

greater  
manchester  
older  
people's  
network

# Championing the Voices of Older People in Greater Manchester: A Guide to Participation

Greater Manchester Older People's Network (GMOPN)  
Event Report

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## Executive Summary

The Greater Manchester Older People's Network is a voice for older people in our city region. We aim to make sure that older people can express their opinions and get their voices heard. We want older people to be given opportunities to participate and for those opportunities to be meaningful and pleasurable for participants, with a real chance to influence and make change. We want an age-friendly Greater Manchester that continues to listen to its older citizens and is the best place for older people that it can be.

In May 2019 the GMOPN held two events in Leigh and Manchester focused on championing older people's voices through participation. Over 50 people attended the events and took part in workshops about good and bad participation. This report collates the findings from the workshops and outlines the recommendations developed as a result.

This findings from this report will be circulated widely throughout Greater Manchester. Our recommendations will be used to inform future participation opportunities delivered by the GMOPN and shared with other organisations working with or wanting to engage with older people to ensure that people are engaged with on their own terms and in a meaningful way.



## **The Findings**

Our report finds that older people want to have a voice on a variety of issues but do not always feel comfortable to express it. Some participants felt that older people's views were less likely to be taken on board than those of younger people. Negative experiences of participation and mistrust in processes have also led some people to feel a degree of cynicism about participation opportunities.

Many expressed the importance of making participation inclusive. This was a concern in relation to the diversity of participants and highlights the importance of reaching out beyond existing groups. It was also relevant in terms of where people lived, with some feeling that larger cities have a stronger voice than smaller towns. Participation needs to be offered in the community and requires good support and infrastructure.

Participants highlighted the importance of building and maintaining trust. They needed to feel valued, respected and treated as an equal at all times.

People wanted participation opportunities and consultation where they were included at all stages, in a process where they were seen as equal partners and had a real opportunity to have an impact and influence. They also wanted to be able to challenge things and for those responsible for consultation to be open to this - participation needs to take place at a time when change is still possible.

The provision of clear information and the use of inclusive language was seen as essential for good participation. It was also notable that a high proportion of negative experiences were due to people not being comfortable in some way, due to poor facilities, organisation or practical factors.

Good participation requires careful consideration of attitudes, process and practicalities. We recommend a commitment to all three factors in order to create meaningful and pleasurable participation opportunities.

# GMOPN Recommendations for Good Participation

## Attitudes



Do it wholeheartedly or not at all. Make sure that there really is an opportunity to influence and make changes and be prepared to take people's ideas and input on board. Be open to questions, criticism and new approaches.



Acknowledge that people may be sceptical about participation and you may need to win their trust.



Be transparent about what input is being sought and what influence it can potentially have. Set realistic expectations about how participation can make changes.



Create an environment of equals, where professionals or experts and older participants are all valued for the input that they bring.



Acknowledge people's contributions - ensure that people are thanked for their input and acknowledge ideas that are going to be taken forward. Give credit where it is due.

## Process



**Be clear about the process and the project timeline and include people at every stage. Provide opportunities to participate and consult as early as possible so that people's contributions can have maximum influence.**



**View participation as a process and an ongoing conversation rather than an isolated event. Involve people in a variety of ways and at various stages: in planning, at specific participation events and through follow up and action planning. Use both written and spoken methods and don't rely solely on digital approaches.**



**Make sure that you include different geographical areas where relevant. If the issue affects people across Greater Manchester, include all areas by going out to communities.**



**Always focus on inclusion and involving those who do not usually participate – look for who isn't involved and make attempts to address the gaps. Approach a variety of groups and individuals to participate. Approaching the same limited groups has the potential to exacerbate existing inequalities.**



**Report on events and consultations in a transparent and clear way that is accessible to those that participated.**

## Practicalities



**Prioritise people's comfort. Make sure the venue is suitable, accessible and with good facilities and sufficient refreshments. Make adjustments for people with specific needs and provide transport or expenses where needed.**



