambers, Glasgow with over 165 delegates in attendance. Guest speakers on the day were Neil Duncan Jordan, Policy Officer, National Pensioners' Convention, Lorna Binne, WASPI Campaign and Graham Smith, General Secretary of the STUC.

Formal business on the day included the adoption of the SPF Development Plan, devised by Executive Committee member Brian Martin, the election of the Executive and Standing Orders Committee for 2016/2017 and an endorsement by delegates of the WASPI Campaign, which fights for the pension rights of women throughout the UK.

Motions to conference seen changes to the Constitution as well as a decision by conference to lobby energy companies to abolish standing charges and to standardise costs in order to help combat fuel poverty.

Our thanks go to Glasgow City Council for their hospitality for the event and to our delegates, who travelled across Scotland to join with us on the day.

Executive Committee 2016-2017

Helen Biggins	Individual Member	
Jim Bradley	Individual Member	Vice Chair
Tommy Brennan	STUC –NLTUC	
Surjit Chowdhary	Mel Milaap/Central Gurdwhara	Treasurer
Pauline Frazer	Individual Member	
Maureen Gardner	STUC-Unite	Assistant Secretary
David Gavin	CWU	
Sam Gibson	Individual Member	
Sheena Glass	GOPWA	
Sharon Greig	UNISON	
Rose Jackson	STUC-UNISON	Chairperson
David Latto	UNISON Housing & Care	
Brian Martin	STUC-UCU	
John McAllion	Dundee Pens. Forum	
Christine McGiveron	Individual Member	
John McGiveron	Civil Service Pens Alliance	
Mary McLaughlan	USDAW	
Alex Morrison	East Kilbride Seniors Forum	
Margaret Murdoch	Individual Member	
Jeanette Pieper	Age Scotland	
William Quigley	GMB	
Rosemary Smith	Individual Member	
Alan Spinks	National Fed of Occup. Pensioners	
Colin Wakeling	Co-opted	
William Welsh	RMT	

OUR WORK THROUGHOUT THE YEAR



MEETING WITH JEANNE FREEMAN, MSP Minister for Social Security

On 6th September 2016, members of the SPF Executive Committee, along with members from the Scottish Seniors Alliance, met with Jeanne Freeman MSP, Minister for Social Security, to discuss areas of concern to older people on behalf of their members.

In a very open and frank meeting, Ms. Freeman indicated that she viewed the meeting as a starting point to ongoing discussions between both organisations and stated that she was keen to ensure that older people's voices were heard across government and that their contribution to society as a whole was recognised. Ms. Freeman remarked that she was keen to find a way of effectively bringing together all older people's organisations as cross Government responsibility for older people's issues formed part of her remit.

During the discussion, Ms Freeman encouraged both the SPF and the SSA to hold, and attend, events in line with the Social Security consultation and that a written response to the consultation would also be welcomed from them.

Other issues for discussion at the meeting included the possibility of reinstating the Older People's Consultative Forum which both organisations felt would provide a more direct mechanism for older people to liaise directly with government on issues of concern, a much strengthened Cross Party Group on Older People, Age and Ageing, with more active representation from MSPs and the issue of fuel poverty, with an increase to the Winter Fuel Allowance without the need for means testing

A further meeting with Ms. Freeman and members of the Scottish Government Equalities Unit took place in February 2017 where all Scottish Government funded older people's organisations were in attendance.

A paper detailing concerns for older people was sent from the SPF to the Scottish Government for their consideration and discussion at future group meetings and these can be found on the next page of this report.



ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR OLDER PEOPLE

After discussion at SPF Executive Committee meetings of February and April 2017, the following concerns were submitted to the Scottish Government in April 2017 on behalf of our members

- 1. The closure of banks and libraries throughout local authority areas has proved problematic for older people and particularly those with disabilities, with many of these banks/libraries being replaced by mobile facilities. One of our board members highlighted the plight of a disabled person in Cumnock, Ayrshire, who was wheelchair bound, having to wait in a car park for over half an hour as the mobile bank was not wheelchair accessible.**
- 2. With the closure of banks many older people are being urged to use post offices which are themselves under threat. Although many older people have the use of digital services there are many more who do not and so we feel this is an issue which must be addressed.**
- 3. Many companies withdrawing from offering care services due to inaffordability.**
- 4. As many migrant workers are employed within the care sector there is a real fear amongst older people that with the many issues surrounding Brexit that their standard of care will be reduced and/or affected by a reduction in qualified carers.**
- 5. Many community facilities are being closed by local authorities due to budget constraints and this is having a detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of older people leaving many vulnerable people lonely and isolated.**
- 6. Fuel poverty is a very real issue for older people, with the Big 6 again hiking up prices, which has an effect on the price of food and other things. We highlighted this in a special edition newsletter in 2011 and the issue is still very real if not worse.**
- 7. Integration of health and social care is a worry for many older people who believe that their standard of care has dropped and their calling times reduced.**
- 8. Community safety is a major issue for older people who feel vulnerable to scam callers and the like.**
- 9. The concessionary travel scheme is a vital lifeline for older people and there is fear over it being withdrawn or means tested.**
- 10. The use of mobile data by local authorities at arms services which records personal information on medication, names and addresses, health care, benefits, care plans and alarm and fob codes is a worry for many older people. Has the use of data in this way been authorised by service users and/or their families.**

CROSS PARTY GROUP ON OLDER PEOPLE, AGE AND AGEING

The Scottish Pensioners' Forum continue to be represented on the Scottish Government Cross Party Group on Older People, Age and Ageing, convened by Sandra White MSP.

