

How to involve people

Throughout Wales older people are actively involved in their communities.

Older people sit as school governors, hold jumble sales to raise money for the local church, march in the streets to protest about the war in Iraq and sign petitions to outlaw age discrimination. They sit on Community Partnerships and are active in their local 50+ forums. It is clear older people make a huge contribution to community life.

The challenge

For organisations, service providers and campaign groups the challenge is how to “actively” find, connect with and then listen to older people.

The key

The “key” to effective involvement is planning. How will you involve older people? Will the experience meet their needs? How do you plan to feedback back to them? These and other issues require thought and planning in the early stages.

Toolkit

Within the 50+ Engagement toolkit there is a planning tool to help you through this important stage. This can be accessed via the website. This tool helps you consider what it is you are trying to achieve and what barriers you might meet. It can be found at www.50plusengagement.co.uk

“Tell me and I may remember.
Show me and I may understand.
Involve me and I’ll never forget.”

American Indian saying

Methods

Engaging and involving older people can take many forms and a variety of methods can be used. It could simply be a case of asking people to fill in a survey, take part in a focus group or one of the many other more interactive methods. There are literally hundreds to choose from. Details and how they might be used can be found on the People and Participation website: www.peopleandparticipation.net

New ways of engaging

We have piloted 3 new methods of involving older people:

- Developing a workplace network
- Video letters
- Getting older people involved in delivering training to “professionals”.

Each method has proved to be very successful. Details of each pilot project can be found in the 50+ Engagement Toolkit. Remember that these pilots can easily be tailored to your own needs, topic and audience.

You can find a range of contact numbers and addresses in your local phone book or you can visit your library. The library will also help you access the internet free of charge.