**Provide clear accessible information before, during and after the event, both in summary and more detailed forms. Make sure that people are clear about what is expected from them. Don't use jargon - it makes people feel excluded and limits their ability to comment, contribute and question.**



**Allow people to participate on their own terms as much or as little as they wish, offering a variety of methods to suit individual preferences.**



**Use well-trained facilitators to ensure that everyone can contribute if they wish. Don't allow a few voices to dominate and be prepared to ask people to allow others an opportunity.**



**During events, make sure that actual participation is prioritised. Avoid cutting question time or workshops because speakers run over.**



**Give feedback and address concerns and arguments, even if response will be negative. Be clear about when feedback will be given and who is responsible. Make sure that feedback includes what action will take place.**



**Leigh event**



**Manchester event**

## Section 1: Introduction

The Greater Manchester Older People's Network (GMOPN) is about getting older people's voices heard from right across Greater Manchester. It aims to make sure that older people have a say in the decision-making that affects them and that their voices are championed in as many relevant areas as possible. Our previous work and reports have outlined the necessity of participation and involvement of older people, no matter what the focus of work.



**OLDER PEOPLE ARE EXPERTS BY EXPERIENCE, SO WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF HOUSING, SERVICES AND STRATEGIES FOR LATER LIFE**

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**Action should be taken to empower older people to voice concerns and to influence change.**

**Opportunities need to be established and supported to ensure that older people can be involved in design, planning and decision making. Clearer mechanisms need to be developed, with designated officers to support people to resolve their transport issues**



2

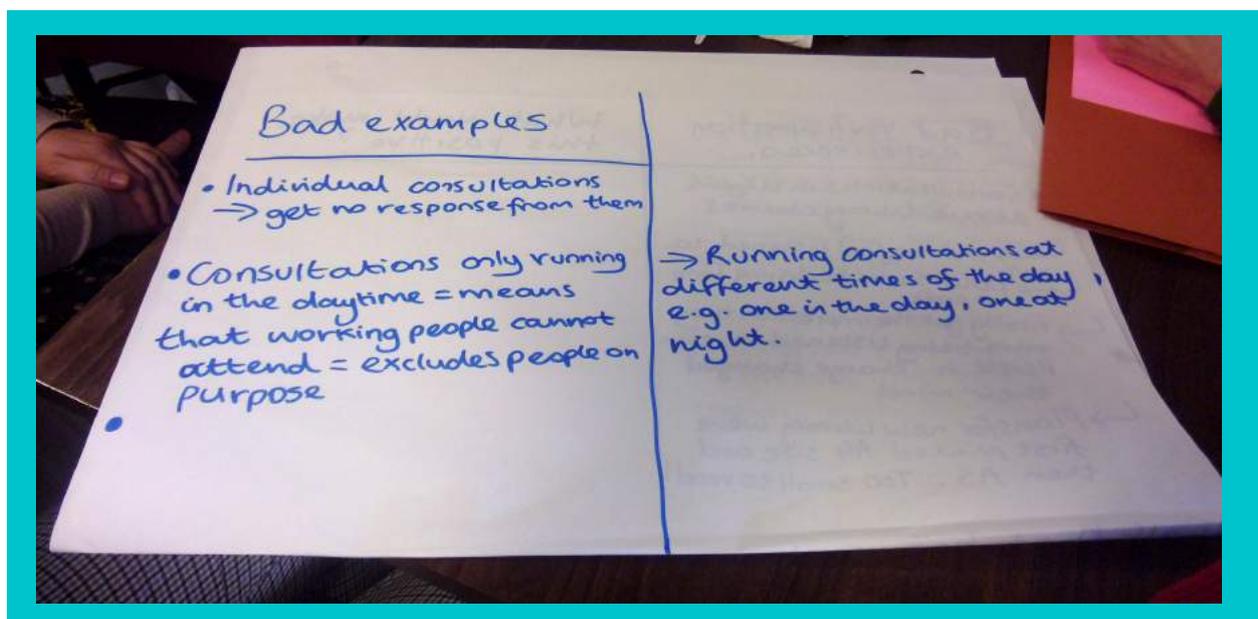
1) GMOPN Housing Manifesto (October 2017)

2) GMOPN Transport Report (March 2018)

It is clear that older people want the opportunity to participate and get their voices heard on a variety of issues. However, in order for this to happen and for people to have a real influence and impact, participation opportunities need to be offered that are meaningful and valuable for older people.

