

The Association for Education and Ageing,
Age Action Ireland, Workers' Educational Association NI
& The New Dynamics of Ageing Research Programme UK
present

INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CONFERENCE
**New Dynamics of Learning and Ageing:
Research, Policy and Practice**

20 - 22 MARCH 2012,
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
OF IRELAND,
MAYNOOTH

Taking place in St. Patrick's College, Maynooth (within easy reach of Dublin), this international residential meeting will seek to highlight new areas of study for older learners and innovative ways of presenting this material – including the use of arts and creativity.

An additional pre-conference programme will be available for older learners and anyone with a view on later life learning, organised by the Adult and Community Education Department of NUIM.



The Association for
Education & Ageing



new dynamics of ageing
a cross-council research programme



New Dynamics of Learning and Ageing: Research, Policy and Practice

PAPER / PRESENTATION SESSIONS ABSTRACT DOCUMENT

ABSTRACT 1

Title: *Memory beliefs and strategy use by older adults: implications for teaching and learning*

Style: paper

Presenter: Dr Andy Cochrane

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Employer: Department of Psychology, NUIM

Engagement in situations that require memory proficiency is an important pre-requisite for successful ageing. Yet, concerns about memory performance may prevent some older adults from engaging in beneficial tasks such as learning new skills or re-entering education.

Memory training has tended to focus on teaching mnemonic strategies with promising results, but maintenance of effects is poor. This may in part be related to the difficulty in modifying older adults' lower confidence in their memory abilities, and negative self-stereotypes about the ageing process.

The aim of this project was to explore the relationship between attitudes towards ageing and self-reported memory abilities in a group of older adults. Two questionnaires (Multifactorial Memory Questionnaire and Attitudes towards Ageing Questionnaire) were administered to older adults living in the local community (n = 73). Positive beliefs about memory ability were associated with greater contentment with the ageing process. Greater use of memory strategies was associated with fewer memory errors. The participants tended to use external memory strategies (e.g., writing things down), rather than internal strategies (e.g., imagery) that may be more effective when learning new material.

The findings indicated that beliefs about memory are associated with more general attitudes about self-ageing. Additionally, consistent with other studies, these older adults tended not to use the types of effective memory strategies that young adults adopt spontaneously. Older learners may benefit from training in strategies that will complement adult learning approaches, and these programmes will be enhanced by considering the role that beliefs and attitudes may play in memory performance.

ABSTRACT 2

Title: *'My first older student'- Investigating the specific requirements of teaching music to elderly people*

Style: Paper

Presenter: Karolien Dons

Researcher and project leader for the Research Group Lifelong Learning in Music & the Arts, Prince Claus Conservatoire, Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen, Veemarktstraat 76 9724 GA Groningen, The Netherlands

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Employer / sponsor: Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen / Foundation Innovation Alliance (SIA – Stichting Innovatie Alliantie)

With an above average ageing society and a rising demand for arts education for the elderly in the northern Netherlands, the research project *'Music and the elderly, learning an instrument at an advanced age'*, carried out by the Research Group Lifelong Learning in Music & the Arts of Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen, aims to develop specific knowledge for music educators about older learners.

During the first phase of the project material has been developed for music teachers working or willing to work with elderly learners. The material is based on the practical knowledge of experienced teachers combined with a focused literature study. It includes knowledge about recruitment, colloquial manners and didactical possibilities for carrying out lessons with older students as well as notions about older learners in general.

Currently the research project explores the acquisition of knowledge and skills for teaching the elderly in real learning situations. Ten young, recently graduated music teachers, with no experience of teaching music to older learners, will be followed while they give a total of 180 lessons. The research is carried out in a community of practice with researchers, experienced teachers and elderly learners. Relevance and transferability of the existing material will be investigated in a search for the best methods which this specific field requires.

This paper deals with the outcomes of this particular phase of the research project, providing fresh knowledge on arts educators learning to work with older students, as well as giving insights into the distinctive research method of collaborative learning within a community of practice.

