

50+ Citizen Engagement Project

Workshop – Towards Engagement Pilots

Date & Time

Venue

BRIEFING SCHEDULE

Time	Activity	People
10:00	Welcome & introductions	JG
10:05	Project update & briefing purpose	NG
10:15	Barriers to Engagement – your views	All
10:45	Innovating ... what exactly?	NG
11:00	Old Ground & Blue Skies ... your ideas for pilots	All
11:45	Round up & next steps	NG
12:00	Close	JG

FURTHER DETAILS

Briefing purpose

The research review has given us one take on the barriers to 50+ citizen engagement. In order to take the project forward, your views on the barriers to engagement are needed. Your inputs are essential for the bigger picture on citizen engagement. (There's a parallel strand gathering older people's views.)

The other important part of the workshop is moving towards engagement pilots. These pilots will give an opportunity to put into practice the ideas collected from: the research review; your own perceptions as above; and the feedback from the 50+ strand.

The Barriers to 50+ Citizen Engagement – your views

Our research review touched on this issue – but we need more information.

There's been other recent research done in Wales. You can access this at:

<http://www.opinionresearch.org.uk/makingconnections/>

Rather a lot to go through here – but worth a scan if you can find a few minutes.

In this part of the workshop, it's a case of conversations, comments & feedback that we can use in the coming months.

Innovating ... what exactly?

The barriers to engagement - many have tried to dismantle them or side-step them or jump over them ... whatever. But success has often been limited.

In this short slot, we'll be looking at why this project is looking at things rather differently. And that means looking at innovation in a more rounded way. It also means factoring in evaluation – and we'll be touching on that.

Old Ground & Blue Skies

In this part we'll be repeating an exercise we've tried twice already. It worked really well – but very differently on each occasion!

It's about you and how you would like to see the pilots developed. To some extent it takes off from where our considerations of innovations left off. For example:

- Innovation in old ground – rejuvenating a forum
- Blue Sky innovation – just that!

BACKGROUND PREPARATION

I appreciate how busy you all are!

It would be really useful if you could look at the other attachments to this e-mail:

- reading the executive summary from the report would be really helpful – any comments well-received! If you really want to read the whole report, please just e-mail me.
- Checking out '*Additional Reference Information*' – this is another section taken from the research review. It contains some 'definitions' – e.g. what is 'citizenship' anyway? ... and also some examples of types of civic engagement.
- some links to sites that are worth a look.

ANYTHING ELSE?

Please let me know if you need anything more, e.g. help on the day or more information.

Looking forward to meeting you all!

Thanks in advance for you're your time & help,

50+ Citizen Engagement Project

Workshop – Towards Engagement Pilots

Background papers & links

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

There's three parts to this:

1. The Executive Summary from the Research Review (Section 1)
2. Additional Reference Information.
3. Some links to websites of interest.

SECTION 1

Executive summary

PURPOSE

This report addresses three of the objectives listed in the 50+ Citizen Engagement Research Project (see Appendix 1):

- To review current research to identify clearly established barriers that prevent or deter people who are 50+ from getting involved in consultations, engagement projects and decision-making processes.
- To review current research to identify what HAS been found to work and what has NOT worked when trying to engage effectively with people who are 50+.
- Produce a simple “readable” lay person’s report making recommendations, to the task & finish group, as to the key barriers for people who are 50+ and which, if removed or reduced, could help make a significant difference to engagement.

ENGAGEMENT & OTHER DEFINITIONS

The Glossary (p.38) gives a list of commonly used terms in the context of citizenship. The list contains working definitions – hopefully they will generate debate.

As for ‘Engagement’, we understand it as follows:

- **engagement** has more or less the same meaning as **involvement** or **participation**;
- people have **levels** of engagement / involvement / participation, ranging from, say, reading a newsletter to editing an older people’s forum newsletter;
- public sector organisations can provide different **types** of engagement, for example, by setting up meaningful consultations or funding a citizens’ jury;
- some types of engagement require a more extensive level of engagement, for instance, chairing an older people’s forum;
- ‘it takes two to tango’ – engagement is about relationships.

