

Snapshot Analysis of the Age Action Alliance

This snapshot analysis explores the value of the Age Action Alliance (AAA, the Alliance) to help inform discussions and set priorities for its future. The full report is available on request.

While measurement of the Alliance is complex and delivering collaborative outputs in the context of austerity and reduced capacity has been challenging, members clearly value the Alliance, feel it provides worthwhile benefits and should continue. A table summarising findings on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the Alliance is attached.

An additional pressure is created by the decision announced in November 2015 to cease funding of the English Forums on Ageing (EFAs). It is a fundamental value of the Alliance to keep older people involved at its core. The decision affects the membership model of the Partnership Development Group (PDG) in particular.

Priorities for the Alliance's Future

Our analysis identifies three priorities for the Alliance to consider in order to drive its ambitions further: (1) finding a sustainable funding model to ensure continued involvement of older people in the Alliance; (2) re-evaluating the Working Groups; and (3) increasing members' involvement.

Funding

The main priority is to find a sustainable model to fund the Alliance and keep older people involved at its core. Different options and models exist, including:

- (a) Introducing a (potentially voluntary) membership fee which could be staggered according to organisation size and turnover. However, this could deter organisations and individuals from joining.
- (b) Sourcing resources for individual Working Groups from members, relevant Government departments or private companies who have a strategic interest in the Working Group's theme. This approach has been adopted by DWP and DH for relevant groups. To be able to secure funding this way, the Alliance needs to clearly articulate what it is and what it has to offer. However, this model does not address the question of funding older people's involvement on the PDG.
- (c) Following the model of the Disability Action Alliance, which has been offered a one year grant to develop a sustainable funding model. This model depends on a similar grant being available for the AAA and members being willing to provide the Secretariat. Moreover, it only defers the process of finding a sustainable funding model. It also threatens the benefit of a cross-sector secretariat where Government and VCS lead play an enabling role involve members and keep them motivated to contribute.

Review of the Working Groups

A second priority to enable the AAA to fulfil its potential is a review of the Working Groups. Working Groups should re-evaluate and redefine their purpose and objectives and revisit the AAA membership

to (re)engage inactive members. Continuous support to facilitate and drive the groups should be provided from the Secretariat, government departments or members.

Increasing Members' Involvement

Finally, new ways have to be found to increase members' involvement in the Alliance. While introducing a membership fee could have that effect ('making the payment worthwhile'), other ways include an annual all-members event, more informal regional or local networking opportunities and skill exchanges and cross-sector learning via secondments.

Another option is to introduce an AAA Ambassador programme whereby each member organisation selects AAA Ambassadors who raise the profile of the Alliance internally. Most of the AAA Ambassadors' tasks will take place alongside their normal day-to-day jobs and do not require much resource. With this approach, the benefits of Alliance membership for the organisation can be increased simultaneously: If the profile of the Alliance is raised within the organisation, more information will be shared with the AAA, which raises awareness of the organisation's brand and enables new connections and partnerships. It should be considered whether implementing the AAA Ambassador programme could be a requirement of membership.

SWOT Analysis

This table summarizes the findings on the Alliance's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large, growing and diverse cross-sector membership - Relationship building → "Dating Agency" - Information exchange and sharing of best practice - Increases members' reputation, credibility and brand awareness - Monday email, Twitter and website - Loose federation and flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of resources - Limited capacity of the Secretariat - Membership does not imply commitment to take action - Working Groups: lack of focus/milestones, dependency on individual members/chairs, changing membership, quality concerns, diverse focus of themes could dilute impact
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondments (Secretariat, membership) - Increasing members' involvement - Involving more private companies, larger organisations and government departments - Working Groups could redefine their purpose and membership for greater impact - The AAA could provide a greater leadership role in representing the collective voice of the ageing sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes to UKAFA and EFAs – with funding implications - Limited Secretariat resource impacts follow-up/delivery of actions and support to Working Groups - Too high expectations of what the AAA can achieve relative to the level of resource - Inactivity of some members - Lack of engagement of excluded older people (requires resource)