

Becoming an Age Friendly Island

Key Findings from the Evaluation

The Age Friendly Island project, delivered by Age UK IW and Community Action, is part of an Ageing Better partnership funded by The National Lottery Community Fund. The partnership aims to make the Isle of Wight a great place to grow older, encourage better relations between generations, and tackle social isolation and loneliness.

What is 'age friendly'?

"In an age-friendly community, policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to support and enable older people to "age actively" – that is, to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society." - The World Health Organisation

The Age Friendly Island Project has been working to make the Isle of Wight age friendly through:

Training aimed at staff and organisations that work with older clients or customers. It looks to address cultural attitudes to ageing, focusing on physical barriers, physiological barriers and environmental barriers.

Age Friendly Training

Town & Parish Council Work

Encouraging Town and Parish Councils to work together with older people to address local needs, including through: identifying Age Friendly Champions; producing Age Friendly Communities reports with identified recommendations; and making commitments through Age Friendly Charters.

Work in schools to deliver age friendly awareness sessions in assemblies and lessons, and running a programme of Young Volunteers who provide support to older people in the community.

Inter- generational Work

Public Forums

Holding regular Public Forums in a number of locations across the island for people to share information, discuss ideas and find sustainable solutions to issues affecting older Island residents.

A Celebrating Age Festival held each October, including a week of events and an awards ceremony celebrating the achievements of local older people and their contribution to Island life.

Celebrating Age

Steering Group

A multi-agency group involving representatives from statutory sector, voluntary sector, businesses and services across the island. The group tackles issues that affect older people by working in partnership across organisations and sectors.

Change in attitudes

93%
of people

said that Age Friendly training gave them greater understanding about the practical challenges and issues that older people face in day to day life

"It has raised awareness and communication skills [of our officers], plus knowledge of the support available and the right agency to refer to" Hampshire Police

"It gave me a better understanding of how with age, confidence is diminished and small problems like being able to read your own meter can be difficult for the elderly and also how they can become easily confused by our terminology"

Southern Water employee

"It gave me a lot more empathy and understanding for some customers' needs and wellbeing. I am now a lot more patient and confident with people."

Library Service employee

524

people

participated in 45 Age Friendly training sessions, including people working for the Fire and Rescue Service, IOW Council, Southern Water, Tesco, the Library Service, the Prison Service and Red Funnel

5,891

children & young people

participated in age friendly awareness sessions in 35 different schools

112

Young Volunteers

provided support to older people in the community

"It has changed my perceptions – I understand more what it's like to be blind. I would have expected her to be more dependent on people, but she wants to go out and be independent which is really inspiring"

Young Volunteer

77%
of people

said that Age Friendly training gave them greater understanding about what older people can contribute and offer to the community¹

900
people

participated in the 2018 Celebrating Age Festival

"It's become more like a friendship – I enjoy her company."

Young Volunteer

Recognising older people as assets

Change in practice

Businesses, services and organisations taking action

27 organisations

27 organisations from the statutory sector, voluntary sector, services and businesses are working together through the Steering Group

“Everybody is working towards the same thing” Trading Standards IOW council

“We’ve ended up working with some of them in ways that would not have happened” Southern Vectis

50% of people

said that their organisation took specific action as a result of the Age Friendly training¹

“We used the information gained to inform the redesign of our new reception area”
IOW Council

Tesco

The idea of a ‘Time for you’ till in supermarkets was identified

through the Public Forum in recognition that shopping can feel stressful and pressured for older people. As part of the Celebrating Age Festival in 2017, Tesco, a member of the Steering Group, ran a ‘Time for you’ till. This led to an increase in customer satisfaction from 57% to 63%. As a result of this Tesco now run a ‘Time for you’ till 52 weeks a year. Staff at the till have taken part in Age Friendly training.

Library

The largest library on the island now has an age friendly area with adapted seating, improved lighting, better signs, a targeted notice board and stock moved to better locations. This was done using information gained through the Age Friendly training and guidance from the Age Friendly Island project.

Southern Vectis bus company

Southern Vectis have incorporated Age Friendly training as part of the compulsory training for all of their bus drivers through a train the trainer approach and a training kit produced by the Age Friendly Island project. As well as this, Southern Vectis buses have low floors that are easier to access and light coloured floors that are better visually; drivers are open to the public rather than behind screens to help communication. Southern Vectis worked with Age UKIOW to design ‘Safe Journey’ cards for people to show to the driver. Southern Vectis have also produced a ‘Top Tips’ factsheet that focusses around safer travel on the bus which asks the driver to wait until people sit down before the bus moves. Southern Vectis report fewer trips and falls on buses and they have had feedback that older people are using ‘Safe Journey’ cards in shops and taxis as well as buses. The change is widely recognised by people using the buses: *“Unbelievable – every person there [Public Forum] who used the buses recognised the change. Absolutely incredible”*.



