

Age Friendly Check In: Give us your input

Civic Participation & Employment



Older people can access the work and volunteering opportunities that they want.

Older people in Bristol feel heard and have a say in decision making on things that affect their lives.

Bristol Ageing Better has been working with the City Council and partners to get Bristol recognised as an Age Friendly City by the World Health Organisation.

To gain status as an Age Friendly City, we have been building up an action plan that will demonstrate what Bristol is currently doing as a city to help older people, and also what needs to change in the city to make it even better for older people in the future.

This draft document is one part of the action plan and focuses on the Civic Participation and Employment domain. We have created this based on conversations and involvement from older people and partners. This draft document contains some examples of age friendly work that is happening in the city, however more examples can be found on the age friendly website here: <http://agefriendlybristol.org.uk/>

We would like to invite you to take a look at this draft document and give your input before we submit it to the World Health Organisation.

When you are looking through this draft action plan please consider the following questions:

- 1) **Do you think that the “what do older people think” section reflects opinion in the city?**
- 2) **Do you think we have identified the right factors affecting civic participation and employment? Would you want to include anything else?**
- 3) **Do you agree with the outcomes?**
 - i. **What actions do you think are needed?**
 - ii. **What can you do to help?**
- 4) **What other age friendly examples are you aware of for the civic participation and employment domain?**

If you would like to give your input please fill out the online form here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/R2PFHWG>

Please do this by 5:00pm on 24th July.

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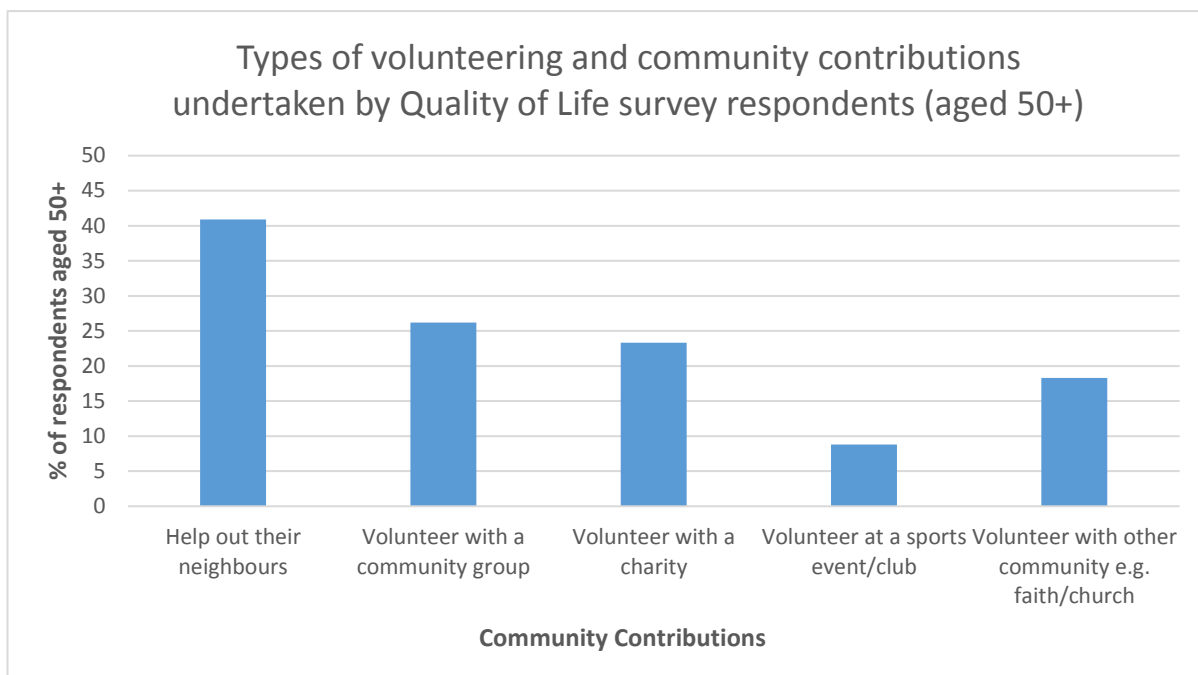
Not every older people can afford to retire. Some people work and volunteer to keep busy and stay connected with their communities, however some older people need to carry on working as a financial necessity. It's important to bear this in mind when we are thinking about the work and volunteering opportunities older people want to be doing.

Bristol believes that older people add more to the community than they take from it. Our aim is to increase the degree of community contributions from older people so that they feel as included in their community as possible. This will in turn ensure that older people are seen as assets to their community.

When it comes to work and volunteering opportunities, there are many barriers to employment for over 50s. There can be age discrimination as well as a language of exclusion in job adverts. Older people's lives can be enriched by opportunities to continue their careers or take up meaningful volunteer work in the community.

