



Designing a better
experience for later life.

PHASE 1

Exploring the challenge: the impact of the design process



Transform Ageing is delivered by:





About Transform Ageing

Transform Ageing is a design-led programme aiming to improve people's experience of ageing. The programme is funded by the Big Lottery, and delivered through a partnership to encourage new ways of thinking, working and new behaviours led by Design Council, alongside UnLtd – the Foundation for Social Entrepreneurs, the South West Academic Health Science Network (SW AHSN) and the Centre for Ageing Better. It is being supported locally on the ground by Volunteer Cornwall, Devon Communities Together, Community Council for Somerset and Torbay Community Development Trust.

www.designcouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/transform-ageing

About Postcode Films

Postcode Films is an award-winning documentary and ethnographic research company. We have been making ethnographic films for research for over a decade, helping public, third and private sector organisations to bridge the communication gap between citizens and decision-makers by creating films that can inspire profound changes at the heart of policy development, design and evaluation. The research team was led by Kate McLarnon, Co-founding Director of Postcode Films and Fan Sissoko, an independent design researcher with extensive experience in the field of social innovation.

www.postcodefilms.com

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	4
2. Setting the scene	6
What happened in Phase 1?	6
What did we film?	10
Torbay	12
Somerset	18
North Devon	20
Cornwall	30
3. Insights and opportunities	36
 Diversity and collaboration	36
 Accessibility and inclusiveness	40
 Human beings first, professionals second	43
 The process and language of design	46
 Ownership and legacy	50
4. Next steps	54
What happened after the workshops?	54
Keeping the participants involved	55
Evaluating Phase 2	55

1. INTRODUCTION

About Transform Ageing

Transform Ageing is a design-led programme aiming to improve people's experience of ageing. It brings together people in later life, social entrepreneurs and health and social care leaders to define, develop and deliver new solutions that better support the needs and aspirations of ageing communities.

The programme has been designed with the intention to **place people in later life at the heart** of the design process, and to actively engage their insight and increase their influence on solutions which will better meet their needs.

It also aims to support commissioners to feel more confident in developing closer relationships with service users in later life and social entrepreneurs to scale their solutions more sustainably.

Phase 1 of the programme engaged 120 people over four months, from May to August 2017, in 4 different locations in the south-west of England: Cornwall, North Devon, Somerset and Torbay. It brought together people in later life, friends, family and carers with health and social care leaders and social entrepreneurs, to explore a set of challenges related to ageing and conduct research in their communities.

Their findings informed a set of 'innovation briefs' for social entrepreneurs to respond to with innovative products and services in **Phase 2**.

Evaluating the process

Postcode Films was commissioned to evaluate **Phase 1** through film ethnography. We used a combination of observation and interviewing to document the experience of participants from a qualitative perspective.



The insights and recommendations outlined in this report will inform a wider evaluation of the whole programme. Our research aimed to elicit insights about participants' experience of the process, and to identify emerging outcomes. Due to the programme's commitment to enabling co-production, we paid particular attention to the dynamic between participants and to the factors that helped them to collaborate on an equal footing. In particular, our fieldwork was guided by the indicators, themes and research questions outlined below.

Relevant indicators

→ People in later life

- *Feel better able to influence services*
- *Feel they have a role in the design process*
- *Feel they made a contribution to the process*
- *Feel they understood the design process*

→ Health and social care leaders

- *Better understand social entrepreneurship and value it as a way of meeting the needs and aspirations of people in later life*
- *Understand the needs of people in later life and work with them to commission services*

→ Design workshop participants

- *Feel they have a role in the design process*
- *Feel they made a contribution to the process*
- *Feel they understood the design process*
- *Are satisfied with the level and nature of their involvement*
- *Are able to identify barriers and facilitators, of co-design such as trust, power and ownership*

→ Delivery organisations

- *Are satisfied with the level and nature of their involvement*

→ Delivery staff

- *Are able to identify barriers and facilitators of co-design, such as trust, power and ownership*

Themes

Ongoing analysis of the material collected through interviewing and observation led us to organise our findings around the following themes.