ABSTRACT 3

Title: *Discovering hidden talents in older age – a sheltered housing performing arts group*

Style: Presentation

Presenter: Patricia Gormley

WEA tutor on the Learning Age Project (LAP) and scheme coordinator for Tearmann Fold in West Belfast, UK

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Employer / sponsor: WEA NI

The interest in performing arts began when a group started doing creative writing classes with the WEA a few years ago. The aim of our drama group is to unlock the potential within the person and to encourage them to use their creative energy in a positive way. Since the activities have developed we have performed our own work in various venues and festivals throughout Belfast. The transformation in some of the people taking part is incredible. They have taken to the stage as if they had been actors all their lives!

The benefits of these activities are many. Minds and bodies are being stretched and research has confirmed that these things actually make for a healthier old age. It takes pressure off the health trusts if people are getting exercise and outings, so that their mental health is maintained. Many of the older people involved have recruited the help of families and friends in the production of the plays. In this and in other ways, the drama and creative writing classes have had a massive impact on the lives of the participants.

Since beginning our journey of self-discovery we have engaged with many groups within our local community and beyond. We have led workshops with drama students from the local secondary school and have worked with children from the travelling community. We also performed alongside students who are studying for a degree in performing arts. They reported back that our input was of great value to them and we are keeping up a correspondence with them with a view to future projects. Our work with the Big Telly Theatre Company led us to performances in the Waterfront Hall and the Ulster Museum in Belfast.

ABSTRACT 4

Title: *Older People and Technological Innovations – Lifelong learning and applications for health and wellbeing*

Style: Paper

Presenter: Dr Jonathan Hughes

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Employer / sponsor: Open University

This pan-European project, involving England, Scotland, Germany, The Netherlands and Slovenia, has questioned whether current approaches to introducing new technologies are the best way of enabling older people to learn about and use technology in their everyday lives. Promoting and enhancing the use of ICT with older people is viewed as particularly important as new technologies can enhance access to information, education and support, which can in turn improve physical, psychological and social wellbeing.

In each of the partner countries older people are engaging in workshops where play is used as the main method of enabling people to engage with new and existing technologies. These include touch screens, haptic technologies (where touch provides the interface between the user and the technology), gaming stations, mobile telephones, traditional computers or equipment designed for use in health and social care situations. The data collection methods used to capture and evaluate the older people's experiences include: video recordings of interactive play workshops, participant observation, focus groups and interviews.

This presentation will focus on preliminary findings from the interactive workshops to demonstrate the extent to which these have enabled older participants to:

- explore and learn about new and emerging technologies
- develop skills and experience of new and emerging technologies
- gain greater awareness of, and confidence to use, new technologies
- identify how they might use new technologies in the context of their everyday lives
- identify potential future applications for new technologies that could enhance their health and wellbeing.

Findings, drawing on the project's final report, will also be presented to illustrate similarities and differences of experiences across European locations.

ABSTRACT 5

Title: *Social exclusion, volunteering and learning*

Style: Paper

Presenter: Dr Anne Jamieson

Reader Emeritus and Research Associate, Birkbeck, University of London, London, UK
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Employer / sponsor: Birkbeck, University London / European Foundation for the
Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EFILWC)

This paper will present the findings from three UK case studies focusing on the involvement of older people as volunteers as a strategy for combating social exclusion. This work formed part of a European project on social exclusion and volunteering, funded by the EFILWC. The context of this work is the ageing of populations coupled with the growing disparities between the 'well-off'/ well educated retired people and those with few resources (financial as well as physical) and little education, who are at risk of being socially excluded. Involvement in volunteering is one possible way of overcoming social exclusion and lack of education.

In terms of education and learning, it is well established that older learners tend to be recruited from among those who have been involved in learning throughout their lives. The challenge is how to involve those whose life course has not included much education.

The three case studies illuminate some of the benefits of volunteering as well as the barriers to active engagement. Focusing on the UK, the presentation will address the following questions:

- What are the trends in ageing and sources of social exclusion of older people?
- What policies have been pursued to overcome such social exclusion, and in what ways can volunteering help?
- Most importantly: how does volunteering relate to learning? Is volunteering a good strategy for getting disadvantaged older people involved in learning in later life?

