

Celebrating Healthy Ageing in North Yorkshire

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Sharing the learning from a photo competition and exhibition challenging stereotypes of ageing

"The frustration of being over 50+ is that you are ignored by some who appear to think you no longer can think for yourself"



"I am now over 50 and almost feel invisible" (referring to ageing without children)

Why focus on ageism?

There is still often a negative perception of older people despite age being a protected characteristic. Local engagement highlighted that some older people have experienced discrimination due to their age in the workplace, healthcare and in their community.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines ageism as 'the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) towards people on the basis of their age'.¹

Ageism causes people to be excluded from society and services; it also leads people to limit their lives, activities and aspirations, damaging their health and wellbeing. For example, older people may not receive medical treatment because of their age or delay seeking advice about their health.

In the workplace ageism is a key barrier older people often face where they may not be given the same training opportunities or could be perceived as being unable to embrace new technology or being unproductive.

Facts:

5% of adults agreed that the UK is ageist (with just 13% disagreeing).²

25% of TV ads feature characters aged 50 or older, down from 29% in 2020.

5% of TV ads feature characters aged 70 or older.³

1 in 3 people aged over 50 believe they have been turned down for a job because of their age.⁴

Older applicants are less likely to be hired, and once employed, less likely to receive training.⁵

"On two occasions I was told by the surgeon that I needed an operation but due to my age he said 'I was not worth bothering with'"

"I get asked all the time by my manager when I am going to retire"

Let's change this!

What did we do?

We aimed to change the narrative around ageing, and to accompany the Director of Public Health Annual Report we launched a competition inviting people to send in their photos of ageing well in North Yorkshire.

To comply with data protection and competition regulations we completed the following:

- A data protection impact assessment (DPIA)
- Terms and conditions
- A privacy notice
- Guidance for entries

Prizes were given for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place and a judging panel assessed the entries based on the following criteria:

- a) positive ageing in North Yorkshire
- b) relevancy to category topic
- c) originality

Over 130 entries were received! The outcome of the competition was publicised and received positive press coverage that included an interview with one of the prize winners.

To coincide with International Day of Older People (IDOP) the photos were displayed in an exhibition which is currently touring libraries across the County and at various community events. It is getting a lot of attention and we are welcoming further photos to be sent in to grow our 'photo library'.

"Don't talk down to me. I may be old but my brain is still fully functioning"

What will we do next?

The photos will be used as a bank of images for future North Yorkshire Council publications to continue to promote positive images of ageing. For example in recruitment campaigns, reports and communications.

The exhibition will displayed at events to help promote conversations.

The images will be replaced every 3 years.

"(Ageism) It's rife and self evident throughout UK society. Condescending and patronising comments in the media and in the streets are only symptoms of the underlying discrimination against the elderly"



References

1. Global Report on Ageism

2. Rerframing ageing

3. Mirror on the Industry

4. Shut out, How employers and recruiters are overlooking the talents of over 50s workers

5. To much to lose, Understanding and supporting Britain's older workers

