

KT-EQUAL Workshop
Thursday, 17th September 2009

Making the Most of Assistive Technology



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KT-EQUAL: Its mission for older people

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2009 - A Good Time to Take Stock

- Older people a major issue for UK government
- Investment in ageing research is increasing
- Moving up the learning curve on how to organise ageing research



The Research Councils and ageing research 10 years and more for some!

- MRC - Medical
- ESRC - Economic and Social Sciences
- **EPSRC - Engineering and Physical Sciences**
- BBSRC - Biotechnology and Biological Sciences
- AHRC - Arts and Humanities



Research Council Programmes

- Past
 - Growing Older – ESRC - 1998
 - Science of Ageing/Experimental Research into Ageing – BBSRC -1998
 - **EQUAL Projects – EPSRC – 1997 – 2002**
- Current
 - Life Long Health and Wellbeing - All – 2008-
 - New Dynamics of Ageing – All – 2005-
 - **EQUAL Consortia –EPSRC - 2002 -**

Important Foundation of Current Programmes

- Multidisciplinary
- Collaborative
- User Involvement
 - Pioneered by EQUAL
 - Extremely successful
 - Now, generally accepted approach by all research councils
 - But, still some resistance and breaking of ranks
 - Some variation in approach to user involvement between programmes



EPSRC EQUAL Initiative 1997-

- Multidisciplinary
- Multi-professional
- Intermediate Organisations
- Older People as experts
 - Built Environment
 - Design for All
 - Rehabilitation
- 34 projects, 5 consortia



SPARC 2005-8

For the research community and its supporters in health, social and housing services, charities, voluntary agencies, local and central government, and amongst older and disabled people.....

SPARC - a Community-led Initiative

- Focused on:
 - Encouraging newcomers into ageing research
 - Building rapport and involving all stakeholders
- 2005 – 2008
 - Took three years to secure support
- EPSRC & BBSRC - £1.75m
 - Design and engineering research
 - Biological research
 - All areas in between
- Three themes
 - Workshops for all comers
 - Advocacy
 - Pump-priming



2009!



- December 2008 – SPARC ended
- January 2009 – KT-EQUAL began
 - Knowledge Transfer for Extending Quality Life
 - Workshops
 - Advocacy
 - Developing younger researchers
 - Dissemination, application, utilisation
 - Even closer to policy makers, practitioners and older people

So much for the researchers but what about older people, their carers, professionals and other users, beneficiaries and stakeholders?

Taking Older People Seriously?

- Very little investment in research and development concerned with older people
- Over-medicalised and over-socialised
- 'Top-down' policy doesn't work
- Policy documents often useless
- What about offering some solutions?
- Try 'bottom-up', scientists working directly with older people?

Motivation for EQUAL & SPARC

- Scientists can gain considerably from communicating and discussing their work with older people, their carers and professionals in the field and listening to them
- Older people should be valued and involved as experts in the full research process
- Practitioners and older people have as much right to hear about the latest findings from research as have scientists and at the same time!

The SPARC/KT-EQUAL Community

- 2005-2009
 - 48 workshops – 3300 participants
 - 34 All-comers events
 - 30% Academics/researchers
 - 20% Health, Social Services, other Government
 - 40% Charities, Individuals
 - 10% Industry
- Mail List
 - 2000 members of which
 - 1200 non-academic/non-research members

Keeping on Track

- You must tell us if ever we seem to forget our roots in the community and its support for our style of research
 - **Bottom-up not top-down**
 - **Ageing research (and KT) thrives**
 - when those with knowledge of leading edge of science become engaged with ageing issues
 - when older people, practitioners from all walks of life and researchers get together
 - on grassroots enthusiasm of researchers and their supporters who want to make a difference to the quality of life of older people.
 - **Inclusion, Transparency, Accountability**



Today

- A unique experience
- A topical event
 - Lectures
 - Briefings
 - Lots of Networking
 - academics, practitioners, older people
- Designed to bring everyone together

Thanks!

- To BIAS
- Today's Presenters
- The Chairs
- You, the Participants

- And, of course, EPSRC

The Ultimate Aim



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