In May 2019 the GMOPN held two events focused on championing older people's voices through participation. The first, on 9th May, was held in Leigh, the second, on 23rd May, was held in central Manchester. (Links to the presentations from the Manchester event can be found in the appendix 1.) A workshop was held at both events, involving approximately 50 participants in total, with the aim of gathering people's experiences of participation of all kinds.

Participants then worked on drawing out key principles for good participation. The findings of these workshops form the basis of this report and guide for participation. This guide will be used to inform the future work of the GMOPN, and be shared with organisations throughout Greater Manchester to ensure that participation with older people across the city region is conducted in a way that accords with older people's priorities.



## Section II: The Workshops and Findings

During our workshops we first asked people to give examples of negative experiences of participation. We asked them to consider examples of all kinds, whether this be consultation workshops, attending meetings or completing surveys. We then asked them to consider how these negative examples might be made positive through a different approach. In this section, key themes are explored arising from both questions. Full details of all the responses are noted in appendix 2 of this report.

### **Older people want to have a voice but do not always feel comfortable to express it**

Older people want to have the chance to participate, be consulted or be involved in decision-making. Some participants expressed "fear" of not having a voice. People expressed feelings that older people's views were not always taken seriously and some felt that younger people were listened to more and their views seen as more relevant.

Negative experiences included those where they had been made to 'look foolish as an older person', or feeling that those organising an event or participation opportunity could not relate to what older people struggle with. Participants noted that it helped when those leading events are people you can relate to and that there should be older people leading, if the event is for older people.

## Participation requires good support and infrastructure and to be offered 'in the community'

Participants noted the importance of social infrastructure such as good public facilities and spaces for activities, events and participation opportunities to take place. They also highlighted the importance of the voluntary and community sector to support participation.

They expressed that participation events happening in communities were a way of supporting a “sense of community” and a way to prevent social isolation. They also noted the problems of short-term funding in this context – when funding stops there is a decline in community participation, potentially adding to social isolation.

Wider infrastructure and particularly the lack of good quality public transport and community transport such as Ring and Ride was considered a barrier, particularly in order to include those with mobility issues.

At the workshop in Leigh it was also voiced that participation was not always representative. There was a feeling that, “only main cities and towns get listened to – smaller towns are ignored”.



## The necessity of trust

Some participants had negative feelings about participation and the political process which meant that they were inclined to approach consultation with scepticism. Feelings that “things are done for profit rather than people”, “politics always overrides public interest” and perceptions of “being lied to by those in power” meant that trust was not a given and highlighted the necessity of clarity and transparency about the process of any consultation or participation opportunity. Negative experiences included those where people felt the process was deliberately vague, or where people were deliberately excluded or limited in the extent to which they could contribute. People also pointed to the importance of transparent reporting when consultation has taken place. They gave examples of professionally produced reports, making statements such as “50% of participants want ...” that gave the impression of large-scale consultations when in fact only a very limited group had been involved.

## Getting the basics right

Negative experiences of participation often related to facilities, venues, transport and general accessibility rather than the content or process of the consultation. People related experiences of being too hot or cold, being disturbed by external noise, being cramped and uncomfortable, having difficulties finding a venue or not having individual needs considered, such as hearing or visual impairments. Sufficient refreshments was also considered a necessity. These kind of issues were raised by most groups, pointing to the fact that without the prioritising of participants’ basic comfort, no consultation or participation exercise can hope to be successful.

## Providing clear information and using inclusive language

Participants highlighted the importance of relevant and clear information that was accessible to older people who may have sight or hearing impairments. This applied to both promotional information and that provided at the event itself, whether written information or that presented by speakers. Negative experiences often involved people attending events, meetings or consultations that didn't reflect what was advertised and where their expectation did not meet their actual experience. People expressed the importance of having a clear agenda, information and guidance for any exercises or workshops. They also noted that presentations needed to be clear, relevant and free from jargon. Jargon alienated people and had the effect of closing them down and limiting their responses.