Isle of Wight Against Scams

Isle of Wight Against Scams Partnership (IWASP) has been formed to address doorstep crime and scams on the island. Through the Steering Group IOW Trading Standards has worked with organisations including the Police, Fire and Rescue and Citizens Advice Bureau to form the partnership and develop a Charter for organisations to sign up to say what they will do to counteract scams. The Public Forum worked with Trading Standards to help them produce tools to help older people avoid scams.

“The Steering Group opened us up to other partners who we would have had great difficulty talking to before... without the Steering Group we would never have got as far as we have now with this work.” Trading Standards, IOW council



GP Surgeries

The Age Friendly Island project worked with a Patient Participation Group at a GP surgery and the Public Forum to understand what needs to be in place to make GP Surgeries age friendly. They produced a short film and a toolkit which provides a guide to helping other surgeries become age friendly. These have been promoted nationally.



Dementia Friendly Church Services

The Age Friendly Island project has worked collaboratively with two Island churches to establish Dementia Friendly Church Services. These services are more informal, designed with the needs of people living with dementia in mind. Accessible Service Booklets are used with traditional hymns and prayers. Not only are the services dementia friendly but they are accessible for people with many different access needs. The services have proved to be popular with a steady number of attendees. The Age Friendly Island project have worked with two churches who will now continue to run these themselves, three times a year.

Individuals taking action

Over 500 people

participated in Public Forums meetings to share information, discuss ideas and find sustainable solutions to issues affecting older Island residents

100% of people

attending Age Friendly training said it will make a positive change to their work practices and confidence in working with, understanding and assisting older people²

62% of people

said that the Age Friendly training affected how they interacted with older people outside of work, in their personal life and in their community¹

73% of people

said that Age Friendly training affected how they interact with older people in their workplace¹

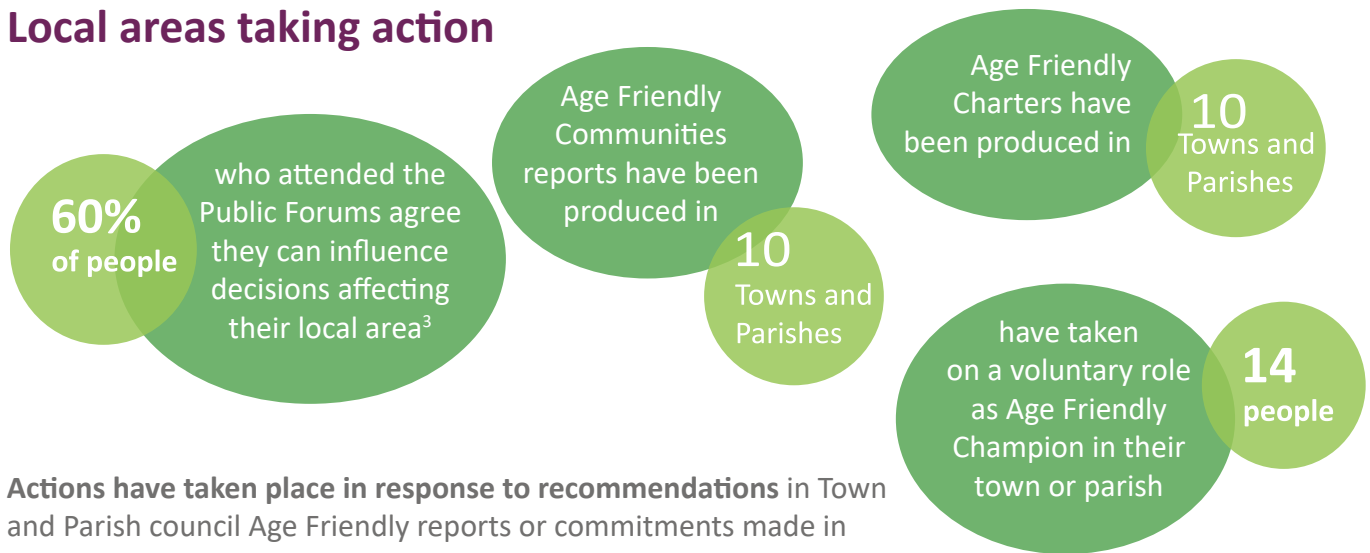
“I tried to chat more to people I perceived as vulnerable or lonely. Had one particular success with a lady who was recently bereaved. We now chat whenever she comes into the library.” Library Service

“By gaining a better understanding and being able to recognise potential restrictions and limitations for older people I am able to offer more tailored information, activities and advice.”