Evidence Box A shows some of the types of engagement grouped according to how often they are used. Section 3 (p.39) gives further details.

As for ‘Active Citizenship’, Together We Can suggest this definition:

“Citizens taking opportunities to become actively involved in defining and tackling the problems of their communities and improving their quality of life.”

Although we will be keeping in mind the big picture of citizenship, the main focus of this project is on the civic aspect of citizenship – especially the links between people and their local government.

Evidence Box A - types of engagement for older citizens <i>Engagements listed by the BGOP / PSI Report (2007)</i>	
●	Information newsletters/publications
●	User feedback surveys
●	Community events and festivals
●	Voluntary & community sector representation
●	Older Peoples Forums
●	Citizens' Panels
●	Older Peoples' Champions
●	Steering group representation
●	Local Strategic Partnership representation
●	Open board/general meetings
●	Sessions in day/recreational centres
■	Community planning/regeneration representation
■	Sessions with cultural/faith groups
■	Consulting 'expert' older citizens
■	Older citizens as participatory researchers
■	Older citizens as peer mentors/inspectors
■	Older citizens as service delivery agents
■	Timebanks or other forms of co-production
<i>Democratic Innovations (selected from Power Inquiry)</i>	
* Consultation Innovations	- planning for real - participatory theatre
* Deliberative Innovations	- (DIY) Citizens Juries - Consensus conferences
* Co-governance Innovations	- Participatory budgeting -
* E-democracy Innovations	

Key:
● - frequently used
■ - less frequently used
* - rarely used

KEY FINDINGS

1. Very few older people are engaged extensively as citizens. This does not mean that many older people are not active in their communities. It means that comparatively few older people are active in, for example, local decision-making processes.
2. It is unlikely that there will be a sudden increase in the number of older people fully engaged as citizens. Progress in citizenship is probably best achieved by using a combination of existing and new ways of overcoming the current barriers to engagement.
3. Traditional forms of engagement have tended to communicate with older people as a mass. Traditional types of engagement have their place but their limitations need to be recognised.
4. New ways of engaging older people as citizens are most likely to succeed if older people are approached as individuals. There is a need to personalise any invitation to become more fully engaged as a citizen.
5. Barriers to engagement are of two basic sorts.

First, for a number of reasons, older people themselves might not be able to or want to become more actively engaged as citizens. The reasons are detailed below under points 6 and 7.

Second, public sector organisations might not be able to or want to engage older people as citizens. Considering this issue was a secondary focus of this phase of the project but limited findings are recorded below under point 8.

6. Evidence pieced together from a variety of sources provides the profile of an older person most likely to be fully engaged as an active citizen. *Evidence Box B* shows these findings.

It is important that *Evidence Box B* is read carefully. It is not intended to present a picture of the ideal 50+ active citizen.

Evidence Box B is about the likelihoods of certain person characteristics. The evidence helps us to understand why so few older people are extensively engaged as citizens.

It is useful to think about *Evidence Box B* as telling us something about the people who have by-passed the barriers to engagement. If we think about things in this way, we can go on to make suggestions about helping older people to become more actively engaged if they want to be.

This profile is useful not only in identifying the barriers to civic engagement for older people but also in informing strategies for recruitment.

Evidence Box B - Older People and Citizen Engagement

The literature search did not produce any dedicated research on older people and citizen engagement that could be directly used in this project.

A picture – somewhat sketchy – of the engaged older citizen emerges as someone who:

- ⇒ Is in a minority of, say, one in a hundred for the most active forms of engagement.
- ⇒ Is on average about the age of 65.
- ⇒ Contributes considerably more time to volunteering than the average citizen.
- ⇒ Has a prosocial personality – agreeableness, helpfulness, empathy and emotional stability.
- ⇒ Is motivated by the two-way benefits of civic engagement – gaining personal health and well-being in return for giving time and energy to the community at large.
- ⇒ Has above average levels of education.
- ⇒ Is in good physical health.
- ⇒ Has sufficient financial resources.
- ⇒ Is socially active.
- ⇒ Has religious beliefs
- ⇒ Has altruistic and non-materialistic values.