What do older people think about Civic Participation and Employment?

In the 2017 Quality of Life survey, 76% of respondents aged 50 and over volunteered or helped out in their community at least three times per year. This increased to 80% for those aged 65 and over. Both of these figures are above the average for all age groups in Bristol (66%). These community contributions took a number of different forms, including helping out neighbours or volunteering with a community group, charity, sports event or religious institution. This is shown in the graph below:



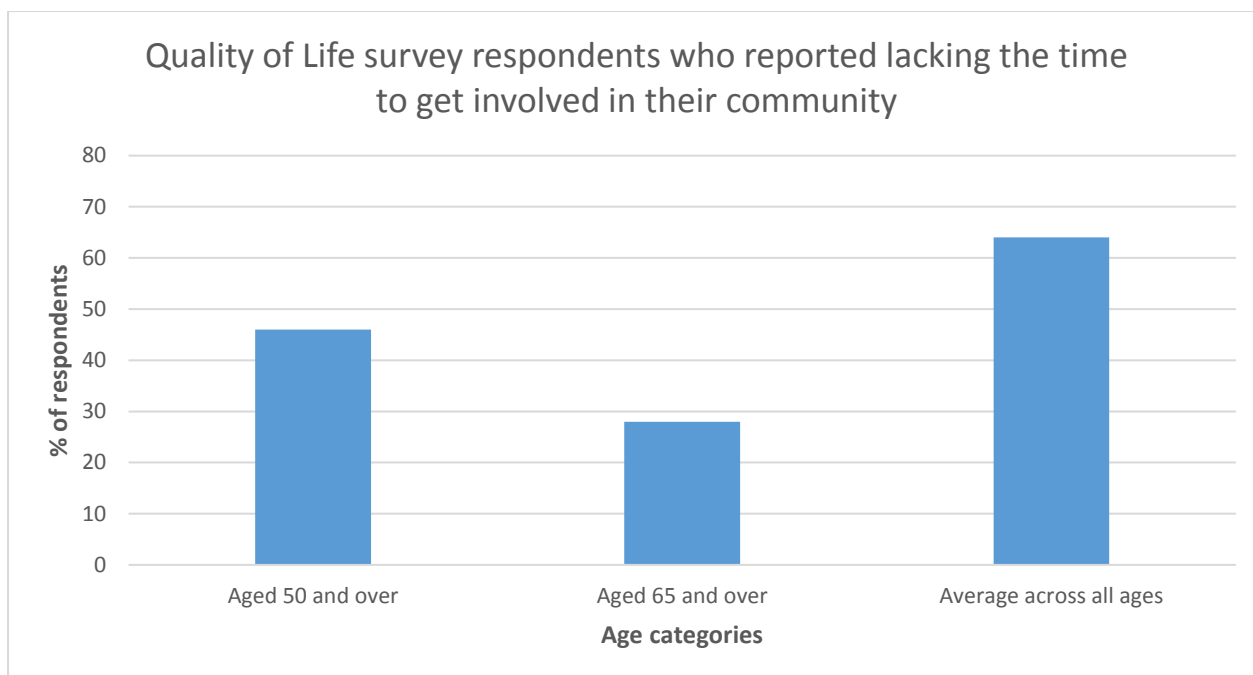
A similar question was asked in the 2018 annual survey conducted by the Bristol Older People’s Forum (BOPF). 47% of respondents (all aged 55+) reported that they had contributed to their community at least a few times in the past 12 months. This percentage remained consistent across respondents aged 55 – 85 years old, although decreased to 31% for respondents aged 85 and over. These community contributions are broadly similar to the results from BOPF’s 2017 annual survey which found that 51% of respondents aged 55 and over had contributed to their community at least a few times in the past 12 months.

Bristol Ageing Better ask those participating in their programme (all aged 50+) for information about levels of unpaid help and volunteering. Between 2016 – 2018, 56% of respondents reported giving unpaid help or volunteering in the 12 months prior to them completing the questionnaire.

The 2018 BOPF survey asked respondents what they felt prevented them from contributing to their community or doing as much as they would like to. The biggest factor was poor health (48% of the people who responded to this question), followed by age (22%) and being too busy (22%).

Only 4% of 2017 Quality of Life survey respondents aged 50 and over said that accessibility issues prevented them from getting involved in their community. However this percentage is slightly higher than the average for all ages in Bristol (3%). 20% of respondents aged 50+ said that they lacked the information to get involved in their community. While this is a lower percentage than the average for all ages in Bristol (28% of all respondents said that they lacked this information), it nonetheless demonstrates that a significant number of older people do not have access to this information.

