



Engaging people aged 50+ and communities in Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale Project Results

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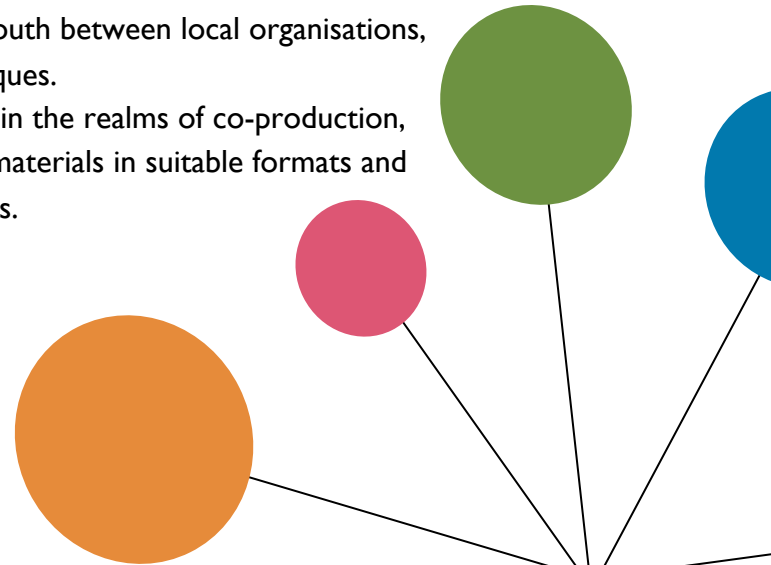


Executive Summary

In 2022, Calderdale Council commissioned Ideas Alliance to support its work on engaging with people aged 50+ and communities as part of Ageing Well. The core aim of this work was to explore the question: **How can people aged 50+ and communities be involved in the delivery and decision-making of Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale?** Between May 2022 and March 2023, a series of action research, capacity building and insight gathering activities took place to answer this question.

The core insights to emerge from these activities include:

- **Strengths** of current engagement work: Variety of connections with different stakeholders at an organisational level, range of existing communication channels, word-of-mouth between local organisations, willingness to learn and experiment, and confidence in consultation techniques.
- **Weaknesses** of current engagement work: Lack of engagement activities in the realms of co-production, difficulties in reaching specific demographics, lack of availability of printed materials in suitable formats and lack of visibility of Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale in communities.
- **Opportunities** to develop current engagement work: Ability to bring in other partners from the area who have additional skills and expertise to contribute, a growing body of people with engagement skills (and an interest in this arena), concrete ideas from people aged 50+ as to how storytelling can be used to enhance visibility of Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale in communities, there is enthusiasm



for learning, development and innovation across all parts of the Ageing Well infrastructure.

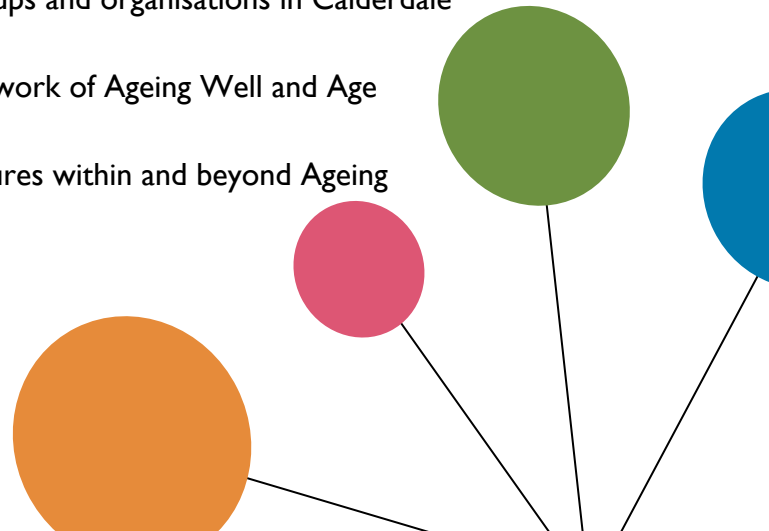
- **Threats** to developing current engagement work: Priorities of organisations are focused on delivery of service not engagement work, lack of time and resource for engagement work, agendas being set in a ‘top-down’ manner, thus making engagement seem less valuable and a lack of designated person/people to ‘lead’ this work in the future.

A **set of ideas** have emerged from the work as to how these insights could be put into practice. They fall into the following areas:

1. **Catalysts:** Ensuring the work has leadership – a person, group or organisation that drives action forward
2. **Learning:** Centralising the role of ‘learning’ in Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale, ensuring it is iterative and on-going
3. **Resident Voice:** Creating a structure and mechanisms through which residents are actively involved in the governance of Ageing Well
4. **Capacity Building:** Developing the skills and confidence in individuals, groups and organisations in Calderdale to conduct creative and co-productive engagement activities
5. **Feedback Loops:** Communicating effectively with communities about the work of Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale
6. **Embedding:** Looking at how activity can be embedded into existing structures within and beyond Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale

To support this implementation, we would **recommend:**

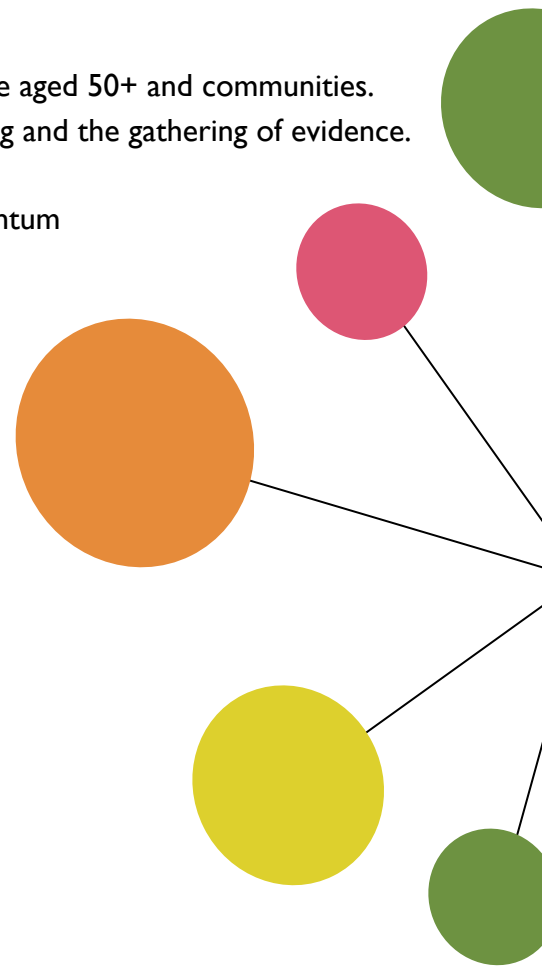
- **Continue** to work across different sectors and being porous to new people, groups and organisations getting involved in Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale.



- **Improve** the ways that Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale communicates with people aged 50+ and communities.
- **Change** how Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale thinks about and approaches learning and the gathering of evidence.

The **immediate next steps** for Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale to ensure that momentum behind this work is not lost, are:

- ✓ **Identify** the most useful existing communication channels into communities and develop a process through which regular and repeated messages can be shared.
- ✓ **Establish** the forum through which 'peer support and shared learning' for people doing engagement work in Calderdale can take place and identify the way in which learning from this feeds into wider structures (e.g. Ageing Well and beyond).
- ✓ **Determine** the person, people or organisation who will lead this work in the immediate and short term, ensuring that they have the time, resources and scope to lead this journey.



