

## Role of Older People's Champion

### Introduction

The Scottish Older People's Assembly (SOPA) and Age Scotland want to support and encourage local authorities across Scotland to appoint an Older People's Champion.

Older People's Champions can spotlight the issues impacting the lives of Scotland's growing older population, which include loneliness and isolation, digital exclusion, housing, and health and social care, and ensure older people's voices are heard in council chambers.

SOPA and Age Scotland have produced the following suggested role description, which you can adapt to suit your own local authority's needs. For instance, some local authorities, particularly those covering a large geographic area, may choose to appoint more than one Champion.

How an Older People's Champion chooses to carry out the role is up to them – the role is flexible and can be adapted depending on the post holder. However, the role's core purpose of listening to older people and amplifying their voices should be the same across Scotland.

### Role Description

An Older People's Champion is a Councillor within a local authority who is tasked with working to ensure that older people's voices are heard.

Broadly, Older People's Champions raise awareness of issues affecting local older people and work to seek solutions on their behalf. They act as a link between the council and older people in the local area, ensuring their needs are considered in the planning and delivery of policies and services.

Their responsibilities might include:

- ensuring older people's perspectives are understood in every policy area
- collecting and feeding back on older people's concerns to the council
- leading on council campaigns around older people's issues
- helping to communicate council policy to older people and the wider community
- acting as the council's spokesperson on issues relating to older people
- linking up with other council Champions where appropriate – e.g. the Armed Forces and Veterans' Champion
- participating in focus groups and other events
- attending relevant local and national meetings
- working with local organisations, community groups and other stakeholders

The role is apolitical, with a focus on representing the voices of older people from across the local area. We do not anticipate there to be any budgetary implications attached to the role.

Experience of the issues faced by older people would be beneficial but the ability to empathise and represent the views of others is more important.

The Champion does not need to be an older person themselves.