



Consulting older people: a checklist

Action / activity	By whom/by when?
Before the event	
Set up steering group to manage process.	
Agree purpose of consultation.	
Draft a detailed project plan, including budgets etc.	
Agree the evaluation process.	
Choose a date that gives people ample notice – avoid the depths of winter or the height of summer.	
Agree start and end times, taking into account participants' needs.	
Make sure that you are consulting people about something in which they are interested. We recently identified a number of older people who had had a fall – this was our target group for our “Falls Conference”.	
Be clear about the purpose and the parameters of the consultation – don't raise unrealistic expectations.	



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Plan to use a variety of methods to gather information e.g. small group work, individual discussions, video box.	
Develop a clear communication strategy e.g. produce a press release, arrange for an article to go in local voluntary organisations' newsletters.	
You can send out written invitations and follow these up with telephone calls. All written information should be in size 14 point type and available in different languages / formats if required.	
Identify participants who are also carers and if necessary arrange respite care.	
Provide people with clear and accessible information about the day. If you are going to be producing a report make sure that you tell people that they will get a copy.	
The invitation should include questions about any dietary requirements, whether they need an interpreter, other personal needs.	
In the invitation say that there will be carers if anyone should need personal care.	



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It's great if someone known to the older person, like a care manager or a voluntary worker, can deliver the invitation, answer questions and accompany them to the event.	
Book qualified male and female paid carers for the event.	
Give participants a contact number so that they can let you know if they are unable to come on the day.	
Find out from the older person how they would like to get to the venue and get home again. It wouldn't be fair for them to have to use a taxi card so offer to arrange a taxi. We found that mini buses or shared taxis weren't fair and didn't really work as the last person off had had to endure a long, and perhaps, uncomfortable journey. It's more labour intensive and it costs more to have individual travel plans, but it's much more person centred.	



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The Venue	
Choose your venue carefully – don't rely on brochures to tell you about accessibility – visit each potential venue.	
If you can't do an access / risk assessment, then take someone with you who can.	
Make sure that there are enough disabled toilets/raised toilet seats. Make sure that the toilets are inspected regularly through out the day and that there are cleaners on site.	
Make sure that the signage to and in the venue is adequate.	
Make sure that there is a qualified first aider.	
Check the weather forecast – you may need to order in portable air conditioning, extra water etc.	
Book microphones etc. Find out if there is someone who will be able to help with technological glitches.	



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Action / activity	By whom/by when?
Deaf & hard of hearing people	
Check the acoustics	
Check that the venue has a loop system – you can hire in a portable system if you need to – make sure you, or a colleague, knows how to use it.	
Provisionally book BSL interpreters <i>before</i> you ask if anyone would like an interpreter.	
People with a visual impairment	
Ask if people would like information before the consultation day to enable them to take a more active part.	
Make sure that there is someone who can read information/write on behalf of older person.	



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Other needs	
Find out if the older person uses a pressure cushion. They might not be used to carrying it around with them, so you may have to remind them to bring it.	
Make sure that the venue has comfortable chairs with armrests – you can hire these in if necessary.	
Find out if anyone uses a wheelchair/walking frame – take this into account when planning seating arrangements.	



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Food	
In an ideal world it's a good idea to have waiter/ress service, as many frail older people may not be able to serve themselves.	
In the real world, make sure that you have enough staff volunteers to serve people.	
Avoid finger buffets – have a choice of dishes.	
You are likely to have a number of people on special diets e.g. diabetes, so avoid “fancy food”.	
Make sure that the food reflects the religious preferences / ethnicity of participants.	
Remember - it's a very fine line between having good refreshments and wasting the participants' council tax!	
Make sure you are able to get hold of different foods on the day – there may well be people who are on particular diets, but haven't told you.	



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On the day	
Have more helpers than you think you'll need - they can help people in and provide information about the day and the venue.	
Have the number of the cab company/transport so that you can chase up late comers or arrange for people to go home early.	
Make sure that you follow up anyone who doesn't come to the door – they might be on holiday, but it's possible that they could have had a fall!	
Keep a list of participants' names for health and safety purposes. Make sure you get addresses too, so that you can send out reports etc.	
Have a cash float.	
Ask participants what they thought of the day.	



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Action / activity	By whom/by when?
After the event	
Review and act on the evaluations.	
Write and thank people for their contribution and give brief feedback on outcomes.	
Send a report if one has been produced.	
Ask if people would like to continue to be involved.	
Let people know if their feedback leads to changes in service design or delivery.	
Evaluate this checklist.	
Have a break!!!	