Contents



AIMS

What we wanted to achieve

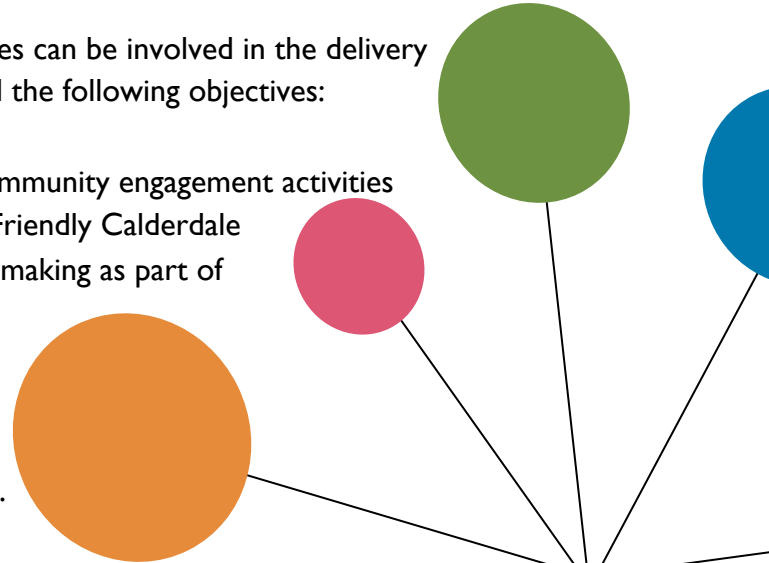
In 2022, Calderdale Council commissioned Ideas Alliance to support its work on engaging with people aged 50+ and communities as part of Ageing Well. The work involved the following key strands:

- **Action research:** Piloting different engagement methods and running an informal learning process alongside them
- **Capacity building:** Developing the skills of individuals, groups and organisations in Calderdale in community engagement approaches
- **Insight gathering:** Gathering data, ideas and insights about engagement in Calderdale

The core aim of this work was to explore how people aged 50+ and communities can be involved in the delivery and decision-making of Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale. This work had the following objectives:

1. **Develop** the skills of local people, groups and organisations in delivering community engagement activities
2. **Create** spaces that support dialogue across the layers of Ageing Well/Age Friendly Calderdale
3. **Increase** people aged 50+'s involvement in the agenda-setting and decision-making as part of Ageing Well/Age Friendly Calderdale – particularly marginalised groups
4. **Oversee** the testing out of local engagement activities, ensuring that learning is captured and shared

The work detailed in this report took place between May 2022 and March 2023.



ACTIVITIES

What we did

Strand	Specific Activities	Core Objective(s)
Action Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Development, coordination and collation of results from engagement activities with people aged 50+, communities and services on Age Friendly Calderdale priorities and campaign materials- Coordination of 'test and learn' activities addressing transport issues for people aged 50+ and delivery of a learning process connected to this- Design and delivery of 2 learning exchanges and a workshop focused on exploring how to put the learning from the work into practice	2, 3 and 4
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Delivery of 'From consultation to co-production' training programme (5 x online sessions, 20+ attendees)- Delivery of small group support sessions to enable the delivery of pilot activities (3 x online sessions, 5 attendees)- Delivery of small-scale, rapid test and learn activities/pilots	1 and 4

Strand	Specific Activities	Core Objective(s)
Insight Gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback loop survey sent to Ageing Well Alliance Board, Ageing Well Working Group, Engagement and Campaigns Subgroup and participants of capacity building activities (11 responses) - 5 specific topic 121 insight gathering conversations - 2 small group insight gathering activities - Questionnaire on 'how people would like to be involved' in Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale completed by 3 people aged 50+ connected to Age Concern UK Calderdale. - 5 activities embedded into capacity building programme, plus feedback surveys/evaluation activities - Regular attendance of Ageing Well Alliance Board, Ageing Well Working Group, Engagement and Campaigns Subgroup meetings 	2 and 3

INSIGHTS

What we learned

From the activities delivered – including the various sense-check style sessions delivered with different layers of the Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale structures – a set of core insights emerged. These insights have been synthesised thematically in this section of the report. Further details can be found in the documents listed in the Appendix at the end of this report.

Existing engagement activities with people aged 50+ and communities in Calderdale

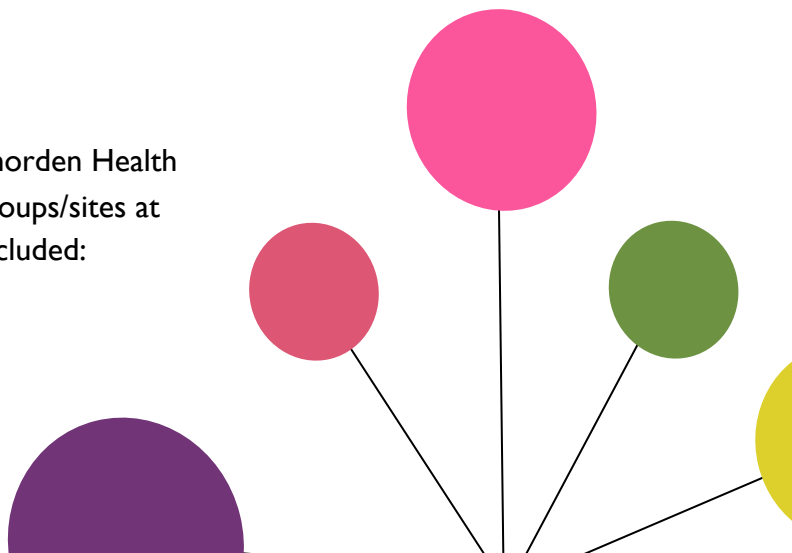
The work undertaken highlighted a number of existing engagement activities that take place in Calderdale.

Examples of regular engagement activities include:

- Forum 50+ surveys and meetings
- Together Housing complexes resident meetings
- Valley Wellbeing Network

It was also felt that the activities that Age Concern Todmorden and the Todmorden Health Champions undertake also have regular engagement in them. Furthermore, groups/sites at which regular engagement activities could take place were identified. These included:

- Memory Lane cafe
- The Crypt Cafe at St Mary's Church in Todmorden
- Elland Road Chit Chat group
- Various coffee mornings in churches

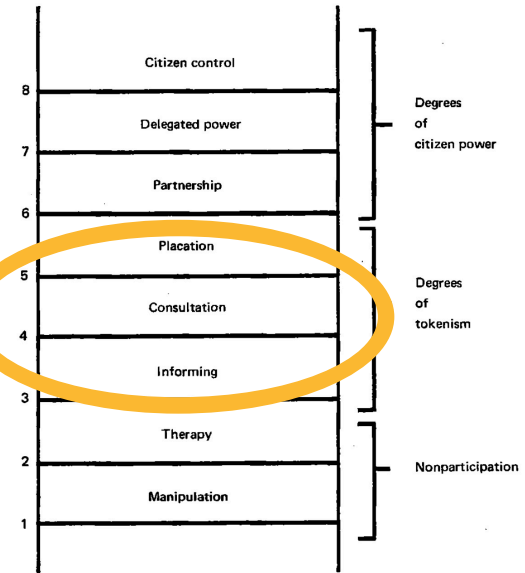


Local capacity in delivering engagement activities with people aged 50+ and communities

Feedback on the ‘From consultation to co-production’ training sessions and subsequent support sessions was largely positive. In terms of the delivery of the training sessions, it was noted that they were “*well paced, well managed, good comms, good resources and good blend of presentations and interactive elements.*” The content of the sessions was described as “*interesting*” and people “*picked up lots of tips and things to think about in the future.*” The support sessions were “*useful to see how to put theory/concept into practice*” and they were a positive learning space – “*it was good to network and learn from peers about their experiences*”. The sessions provided people with the momentum and confidence to put skills from the training into practice – “*regular nature has kept the momentum going following the training*” and have encouraged people to take on new ideas in their work – “*I plan to use the ‘test and learn’ approach in my own work*”.

