

Good Practice Guidelines

Older People

Introduction

These good practice guidelines support the learning and development of community and non-profit organisations that provide services or activities for older adults, and that promote older adults' inclusion in and contribution to community life. Drawing on sector resources and research, they have been developed by the Centre for Social Impact for Rātā Foundation and Foundation North.

Indicators of Good Practice

<p>Indicator #1: Respecting and valuing older people</p>	<p>In New Zealand, the over-65 population is growing. People are living longer and older adults are increasingly more active and healthier than previous generations. However, people age in different ways and have diverse and sometimes complex needs.</p> <p>No matter what their needs, circumstances or state of health and wellbeing, older adults should be treated with dignity and respect and recognised as valued members of the community. When working with older adults it is good practice to demonstrate this through offering services or programmes that understand the 'whole person' and their needs, wellbeing goals and aspirations.</p>
<p>Indicator #2: Inclusion and participation</p>	<p>The concept of 'positive ageing' is underpinned by the concept of 'social inclusion' – that is, older adults' involvement with and participation in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• groups, organisations, workplaces, local communities and other communities of interest• activities such as volunteering and intergenerational, employment and learning opportunities• using technology and social media at home. <p>As well as offering social and physical benefits, this participation can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• help to challenge negative stereotypes and views of ageing• help older adults to build confidence, stay active and maintain their social networks• enhance older adults' health and wellbeing. <p>Good practice in providing these participation opportunities involves putting older adults at the centre, involving them in service design and development, and meeting their needs, interests and priorities.</p>
<p>Indicator #3: Age-friendly communities</p>	<p>It is good practice to apply an age-friendly perspective to the physical and social development of communities and community assets. For example, community spaces should meet older adults' needs, such as for accessibility, proximity to public transport, and safety.</p>

<p>Indicator #4: Cultural responsiveness</p>	<p>It is important to acknowledge and respect the cultural values, traditions, customs and spirituality of Māori and Pacific older adults, as well as older adults who are new migrants or have refugee backgrounds. This affirms their role and contribution within the context of their families/whānau, communities and culture.</p> <p>Older adults who are new migrants or have refugee backgrounds can have complex issues related to their settlement or resettlement in New Zealand. Providers engaging older migrants/refugees should seek to understand and respond to these complexities in culturally appropriate ways. Good practice can include translating languages and recognising cultural values, concepts, tikanga and identity, and other practices that value and affirm cultural identity.</p>
<p>Indicator #5: Supporting health and wellbeing</p>	<p>Older adults are vulnerable to a range of physical and mental health issues – including isolation and loneliness, which can be worsened by community discrimination and ageism.</p> <p>Older adults can also experience health issues owing to poverty, poor-quality housing, long-term disabilities and elder abuse. It is good practice for organisations supporting older adults to understand and address their complex health needs to support their wellbeing.</p>
<p>Indicator #6: Connected services, with older people at the centre</p>	<p>Many older adults have complex needs, and because of this need help from health practitioners, housing providers, Work and Income, social services and other community support providers. It is important that these services are connected and that providers work together to ensure an integrated experience for those who need them.</p> <p>Older adults may also need to navigate complex information and advice about topics ranging from retirement and financial planning to housing, digital safety and public transport. Organisations that advise older adults should consider how they are communicating and how older adults could be involved in shaping this advice.</p> <p>It is important that older adults have a ‘voice’ in their communities. Organisations should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide opportunities for older adult communities to be involved in and contribute to decision-making• find opportunities to strengthen the capacity and capabilities of older leaders who can help and enable other older adults to be involved.
<p>Indicator #7: Learning and development</p>	<p>Good practice in working with any community, including older adults, includes setting aside time to consider what is working and what could be improved.</p> <p>This is particularly important when working with adults with complex and interconnected needs, especially where a service is provided alongside multiple other services delivered by other organisations/agencies.</p> <p>It is important to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop processes for collecting information and insights on activities/services, as this helps to show progress and demonstrate the activities/services’ impacts• communicate this information, so that successes and lessons learned are widely and proactively shared, and stakeholders, communities and funders are up to date on progress.

Demonstrating Good Practice

When seeking funding for activities and services for and with older adults, organisations should describe how their proposed services align with the seven indicators of good practice. Many funders expect to see evidence of:

- how the organisation has designed its service to meet older persons' complex health and social needs
- how the proposed service works alongside other services for older adults, while keeping older people at the centre
- how the service will respond to the older adults' cultural identities
- whether older adults have helped to shape or influence the service's design and scope
- whether the organisation provides opportunities for older adults to engage and participate in their communities
- whether the organisation has systems and processes to ensure that its service will meet older adults' needs.

Key Questions:

Can We Strengthen the Way We Engage with and Support Older Adults?

- Are we providing opportunities for older adults to engage and participate?
- Have older adults helped to design our services?
- Do we have a process for gaining a full understanding of older adults' situations and needs?
- Are our spaces, communication and broader organisational values age friendly?
- Do we work cooperatively and collaboratively with other service providers?
- Do we have systems that enables us to reflect on progress, understand what is working and continue to improve our approach?

Key Resources for More Information

1 Age Concern

www.ageconcern.org.nz/

2 Boomers Website (Mental Health Foundation)

www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/our-work/category/12/boomers

3 Useful Websites – Services for Older People (Ministry of Health)

www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/health-care-services/services-older-people/useful-websites-services-older-people

4 Best Practice in the Field of Intergenerational Solidarity (Age Platform Europe)

www.age-platform.eu/good-practice/best-practice-field-intergenerational-solidarity

5 Older People's Health – Resources (Community and Public Health, Canterbury District Health Board)

www.cph.co.nz/your-health/older-persons-health/

6 Older people In Aotearoa – Key Statistics (Ministry for Social Development)

www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz/about-superseniors/media/key-statistics.html

Case study:

Older People: Good Practice



AgeConnect was established in 2017 by Age Concern Nelson Tasman, and was the first initiative of its kind in Aotearoa. It aims to build friendships and community connections among those in the region aged 65-plus, and address loneliness and isolation among older adults. AgeConnect demonstrates good practice by:

- running an annual 'AgeConnect Champions' awards programme for individuals, groups and businesses committed to supporting older members of the community to feel more connected and respected and as though they belong
- providing opportunities for older adults to participate in activities and events that build their skills, create social connections and keep them active. These include arts and crafts and educational, entertainment and health and wellbeing events
- offering programmes designed to meet older adults' specific needs. For example, Tea and Tech helps older adults to improve their skills with their smartphones, tablets and laptops by connecting them with younger people, and PetConnect enables older adults to spend time and connect with animals.

AgeConnect is supported by a coordinator and has an events calendar on its website.

For more information on AgeConnect, visit ageconnect.org.nz

This good practice resource was developed in 2019 by: