

Tool 4.3: Checklist for engaging with older people

☐ **Identify and work with local groups:** Have you identified and contacted representatives of local groups? Contacting these groups will allow you to test your engagement approach, and confirm the engagement methods and communication channels that older people in a particular community access. These groups may also to promote your engagement events and process through their networks.

☐ **Timing and location of meetings:** Have you considered whether the timing and location of meetings will encourage older people to attend? Some members of this group have safety, security and mobility concerns that would preclude them from attending engagement events at night, while others may still be active or working and prefer evening or weekend meetings. Meeting locations need to be conveniently located, well lit, with access to car parking and public transport. This information should be made available to older people when inviting them to attend meetings.

Venues need to provide comfortable seating and temperature, and be accessible. They also need to cater for various abilities (e.g. the availability of hearing loops).

Also, visiting where older people live or shop, or connecting with existing events or meetings attended by older people, could encourage participation in the engagement process.

☐ **Choice of engagement techniques:** Have you considered whether the older people in your community use or have access to technology? Have you considered how mobility and accessibility could affect your choice of engagement technique?

It may be necessary to provide a mix of online and mobile engagement methods with more traditional print methods. It may also be necessary to consider the mobility needs of the audience when choosing engagement techniques (e.g. a facilitation technique that requires participants to move frequently may not be useful in some circumstances).

This group is also interested in attending events, so provide opportunities for individual or group discussion. Other techniques to consider are:¹

- ☐ using local radio, local newspapers or newsletters distributed by organisations that support older people (e.g. Seniors Peak Service and other seniors organisations)
- ☐ attending or distributing information through social clubs and seniors' clubs
- ☐ surveys
- ☐ peer-led conversations or engagement events.

¹ Adapted from information contained in Youth Affairs Council of South Australia, *Better together: A practical guide to effective engagement with older people*.

- ☐ **Communicate effectively:** Have you considered if this audience has any particular communication needs? Generally, to communicate well with older people, you need to:²
 - ☐ listen well
 - ☐ be respectful
 - ☐ use plain language, large fonts and colour that is easy to read
 - ☐ consider whether a support person (e.g. a family member) should also be part of the discussion
 - ☐ be hospitable and, where appropriate, provide refreshments
 - ☐ make sure that electronic equipment, such as mobile phones, radios, televisions and ticket machines have large buttons and large lettering
 - ☐ make sure that automated telephone services give instructions slowly and clearly and tell callers how to repeat the message at any time
 - ☐ share status updates or outcomes with older people after the event
 - ☐ not be patronising.

² Ibid.