Activities delivered in the training programme also enabled us **to learn about how engagement activities currently work** in Calderdale. Insights included:

- Current expertise lies predominantly in the ‘consultation’ domain but there is willingness amongst professionals to work in more co-productive ways. There was an openness to learn and experiment from the people involved, but confidence and ‘permissions’ were lacking. People needed help in adapting methods into their own contexts.
- There is a lack of capacity and resource to conduct engagement activities within organisations and people’s individual roles – this is both a financial and skills issue
- It was felt that organisations’ are not necessarily prioritizing active involvement – service delivery and their ‘core’ function dominates time and agendas. These agendas and strategic direction are largely determined ‘top-down’ and there were questions over the value of ‘real’ engagement being done in this context.



Ladder of Citizen Participation,
Sherry Arnstein (1969)

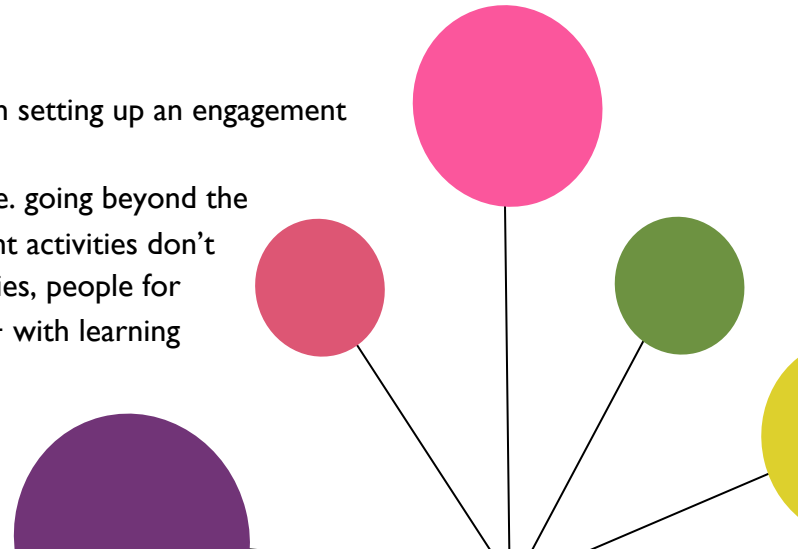
The elements of current engagement activities that **work well** are:

- Face-to-face meetings – they help overcome the ‘digital divide’: not everyone is comfortable ‘on-camera’
- Holding events in central and accessible spaces that have good transport provision to them
- Events that are area specific to enable local discussions and reduce travel issues
- The various use of different formats – face-to-face, surveys, online sessions

The elements of current engagement activities that could be **improved** are:

- The lack of or difficulty in engaging people with reduced mobility at in-person events
- People aged 50+ who are working – events are usually held in the daytime whilst this group is at work
- Engagement of people aged 50+ with family commitments (e.g. looking after grandchildren) as this also prevents them from attending daytime activities
- Transport issues (i.e. lack of) to enable people to attend events
- Limited knowledge and skills in the area about knowing where to start in setting up an engagement event
- Engaging with people who don’t usually attend engagement activities – i.e. going beyond the voices we are used to hearing. There are specific groups that engagement activities don’t seem to be reaching, such as people from racially minoritized communities, people for whom English is a second language, disabled people and people aged 50+ with learning disabilities.

The work also identified consultation weariness sentiments: *“We’ve been asked before and nothing ever changes”*.



Areas for improvement in the capacity building work we undertook were identified as being:

- The training was open to anyone working in Calderdale with people aged 50+ and this meant that there was a breadth of experience levels in engagement amongst the programme participants. For one person this meant that they didn't feel it was aimed at them – “At times it felt like a 'refresher' course, as if you were talking to people with experience of these techniques, not to people like me, who had no idea about them.”
- The buy-in and understanding of the programme from senior leaders of the organisations who attended programme could have been better in the sense that frontline workers could have been better supported afterwards to integrate the learning at a local level.

As part of the capacity building activities, people were supported to put the skills learned into practice. As part of this a small group of participants undertook some small-scale rapid delivery pilots that were used as **'test and learn' sites**. The group decided that a key barrier to engaging with people aged 50+ was transport. The group's prior experience demonstrated to them that local transport issues included: lack of bus services, uneven pavements, cost of individual transport, people's lack of mobility to get to and from public transport options, reliability of public transport and confidence in using public transport. They decided to test out the hypothesis that if the cost of transport was removed at individual or group levels, a key barrier to participation would be removed. These pilot activities are still continuing and learning is being collated, but from the initial activities, the following has been ascertained:

- Some existing group based activities (i.e. Chit Chat group Elland Rd) already have transport for their current members. A gap in provision lies in **new people** who may want to come but have no transport.
- Individuals who would significantly benefit from access to activities to support their wellbeing (i.e. Stroke survivors) are **making difficult decisions** on whether they can afford the transport to attend– i.e. reducing or sacrificing other core outgoings
- Money that can be **used flexibly** for transport issues as they are identified (i.e. referrals) is useful for short-term solutions.

At a learning exchange, it was proposed that Community Transport Calderdale could be utilized to support these solutions.

“It's made a big difference to my current situation both mentally and financially.”

Age Friendly Calderdale priority areas

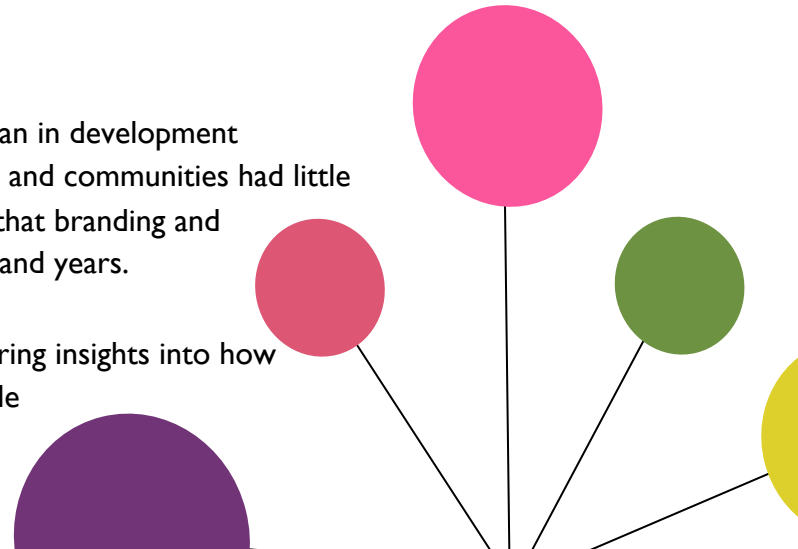
In general people felt the priorities (Accessibility / Things to do / Getting about / Safety and belonging / Age friendly housing) were suitable. It was mentioned that financial issues are a major worry for people aged 50+ and that warm spaces should also feature in Age Friendly Calderdale's work. Another specific point was that paper copies of information relating to 'safety and belonging' would be welcomed.

In regards to 'things to do', it was felt that it would be beneficial for a part of this strand to focus on helping people to find out what activities are available. Pavements were also mentioned as a safety concern (something that has been pointed out in a number of our insight gathering activities as something that prevented people from accessing 'things to do'). Furthermore, it was highlighted that environmental issues are also important. This could include pollution, litter, traffic problems, flooding as well as concerns on global warming.

Age Friendly Calderdale branding and communications

With Age Friendly Calderdale being in its infancy and with the Ageing Well plan in development during the period of this work and not in the public domain, people aged 50+ and communities had little awareness of the ambitions and ideas of this area of work. It was recognised that branding and communications will play a key role in changing this over the coming months and years.