ABSTRACT 6

Title: *Community education and older learners, a case study from West Belfast*

Style: Presentation

Presenter: Pauline Kersten
Conway Education Centre, West Belfast, UK

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Following an introduction to Conway Education Centre, this session will discuss issues concerning:

- Our increasing number of older learners and their feedback on provision
- Importance of a local venue and supportive, informal environment
- Popularity of IT courses and interest in 'new media' courses
- Reaching older learners; how to get the information across of what is available
- Barriers to accessing learning (accessibility of venue, transport and health issues, cost, lack of leisure courses)
- Lack of recognition and difficulties in getting funding
- Importance of partnership working with government departments, health and social care providers, voluntary organisations and funders

ABSTRACT 7

Title: *Tu Si Que Vales (you can do it)*

Style: Presentation

Presenters: Councillor Bernie Kellie & Mary Matthews

Contact: Adele Faulkner, Belfast Health Development Unit, 5th Floor, 9 Lanyon Place, Belfast UK BT1 3LP NI

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Employer / sponsor: Belfast City Council

The aim and purpose of the project of the project are, first, the development of life long skills enabling local communities to draw on the potential of senior citizens as a source of knowledge, competence and experience; second, to learn other cultures and to build the volunteers' confidence and self belief

Belfast and Madrid strive to empower older people and to support them in their independence. Volunteering is recognised as a valuable learning experience for older people as it can promote the process of active ageing. This project offers older people an opportunity to learn, share knowledge and experiences and contribute to active ageing. In this project; entitled "tu si que vales" (you can do it); older people can develop their knowledge and learn from each other by volunteering for 6 weeks in designated organisations within each partner city.

Six volunteers were selected from each City and travelled to the host City in pairs to volunteer for six weeks. All volunteer activities had a focus on learning and wellbeing. The aims were to enhance learning, develop self-confidence, learn and teach the local community, develop skills and community engagement and reap health benefits both in mind and spirit. Volunteer roles and tasks varied depending on the role and the organisation that they were placed in.

The project allowed the volunteer to contribute to the development and implementation of non-profit activities and to the community as an active citizen. The receiving organisations also benefited from the skills and knowledge of the volunteer as well as the volunteer learning new methods of working/volunteering. Learning from placements is shared and put into practice on return from exchange including cultural experiences, communication skills, confidence and sense of achievement.

ABSTRACT 8

Title: *'It keeps me interested in the world around me': Reflections on the Encourage Programme at the Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Strathclyde*

Style: Presentation

Presenter: Alix McDonald

Community Engagement Manager, Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Strathclyde, Graham Hills Building, 40 George Street, Glasgow, UK G1 1QE

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Employer / sponsor: University of Strathclyde

The Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University of Strathclyde has a long tradition of offering learning opportunities for older adults. The Encourage Programme has been part of this for 8 years and is run in partnership with Glasgow City Council. To date over 5000 older adults have participated. It is designed to make a variety of performance media and cultural activity accessible to those aged over 50 who may not otherwise engage with the city's arts and culture scene. This is achieved through a mixture of innovative delivery of workshops combined with attendance at performances as well as the opportunity to attend workshops and away days.

We have recently conducted a questionnaire sent to current and previous participants, which has yielded both quantitative and qualitative data which we are in the process of analysing. The purpose of this is to gain further insight into the experience of participants and to what extent involvement with the project enables general wellbeing and increased engagement with their city and community.

The project is innovative in that it is based within a university and provides the opportunity for participants to learn in an environment which may not previously have been perceived as relevant to them. The partner organisations involved are key to its success and in the past have included Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet, the Tron Theatre, City Halls, the Citizens Theatre, Dance House and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra many of whom offer subsidised tickets.

The purpose of this presentation is to disseminate the results of the most recent evaluation and research and set this in the context of Encourage's history as a widening participation tool specifically for the arts and older adults. It is a model which is of interest to practitioners in the field of educational gerontology and one which could be replicated elsewhere.

ABSTRACT 9

Title: *Big Telly's Spring Chickens*

Style: Presentation

Presenter: Miss Pat Morris
Portstewart Town Hall, Co Derry/Londonderry UK

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Employer / sponsor: Big Telly Theatre Company

This presentation will describe good practice based on intergenerational projects developed and delivered by the Big Telly Theatre Company through Spring Chickens – a creative older people's programme throughout N. Ireland.