Its use meant that people were less likely to be able to disagree or criticise effectively and had the potential to create distrust and reinforce beliefs that their opinions were not really wanted. It also reinforced divisions between 'experts' and 'participants' and made people feel 'foolish' and less inclined to ask questions.

## Being valued, respected and treated as an equal

Many of the negative experiences discussed involved situations where people felt they had been “looked down on”, “talked at” and not treated as an equal. Examples included where people had experienced speakers as “patronising” and where their intellect and abilities were not acknowledged. Participants noted the importance of being thanked for their time as well as having their ideas and input acknowledged – some related experiences where they felt ideas had been “taken” and then “passed off” as those of organisations or politicians. Other negative experiences included those where they had been invited to meetings or committees but not given much responsibility, power or opportunity to input.

Incentives and rewards for participation could help people feel valued but this was only part of the picture. More importantly, in order to feel valued, people needed to feel that they were being listened to and that participation exercises themselves had the potential to effect real change. Phrases such as “rubber-stamping”, “tick box exercise” and “tokenistic gesture” were used in relation to negative experiences where people felt that a course of action had already been decided and that participation or consultation would have no influence. People also expressed that they wanted the opportunity to be involved in larger conferences and events which often involved a fee, making them inaccessible to members of the public.

## A real opportunity to participate where people are open to challenges

People want the opportunity to interact, ask questions and offer opinions. Negative experiences included those where people were waiting for an opportunity to contribute that never came, due to there being limited time to ask questions. Often this was due to bad time-keeping at events, meaning that the question time was cut. It is important for those managing events to ensure that if events are running over that they do not automatically cut this vital opportunity, which is often the very reason that people have attended. Further to this, people need to be given the opportunity to comment and ask questions after the event and receive a response at a later date as not everyone will get their questions answered on the day.

Participants expressed that it was important that any questions were answered directly and that people were honest when they didn't have the answers.

People related experiences where they had been made to feel silly for asking questions or where they had felt dismissed because they had challenged an idea or course of action that was favoured.



## Participation needs to be inclusive

The importance of inclusivity was noted on various levels. It was felt that participation was often over-reliant on digital methods, which had the potential to exclude many older people. Participants expressed that if the views and ideas of a community or area were being sought then those consulted needed to be a representative group. People noted that often it was the same people that got consulted all the time and that consultation could be “cosy” or “cliquey”, with some people made to feel unwelcome or that their voices were less valuable. It was suggested that opportunities should be offered at various times and locations to ensure maximum participation. They also noted that certain groups of older people who were in poor health and less mobile were unable to get their voices heard because consultation was rarely accessible in people’s homes.

Negative experiences of participation frequently involved some individuals taking over or having a stronger voice than others, pointing to the need for well-trained facilitators who ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute. People also noted that different opportunities to participate should be offered to ensure that those that did not feel comfortable talking in groups were still able to express their opinions. There was also a recognition that some people came to groups, meetings and participation opportunities to listen and get information and that people needed to be able to enjoy participation on their own terms.

## Participants need to be included in the whole process

Negative experiences of participation were often reported when a consultation workshop or event was perceived as happening in isolation, rather than being part of a longer process of working together. Often this was due to lack of feedback, where nothing was shared after the event about what had happened as a result of people's contributions. Lack of feedback reinforced ideas that consultations were just tickbox exercises and had no real impact. Although people were appreciative of honesty and transparency, people nevertheless expressed disappointment at feedback that only expressed why their suggestions could not be acted on. It was felt that sometimes there was no real desire to make changes. People also expressed that they wanted to be involved in the planning of participation events and consultations and doing the work after the event that would see their ideas put into practice.