The engagement work that took place in this piece of work focused on gathering insights into how different campaign materials would be received by people aged 50+ and people involved in services aimed at this demographic. The aim of the prototype campaign was to challenge people's perception of older people.



The core **feedback** on these materials was as follows:

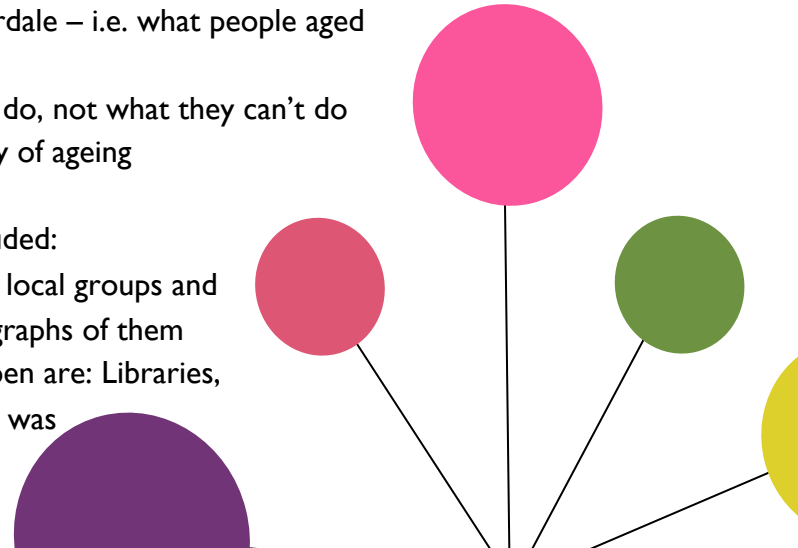
- The wording was not well-received, particularly with people aged 50+. It was felt that some of the language whilst trying to be challenging may actually be counter-productive and reinforce stereotypes of people aged 50+ - *“Hate this word, even ‘elderly’ sounds better”* and *“Wording -horrible, awful”*.
- The images were generally better received but it was felt that they could be diversified in terms of age and culture - *“She looks just how I want to look”* and *“I think he’s spirited, he’s having a good laugh”*.
- People aged 50+ want to be seen as active and current, and some of the campaign material seemed to position people aged 50+ as living in the past (or at least focused on history and memories) – *“Makes us sound like we’re living in the past”* and *“Couldn’t the comments be about how we live right now?”*

Based on this, a set of **recommendations** for campaign materials were produced. Campaigns should:

1. Focus on contemporary, present day stories of people aged 50+ in Calderdale – i.e. what people aged 50+ are doing now
2. Display the strengths of people aged 50+ – i.e. what people aged 50+ can do, not what they can’t do
3. Represent the diversity of people aged 50+ in Calderdale and the diversity of ageing

In terms of achieving this in campaign material, some ideas that emerged included:

- **Using local people in the campaigns.** This could be done by visiting local groups and activities and capturing people’s stories about life now, as well as photographs of them doing activities they enjoy. Some suggested places where this could happen are: Libraries, Memory Lane cafe at St. Paul’s Centre and Maurice Jagger centre. There was also the suggestion to ask local people, groups and organisations to submit photos and stories (i.e., a story call).



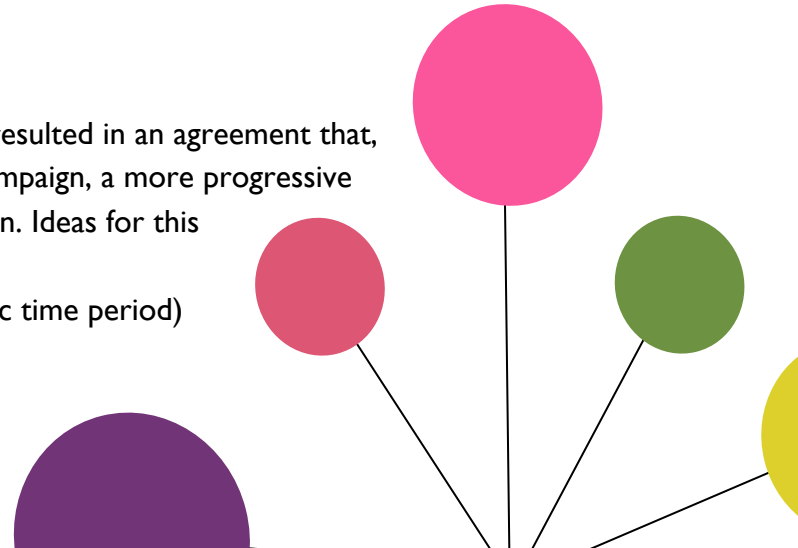
- **Showing the diversity of the area and people.** This could be done by using a more diverse representation of people in the campaign, particularly around cultural diversity. The stories and images could also be done in a range of settings that showcase the various localities within Calderdale. Visuals of local places will help to root it locally and support communities to feel that the campaign is Calderdale-specific.
- **Using video or audio for the stories.** The printed campaign material could link to video/audio stories that people could listen to or watch. A growing archive of people aged 50+ stories could be started that would showcase the diversity of people aged 50+ living in the area.

A word of caution was also mentioned with regard to using stories and visuals from the general public. It is important to think about what happens if:

1. someone in the campaign passes away
2. negative comments are made about the people in the campaign

An exploration of these issues took place in a sense-making workshop. This resulted in an agreement that, rather than let these potential issues become barriers to local voice in the campaign, a more progressive approach would be to look at processes and practices that enable it to happen. Ideas for this included:

- Having campaign material used in a timebound way (i.e., just for a specific time period)
- Allowing people (or their families) to withdraw consent at any point
- Thinking about the framing of the stories/campaign and any comment functions on social media



Feedback loops into communities

The work undertaken highlighted a number of **existing channels** for enabling communication to flow into communities about the Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale work. These included:

- Word-of-mouth via local councillors
- Newsletters and websites (e.g., Forum 50plus, Disability Partnership Calderdale, Calderdale Council, Visit Calderdale, Calderdale Lower Valley Friday Flyer, Age UK Calderdale, Home Instead's What's On Where Guide)
- Social media groups and pages (e.g., Dementia Friendly Todmorden Facebook page, Age UK Calderdale, Tod Chat Facebook group)
- Local Media such as Halifax Courier, Todmorden News, Hebden Bridge Times and Brighouse Echo could be utilised more
- Noticeboards that are in local community centres, libraries and supermarkets

It was also suggested that hard copies of information printed and distributed.

Frontline workers could (and do) hand these out at luncheon clubs, social activities/groups that are aimed at people aged 50+.

In terms of what **works well when adopted** in terms of feedback loops into communities, the following was identified:

- Forum 50+ methods were seen as positive communication methods
- Face-to-face meetings at clubs and groups
- Printed materials (and easy read formats)
- Communication is regular, key messages are repeated and timely (i.e. frequent updates rather than summative communications)



Areas for **improvement** include:

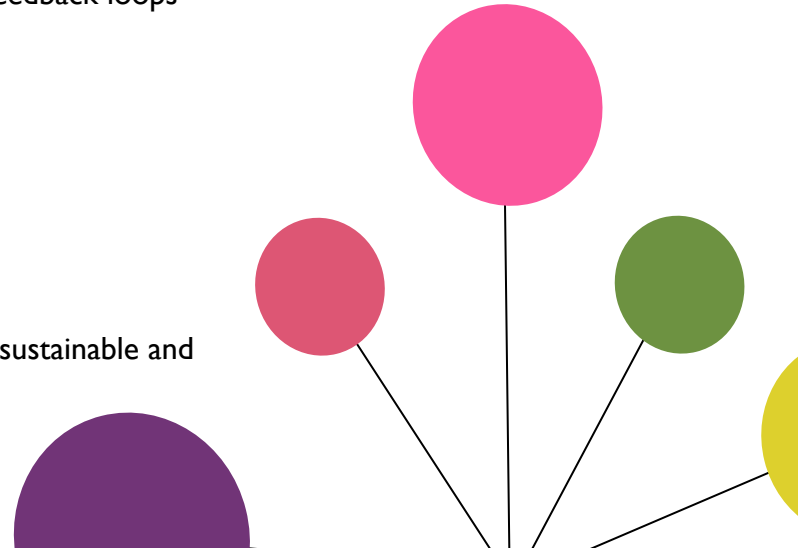
- Current methods are not seen as having a wide reach – *“I’m 66 and don’t feel communicated with at all!”*
- Current methods limited to general audience, there are groups of people who we don’t seem to reach (or reach as well) such as racially minoritized communities, people without digital skills/Internet access, people who need materials in print and large print, people experiencing mental ill health, people who speak English as a second language, people from migrant communities, socially isolated individuals, including people who are housebound and people who access many services.