Diversity and collaboration.

What were the benefits and challenges to bringing together a group of people, from diverse professional backgrounds and walks of life?



Accessibility and inclusiveness.

What were the enablers and barriers to reaching and engaging the programme's target audience? To what extent did participants feel included in the process?



Human beings first, professionals second.

What enabled the participants to connect with the challenges, as well as with each other, on a human level? How has the programme influenced the opinions and understanding of statutory organisations towards the needs of people in later life?



The process and language of design.

To what extent did workshop participants feel they understood the design process? How did it impact their overall experience?

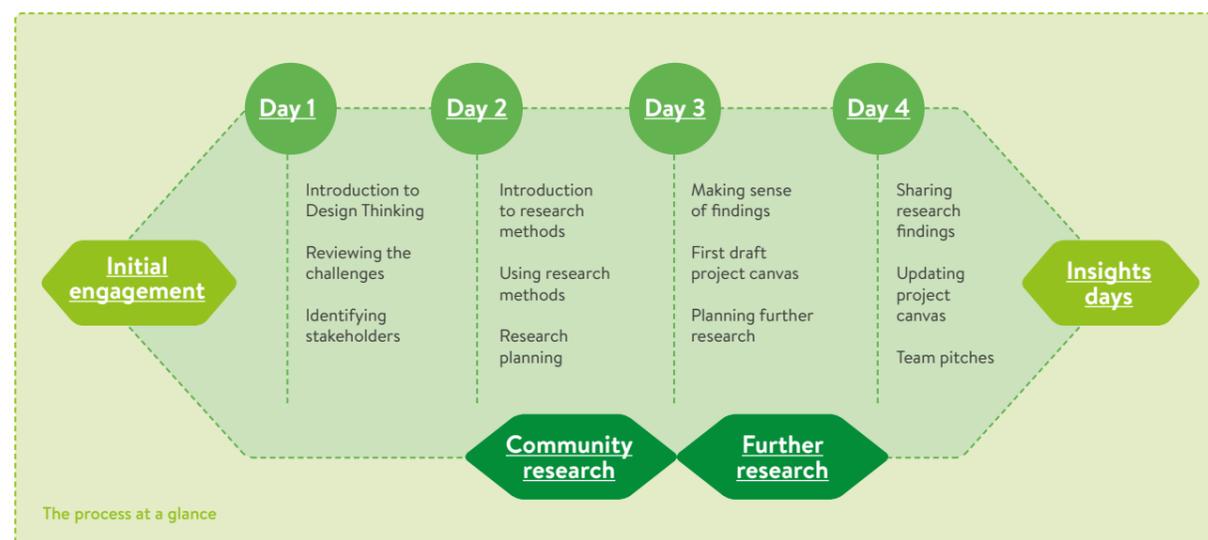


Ownership and legacy.

To what extent did the programme enable participants to feel ownership over the process and its outcomes?

2. SETTING THE SCENE

Exploring the Challenge: What happened in Phase 1?



Initial engagement

Prior to Phase 1, the Transform Ageing team carried out a national review of research about ageing and identified 28 challenges, grouped into five themes: health and wellbeing, environment, safety, money and community capital. Local stakeholders, together with people in later life then selected a handful of these challenges to explore in their community during **Phase 1: Exploring the Challenge**.

In each location, the Design Council worked with Delivery Organisations to engage and recruit in each of the four locations. Interested participants were then invited to a series of four Design Workshops.

The programme covered the following locations and worked with the following Delivery Organisations:

- **Torbay:** Torquay, Paignton and Brixham
Torbay Community Development Trust
- **Somerset:** Glastonbury, Street, Wells and Bridgwater, *Community Council for Somerset*
- **Devon:** Torridge District and Barnstaple,
Devon Communities Together
- **Cornwall:** Camborne and Redruth,
Volunteer Cornwall

Day 1



The aim of the first workshop was to acquaint participants to the process. Emphasis was placed on **introducing design thinking**.