## Conclusion

Good participation requires careful consideration of attitudes, process and practicalities. We recommend a commitment to all three factors in order to create meaningful and pleasurable participation opportunities

## Section III: GMOPN Recommendations for good participation

On the basis of the themes identified in Section II of this report the GMOPN recommends the following:

### **Attitudes**

- Do it wholeheartedly or not at all. Make sure that there really is an opportunity to influence and make changes and be prepared to take people's ideas and input on board. Be open to questions, criticism and new approaches.
- Acknowledge that people may be skeptical about participation and you may need to win their trust.
- Be transparent about what input is being sought and what influence it can potentially have. Set realistic expectations about how participation can make changes.
- Create an environment of equals, where professionals or experts and older participants are all valued for the input that they bring.
- Acknowledge people's contributions – ensure that people are thanked for their input and acknowledge ideas that are going to be taken forward. Give credit where it is due.

## **Process**

- Be clear about the process and the project timeline and include people at every stage. Provide opportunities to participate and consult as early as possible so that people's contributions can have maximum influence.
- View participation as a process and an ongoing conversation rather than an isolated event. Involve people in a variety of ways and at various stages: in planning, at specific participation events and through follow up and action planning. Use both written and spoken methods and don't rely solely on digital approaches.
- Make sure that you include different geographical areas where relevant. If the issue affects people across Greater Manchester, include all areas by going out to communities.
- Always focus on inclusion and involving those who do not usually participate – look for who isn't involved and make attempts to address the gaps. Approach a variety of groups and individuals to participate. Approaching the same limited groups has the potential to exacerbate existing inequalities.
- Report on events and consultations in a transparent and clear way that is accessible to those that participated.



## **Practicalities**

- Prioritise people's comfort. Make sure the venue is suitable, accessible and with good facilities and sufficient refreshments. Make adjustments for people with specific needs and provide transport or expenses where needed.
- Provide clear accessible information before, during and after the event, both in summary and more detailed forms. Make sure that people are clear about what is expected of them. Don't use jargon – it makes people feel excluded and limits their ability to comment, contribute and question.
- Allow people to participate on their own terms as much or as little as they wish, offering a variety of methods to suit individual preferences.
- Use well-trained facilitators to ensure that everyone can contribute if they wish. Don't allow a few voices to dominate and be prepared to ask people to allow others an opportunity.
- During events, make sure that actual participation is prioritised. Avoid cutting question time or workshops because speakers run over.
- Give feedback and address concerns and arguments, even if response will be negative. Be clear about when feedback will be given and who is responsible. Make sure that feedback includes what action will take place.

# Appendix 1: Presentations

At our Manchester Event on 23rd May, participants heard presentations in the morning from representatives of the GMOPN and The Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership. The presentations and links are listed below:



**Introduction, Jan Kitching, GMOPN Action Group**



**Celebrating the GMOPN, Liz Jones, GMOPN**



**Positive Ageing Imagery, Helen Morris, GMOPN**



**Developing a system wide engagement framework to support good engagement, Warren Heppolette, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership**



**Greater Manchester Healthy Homes, Helen Simpson, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership**



**Greater Manchester Digital, Warren Heppolette, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership**

## Appendix 2: Full Workshop Notes

All the comments and feedback generated at the workshops are noted below.

### **General Comments and Considerations**

- Fear of not having a voice
- Not getting a chance to participate and share my views
- Older people aren't always taken seriously and feel that younger people may get listened to more
- Not engaged with older people – can't relate to what older people struggle with
- Fear of looking foolish as an older person
- Politics always overrides public interest
- Being lied to by those in power
- Feeling that things are done for profit rather than people
- Feeling that it's irrelevant
- Lack of community hubs means limited participation opportunities
- Taking events out of the community or estates – ending sense of community
- Lack of money/government funding – decline in community participation
- Problem of social isolation, particularly in winter
- Making older people more isolated when programmes end/stop funding
- Issues to do with availability of transport, problems with ring and ride (service has been altered and hard to contact)