The programme has two key themes: imagining solutions and building capacity. The former helps older people envision and explore ways in which society should better serve the older generation, while the latter is about implementing practical strategies to help older people play a more active role within their own communities and form links with younger people.

Presentation of three examples of best practice, based on the sharing of skills between the generations, *Golden Gangs* (older people sharing their skills with younger people), *Cultural Envoys* (younger people sharing their skills with immobile older people), *Spring Chickens Shows 2011* (older people performing for pupils in post-primary schools, with post-show discussion) and showing how feedback has led to the development of our latest project *TOM* (Targeting Older Men).

This project is externally evaluated. Now in its fourth year, Spring Chickens began a new three year programme in January 2011. A PID sets out agreed evaluation targets and procedures. Outcomes are divided into short, medium and long term (e.g. adding interest and quality to the lives of older people, building confidence and skills of older people etc), while several build on progress made (e.g. connecting older people to the wider community, re-framing the debate about older people's role in society, and developing the 'pool' of artists with the knowledge and experience necessary to work with older people).

ABSTRACT 10

Title: *Technology for Learning in Arts and Creativity*

Style: Paper

Names of presenters: (1) Dr Maria Raquel Patrício & (2) Prof António Osório
(1) School of Education - Polytechnic Institute of Bragança, Campus de Santa Apolónia, Apartado 1101, 5301-856 Bragança, Portugal
(2) Institute of Education - University of Minho, Campus de Gualtar, 4710-057 Braga, Portugal

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The challenge posed by ageing population in the field of education and learning, the importance of new technology in the global world and solidarity between generations are factors of motivation and opportunity to contribute to a new dynamics of learning and ageing. Older people's knowledge, wisdom and life experience will contribute through ICT for a better educational focus on values and traditions, transferring their skills and experience to the younger.

This paper aims to describe the design of learning activities for the development of ICT competences among older adults within the context of informal intergenerational processes of interaction. In addition, youth learning about culture and popular wisdom is also expected, specifically in the area of arts and creativity such as local traditions in northeast Portugal (i.e. winter festivities with "caretos", sounds and traditional songs).

We intended to explore the significance of encounters and exchanges between younger and older generations for the development of interest in learning traditional arts and then use modern technology to register and preserve these memories.

The outcomes will allow us to get relevant inferences to understand and develop strategies to encourage useful and significant intergenerational learning, and how both generations contribute and benefit from it. The reflections will be essential to identify new areas of teaching and learning, especially through arts and creativity supported by ICT, as well as to understand education and intergenerational learning.

ABSTRACT 11

Title: *Educational gerontology in practice: a revised statement of first principles*

Style: Paper

Presenter: Professor Emeritus Keith Percy
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In the early 1990s, Glendenning and Battersby sought to put critical backbone into thinking about learning in later life. They wanted to re-focus discussion less on exhortation and platitude and more on the disadvantage and prejudice that older adults suffer. They argued for the potential role of education in transforming the consciousness of older adults and in equipping them for social action. They called for a 'critical educational gerontology' and they stimulated a debate, through publications, in which the presenter of this paper participated.

Twenty years on, in a recently published article, Formosa urged the crucial contemporary relevance of critical educational gerontology if adapted to the 'post-modern' world. He accepted that the early critiques— which, he said, originated from a 'humanist' standpoint - had some merit but argued that critical educational gerontology provided a 'transformative rationale' which transcended those critiques. Formosa said that he was attempting to touch 'a raw nerve in the educational gerontological community' so that others would want to respond.

This proposed paper is a response to Formosa. It gives the presenter the opportunity to re-evaluate his own writings, of twenty years ago, on this topic in terms of Formosa's strictures, change in society and developments in learning in later life. The paper re-asserts the heterogeneity of older people and of rationales for learning in later life; it recognises the value of a re-constructed critical educational gerontology but denies that it transcends other value-positions. Each has its place but each needs to move from the general to the particular so that practical implications can be laid bare and debated.