Key **learning points and reflections** on feedback loops:

- A variety of existing channels already exist – i.e. newsletters, social media groups etc.
- Local networks and ‘word of mouth’ are important parts of successful feedback loops
- There is a lack of printed materials and materials available in easy read
- Age Friendly Calderdale/Ageing Well does not have a lot of visibility in communities at present
- Current methods seem to feed back to people who are (a) already engaged and (b) to general audiences.

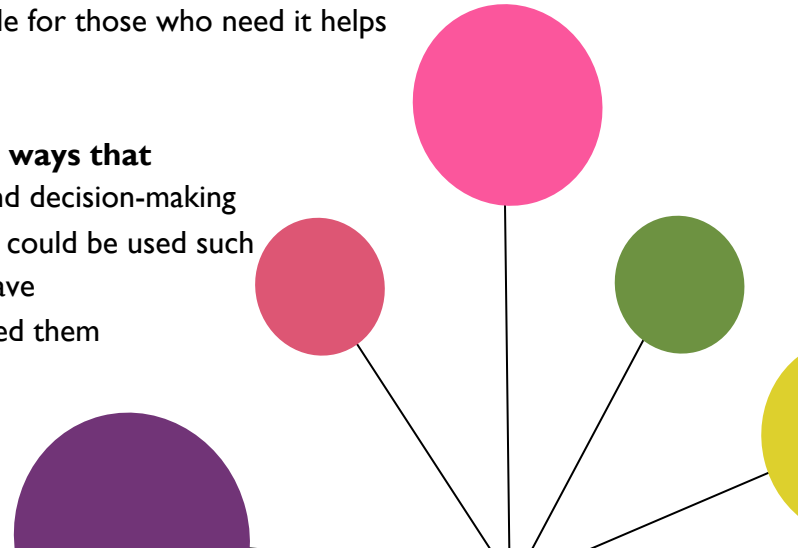
Sustainable Engagement: Opportunities and challenges

The work we’ve undertaken has identified what support is needed to enable sustainable and active engagement of people aged 50+ in Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale. This includes:



- Providing **financial support** for organisations conducting the engagement. It is important to not always rely on good will or to ask workforces try to embed activities into existing work.
- Enhancing the **time and capacity** in people's roles and work priorities to prioritise engagement. This means that, at a senior level in organisations, there must be 'buy-in' to the work and people must see value to them and their work in pursuing the active engagement of people aged 50+ and communities.
- Have a **variety of different professionals, voluntary groups and organisations** providing an input. It is important that input is not dominated by a few voices and that groups/organisations involved are conduits that can reach a diversity of people aged 50+.
- Better **advertisement of opportunities** to be involved. Ideas and learning from the work conducted on feedback loops could provide ideas for how this could be achieved.
- Providing **transport** to enable people to be involved. A major barrier for people aged 50+ to engage in things in the areas is transport. Ensuring transport provision is available for those who need it helps people to get over a physical barrier to participation.

When thinking about sustainable engagement it is also key to **recognize the ways that people aged 50+ would like to be involved** in agenda-setting, dialogue and decision-making and also the barriers to this involvement. A range of ways of involving people could be used such as surveys, workshops, meetings, focus groups and feedback boards. These have all been used successfully in previous work and people aged 50+ have identified them as ways they would like to be involved.



In terms of barriers to involvement, the following have been directly expressed by people aged 50+:

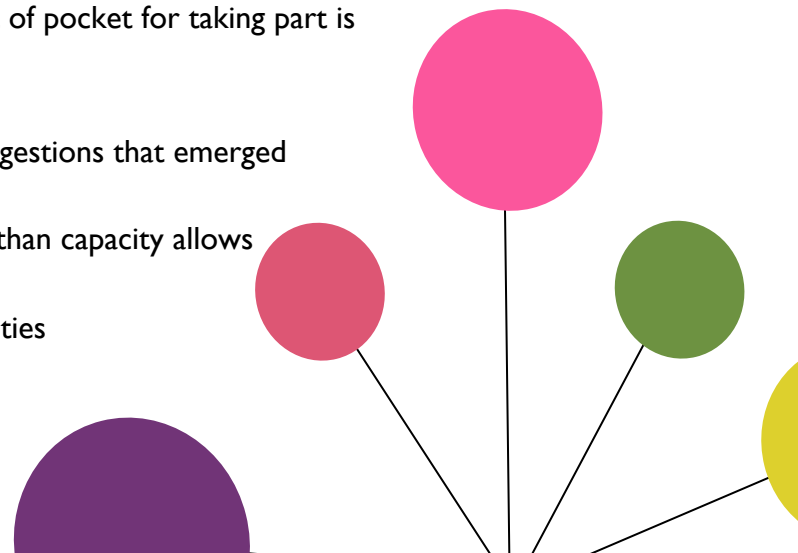
- Time
- Not knowing how to get involved
- Transport
- Motivation
- Skills - particularly digital skills
- Confidence

When people do get involved, it is important to think about how this can be **as meaningful and positive as possible** for them. This can be achieved through making sure people's contributions are valued and by recognising their input. Communicating to people how their input has led to action is also another mechanism. Incentives can also be used and ensuring that people are not out of pocket for taking part is essential.

In terms of **developing sustainable approaches** to engagement, some suggestions that emerged from the insight work include:

- Focus on a few key events and attend them rather than try to do more than capacity allows
- Hold a networking event for volunteers who run groups
- Establish consistent ways to record input from ad hoc engagement activities so that it can feed into the Ageing Well plan
- Ensure we always use a variety of different engagement activities

“It felt like I was listened to and my opinion mattered. It feels worthwhile speaking up but it can be daunting and can feel scary and stressful to do so.”



IDEAS

Putting the learning into practice

As part of the work undertaken, we have been exploring how the insights and learning that has emerged can be put into practice to support the active and meaningful involvement of people aged 50+ and communities in the delivery and decision-making of Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale. A synthesis of these core ideas is presented below.

Catalyst(s)

Driving forward this work takes time and energy, and it needs resourcing properly. This catalyst role(s) will be key to propelling this work forward, and taking the insights geaned from this report and putting them into practice.

Idea for implementation	Putting the idea into practice	Core considerations
Identifying an individual person to lead	A individual designated with leading this work (i.e., someone employed within the Council in this role or a strategic lead identified in the Ageing Well Alliance board.	Ensuring this role is real and tangible will be key. This will mean ensuring it is properly resourced with both time and money. The work should be embedded into current activities and workstreams as much as possible to avoid duplication. It was suggested the the VCSE could play a key role in this.
Adopting a group or collective approach	A group of 'champions' within the system identified to lead within their organisations/teams and as a collective on this work.	
Designating the task to an organisation	A local organisation tasked with coordinating and leading activity across different communities, groups, organisations and sectors.	