- Consultations in Wigan about library closures – did not feel listened to/politics and profit was the driving force. Firstly got the impression they were being listened to, then people in charge changed their mind
- “going to post office/local shop used to be a trip out – closing these has huge impact on people’s lives”
- Badly trained workers
- We weren’t listened to
- Feeling not taken seriously when reporting ASB
- Transport a problem – participation drops when bus routes change, bus stops moved or service reduces (limited after 5pm). Ring and ride not available everywhere
- Funding – dragons den for funding e.g. police money/Wigan council grant

## **Negative Experiences of Participation**

### **The Basics**

- Not being able to attend due to transport – no disabled options available
- Accessibility of language
- Accessibility of buildings
- Lack of refreshments in an unfamiliar environment over a long period of time
- Conditions for consultation/venue – too cold too dark, hearing loop, accessibility, logistics
- Knowing about it in the first place – communication, letting people know they can give feedback/participate

- BSL signers not turned up
- Low lighting/poor sounds systems
- Noisy neighbours (from room next door)
- Bad time management
- Venue was not clear – have to be ‘in the know’ even to know where it is
- Accessibility – lack of facilities/broken facilities
- Health a barrier
- Struggling with other issues – eg. Loss of hearing – hard to participate in group discussions
- Events not accessible – hearing problems – missed out on participation
- Problems with lack of parking or stairs

## Information

- Agenda and info not applicable to audience
- Unclear instructions of what to do
- Communications about events done badly/ wrong information / audience
- Use of jargon, terminology, Acronyms and Abbreviations – people left to assume
- Jargon acts as a way of closing people down and alienating them. It also means people are less likely to be able to disagree or be critical
- “Experts don’t use plain English to communicate information”
- Jargonistic/corporate/buzzwords/acronyms
- Not enough information given as part/before consulting on subject
- Don’t know what meeting is for or about
- No agenda
- Content inappropriate – not what it says on the tin

- Not explained properly – invitation is general but purpose is not explained
- Printed too small to read
- Agenda not clear
- Set agenda

## **Being valued – “your time and efforts are valued”**

- Volunteers not acknowledged
- Token consultation – feels like decision has already been made
- Nodding dog – compliance to organisation. Telling you plans – disguised as consultation
- The decision already made and they are just ‘rubber stamping’.
- ‘Validation’ or tick-boxing’ – public consultation
- Tick box exercise – people can say they have consulted
- Tokenistic gesture – consulting but decision have already been made
- It was a tick box/validation of their opinion
- Process – going to a “consultation” when the final thing has already been decided
- It’s already decided
- Not feeling valued and that that people do not understand your experience
- Coming with preconceived ideas
- Surveys – too many of them (people get tired of completing them so don’t participate
- ‘Process’ – loaded questioning’ – leading you to a certain answer. Making you feel stupid/unvalued if you strayed from desired answer

- When giving “good” ideas, politicians etc. take the good ideas and pass them off as their own
- Not treated as an equal
- Being looked down on
- Meeting where talked at and down to
- Like to be on committee but not given much responsibility/power

## Inclusive

- People taking over/individuals having a strong voice
- Same people consulted – not the view of the whole community
- Cosy little group “usual suspects”
- One person dominating the response
- Consultations only running in the daytime – means that working people cannot attend. Excludes people on purpose
- – helps when those leading events are someone you can relate to
- Not all younger people if an event for older people
- Singling people out to speak – trying to make sure everyone’s included but not everyone’s comfortable – some just want information

## Clarity and Transparency

- Not knowing how the information is used
- Not knowing who is accountable for acting on consultation outcomes – no contact to get feedback on outcomes

## Maximum Participation

- Not being able to interact/ask questions etc. (limited question time)
- Not everyone feels comfortable participating in a public forum/speaking in front of everyone
- Same groups of people used to get feedback
- Way information is given provides limited options/responses when feeding back
- Not using variety or wide enough methods to capture views.
- Just one way of contributing
- When went to meeting at the town hall about library closures they were not allowed to speak
- Clique – voice is not really representative
- Work comes from meeting – need to be prepared to do stuff after meeting
- Need active participants
- Everyone should be contributing