It needs to be emphasised that the above are likelihoods.

This - possibly stereotypical – picture of the engaged older citizen needs adaptation or revision according to local contexts. For example, in South Wales there are many trade unionists who are active citizens without necessarily fitting all the above characteristics.

7. Barriers to the civic engagement of older people can be listed as:

- Lack of personal resources
- Lack of motivation
- Previous negative experiences
- Cultural Issues

Evidence Box C provides a tool for discussing older people's barriers to 50+ citizen engagement.

Evidence Box C - Barriers to engagement, the older person's view
(for greater detail see pages 22 to 25)

Lack of personal resources (note 1)

- Education & skills
- Money
- Physical & mental health
- Mobility & transportation
- Disability & sensory impairments
- Social confidence & self-esteem
- Social contacts
- Time

Lack of motivation

- No knowledge of benefits of participation
- Unaware of civic participation opportunities
- The issues debated are of little interest

Previous negative experiences

- Unsatisfactory meetings
- Consultation overload
- Failures of council to listen
- Perception of manipulation
- Unmet expectations
- Bureaucratic slowness / inertia

Cultural Issues

- Minority groups
- Usual suspects
- Language and literacy
- Values and beliefs
- Form and style of engagement
- Community divisions

8. From the perspective of public sector organisations, the research records:

- some movement towards creating opportunities for new forms of engagement;
- a concentration on 'consumerist' engagement in connection to the quality of public services;
- a prevalence for viewing the general public as apathetic;
- the lack of resources – financial, expertise and time – to establish long term engagement relationships.

9. Regarding 'what works', the use of both universal and targeted strategies is key to success in overcoming the barriers to citizen engagement. This strategy can be formulated as:

- a. **Continuity / Sustainability.** Keep doing what has been partially successful, e.g. the Forums. Make sure they are supported in such a way that guarantees their survival but does not compromise their independence. The Forums themselves must not be a barrier to engagement.
- b. **Personalise.** Building relationships with older people who are 'good prospects' is key: personal invitations to come and join civic engagement; celebrating difference; building on the first contact of a complaint; overcoming people's fears of inadequacy through sensitive mentoring and training; addressing older people's personal barriers to fuller citizenship by directly recognising and responding to their needs.

10. Application of this strategic principle coupled to the use of *Evidence Box C* the table on the barriers to citizen engagement is most likely to be successful if:

- the reality that comparatively few older people are likely to be 'fully engaged' as citizens is accepted;
- different levels of engagement are recognised and accepted – but without assuming that people will necessarily 'climb the ladder of citizenship';
- the background and needs of individuals are understood and acted on;
- a variety of types of involvement are available and become standard practice in citizen engagement;
- thoughtful use is made of existing tools for participatory activities;
- the challenges that accompany citizen engagement are fully acknowledged.

11. Fundamentally it's about 'different strokes for different folks'. Older people should have the opportunity to engage more fully as citizens in ways that suit them. If more older people are to be more fully engaged as citizens, then it falls to public sector organisations to encourage a culture of citizenship by providing appropriate opportunities and resources.

Additional Reference Information

As far as possible within the research context, this report has been designed with accessibility and readability in mind. This final section contains what could be termed 'research nuts & bolts'. Or, in other words, really useful information that could not be included in the main body of the text – due to concerns about breaking the flow of the text.

GLOSSARY – SOME 'DEFINITIONS' OF IMPORTANT TERMS

(with acknowledgements to Vegeris et al (2007) for sources and to Wikipedia and togetherwecan <http://togetherwecan.direct.gov.uk/>)

Active Citizenship (see also Engaged Citizen)

Citizens taking opportunities to become actively involved in defining and tackling the problems of their communities and improving their quality of life. (togetherwecan)

Civic engagement

Civic engagement can take many forms— from individual volunteerism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy. (Wikipedia)

