Involving Older People in Ageing Research in Wales

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The Vision for Wales

Vision:
• To make Wales *the* place to do research into ageing and older people

• Services tailored to the needs of communities and individuals and delivered by research-aware practitioners

• Collaboration

Achieved by:
• Older People and Ageing R&D Network (OPAN Cymru) [www.opanwales.org.uk](http://www.opanwales.org.uk)

• One of nine thematic research networks funded in Wales – including mental health, children, dementia, emergency care, epilepsy
Why an Older People and Ageing Network?

- Demographic imperative
- Policy priority
- Need to involve older people in research
- A broader vision of ageing
Aims

1: To enhance the quality and volume of research
   Identify research priorities and strategies with older people

2: To improve integration of policy, practice and research
   Develop models to engage older people

3: To facilitate collaborative research
   Build strong links with other older people’s networks e.g. National Partnership Forum for Older People
# Importance of Participatory Approaches

## Benefits
- Acquisition of new skills & knowledge
- Increased self esteem and confidence
- Contribute to interpretation of results; capacity to influence decision making and policy formation
- Making visible the lives of older people

## Issues
- Empowerment vs. disempowerment
- Inclusion issues
- Diversity of participatory approaches
Participatory Approaches in OPAN

- Involving People
- Research Development Groups
- U3A research group
- Network 50+
- OPAN advisory and steering groups
- Older people as researchers
  - Older People’s Use of Unfamiliar Space (OPUS)
    (ESRC funded study)
  - RuralWIDe Model
Involving People

How *Involving People* can help:

- Database of researchers and people wishing to participate
- Enabling People Fund
- Training
- Providing researchers with:
  - Advice on best practice
  - Link with patients, carers, service users

Involving People
RuralWIDe: Involvement in a Participatory Research Project as a Volunteer

Survey of older people in Gwynedd

- Wider benefits
  - Social
  - Face to face contact better than a form
  - Learning opportunity

- Difficulties
  - Inaccurate information
  - Transport
Worldwide Presence

Older People and Ageing R&D Network (OPAN Cymru)
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