## Being open to different views and challenges

- Felt that because they challenged things they were dismissed more.
- Not open to new ideas
- Treating questions with respect and answering directly or admitting when you don't have answers (honesty)
- Feeling that your ideas are not taken on board
- Made to feel silly asking questions

## Speakers and Presentations

- Presenters/facilitators going off track/taking over
- Speakers talking very quickly - doesn't give enough time to understanding
- Speakers not taking into account people who are visually or hearing impaired. Eg. Powerpoint font too small. Font on Print outs too small too. Background colour not right - some people with visual impairments may struggle to be able to read things on certain colour backgrounds
- Use of microphone – not everyone understands how to use it
- Patronising delivery – not acknowledging intellect or ability
- Avoiding answering questions directly

## Reporting and Feedback

- Not seeing any change – no feedback
- No 'you said, we did' – chance to comment on a response
- Don't get any feedback on most individual consultations and seems that they were only run as a tick box exercise
- Data produced doesn't accurately reflect what happened. Eg. 50% of people want – when only 4 people turned up
- Feedback given only to tell everyone why their suggestions could not be delivered
- Consultation makes no difference
- People not listening – organisers
- When writing letters, presenting cases etc. no response was given
- Work comes from meeting – need to be prepared to do stuff after meeting
- Being asked your opinion and then ignored

## Other

- Cost can be prohibitive
- Bigger group sessions/consultations potentially cost a lot
- Phone questionnaires – talking too quickly – makes it difficult to hear properly and understand. Not being clear enough. (No comfort breaks)
- Council – texting/internet – barrier for older people (Wigan 30% not online)

## Suggestions for good participation

### The Basics

- Suitable venue – suitable location with parking and public transport access, good temperature, adequate lighting, good facilities – hearing loop, lift etc.
- Make sure subject relevant to the audience
- Good time management
- Consultation needs to be meaningful
- Stick to advertised times

## Information

- More information about why they want the information and how it will be used
- Agenda and event information should be checked to ensure appropriate to audience
- Communications about events should be tested or sense-checked with audience
- Different levels of information to be provided. – summary as well as full reports
- Information before/at consultation
- Share project timeline
- Be clear about the purpose and topic and what is expected of participant
- Paperwork in large enough print for people to read
- Make sure all abbreviations/acronyms etc. are explained
- Clear Agenda provided before the meeting so you can prepare

## Being valued – “your time and efforts are valued”

- Have an acknowledgement to the people contributing
- Lunch and travel expenses help people feel valued. (but not just going for a free lunch as a participant)
- Ensure that refreshments are provided – this is part of the thank you for volunteering time
- More comfort breaks scheduled
- Payment of taxi expenses - Being told upfront that they are available

- Provide transport (especially for events on during the evening)
- Incentives/rewards for participating
- Meals for longer consultation
- Arguments acknowledged and acted upon
- Acknowledge arguments even if response will be negative
- Equality and respect/treating people as you'd want to be treated
- Being treated with respect

## Inclusive

- Use plain English – be aware that people come from different backgrounds etc.
- Expand who is involved
- GM wide – not just 'Manchester'
- Consistency
- Go to harder to reach places
- Offer written options for those who don't feel comfortable voicing their opinion in front of others
- Offer different ways of processing info and feeding back
- Understanding peoples' needs
- Ensure that everyone is included – being prepared to stop people taking over or having a strong voice that closes others down – managing this
- Always think about your audience – childcare issues
- Venues
- Slower pace
- Times
- Dementia friendly – support
- Accessibility needs

- Communications – how to reach representative group for consultation not just ‘active people’ or ‘usual suspects’ – knowing about ways to participate
- Be willing to change your approach.
- Running consultations at different times of day – daytime and evening – to allow more to participate
- Mention before event if people are hard of hearing then move to the front
- Being able to choose to volunteer or participate
- Being representative
- Allowing different levels of participation but having some kind of minimum expected level of participation