Similarly, 46% of 2017 Quality of Life survey respondents aged 50 and over said that they lacked the time to get involved in their community. This decreases to 28% of respondents aged 65 and over. It is much lower than the average for all ages in Bristol (64%) yet still represents a fairly high proportion of respondents aged 50+. This can be seen in the graph below:



Regarding employment, 71% of respondents in the 2017 Quality of Life survey aged 50+ and 90% of respondents aged 65+ felt that they were doing useful work always or most of the time. These figures are both above the average for all ages in Bristol (65%). Similarly, 81% of respondents aged 50+ and 96% of respondents aged 65+ felt that they were usually treated fairly at their workplace. The average for all ages in Bristol was 79%, suggesting that feelings of fair treatment in the workplace were significantly higher among those aged 65 and over.

The 2011 Census indicated that 45% of respondents aged 50 – 74 in Bristol were in employment, either full-time, part-time or self-employed. This decreased to 9% of respondents aged 65 – 74 years old, which is in line with the national average for this age group.

Factors affecting Civic Participation & Employment

What should we feel positive about?

An age-friendly city provides opportunities for older people to contribute to their communities through different channels including informal and formal volunteering, charities and through paid employment if they so choose.

There are lots of great examples across the city where older people are encouraged to get involved in decision making. Bristol Ageing Better has been working with organisations to encourage the use of advisory groups made up of local older people to shape services and to ensure that they are involved in running activities. Bristol Community Health involves a group of older people in the creation of their services and materials and the Bristol Older Peoples Forum, a member-led charity with 25 years experience are working to promote the voice, involvement and influence of older people by involving older people in all of the decisions they make.

There are many organisations that are doing their bit to make volunteering opportunities for older people as accessible as possible. RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme) encourages those who are over 50 to volunteer and Bristol Ageing Better have a large number of older volunteers who work on the various projects that the organisation funds. Can Do Bristol is a volunteering platform that had been developed for Bristol, and encourages older people to volunteer.

However this is an area that we need to know more information about and organisations such as The Centre of Ageing Better help us further our knowledge. They have recently undertaken research in Bristol around older people contributing their time, skills, knowledge and experience to their communities through their 'Community Contributions work'.

What could be better?

Council cuts have changed the structures that previously existed. Neighbourhood partnerships which were designed to bring together local people, community groups, the council, police and local businesses to take action on things that were important for each area are no longer in existence. We need to find opportunities to meet the same outcomes in a new climate of reduced resources.

Higher priority also needs to be given to older workers. It's important to remember that a large number of older people can't afford to retire, especially given the socio economic disparity across Bristol, the cost of living as increased dramatically over recent years. Employers need to offer greater flexibility, and could draw on good practice from outside of the UK. Back to work training could be offered to older people with a focus on their specific needs. We also need to ask ourselves if health related issues sometimes prevent people from getting back to work. What is the role of the health sector in helping people get back to work? Should GPs be resourced to feel better equipped to support people back into work? A greater emphasis on the role of older people in the economy will not only be good for the local economy, but will also go towards improving health and wellbeing.

Actions

Building on from the charter and the above exercise, these actions will reflect that and set out some goals over the next 3 years.

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Guidance Indicator</i>
Older people are aware of all the ways they can be a bigger part of society	Develop pre-retirement opportunities	
Older can influence local decision making	Creation of Age friendly board	
Older people have the right support around employment issues	Develop courses about finding work after retirement	

Ensure volunteering is more accessible

What is Bristol already doing to be Age Friendly?

Bristol Older People's Forum

The aim of the forum is that every older person is an equal, valued, participating member of the community who can influence the decisions which affect their lives. Their activities include meetings with expert and peer speakers sharing information and gathering the views of older people, giving consultation responses and proactive comment on local authority, NHS, national policy and engaging older people to comment themselves.

Bristol Older People's Forum (BOPF) exists to promote social inclusion for the public benefit by working with those in the City of Bristol who are socially and economically excluded or disadvantaged on the grounds of their age, relieving their needs and supporting their participation in society.

Can Do Bristol

A platform for community action. Where people can share ideas, crowdsource and exchange knowledge, time & resources for social good

Retired and Senior Volunteers Programme

RSVP's mission is to encourage those over 50 to volunteer for the benefit of your local community and to provide you with appropriate training and support. They recruit older people as volunteers to contribute to a range of initiatives from school reading groups, care home lay assessor schemes and volunteer driving services within GP surgeries.

Older People's Employment Agency

Whilst some employers do take an enlightened view of older workers there is a tendency to overlook the qualities that such people bring. In order to address this "market failure" The Anchor Society has started this pilot with Business in the Community to address and innovate around the barriers to employment for people over 55