Civil Renewal

The renewal of civil society through the development of strong, active and empowered communities, in which people are able to do things for themselves, define the problems they face, and tackle them in partnership with public bodies. Civil renewal involves three essential elements: active citizenship, strengthened communities and partnership in meeting public needs. Its practical process is community engagement. (togetherwecan)

Deliberative Democracy

Deliberative democracy, also sometimes called discursive democracy, is a term used by some political theorists to refer to any system of political decisions based on some tradeoff of consensus decision-making and representative democracy. In contrast to the traditional economics-based theory of democracy, which emphasizes voting as the central institution in democracy, deliberative democracy theorists argue that legitimate lawmaking can only arise from the public deliberation of the citizenry. (Wikipedia)

Engagement

- **engagement** has more or less the same meaning as **involvement** or **participation**;
- people have **levels** of engagement / involvement / participation, ranging from, say, reading a newsletter to editing an older people's forum newsletter;

- public sector organisations can provide different **types** of engagement, for example, by setting up meaningful consultations or funding a citizens' jury;
- some types of engagement require a more extensive level of engagement, for instance, chairing an older people's forum;
- 'it takes two to tango' – engagement is about relationships.

Engaged Citizen

Someone who:

- recognises everyday responsibilities and rights, for example, by showing respect for the law and co-operating with a fair taxation system;
- acts to support and develop civic life, for example, by voting and attending meetings convened by local government;
- is active in community life, for example, by helping and receiving help from neighbours or supporting local sports teams;
- acts to promote the links between civic and civil life, for example, by communicating the message that law & order is easier in a culture of tolerance and mutual respect - but does not accept that 'anything goes';
- is always willing to listen and learn – especially 'listening to a different point of view' and 'learning to agree to disagree';
- is generally active in support of the democratic tradition and all that involves.

Volunteer

A person who spends time, unpaid doing something that aims to benefit the environment or people, either individuals or groups other than or in addition to close relatives. (togetherwecan)

TYPES OF ENGAGEMENT

This list was produced by Jackie Dix:

- **Citizens council** – this have been used by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) to seek the views of a representative sample of lay people and has been well resourced in terms of both time an money. The council has met for over two years.
- **Citizens' juries** – bringing together a small group of citizens to deliberate on a particular issue.
- **Supermarkets** – to reach a good cross section of the public with on the spot questioning and has the advantage of reaching people who are not normally engaged.
- **On street recruitment** - a method used to recruit to citizens forums for the Assembly Government's research to investigate the way people want to be engaged by public services. Again has the advantage of reaching people who are not normally engaged.

- **Focus groups** – these can be targeted to seek the views of people who are not normally engaged such as with parent and toddler groups, disability groups and at youth clubs or care homes.
- **Community visioning** – there are a broad range of community visioning/planning approaches that aim to generate ideas from across the community leading to the development of a vision and action plan. It is similar to the regeneration approach of planning for real.
- **Rehearsal for Reality** – a theatre company based in Wales which puts on imaginative theatre to promote awareness of citizens' social situation and opportunity for change.
- **Consultation documents** – these can be supplemented by events to discuss the consultation further.
- **User feedback surveys** – to ensure regular feedback on service. Taken further this could involve regularly consulting with service users seeing people as experts in their own fields and even user led research.
- **E-consultation** – with online questionnaires and discussion forums.

Here are further details on selected forms of engagement copied and pasted directly from Smith (2005). These selections are included to promote interest in Smith (2005) – the whole report deserves to be read.

Planning for Real

Planning for real is a technique developed by (and a registered trademark of) the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation and is often used to engage the public in neighbourhood regeneration. This approach to consultation makes more creative use of public meetings and involves the creation of a 3D model of the community, usually built by local community groups or school children. A series of events are then held where participants place option cards (or fill in blank cards) on to the model to represent changes that they would like to see. Often the model is taken to community groups which do not usually engage in consultation exercises, allowing participation at a time and place convenient to participants. The use of cards also means that citizens who may not be confident enough to voice their views in open meetings can offer suggestions. At the end of meetings, suggestions are prioritised and an action plan may be developed. Planning for Real offers a highly visual approach to consultation. The possibility of using new information and communication technology (ICT) is being explored – for example, the virtual experiment undertaken in Slaithwaite, West Yorkshire.

