



Stakeholder Engagement

**Facilitating focus groups
to inform Older People's Strategy**

Older People's Strategy: Focus Group Discussions

Providing services for older people is not just about social care or health. Older people are an integral part of the community, they are workers, carers and volunteers and essential to the fabric of our local communities.

Any Older People's Strategy should promote the well-being of older people by ensuring that universal services are engaging older people in the active community - whilst specialist services are available when needed. In order to do this older people must be active participants in the formulation of any future strategy; they must be consulted and listened to if future services are to successfully respond to their needs.



“An independent focus was essential for this process, feedback has been excellent and we found the whole event very useful and valuable.”

Housing Strategy Officer

The Client

A large Borough Council required expert and independent support to organise and facilitate four focus group discussions with older people in four different age ranges to consider client needs, expectations and experience of housing, in order to inform their Older People's Housing Strategy.

Our Approach

Our consultants prepared and agreed with the client a programme of events for the focus group discussions which defined priorities and emphasis. The four workshops (55-64 years; 65-74 years; 75-84 years; and 85 years plus) were conducted over two days drawing out changing perspectives with advancing age.

Issues around the strategic content and future consultation requirements were discussed with the Council and a transcript drawn up and approved.

Benefits

- The Council gained a rich resource of comment from older public representatives on their needs and the issues that affect them at different ages, such as transport, shopping, leisure, education, independence and finance.
- Practical experience of stakeholder engagement in order to inform strategy development.
- The Council is better appreciated as an expert caring organisation that promotes public participation and listens to its 'clients'.
- Independent facilitation assisted discussion between providers and stakeholders and enabled 'difficult' issues to be aired.

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