

50+ Citizen Engagement

How to get your Voice Heard – In a Nutshell

The Basic Idea

The project aims to ensure that people know the different ways in which they can get their views heard and influence decisions about services and support for older people.

As an example a 30 minute talk would be given that details the processes and opportunities locally that older people can use to get their voices heard about support services at a personal, local and national level.

Talks would be peer to peer, i.e. facilitated by people 50+. This could be done by members of existing forums or other 50+ groups or individuals.

Information packs would be provided at the sessions with forum membership forms and other information about support and services that people can access, such as advocacy services, CAB, patient information groups, expert patient programmes etc.

This pilot could take place at any location on a small or large scale

A specific, “How to get your voice heard” leaflet should be produced that encompasses all the engagement opportunities available locally. Older people should be given the opportunity to help develop the “How to get your voice heard” leaflet.

Provision should be made to ensure that participants delivering the talks receive support/training as required to enable them to facilitate effectively.

Which Barriers-to-Engagement does the pilot address?

The strength of the pilot comes from the “peer to peer” nature of the engagement process. Older people who have some experience of engaging with decision making will be able to pass on their experiences to their peers.

This approach may give the information regarding engagement more credibility which should facilitate a greater buy in to engagement from those 50+ who's voices are seldom heard.

How will participants be recruited?

Participants may be recruited from a number of areas, for example Communities First Partnerships, existing 50+ Forums and other community groups.

This can be achieved through direct invitation, presentations and by creating interest through local media sources.

Dealing with the 50+ citizen barriers to engagement

Barriers to Engagement (50+ Citizen Perspective): Assessment & Innovation type

Barriers to engagement	How to get your voice Heard – In a Nutshell
<i>Lack of personal resources</i>	
- Education & skills	✓ should not present a barrier
- Money	✓ not required
- Physical & mental health	✓ should not present a barrier
- Mobility & transportation	✓ ? Getting to venue could be problematic
- Disability and sensory impairments	✓ ? could be problematic
- Social contacts	✓ ? Should not present a barrier but those more isolated may be excluded
- Time	✓ 30 min session should not present a barrier
<i>Lack of motivation</i>	
- No knowledge of benefits of participation	✓
- Unaware of civic participation opportunities	✓
- The issues debated are of little interest	✓ ? Should be overcome via invitation and prior knowledge of event
<i>Previous negative experiences</i>	
- Unsatisfactory meetings	✓ ? Dependent on process/outcome
- Consultation overload	✓ ? Dependent on

	process/outcome
- Failures of council to listen	✓ peer to peer and not council led
- Perception of manipulation	✓ peer to peer and not council led
- Unmet expectations	✓ ? Dependent on process/outcome
- Bureaucratic slowness / inertia	✓ peer to peer and not council led
<i>Cultural Issues</i>	
- Minority groups	✓ ? Minority groups potentially excluded dependent on invitation process
- Usual suspects	✓ ? As above though contacting less heard groups may overcome this
- Language and literacy	✓ dependent on delivery
- Values and beliefs	✓
- Form and style of engagement	✓ informal and peer led
- Community divisions	✓

Key;

- ✓ - barrier to engagement dealt with
- ✓ ? – barrier possibly dealt with
- X – barrier not dealt with