Participatory Theatre

Participatory theatre is based on the 'theatre of the oppressed' developed by the Brazilian Augusto Boal who believes that imaginative theatre can promote awareness of citizens' social situation and opportunities for change. The players perform a short play that shows a protagonist failing to achieve a goal. The play is repeated and members of the audience are invited to offer suggestions of how the protagonist could have acted differently and to come onto the stage to replace the actors to try out their ideas. Participatory Theatre

can work particularly well as a way of engaging individuals and groups who are alienated from more formal and traditional approaches to participation.

[In Wales Participatory Theatre is known as Theatr Fforwm Cymru]

Participatory Budget

Participatory Budgeting was initially established in Porto Alegre in Brazil in 1989. Of all the participatory initiatives used in developing nations, it is Participatory Budgeting that has caught the imagination of practitioners and academics. Like the Kerala example, it manages to combine popular engagement at the local level with the development and monitoring of a city-wide budget. It achieves this by mixing open assemblies with representative bodies.

Participatory Budgeting begins with a series of neighbourhood and regional popular assemblies that generate investment priorities and select citizens to sit on decision-making bodies which present a city-wide budget to the city legislature. Participation levels are impressive – over a five year period in the late 1990s, as many as 8.4% of the adult population stated that they had participation in the process during the last 5 years.

PB has spread to other Latin American localities and there is growing interest in this use in the UK (for example in Salford). A more detailed analysis of the process is offered in Case Study 5.3.

Online Deliberative Poll

James S Fishkin, the originator of the deliberative opinion poll (4.3.), also promotes the idea of online deliberative polling (ODP). The real-time, interactive function of the internet can be exploited so that citizens who are geographically dispersed can deliberate with one another in the same virtual space. As Ackerman and Fishkin argue, the internet removes the restriction of being people together into the same physical location: 'these restrictions disappear if the face-to-face discussion can be mediated through technology'.

As with the traditional approach to deliberative opinion polling, ODP draws together a random sample of citizens (up to 500) to deliberate on a particular policy issue – the first ODP in January 2003 was on foreign affairs, the most recent in the run up to the 2004 presidential elections as part of PBS Deliberation Day. Participants are randomly assigned to small groups which deliberate for around 2 hours per week over a four week period. At the end of the period, the (post-deliberation) opinions of citizens are surveyed. Compared to traditional internet discussion forums that tend to attract like-minded citizens, the selection process for ODPs ensures that deliberations reflect a diversity of perspectives.

To overcome the 'digital divide', citizens without internet access have been given WebTVs or computers as an incentive to participate; other citizens have been given an honorarium. In at least one of the ODPs 'all participants had

microphones, reducing the disadvantage of those who were less literate or less comfortable with text.

A traditional deliberative opinion poll was run alongside the ODP on foreign affairs in 2003. Although there were similar changes of opinion, 'changes from online deliberation were less pronounced than in the face-to-face version'. Ackerman and Fishkin argue that 'these parallel results suggest that online deliberations, if they continue longer, might someday produce even bigger changes than those resulting from the face-to-face process. However, it is also possible to argue that face-to-face engagement between citizens may have a greater transformative potential than ICT-mediated deliberations. At present there is a lack of evidence either way. Only by running ODPs over a longer time frame will we know the answer.

Links

Power Inquiry Reports

<http://www.makeitanissue.org.uk/Beyond%20the%20Ballot.pdf>

http://makeitanissue.org.uk/devlog/2007/01/the_power_commission_was_estab.php

EngAGE Project

<http://www.accymru.org.uk/en/2290.htm>

Recent research in Wales on citizen engagement

<http://www.opinionresearch.org.uk/makingconnections/>

NHS & participation

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/docrepos/40382/dhss/reportsenglish/signposts2-e.pdf;jsessionid=8037EAB69C61D69015A5AA70C6DBA4A9?lang=en>

The future?

<http://partnerships.typepad.com/civic/engagement/index.html>

Loads more if you want them!!