Centralising iterative learning

Across all the work of Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale, it would be beneficial to develop a strong learning culture in which insights from activity and communities can be used to drive forward action – this should be iterative and continual.

Idea for implementation	Putting the idea into practice	Core considerations
Develop a learning process	<p>It is important to ensure that insights from your work are captured and shared via the Ageing Well structure. A clear learning process is needed that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Gathers emerging insights2. Explores the learning from those insights3. Uses the learning to determine next steps <p>Remember that insights can come from different sources, including people's lived experiences.</p>	<p>Human Learning Systems is an alternative approach to public management which embraces the complexity of the real world, and enables us to work effectively in that complexity. You may want to explore what elements of this you could bring to Calderdale. See the Next Steps section for resources to support this.</p>
Use test and learn sites	<p>Rather than undertake lengthy mapping and consultation activities, rapid, small-scale test and learn pilots could be adopted. Benefits include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. It enables you to 'learn as you do' and these insights can be gathered rapidly2. It encourages a culture that is not fearful of experimentation (or failure!)3. Communities see direct action happening, raises the visibility of the work and avoids more consultation weariness	<p>Whilst it is important to test out new ideas and learn quickly, it is vital that this does not detract from investing in what currently works well. A strong learning process will identify what is already working. This activity should be invested in accordingly and its 'scaling' explored. See the Next Steps section for resources to support this.</p>

<p>Temperature checks</p>	<p>Deliver a set of regular (i.e. every quarter or 6 months) engagement activities in communities to:</p> <p>(a) gather insights into life 'right now' for people aged 50+ and communities to feed into the direction of Ageing Well/Age Friendly Calderdale</p> <p>(b) sense-check specific activities/topics/outputs from the Ageing Well/Age Friendly Calderdale work to give you feedback on its impact</p> <p>The regularity of these sessions will enable you to identify 'weak signals' of change in communities and emerging issues – providing you with insights to drive forward your responses. Furthermore, the nature of sense-checking will increase the visibility of Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale in communities.</p>	<p>You should think about what the primary objectives of these activities are in terms of representation and being representative. You may decide that these activities should prioritise ensuring that voices who are not usually heard within the Ageing Well/Age Friendly Calderdale structures are involved (i.e. representation of less visible communities). However, you could also decide that you are going to instead prioritise ensuring that the activities are representative of the wider population of Calderdale.</p>
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Resident voice in decision-making and governance

To maintain direct input and scrutiny from communities, explore how residents aged 50+ could be involved in the governance structures of Ageing Well.

Idea for implementation	Putting the idea into practice	Core considerations
Lay Representatives	This could involve the recruitment of a diverse group of people aged 50+ who are members of the Ageing Well	It is key that this connects into other similar representative

	<p>Alliance Board. This group of people should be largely independent of specific 'groups' or 'organisations', and it should be clear their involvement is as an individual. In recruiting a group of people, it can help ensure a diversity of voices and also for the role not to be too much pressure on one individual – i.e. pressure or availability. Having a clear role description, a recruitment process that allows new people to join periodically, support structures (& training where needed) and remuneration will be key.</p>	<p>schemes across the system. For example, the Talkback Citizen Panel and programmes like this in the NHS. It could also include family members and carers for people aged 50+ so that their voices are included. Key to its success will be support that is provided towards involving the residents – a keen focus should be on ensuring barriers to involvement are removed.</p>
<p>Participatory Budgeting and Decision-making</p>	<p>Look at how existing commissioning and decision-making processes could be adapted to involve resident voice. You could adapt participatory budgeting practices for local delivery. An example of this is Dudley Council's Make It Happen scheme. This encourages individuals and groups to come forward with community project ideas. At 'pitching events' the Council may offer some support through funding or accessing venues, but it also encourages others to come forward who may have the time, skills or resources available to support a project. You can find out more here: https://www.dudley.gov.uk/news/opportunity-to-make-it-happen/</p>	<p>Ensuring that these activities don't just reinforce existing barriers to 'having a say' will be key. This may mean having specific activities that are ring-fenced for people aged 50+ who are least visible or who are often unheard in existing participation structures. These activities should focus on going beyond those people who are currently active in community decision-making.</p>

Capacity Building

It is important to invest in local people, communities and organisations to drive forward work aimed at involving people aged 50+ in Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale, as such further capacity building activities should be undertaken.

Idea for implementation	Putting the idea into practice	Core considerations
Training	Further training in more 'co-production' based methods is needed in the area. It is advised that future sessions could be more 'targeted' either by participant, topic or work context. Additionally, further buy-in and understanding of the training from senior leaders should be secured so that they can better support participants to implement their skills post-training.	It would be beneficial to look at how this could be provided by local organisations. VAC have identified themselves as a possible provider.
Bespoke Support	Support sessions are a good way of helping people and organisations to apply engagement approaches in their own context and help them to understand where they integrate with their roles and the service's priorities - i.e. meeting existing job tasks. These sessions are beneficial when they help people to adapt techniques to their own context so that they do not feel as daunting.	Exploring how this 'mentoring' could be provided by local people or organisations would be beneficial. For example, Creative Minds has significant expertise in involving people in service design and commissioning.
Peer support	Create spaces for people with engagement related roles (staff, volunteers, etc.) to share experiences, know-how and resources in order to learn from one another and provide different types of support.	This could be a network. Sessions need to be regular and given a clear format so that they are productive and useful.

Feedback loops into communities

Raising the awareness of Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale in communities would be achieved by establishing strong feedback loops into communities.

Idea for implementation	Putting the idea into practice	Core considerations
Use existing channels	Look at the existing channels identified and select a core set that you will utilise. Create a process through which communications can be fed into them and roll it out.	Remember that word-of-mouth has been identified as a key tool.
Be regular and repetitive	It is important that communication is regular, timely and key messages are repeated. These communications do not need to be lengthy or be a 'final decision' or summative reports on a project etc. Instead, they can be incremental.	Identify regular communications that already exist and ensure that information is fed to them. This helps key information to be heard and understood by communities.
Target specific groups who are 'out of the loop'	Look at the groups who have been identified as being 'out of the loop' and identify how they could be communicated with and what key information they should have access to. As part of this work, you should connect with others who may already be in contact with these groups. This could include local employers.	If the resources available do not allow you to reach all of these groups, you will need to prioritise who you try to reach.
Put accessibility at the heart of communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ensure that printed and easy-read communications are not neglected- Ensure that digital does not fully replace in-person	Look at good practice that already exists in Calderdale and engage with those groups/organization.

How engagement work can link into existing structures

When determining how this engagement work is taken forward, it would be beneficial to think about how it can be integrated with existing structures. Ideas for how this can be achieved are:

- **Engagement and Campaigns Subgroup:** This subgroup of the Ageing Well Working Group has previously been instrumental in the implementation of engagement activities (i.e. events for International Day of Older Persons and consultation on Age Friendly Calderdale branding and priorities. This subgroup could:
 - Lead on FEEDBACK LOOPS into communities
 - Deliver the regular TEMPERATURE CHECKS with communities
 - Be the space for PEER SUPPORT
- **Engagement Champions:** Engagement Champions are individuals working in the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector who are trained to engage with the local population in Calderdale on the West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board's behalf and talk to them about changes and developments in health services. VAC, as part of the VSI Alliance, offers free training for local people to become Engagement Champions and help local communities to have a say when changes to health services are proposed. How could this existing resource be utilised as part of Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale.
- **Local Councillors:** Local Councillors have proven to be a useful conduit into communities. To address the cost of living crisis, Local Councillors have (1) been communicating with local residents the key information about the local support offer and (2) have been feeding back on specific issues in their ward (e.g. Park Ward area have identified funeral costs as a pressing concern. Local Councillors could be utilised by Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale in a similar way. More so, the Local Action Groups could be another vehicle for engagement, connection and action in communities.



