



Councillor Jonathan McColl
Council Leader
West Dunbartonshire Council

Councillor Caroline McAllister
Deputy Leader
West Dunbartonshire Council

Joyce White
Chief Executive
West Dunbartonshire Council

1 February 2021

Dear Councillor McColl, Councillor McAllister and Joyce White,

An Older People's Champion for West Dunbartonshire Council

As the national charity for older people, Age Scotland works to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50. The Scottish Older People's Assembly (SOPA) is a membership organisation which exists to give a strong voice to Scotland's older people and to celebrate their contribution to society.

Age Scotland and SOPA are writing to you to ask that you establish the role of an Older People's Champion within West Dunbartonshire Council and appoint a councillor to this post.

Older People's Champions are councillors who act as a link between the council and older people in the local area. Their responsibilities include ensuring older people's perspectives are understood in every policy area, feeding back on older people's concerns to the council, leading on council campaigns around older people's issues and helping to communicate council policy to older people and the wider community. As the role is apolitical with a focus on representing the views of local older people, any councillor can take up post. There are no budgetary implications attached to the role.

Age Scotland and SOPA's vision is for a network of Older People's Champions with representation from every council in Scotland. It would be a forum for older people's issues at local and national level, and a space where councillors could work together on shared challenges and collectively influence change.

SOPA has previously written to every local authority about the role and several, including Scottish Borders, Dumfries and Galloway and Dundee City, already have Champions in post.

COVID-19 has had a particularly stark effect on Scotland's older people. We believe this has only strengthened the need for Older People's Champions, who will be vital in representing the views of older people to colleagues and decision-makers and keeping communities connected during these difficult times.

Age Scotland can provide support to Older People's Champions, including information on issues affecting older people, a regular round-up of our work, and access to briefings and research publications. The Older People's Champions already in post have joined SOPA, which provides a space for them to network and share best practice to benefit older people.

In an effort to support you in establishing the role, we have included a role descriptor. You may wish to adapt this to suit your own area's unique requirements.

If West Dunbartonshire Council already has a Champion or a representative doing a similar role, please let us know and feel free to pass on our details so they can get in touch with us.

We would be very happy to meet with you to discuss our campaign and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Brian Sloan'.

Brian Sloan
Chief Executive
Age Scotland

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Diana Findley'.

Diana Findley
Chair
SOPA