



**Volunteer with Age UK to be a
Policy Reviewer
on the
Policy Sounding Board**

**Information Pack and
Expression of Interest Form**

October 2019

Age UK's National Engagement Team invites you to get involved and share your views

Are you interested in influencing policy in national and local government?

If so, read on to learn about volunteering as an Age UK Policy Reviewer to help Age UK shape their public policy positions.

Background

Age UK is the country's leading age organisation working with and for all older people. We help millions of people in the UK every year, providing support, companionship, advice and services to older people. We are a strong voice, campaigning with and for older people and future generations to champion their rights, needs and wishes.

Age UK Public Policy Positions

Age UK has a wide range of public policy positions which aim to set out guiding principles and key objectives in major policy areas. These explain both the issues and how Age UK believes central or local government, other sectors and society in general should address these. Our policy positions can be found on our Age UK website at: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/policy-research/policy-positions/>

Being informed by the views of older people is essential to developing our policy positions and our decision-making processes.

Your Opportunity as a Policy Reviewer

Age UK, the national organisation, is currently recruiting a small number of people aged 50+ to volunteer as Policy Reviewers and join its existing Policy Sounding Board membership. The Sounding Board meets up to four times a year with Age UK's Director of Policy & Research, and her team. In this role you will have opportunity to influence policy-makers and thereby Government. Members will be expected to be individual contributors bringing their own knowledge, experience and perspectives, rather than representing the views of a specific local or national organisation.

At Age UK we recognise the importance of promoting equality, valuing diversity and creating an inclusive environment for everyone. We want to include people with a mixture of life experiences, with different backgrounds, from different communities and with varied interests. We are delighted to have a number of Age UK sounding board members from seldom heard groups including those with a disability, OLGBT and ethnic minority communities and would welcome new members from these and all other communities. In considering this opportunity, if you would find it helpful to talk to a current volunteer about what is involved in being a Policy Reviewer, please contact Liz Stacey, Divisional Services Co-ordinator, as listed below and we will see if we can accommodate your request.

How to apply

More information can be found in this pack and if you want to apply, please complete and return the short Expression of Interest Form to Age UK by **Wednesday 20th November 2019**.

If you have any queries please call Liz Stacey, Divisional Services Co-ordinator on: **0203 033 1152** or email engagement@ageuk.org.uk Thank you.

Age UK Policy Reviewer Volunteer - Role Description

Policy Matters for Policy Makers

Policy Reviewers are volunteers aged 50+ who serve as members of Age UK's Policy Sounding Board. In this role you will play a vital role in helping Age UK develop and review external facing policy positions on a wide range of topic areas such as:

- money matters
- health & wellbeing
- care & support
- housing and homes
- active communities and transport

What is involved?

- Attend a 'meet and greet' induction day on **Wednesday 15th January 2020 from 10.15hrs to 15.15hrs**, which will inform your understanding of Age UK and the volunteer role
- Attend 3 – 4 meetings per year in London usually 10.15am – 15.15hrs
- Future meeting dates for 2020 are **Thursday 13th February, Thursday 7th May, Thursday 2nd July and Wednesday 28th October**
- Read several papers in advance (provided in English and in hard copy and email)
- Contribute your personal views and experiences

Qualities and skills required

- An interest in policy in its widest context e.g. decisions made by local or national government that affect society and older people in particular
- An interest in developing public policy relating to older people
- An informed interest in one or more of Age UK's policy topic areas
- At ease in working as a part of a group
- Comfortable contributing your personal views and experience to develop diverse perspectives

Additional information

- Please refer to the Policy Sounding Board Terms of Reference
- All reasonable expenses and overnight accommodation incurred in attending meetings will be reimbursed in line with Age UK's policy
- Contribution toward cost of an attendant or replacement carer will be provided
- We create an inclusive and confidential environment and value diversity of membership
- Membership of the group will generally last up to three years and members are able to opt out at any stage. Members of the sounding board will also be able to share their voices via other engagement opportunities and join the Engagement Consultative Network

Policy Sounding Board - Terms of Reference

1. Aim

The Policy Sounding Board (PSB) is a group of committed volunteers aged 50+ who meet three to four times a year, whose aim is to help Age UK review and develop new policy positions. We call these volunteers Policy Reviewers. The aim of the PSB is to ensure that Age UK's public policy is influenced and informed by the involvement of older people. It complements other ways in which Age UK seeks to understand the needs of older people such as conducting evidence reviews and research.

The role of the Policy Sounding Board will be achieved by providing an informed voice on:

- I. the overall national strategic direction of Age UK's public policy work
- II. Age UK's public policy positions at different stages of their development – early stage to review and revision stage
- III. the future and long term opportunities of an older population and the implications for our public policy and influencing work - in a way that plans for the future of older people and cares for the present.

