

Workshop and Next Steps



The Journey So Far...

Since completing a full evaluation of the Seniors Together Project in 2017, our aim has been to take the learning from this successful project and determine how we might work together to increase community participation and improve connections for older people.

Our starting point for this was to bring people together to talk, network and find useful ways for us to work collaboratively. To do this, we held four conversation cafes in Barrhead. 56 people attended, including third sector organisations, community groups, faith based organisations and volunteers*.

From these conversations we gathered your feedback and insights to concentrate on three areas:

1. **Transport** – poor links across the authority, limited accessible taxi service and bus drivers disregard for older people's mobility issues.
2. **Information** – how do older people access the information they require in an increasingly digital world especially those who are not 'online'.
3. **Activities** – a lack of activities, too many similar activities, transport issues and how to find out what activities are available in the community.

***For further information, please see previous reports on www.va-er.org.uk or contact us for a copy.**

The Workshop

With these areas in mind, a follow up workshop was held on the 6th December 2017. The aim of this workshop was to explore the key areas identified in more detail and consider how we could work collaboratively to find short, medium and long term solutions to the issues raised.

The workshop participants joined discussions under each of the three headline topics and focused their discussions using the following questions...



Q1. Transport – How do people travel now? How do we increase confidence to use what is already available? How do we ensure people are safe?

All groups were able to easily identify the types of transport already available throughout East Renfrewshire and started to ask what the barriers were to using it...

"How do people who need help to get out, find timetable information"

"How does Dial-A-bus work"

"What about safety on public transport? Sometimes bus drivers set off before passengers are sat down"

"Older people think taxis are too expensive"

"Who can apply for a blue badge"



Q2. Information – What media streams do we use? How easy is it for people to find out what's going on? What information is missing?

The group spoke about what information is already available but quickly realised the gaps in reaching isolated people...



“Word of mouth is key”

“More and more information is digital only. How on earth do people with no digital access find out what's going on”

“There may be a leaflet advertising a group, but it doesn't tell you how you can get there”

“The local newspaper isn't delivered to everyone”

“If information is only put in key areas like supermarket notice boards, health centres, libraries etc, how do people who can't get out find information?”

“The message needs to be consistent no matter what format it's in so people understand”

Q3. Activities – Clubs? Befriending? Exercise? – What choices are available for people?

There are lots of activities available so what are the barriers to joining in? There is a direct link to the other questions about transport and information. The group also identified other issues...

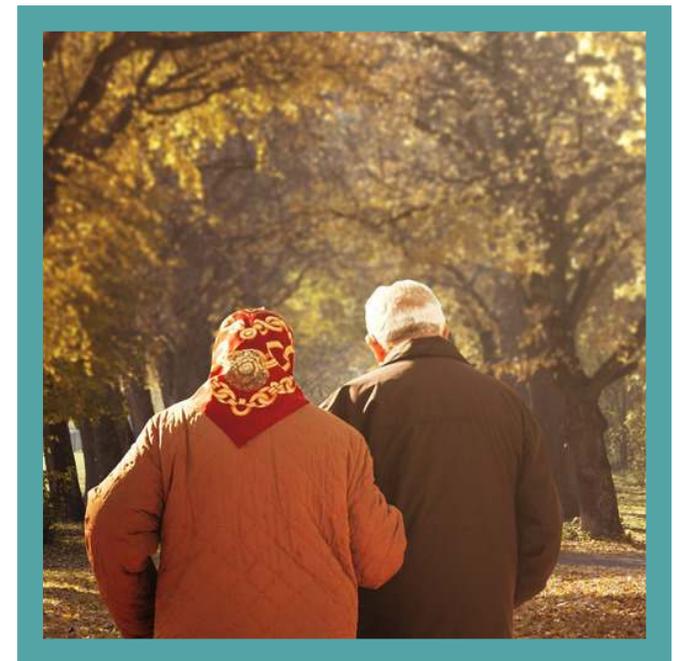
“We need to ask people what they want, not just put our choice of activity on and expect people to turn up”

“Losing confidence creates isolation, having a buddy to take you to a club for the first time would be great”

“Not everyone actually wants to go out but if they were able to use technology they could keep connected – Skype / Facetime”

“What about mixing groups for mutual benefit. Like older people volunteering at toddler groups and schools visiting groups of older people. Think of the shared experience and learning”

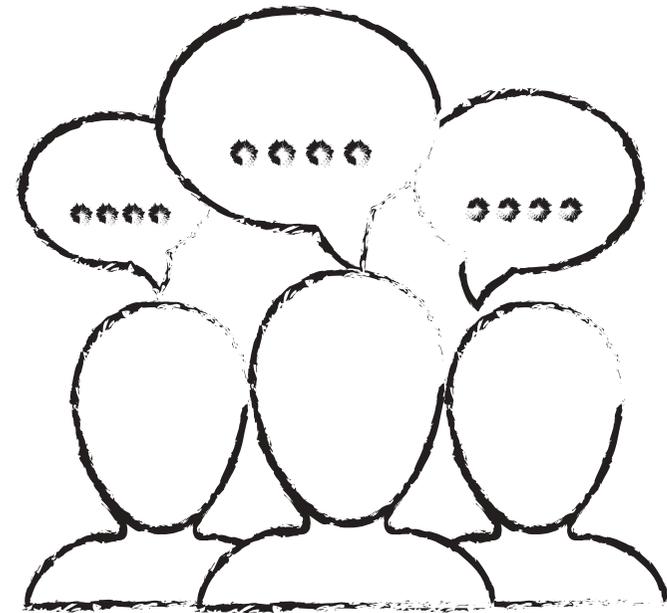
“Groups need to be encouraged to take responsibility for their ideas”



Workshop Outcomes

The workshop provided an opportunity to share and discuss what we already know about transport, information and activities and has highlighted some of the issues people experience that could be a barrier to them connecting with others. Given these findings we have a specific short term action:

- We will have more conversations with interested stakeholders to specifically discuss the issues relating to transport, including transport providers and people who use those services



The Journey Ahead...



In March 2018 Seniors Together will come to an end. The map on the following page illustrates the number of matches the project supports and where these are located.

It is now our intention to continue conversations with those individuals and organisations that have expressed an interest in facilitating a service. There will be a transition period for this in which VAER will provide initial support to interested organisations to set up or evolve a service(s). If you would like to be involved in helping to facilitate a service, please get in touch with us.

We appreciate all the contributions you have provided throughout this process and we understand that people may be interested in doing more but may not necessarily have the capacity at this time. We would still like you to be involved in conversations.

Recently VAER in partnership with Thrive were successful in receiving a grant award from Big Lottery Scotland- Improving Lives. The Funding is to deliver a two year programme working in East Renfrewshire and South Ayrshire to shape the design of services for the older people of the future. We call this 'Tomorrow's Older People Today'. This is an exciting initiative, so please keep an eye on your inbox for future announcements!

Map of Current Matches



17 Matches
15 Volunteers

Please keep your eye on your inbox for future announcements. If you are interested in helping facilitate a service, please get in touch either by contacting us directly by email/phone, visiting our website or through social media.

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