Fire and Rescue Service

“It is the little things that an individual can do that makes the difference - for example opening a brand new jar of jam that arthritic fingers struggle with... I often do little things like above” IOW Council

Local areas taking action



Actions have taken place in response to recommendations in Town and Parish council Age Friendly reports or commitments made in Town and Parish Age Friendly Charters, including:

- Improved bus service
- Accessible paths and improved lighting to Community Centre
- Programme of social events for older residents
- A new bench provided at a bus stop
- Establishment of an Accessibility Forum

Organisational policy

Hampshire Police have gained a better understanding of employee needs for those aged 50 to 60 and have changed shift patterns to reduce the number of unsociable hours worked.

The Library Service now have a new category for borrowers with dementia or their carers which means they no longer have to pay fines for overdue books.

Trading Standards have changed the way they work with vulnerable people, including letting people make statements by video.



Local policy

In response to the Town and Parish Council work:

- 'Age friendly' is now embedded into the Parish plan for one Parish
- 'Age friendly' is a regular agenda item for one Parish Council
- Age Friendly Champion is a recognised role at some Parish Council AGMs
- In one Parish the Age Friendly Champion reviews planning applications for their age friendliness

As part of the Age Friendly Charters, Towns or Parishes have made commitments, including to:

- Ensure all Council actions and decisions are tested for 'Age Friendliness'
- Liaise with local organisations to promote a universal strategy to support local residents
- Engage with the Community Partnership to develop an annual action plan

What has been important in supporting this change?

Having the right mechanisms to involve the right people – Having complementary mechanisms of the bottom up approach of the Public Forum to facilitate the voice of older people, and the Steering Group to mobilise people with the right level of authority to make change happen.

Cross-sector working – Having a unique and valued opportunity through the Steering Group to address issues, exchange information and create partnerships through cross-sector and cross-organisation working, and demonstrating that this works better than working in silos.

Demonstrating a business case for age friendly – Getting private companies on board and being able to demonstrate that there are customer care and business case reasons for being age friendly.

Interaction between elements of the project - Different elements of the Age Friendly Island project interacting, supporting and complementing each other: issues raised at Public Forums being taken to the Steering Group for action; ideas emerging through the Steering Group being tested through Public Forums; organisations on the Steering Group, Age Friendly Champions and Town and Parish Councillors participating in Age Friendly training.

Flexibility – All elements of the project being prepared to change and respond to needs and opportunities.

Key individuals – Having skilled enablers or facilitators to drive the Steering Group and Public Forum; having a 'local driver' on Town and Parish councils – a committed and passionate individual or organisation driving change.

What has got in the way of making further change happen?

Lack of clarity – Difficulty in articulating the Age Friendly Island project leading to confusion and lack of clarity about its purpose.

Limited capacity – Organisations and Councils not having capacity or resource to become involved or implement change; organisations dealing with competing groups of people with needs for resources e.g. young people.

Missing people – Key organisations or sectors that could facilitate further change not being represented, for example Adult Social Care.

Time – Becoming age friendly is a cultural shift and takes time; some of the more significant changes are only just starting to happen as the Programme is in its final year.

Changing policies

Most change has occurred to attitudes and practices, how can the focus shift to change to policies in the final year of the project?

Sustaining what works

There is a clear desire from Steering Group members for the group to continue, how can this best be sustained after the project ends?

There are clear benefits of involving the voice of older people, what is the best way to do this after the project ends?

1 Online survey to Age Friendly training participants, May 2019, n=30

2 End of training evaluation form from 2017-2019, n=181

3 Common Measurement Framework questionnaire collected as part of National Evaluation

NDTi worked with Shepard & Moyes Ltd who are conducting project evaluations of the Ageing Better projects, to plan the evaluation and collect data. This report reflects the data collected by both organisations.

Methods used include interviews with Age Friendly Island project leads at regular intervals since 2016, interviews with Steering Group members (n=8), interviews with Town and Parish Council project (n=2), interviews with Young Volunteers (n=3), survey to age friendly training participants (n=30), monitoring data collected by projects, and data from Common Measurement Framework questionnaire collected as part of the National Evaluation.

The Age Friendly Island project is one of a number of projects funded by the Ageing Better Programme. For more information see www.agefriendlyisland.org

This evaluation of the Age Friendly Island Project is part of National Development Team for Inclusion's (NDTi) evaluation of the Isle of Wight Ageing Better Programme.

See www.ndti.org.uk/our-work/our-projects/ageing-in-place/age-friendly-island-evaluation.



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