

## Engaging with Older People

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### **Making Older People Welcome**

**Verity Smith and Alan Archer**



## Pre-Registration Decisions

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- Why is the event being held?
- What information to put across and how?
- Who will do that and how?
- To whom do you want to present it?



## Challenges of inviting Older People

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- A more diverse audience
- Challenges for whom?
- How to find the older people?
- What possible special needs?
- Even more advance planning
- More uncertainty



## The Benefits

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Think, for a moment, who can benefit.....



## Who can benefit?

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- The older people
- All other people in the audience
- The Organisers themselves!



## Another question for all of us..

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- Have we all, today, felt welcomed to this event, so far?
- Give one or two comments on this to your neighbour



## Publicity to attract Older People

- Where to advertise
- Event title
- Cost
- How to get there
- What time of day
- Prior information on accessibility
- Contact point for queries
- Whether food is available (? free)



## Falls Awareness Day Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2007



### A Walk a Day Keeps a Fall at Bay

Older local residents are warmly invited to this day of talks, indoor activities and information designed to help you keep fit and active and avoid falls.



Date: Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2007  
Time: 10am - 4pm  
Place: Camden Centre, Eldonborough Street, London WC1.

Nearest underground: King's Cross St. Pancras, Euston.  
Buses: 10, 30, 46, 63, 73, 91, 214

You need to book a free place beforehand...

Tel: 020 7974 1542  
Write to: Active Health Team, Camden Town Hall,  
Agyle Street, London, WC1H 1EQ  
E-mail: [marc.malton@camden.gov.uk](mailto:marc.malton@camden.gov.uk)



## Suitable venue

Is this hall suitable for older people?

Now, consider these for a venue you know:

- Public transport
- Directions and signage
- Parking / drop off point
- Accessibility
- Wheelchairs
- Hearing loop



## Meeting and Greeting

- Friendly personal welcome
- Informed people to answer queries
- Most frequent first query?
- Name badges
- Welcome Pack / Programme
- Help to those with an obvious disability
- RESERVED signs on some seats



## Disabilities

- Who has disabilities?
- Disability not always obvious
- Organisers may have information on this in advance
- People's attitudes to special treatment / assistance vary



## Hard of Hearing

- RNID Statistics re hearing loss:
  - of people over 60 years.....55%
  - of people over 70 years.....71%
- ..... have some degree of hearing loss



## Helping with Hearing Loss - 1

- Hearing Loop
  - technician tests & switches on
- PA system
  - technician tests & turns on in advance
- Clip on mics for speakers
- Hand held mics + 'runners' for questions
- Suitable lighting



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## Helping with Hearing Loss - 2

- Powerpoints to give enough information
- Lots of visuals
  - photographs or diagrams to illustrate a point
- Questions from the floor
  - Chair to repeat gist of question
- British Sign Language experts

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## Helping those with Visual Impairment - 1

- Good clear signs to venue
- Be on the look-out for their arrival
- If with a guide dog – water bowl
- Large print programmes ready -14 pt.
- Help, if required, in seating
- May need Organiser to ring for a taxi



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## Helping those with Visual Impairment - 2

- Screen clarity
  - light screened from the presentation
- A helper available at breaks
  - take to refreshments, toilet
  - assist in networking
- Very clear directions around building with good colour contrast

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## Mobility problems

- Can happen to any of us
- Where are accessible toilets?
- Wheelchair access
- Positioning wheelchairs
- Hold doors open
- Assist in networking



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## Dietary needs

- Try to find out beforehand
- Have special foods plated and labelled
  - so others don't gobble them up!
  - so those requiring them get them!
- Sometimes people bring own food
- Tea, coffee and water appreciated
- Coeliacs / Gluten (wheat) free and Lactose (milk) intolerance

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## Quotation from a Coeliac friend

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*"They always give me a salad at conferences and I'm really insulted. One has to find a chair somewhere to sit, and can feel quite isolated, when everyone else is standing eating sandwiches, chatting and networking. Salad doesn't really fill one up and is less suitable in the Winter.*

*But when Organisers make the effort to provide something better, it's really appreciated and I'd remember that event also for the food."*

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## **Finally, Rewards of working with Older People**

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- Experienced and can contribute
- May well be retired professionals
- Presenter gains new angles on subject
- Can be very appreciative of opportunity
- May have many good contacts to share
- May ask excellent questions!
- Warning – may make presenters sit up!

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