- **Talkback Citizens' Panel:** Talkback is a Citizens' Panel made up of a large group of adults of different ages and backgrounds. They represent the different people who live in Calderdale. The panel helps to measure public opinion by taking part in different types of consultation, like surveys or focus groups. This panel could be utilised for 'temperature checks' or to support participatory decision-making.
- **Employers:** This is possibly an underused resource for engaging with people aged 50+, particularly those who are still in work or the people who are carers for people aged 50+. Links with larger local employers could be established and with them engagement activities could be arranged (i.e. sending out a survey through the employer, advertising opportunities for getting involved through the employer, using data from employers about the needs of their employees, engaging employers in the Ageing Well structures etc.).
- **Involving People Network:** The Involving People Network is a diverse group of professionals who work with our communities to understand their needs and celebrate the great things that are happening in local areas. The network shares knowledge, skills and resources and provides peer to peer support to involve local people and our communities. It would be beneficial to explore how this network could be utilised in further local capacity building.
- **Other existing and new resources in the wider system:** This could include new resources available in the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and social care such as the Transformation Lead and Engagement Co-Production Lead. Furthermore, the work of Healthwatch Calderdale and the Calderdale Health Forum are other areas of interest.

It would also be useful to explore how ideas in this document can link with the wider Wellbeing Strategy and work under the Starting Well, Developing Well and Living and Working Well banners, as well as with the Calderdale Vision.



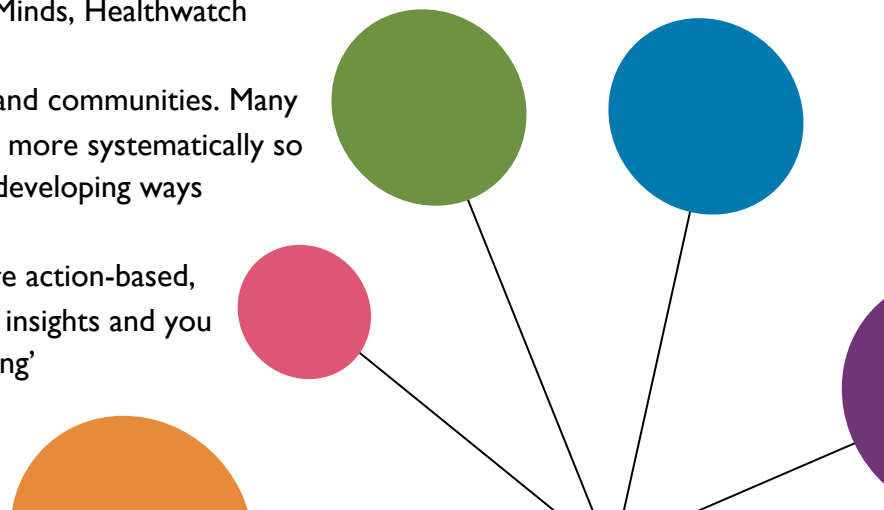
NEXT STEPS?

Building on this work

A lot of exciting ideas have been generated! It is important that we make use of the positive energy behind these ideas and this piece of work before it dissipates. However, taking things forward can feel daunting and it can be difficult to decide where to start. This final section of the report will hopefully help you in this task.

To guide Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale's next steps, we are proposing the following **core recommendations**:

- **Continue** to work across different sectors and be porous to new people, groups and organisations getting involved in Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale. This will ensure new energy and ideas can enter, and that it doesn't become an 'exclusive' forum. You should explore how other groups, services and organisations in the area who have different skills, expertise and connections to contribute can be (more) involved (e.g., Creative Minds, Healthwatch Calderdale).
- **Improve** the ways that you communicate with people aged 50+ and communities. Many of the components are already there, they just need to be utilised more systematically so that messaging is regular and repeated. You should also focus on developing ways to reach specific demographics who are regularly out of the loop.
- **Change** how you think about learning and evidence. Make it more action-based, and ensure it is iterative and on-going. The work you do is rich in insights and you should design processes for collating them and create 'sense-making' spaces for exploring them. Use this to drive forward your work.



A roadmap for future activity?

To take this work forward, a loose roadmap for the activity may help to provide some direction.

Cynefin Framework

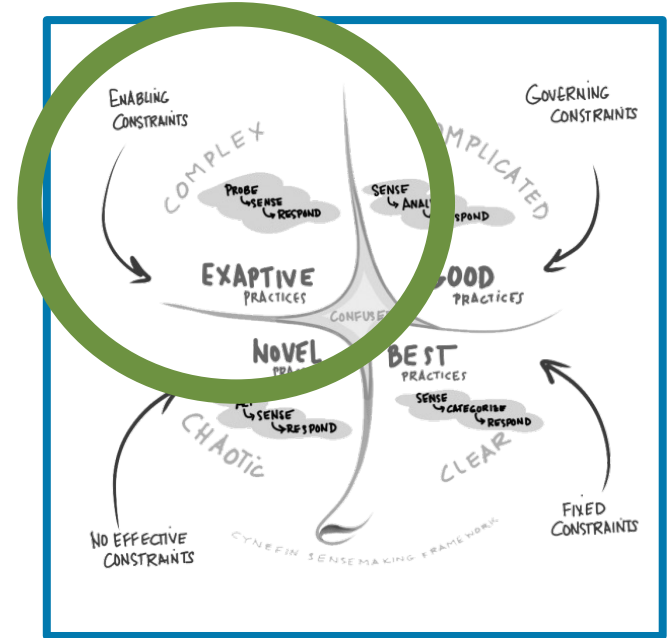
The Cynefin Framework may provide one way of structuring the direction of this work. This framework was created to support decision-making in different types of environments. Given the varied people, groups, organisations, stakeholders and sectors involved in Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale the 'complex' arena seems the most apt. This process has three stages that should be used iteratively:

1. Probe – Ask questions, gather insights
2. Sense – Explore the insights collectively
3. Respond – Use the insights to inform responses

This process can underpin an active and iterative learning process as suggested earlier in this report.

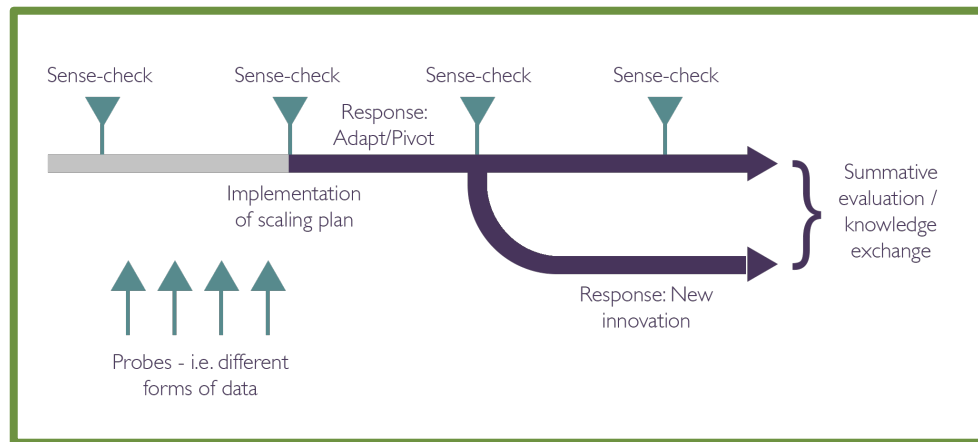
Learning As You Scale

The 'Learning As You Scale: A practical guide for using data and insights to navigate scaling and complex system change' (Trowbridge et al, 2022) presents



Visual produced The Cynefin Co.
Accessed: <https://thecynefin.co/about-us/about-cynefin-framework/>

a way in which this ‘probe-sense-respond’ can be put into action as part of an active learning process. As the diagram to the right depicts, this approach to learning provides scope for temperature checks throughout the implementation of different activities connected to Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale. It enables the people, groups and organisations involved in those structures to learn as they go, and to feed the learning back to improve and accelerate the work. Although this process focuses on continual learning, it can also build to a more traditional summative evaluation.