## Clarity and Transparency

- Change the name – consultation isn’t usually accurate as they aren’t listening
- Transparency – saying if decisions have been made – honesty. Making best of decision that has already been made
- Need to know how information and feedback is used. You said we did
- Need to be open and honest about decisions that have been made
- Transparency of where the participation is on project timeline
- Set realistic expectations about how participation will change the outcome/output
- Honesty
- Being flexible

## Maximum Participation

- Offer different ways to participate and opportunities for further involvement
- List of questions that speakers answer after the event if no time at the event
- Participants to stay on topic so things don't overrun and the question times don't get cut
- Event planning – ensure that there is enough time for questions.
- Activities should be clear, well thought through, with a clear purpose
- Comments box – being able to submit comments or discussion points
- Being able to write a note or submit response before event
- Contributing to shape or agenda for event
- Good chair/facilitator
- Strong but inclusive leadership/ facilitation
- Always look for ways to include those who don't usually participate

## Speakers and Presentations

- Have speaker check in with the audience
- Training for speakers about how to deliver professional speeches
- Introduction at event about microphone. When the microphone is passed to someone explain where they need to talk
- Ensure that there is a caveat at the beginning of speeches inviting and encouraging people to ask for clarity if using jargon or using unfamiliar terms/ ideas that need more explanation
- Plain speaking – no short forms/abbreviations – explain further what you mean. No jargon and terms should be explained

- Involve people in DOING the work for continual improvement
- Speak clearly
- BE aware that people have other issues such as hearing impairment
- Being open to questions

## Reporting and Feedback

- Include an executive summary
- Provide concise information in pullet point form
- Actioning things at meeting – responsibility/ accountability. Need to feed back and to know who is accountable
- Contact details to be provided so after consultation you can contact for update or to feed in
- Need confirmation that organisation has understood comments in consultation
- People need a chance to respond to planned changes/recommendations (e.g. comment on ‘you said, we will do’ to make sure it reflects consultation – Important for these principles
- Feedback in some kind of “You said .... We did ... format”
- You will get feedback within ... days...weeks ...months and who this will be from

## Other

- Telephone surveys – take into consideration that people need more time (offer paper copies of questionnaire/stop the caller and tell them that they are talking too fast)
- Consultation should be done when ideas are first conceived (at an earlier stage). Consultation before decision is made/throughout process/early
- The individual needs to have the strength to say no, I don't want to take part
- Better training needed for people who work in customer services around how different people deliver information – patience and open-mindedness
- Appreciative enquiry – method (debate)
- Appreciative enquiry method
- Don't ask about things only relevant in Manchester for example
- Being able to feed back on method/delivery of consultation
- Clear boundaries, active listening, clarity
- Honest frameworks, keep to timings – information available beforehand – shorter meetings
- Organisation taking responsibility – content, people, speakers. People need to be committed and passionate
- Widen the reach – don't just go to easy places/established groups
- Oldest older people – have to go to them
- Understanding your audience
- Innovative approaches
- Recognising differences
- Who isn't represented?
- Where are the gaps
- Event has to have a visible outcome – action from discussions.
- Support for smaller organisations in how to do this
- Only use terms 'co-production' or 'consultation' when appropriate

- Be clear – agenda that matches expectations and what is actually going to happen
- Honesty
- Transparency
- Being listen to and having suggestions taken on board
- Empowering people by letting them know protocols and general guidance
- Speak to those who may be interested in ideas rather than speaking to everyone in charge
- Officers to have training
- Include a map of where things are – from home to events (things in Manchester are often changing)
- Having a laugh





## Join our network!

The Greater Manchester Older People's Network is all about getting older people's voices heard from right across Greater Manchester. Membership is open to individuals aged 50 and over and to organisations that support older people.

Our members receive a monthly newsletter, invitations to our events and information about training and participation opportunities. It's up to you to get involved in the network as much or as little as you would like.

**For further information or to become a member please contact Liz or Victoria on 0161 834 9823 or email [GMOPN@macc.org.uk](mailto:GMOPN@macc.org.uk)**

**Website: [www.gmopn.org.uk](http://www.gmopn.org.uk)**

**Twitter: [@GMOPN1](https://twitter.com/GMOPN1)**