Recent discussions have looked at health and social care, dementia, the newly devolved social security powers for the Scottish Government as well as funeral poverty.



MEETING WITH ALEX ROWLEY MSP



Following his motion to parliament calling for cross party collaboration on the issue of funeral poverty, members of the SPF Executive Committee met with Alex Rowley MSP and Anas Sarwar MSP at Holyrood to discuss ways of moving forward on a joint venture on this issue. Talks have been ongoing and the SPF have now been invited onto the Cross Party Group on Funeral Poverty as well as continuing to serve on the Scottish Government Funeral Party Working Group, chaired by John Birrel.

CONSULTATIONS ON THE CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL SCHEME



Members of the SPF Executive Committee met with representatives of Transport Scotland in March 2017 to discuss the future of the concessionary travel scheme and after voicing our concerns were invited along for a discussion with Transport Minister, Humza Yousaf, in April 2017, along with representatives from other older people's organisations in Scotland.

It is the position of the SPF that the status quo must remain as the concessionary travel scheme allows older people to get out and about, combating loneliness and isolation and helping keep older people healthy. As well as this, the SPF emphasised that older people use their concessionary card to attend hospital appointments across local authority areas, as hospital transport was often inadequate, and also to carry out caring and volunteering duties which in itself saves the government money.



Talks are still ongoing and the SPF have identified several Executive Committee members qualified to discuss this issue in depth to represent us and continue to make our position felt.

UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS



To mark United Nations International Day of Older Persons, the Scottish Pensioners' Forum, in collaboration with the STUC, held a demonstration of the Scottish Parliament on 29th September 2016.

With help from our members and affiliates, who also turned out to support us on the day, as well as contributions from SPF Chair Rose Jackson, Davena Rankin, STUC Women's Committee and Bill Kydd MSP, who put through a Members Motion on our behalf, the event was a success and allowed us to put our message across on the many issues facing older people in Scotland.



The theme of this year's UN International event was loneliness and isolation in older people and Rose Jackson made reference to this by telling those in attendance that it was one of the biggest challenges facing society today, often caused by the breakdown of

Members Motion S5M-01689 Tabled by Bill Kydd MSP for Glasgow Anniesland

That the Parliament notes that 1 October 2016 is the designated UN International Day of Older Persons; welcomes the opportunity to focus on the contribution that older people make to Scotland's economy and society at large; commends the work done by the Scottish Pensioners' Forum, which is the campaigning organisation for older people, with the support of the STUC, in giving voice to older people's concerns; recognises that the issue of loneliness and isolation is a priority for older people, and considers that the transition from working life into retirement can contribute to addressing this issue, alongside the agenda set by the Fair Work Convention.

communities and social relationships which has seen many older people being confined to their homes. Rose touched on the future campaigns being undertaken by the SPF but noted that this specific day was all about uniting in solidarity with older people from around the world to make their collective voices heard.

As well as the valued contribution made by Bill Kydd MSP on our behalf, over a dozen MSP's came out to meet with our representatives and to listen to our concerns.

WESTMINSTER CONFERENCE ON PRIORITIES FOR PENSION POLICY IN THE UK

The SPF was recently invited to attend a conference in London to discuss the priorities for pension policy in the UK and took the opportunity to arrange a meeting with the Chair of the proceedings and Shadow SNP Pensions spokesperson, Ian Blackford MP, to put forward the views of older people in Scotland.

During the discussion with Mr Blackford MP, Rose Jackson, SPF Chairperson, spoke out on the threat to the Triple Lock and to other universal age related pensioner benefits such as the winter fuel allowance. Rose highlighted the fact that pensioner poverty is still a major issue for many older people across the UK and was one of the main reasons the Triple Lock system was first introduced. The SPF felt it was also necessary for policy makers to bear in mind the long struggle to establish a caring, supportive state pension in the first instance. As it presently stands, 1 in 7 pensioners (equating to 1.6 million or 14% of all pensioners living in the UK) are still living in poverty with a further 1.2 million pensioners (just over 10% of UK pensioners) living just above the poverty line. (Cont'd)



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(Cont'd) The SPF argued that any threats to the future of the Triple Lock, based on at best uncertain forecasts, would of course impact most significantly on the poorest pensioners as would any ideas surrounding the discontinuance of age related universal benefits and moving these to a means tested system. Statistics show that older people are less likely to claim means tested benefits and so any such moves in this direction would also impact significantly on younger generations and make them more likely to suffer from pensioner poverty in their later years

The 'Triple Lock' guarantee was introduced by the UK coalition government in 2010 and was a guarantee to increase the state pension each year by the higher of inflation, average earnings or a minimum of 2.5%.