ABSTRACT 12

Title: *Live and Learn – creative and community arts project for over 50s*

Style: Presentation

Presenter: **George Sproule** and Sue Cathcart

Outreach Team Leaders, Live & Learn Project, National Museums Northern Ireland, Cultra, Holywood, Co. Down, UK

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Employer / sponsor: National Museums NI / Big Lottery

National Museums NI Project *Live & Learn*, funded by Big Lottery, and in association with Age NI has been delivering a programme of learning to over 50s groups since 2009. Using NMNI's collections, resources and museum sites the Live and Learn Project engages with older people across the province and targets older people who would not normally be users of museums, or feel any connection to museums.

The Project has developed tailored outreach programmes that draw upon the interests, skills and potential of participants and increase opportunities for learning and creativity and corresponding on-site activities at the Museum sites (Ulster Museum, Folk & Transport Museum, and Ulster American Folk Park)

A diverse range of programmes have been developed through a variety of means, from creative writing, art, craft, music and drama to intergenerational projects, reminiscence, photography and community exhibitions. The emphasis is on participants identifying areas of interest within the collections of NMNI and directing the course of their engagement with the support and resources of the Live and Learn Team. Participants are encouraged to share their knowledge, skills and experience, to take advantage of new learning opportunities and to focus this learning back into their communities.

To date over 75 community-based groups have benefited from the programme, including those with dementia, learning difficulty and sight impairment and carers. A new innovation has been the Making Connections programme which provides a monthly free access afternoon and a tailored programme for over 50s at the museums.

ABSTRACT 13

Title: *Creative specification of internet learning needs in the individual cross generational learning-teaching process*

Style: Paper

Presenter: Tiina Tambaum

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Employer / Sponsor: University of Tallinn

Every so often younger generations take on the responsibility of educating older generations in a new field, for example decreasing the rate of illiteracy (in Cuba in 1960s) or increasing digital literacy skills (in EU projects currently). These projects have been successful and have benefited both generations. However, little is known about what actually occurs during this type of training.

For older learners, successful learning can be dependent on what subject is being learned. There exist studies about the likes and dislikes commonly expressed by older people about the internet (Tambaum, 2010; Hernández-Encuentra et al., 2009; Carpenter, Buday, 2007). Nevertheless, the youngster providing an individual internet training to the elderly learner usually needs to specify the interests to be followed during the lesson. So in this presentation, we focus on how the young instructor and the elderly learner negotiate interests for individual internet learning.

Using video data of four pairs of younger 'teachers' and older learners, we analysed the experiential teaching-learning process. Before the first training the adult learners had been given no information about the content of the training. Young tutors had no chance to check out the learners' personal preferences beforehand. They received a printed programme developed for a Grandparents & Grandchildren project immediately before the first training. This printed material was recommended but was optional for the young tutor to use.

The following research questions were asked: how was the change of a subject initiated and by whom; and whether the existence of a non-compulsory printed program influenced their choices. The study also describes situations of meeting the learners' needs during lessons even when the defined learning subject was not familiar to a young teacher.

ABSTRACT 14

Title: *The Active Ageing strategy in the European Union and Portugal: public policies for the elderly and the right to education*

Presenter: Esmeraldina Maria da Costa Veloso
Universidade do Minho, Instituto da Educação, Departamento de Ciências Sociais da Educação, Campus de Gualtar, 4710-057 Braga, Portugal

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Employer / sponsor: Institute of Education, University of Minho

The current study is an analysis of the developments in public policies in Portugal aimed at promoting and facilitating adult education to the elderly. Taking into account the demographic ageing trends of industrialised societies, the European Union has developed different sets ideas so that the consequences of ageing are minimised and overcome. Such lines of thought are collectively named active ageing and bear consequences to the field of education of old age adults. We will start by analysing the perceptions of active ageing within the EU, its foundations, influences and impact in Portugal.

This approach of public policy is not limited to the third age but is also extensive to adult education, as shown through the analysis of different documents such as government policies and acts as well as other studies on this matter by other authors. The study also analyses different documents related to the strategies for Active Ageing both in the European Union and Portugal.