2. Membership

The membership aims to achieve a wide geographical spread across England and to include people who live in different settings. The membership is to be made up of people aged 50+ from diverse backgrounds to help ensure that a wide range of views and experience is available to the Director of Policy & Research. Members will be expected to have an informed interest in relevant fields, such as transport, local government, legal services, housing, the NHS, Social Services, advocacy services, consumer affairs, financial services, physical or mental health or well-being services, emergency services, ageing policy or research. An informed interest could be demonstrated by, for example, having experience and/or skills as or in one or more of the following:

- a) A user of public services, for example, hospitals, GPs, social services and housing
- b) A carer or intermediary of someone receiving services or similar
- c) A commissioner or deliverer of services that are either public, private or charitable
- d) Standard setting, monitoring & regulation of services or products used by older people.
- e) A professional or other informed interest such as membership of a Patient Participation Group or Housing Association Residents Committee

Members will be expected to be individual contributors bringing their own knowledge and experience, rather than representing the views of a specific local or national organisation.

The membership will not exceed 25 and will include those who are from seldom heard or marginalised communities. Members will be expected to complete an Expression of Interest (initial or on-going) Form, an Equalities Monitoring Form, and provide a short personal informal biography.

4. Remit

The Policy Sounding Board mirrors Age UK's remit for public policy. This means it covers all issues reserved for the Westminster Parliament, including at different times issues affecting England only, England and Wales, Great Britain and the UK. It may also consider EU and international policy, in consultation with Age International. The Age UK board of trustees is responsible for final approval of all policy positions.

The PSB does not consider issues which are exclusive to Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland but covers nationwide issues relating to local and regional policy and does not take a view on the detail of local and regional issues.

5. General principles for Operation

- a) Overall ownership of the Policy Sounding Board work-plan rests with the Director of Policy & Research and her team
- b) The Policy Sounding Board (PSB) is currently Chaired by Engagement and Involvement (E&I), with the agenda jointly agreed between the Director of Policy & Research and E&I
- c) Policy Heads of Departments or their nominee will be expected to regularly participate in PSB meetings in accordance with the work-plan and provide timely communications, including the outcomes from previous PSB participation, two to three weeks prior to the meeting e.g. reports and review papers
- d) Support Services will be provided by the Age UK Influencing division. Meeting outcomes and actions will be circulated in advance of the next meeting and provided to the PSB and Policy Panel. This will include information on outcomes from previous PSB participation.
- e) Relevant members of Age UK staff (especially from the Policy Department) will attend according to the nature of the topics to be discussed.
- f) Advance papers will be issued to the PSB members (electronic and hard copy) 10 days in advance of the meeting, whenever possible, to support informed participation at the meetings.
- g) The PSB will convene three to four times a year, as required - any member unable to attend will be provided with an opportunity to input views and comments before or after the meeting on papers issued.
- h) Meetings are usually held between the hours of 10.15am to 3.15pm
- i) Any member missing three meetings in a row will potentially forfeit their membership to encourage active participation
- j) Members may be invited to volunteer for additional sub group activity, for example special one-off meetings on specific subjects, in between meetings, but participation in this activity will not be a requirement of membership
- k) Appointments will generally last up to three years, and may be reappointed. Sometimes the term of appointment may be varied to allow for the rotation of members.
- l) An Induction will be provided to new members
- m) Electronic or postal communication may be used from time to time to elicit views or obtain feedback from PSB members

- n) Participation in the PSB is voluntary and unpaid. All reasonable travel, overnight accommodation where required and subsistence expenses incurred in attending the PSB will be reimbursed in line with Age UK's policy. Age UK will provide a contribution to the cost of an attendant carer to enable a member to fully participate
- o) The PSB Terms of Reference will be reviewed every three years
- p) The PSB is to meet the requirements of our engagement principles which are that engagement is:
 - a) Mutually beneficial (for the individual participating and for Age UK)
 - b) Aligned to Age UK's key themes and priorities
 - c) Cost effective and sustainable
 - d) Inclusive
 - e) Timely and frequent
 - f) Flexible and varied
 - g) PSB members will automatically become members of the wider Age UK Engagement Consultative Network¹ and will benefit from receiving further national engagement opportunities and at times free places at conferences.

¹ The Age UK Engagement Consultative Network (ECN) is made up of people aged 50+ who live across England who have volunteered to share their views with Age UK on a range of different topics. The Age UK Engagement team offers the ECN different opportunities to join in for example by; responding to surveys, taking part in focus groups or being part of a membership engagement group such as the Policy Sounding Board or Services Sounding Board. Individuals can opt out of the ECN at any time. Age UK will also share with the ECN other engagement opportunities that are also relevant to older people that are run by other organisations.