This guarantee was to ensure that pensioners would not see their income reduced due to the gradual increase in the cost of living.

As it stands, the Triple Lock has only been guaranteed until 2020 when subsequent administrations may call it into review

38 DEGREES
people. power. change.

The SPF have launched a campaign through 38 Degrees calling for support on our petition to Westminster government on the need for a single tier living pension for all pensioners set above the UK poverty level.

https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/a-single-tier-pension-for-all-pensioners?just_launched=true

Please see our website and social media pages for more details

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS

As well as participating in cross party groups and meetings with Ministers, the SPF were also called to give evidence to the Social Security Committee in September 2016 and to the Scottish Affairs Committee on the demographics of an ageing population. For these evidence sessions, the SPF called on the expertise of Executive Committee member John McAllion, to deliver our views.

We have also submitted consultations on mental health, oral health and health and care standards over the past few months

KEEP ME POSTED AND THE WASPI CAMPAIGN



THE CONSUMER'S
RIGHT TO CHOOSE



The Scottish Pensioners' Forum formally endorsed the WASPI campaign on state pension inequality for women pension and the Keep Me Posted campaign ensuring people have the right to choose how they receive their information from their banks and other service providers. I'm sure you'll agree these are very worthwhile causes and we aim to collaborate on some joint initiatives with both campaigns in the very near future.

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OUT AND ABOUT

In addition to the work highlighted in this publication and our recent newsletters, the volunteers, and staff, of the SPF Executive Committee have attended various conferences and events throughout 2016/2017 and listed below is just some of the work carried out by them:-

- NPC Pensioners' Parliament
- Christie, 5 Years On
- STUC Youth Conference
- Luminate Festival
- SWC 'Women for Sale'
- GOPWA AGM
- Holyrood Conference on Community Transport (Speaker)
- Poverty Alliance Members Seminar
- UN Older People's Day Dundee
- STUC Black Workers' Conference
- Age Scotland Regional Assembly
- Cross Party Group on Older People, Age and Ageing
- STUC Women's Conference, Perth
- Scottish Women's Convention, Social Security consultation
- Poverty Alliance 6th Annual Conference
- Outside the Box "We're Here Too"
- National Funeral Poverty conference
- STUC Disabled Workers' Conference
- Priorities for Pension Policy in the UK
- Enabling Active Travel
- SCVO event, December 2016
- Funeral Poverty Working Group
- SOOPIR event, Renfrewshire
- STUC Congress Aviemore.
- SPF Outreach meetings
- Meeting with Jeanne Freeman MSP
- Meeting with Humza Yousaf, MSP
- Meeting with Alex Rowley MSP
- Age Scotland Conference Perth
- Loneliness and Isolation conference (Speaker)



We are also regularly asked to comment on press articles and on local and national radio to discuss issues of interest to older people in Scotland.

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SPF MEMBERSHIP

Our members are very important to us and their commitment allows us to carry out the work that we have been doing over the past 25 years . Through our membership we represent over 150,000 older people across Scotland

We presently have 3 categories of membership of the Scottish Pensioners' Forum and our membership numbers are as follows:

Individual Pensioner Members	364
Other Individual Members	23
Organisations and Local Forums	172

We thank you for your continued support to the work we carry out on your behalf



thank you!

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INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT As at 31st March 2017

INCOME AS AT 31st March 2017

<u>MEMBERSHIP FEES</u>		<u>2779.50</u>
<u>DONATIONS</u>		<u>3135.20</u>
<u>GENERATED INCOME</u>		
Conference Fees	630.00	
Scottish Government	15343.50	<u>15973.50</u>
Adj Unpresented Cheqs	51.20	<u>51.20</u>
<u>TOTAL INCOME</u>		<u>21,939.40</u>

EXPENDITURE AS AT 31st March 2017

<u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u>		
Volunteer Expenses/Catering	1473.53	<u>1473.53</u>
<u>POSTAGE/PRINTING/OFFICE</u>		
Publications	1231.00	
Postage	1078.74	<u>2309.74</u>
<u>CAMPAIGNS AND OUTREACH</u>		<u>4156.91</u>
<u>MISCELLANEOUS</u>		
Global Justice Now donation	20.00	
Watson & Co Audit Fees	576.00	
Design is Central (Website)	270.00	
Meeting VAF	45.30	
Promotional Materials	134.99	
Rent/Rates	1425.00	
Adobe Subscription	19.33	
Office Furnishings	274.05	<u>2764.67</u>
<u>SALARY</u>		
Salary	23995.73	<u>23995.73</u>
<u>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</u>		<u>34700.58</u>

Balance
As at 31/03/16 **29,666.13**

Add:
Income **21,939.40**

Less:
Expenditure **34,700.58**

Year End Balance **16904.95**



**Scottish
Pensioners'
Forum**

Join the Scottish Pensioners' Forum

Application forms can be requested from:

**Scottish Pensioners' Forum,
333 Woodlands Road, Glasgow
G3 6NG**

**Telephone 0141 337 8113
or at: www.scottishpensioners.org.uk**

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