ABSTRACT 15

Title: *TOPIC (Tutoring Older People in Care) followed by, and showing the progression route to, PACT (Practical Action for Carer Training)*

Style: Presentation

Presenter: Andrea Walker-Patrick LCGI FRSA
manager of TOPIC and Arts Educational Adviser Trustee

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Employer / sponsor: Derbyshire County Council / First Taste

TOPIC (Tutoring Older People in Care.) is a two-year programme which was successfully written into an educational format with aims, objectives and outcomes in order to offer qualifications: at Level 1 for care staff and Entry Level for residents.

The programme was innovative and aimed at both residents and care staff. Structured lesson plans were developed (recognising dementia and other disabilities) with Differentiation Strategies. Data and individual assessments were recorded. Care staff maintained work folders and were encouraged to deliver activities themselves. Something new was devised: a Response Record (coded) which detailed residents' reactions to activity sessions. An independent evaluator was contracted and interested care staff registered and worked toward certification.

Examples of unexpected outcomes: reduction in residents' medication and the need for further practical and holistic training for care staff.

The second part of the presentation covers:

PACT (Practical Action for Carer Training) This is a current three-year training programme, including ICT skills. It runs alongside a Derbyshire County Council funded project for First Taste to train DCC employed care staff/ activity organisers in further practical carer skills, in addition to their health and social care training.

It is also used in the overseeing of intergenerational work in care homes by pupils from three local schools. The TOPIC model of good practice is being maintained in a simply adapted form for use by care staff/activity organisers.

ABSTRACT 16

Title: *Constructing new dynamics for active participation in an age of austerity: new potential for older adults' learning*

Style: Paper

Presenter: Nicholas Walters

Executive Director of INTEVAL (consultancy company on adult learning and social exclusion) and Visiting Senior Fellow in the Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences, University of Surrey.

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Employer / sponsor: INTEVAL Ltd and EU Grundtvig

The aim of the paper is to explore new approaches to older adults' learning in a context of severe economic change. With little or no growth in economic activity, older adults are facing a future of poorer pension provisions to meet ever-increasing costs of living and, possibly, fewer ways of becoming active citizens and learners. The paper will address the need for new approaches to this new socio-economic situation. Much discourse on older adults' learning was framed in more stable times and the assumptions and values behind this require review.

The paper will include discussion of two current transnational project initiatives funded by the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme. There is increasing emphasis on volunteering but less recognition of older learners' past experience, and how this can be reapplied. The first project is developing and disseminating a community-based Workshop model that combines elements of recognising older learners' prior life and work experience and offers action planning to help to develop future activities and identify learning needs to support this process. This is a combination of APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning) and IAG (Information Advice and Guidance).

The second project addresses the economic wellbeing of older adults who are facing economic pressures. There are new structural changes in the labour market's working patterns that need further exploration, for example: part time work, home working, social enterprise, portfolio working. More older adults have realistic options to remain economically active but what do they need to learn to do this?

The paper's outcomes include the proposal of a new curriculum for older learners that challenges the fear of future increased isolation, disengagement and chronic social exclusion. The concluding discussion will focus on the reflections of participants and the possible impact on their own work.

ABSTRACT 17

Title: *Positive Futures: enhancing our experiences of ageing by learning how to plan and prepare for later life.*

Style: Presentation

Presenter: Ms Lynne Wealleans

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Employer / sponsor: Beth Johnson Foundation / NESTA

During the development of our mid-life work, the Foundation identified 'planning and preparing for later life' as a key element in supporting people to age well and to take more control over their lives.

We secured funding through NESTA's Age Unlimited programme to test, with individuals, groups of older people and other key stakeholders, our ideas about how people could be encouraged to think about ageing and to plan for their future.

The project development process began with gathering insights from a wide range of older people about the usefulness of planning and preparing and about how that might best be delivered. Ultimately we wanted to test a model of peer to peer coaching and our route there was by developing an 'age readiness' programme to raise awareness of the need to prepare and plan, to enable individuals to relate this to their own experience and to support them to make an action plan for their future.

In response to people feeding back that life events could negatively impact on plans for the future we also tested 'coping positively with change' training.

This model has been tested in some of the more disadvantaged areas of North Staffordshire and has received very positive feedback from people in mid-life, some of whom will go on to train as peer coaches. It is a model that can be applied in other areas and within communities of interest.