Visual taken from ‘Learning As You Scale’ (Trowbridge et al, 2022)

As identified earlier in this report, piloting and investing in ‘what already works’ are approaches you may want to explore. Both of these may lead you to ‘scale’ activities. The European Commission & the OECD (2016) have categorised scaling approaches in the following ways:

- 1. Scaling deep or localised growth:** This could involve expanding an activity to more people from the same group you have been working with or opening up the activity to people from other groups/demographics.
- 2. Replicating:** This involves replicating a successful activity from one geographical location in another location.
- 3. Partnership working:** This type of scaling involves techniques such as affiliations, strategic partnerships and mergers & acquisitions.
- 4. Knowledge and skills sharing:** Successful approaches can be scaled by sharing knowledge, transferring organisational culture or processes into new places/organisations/services.

‘Learning As You Scale’ has further information on these scaling approaches, as well as techniques and practical guidelines for designing and undertaking an active, iterative approach to learning and development.

The Cynefin Co's Vector Theory of Change

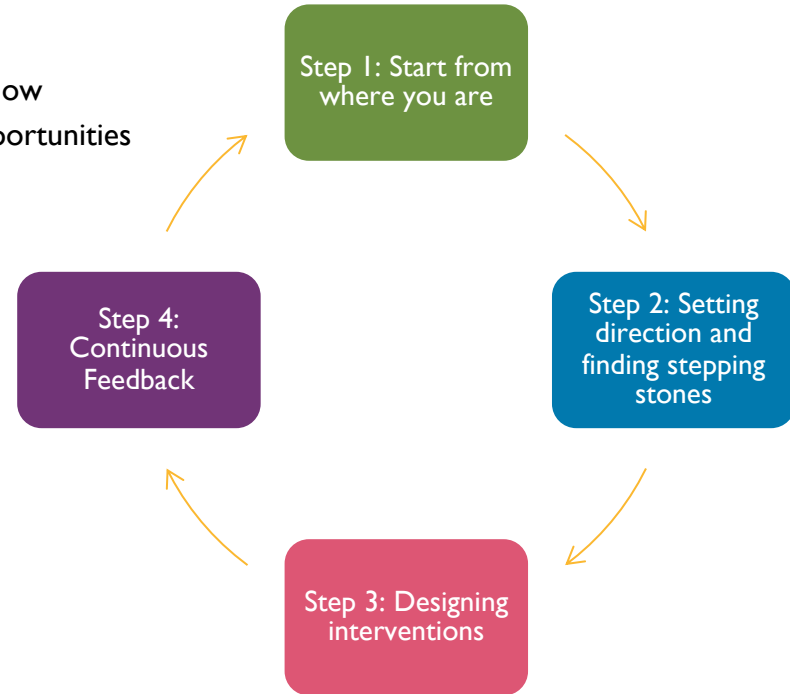
The Cynefin Co's Vector Theory of Change approach could help you break down your larger visions for engagement work into more manageable and achievable progress. More information can be found here: <https://cdn.cognitive-edge.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2022/02/02160119/VTOC-paper-2022.pdf>

Step 1: Map the current state of play. This shows you existing practice and how things are likely to shift and change. This enables you to see the emerging opportunities that you could utilise to get you started on the journey.

Step 2: As a collective, identify the direction you want to move in. The direction is established by deciding on what you want more of in the current landscape and then devising ways to amplify this. You should seek to identify the adjacent possibilities – i.e. the things that are a single step away from where you are and are therefore likely to be achievable.

Step 3: Keep your actions small and immediately do-able. These 'nudges' are small, contextual interventions that change the context (i.e. behaviours) and encourage wider change.

Step 4: Through keeping an eye on where you are and gathering insights from the here and now, you will see the next places where the system is ready to be nudged - i.e., the path of least resistance, the stepping stones of your journey.



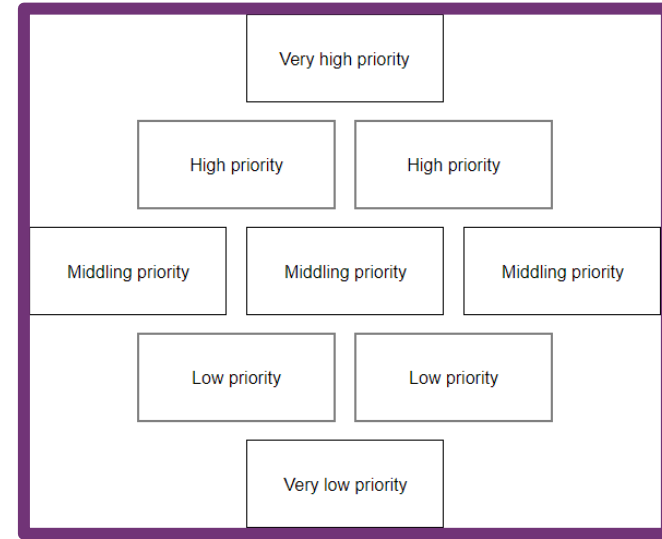
Visual produced based on The Cynefin Co's Vector Theory of Change

Priorities

Having a clear understanding of the most important areas connected to the active and meaningful involvement of people aged 50+ and communities in Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale will be vital in identifying your immediate next steps. To support this decision-making, we are suggesting that the following actions should be undertaken rapidly to not lose momentum:

- **Catalyst:** Determine the person, people or organisation who will lead this work in the immediate and short term, ensuring that they have the time, resources and scope to lead this journey.
- **Feedback loops:** Identify the most useful existing communication channels into communities and develop a process through which regular and repeated messages can be shared.
- **Capacity Building:** Establish the forum through which 'peer support and shared learning' for people doing engagement work in Calderdale can take place and identify the way in which learning from this feeds into wider structures (e.g. Ageing Well and beyond).

Finally, when prioritising different actions in the future, you may find the 'Diamond Ranking' framework to be useful.



Diamond Ranking Framework

Useful resources for the future

Sometimes it is not productive to re-invent the wheel when energy, time and resources have been spent elsewhere designing effective models, ideas, tools and techniques that can support us to meet our own aims and ambitions. With this in mind, we have collated different 'resources' that Ageing Well and Age Friendly Calderdale may find useful in their next steps.

Involve's Methods Portfolio: <https://involve.org.uk/resources/methods>

NHS Wales Three Horizons Toolkit: <https://phw.nhs.wales/news/future-proof-your-planning-with-easy-to-use-tool/three-horizons-toolkit/three-horizons-toolkit/>

Welsh Government Participatory Budgeting Toolkit: <https://neighbourhooddemocracy.org/documents/Welsh-Govt-PB-toolkit.pdf>

Cynefin's Vector Theory of Change overview: <https://cdn.cognitive-edge.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2022/02/02160119/VTOC-paper-2022.pdf>

Human Learning Systems Practical Guide: <https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/assets/pdfs/hls-practical-guide-summary.pdf>

Learning As You Scale Toolkit: <https://www.genio.ie/publications/learning-as-you-scale>



Appendix

Engagement Pilot Feedback Forms (March 2023 – Sept 2023)
Interim Report (Feb 2023)
Engagement Activity Results (December 2022)

[**https://ideas-alliance.org.uk**](https://ideas-alliance.org.uk)