Teams were formed around challenges relevant to each location, ranging from social isolation, to hospital discharge. Each location had between four and five teams, each comprising between six and ten participants. While participants were invited to choose their preferred challenge, they were eventually allocated to a team by the programme delivery team, to ensure a good balance of participants in each team.

Participants were then invited to **share their experiences, assumptions and emerging ideas** in relation to their chosen challenge, and to **identify stakeholders** relevant to this challenge.

Throughout Day 1, participants reported feeling positively challenged by having to collaborate with a diverse group of people, as well as feelings of anticipation for the rest of the process. However, they also mentioned that the challenges felt too broad as a starting point, and that it was difficult to find a focus.

Day 2



The second workshop introduced participants to **research methods**. Emphasis was placed on how to build trust with interviewees, in order to gather deep insights about their lives, their needs and their aspirations. Participants had an opportunity to practice by interviewing each other.

In teams, they then had to **identify a research question** relevant to their challenge to guide them in their community research.

Finally, they had to **plan research** activities to conduct in their own time, before Day 3.

For most participants, prioritising one question felt challenging. Some also reported some scepticism around the value of community research, as they felt that there was already a good enough amount of expertise in each team.

Community research



Conducting research in the community

Between Day 2 and Day 3, participants were encouraged to go out in their community and conduct research. Most chose to do **interviews** with neighbours, acquaintances, or service users of their organisation, though some participants tested more creative ways to gather insights, such as giving people journals to record their relationship to technology, or trying different wheelchairs to understand barriers to mobility.

Day 3



Research pen portraits

For the third workshop, participants came back together to **share what they had observed** and learned through their research.

Based on that, they started to produce a 'Project Canvas', a template inviting them to summarise what they felt the core challenge was, what their main insights were, and what their vision was. Day 3 was seen as a turning point where a number of teams started to reach clarity.

Finally, teams were encouraged to identify opportunities for further research.

Day 4



Project canvas

On Day 4, participants came back together to share further research findings, update their *Project Canvas* and **pitch** it to the rest of the room.

They were also introduced to the next phase of the programme and how funding would be allocated to social entrepreneurs responding to the briefs.

While the tone and mood of the fourth workshop was generally celebratory, it also raised questions about the next phase. In particular, participants voiced that they felt a strong sense of ownership over the brief they had worked on, and expressed a desire to be involved in the next phase.

Insights days



Reviewing the briefs

The last stage of Phase 1 aimed to bring together all the insights that were generated by participants in each of the four locations, and synthesise them into a number of briefs that social entrepreneurs would be able to respond to in Phase 2.

The programme delivery team held an internal **Insights Consolidation** session over 2 days to examine common themes across the different challenges and locations, and to articulate 6 briefs.

To ensure the briefs were representative of the extensive insight gathering work conducted by the design workshop participants over 4 months, the delivery team then ran a number of feedback sessions, first with Delivery Organisations, then with some of the design workshop participants.

What did we film?

Postcode Films attended 12 out of the 16 Design Workshops. In each location, we focused on capturing the journey of a specific team, in order to get rich insights on team dynamics and consistently capture the evolution of their experience through the whole process. This means that while this report may not represent the views of all 120 workshop attendees, it offers an in-depth analysis developed through reflective conversations with participants, not only of the impact the process had on them, but also on why and how it had this impact.

Our approach to document each workshop combined **observations** of how our chosen teams moved through the process by filming table discussions, with **one-to-one interviews** about the process, generally conducted in a breakout room. This allowed us to observe how team members related to each other, and to capture difficult moments or breakthroughs from a distance while at the same time capturing participants' individual perspectives and experiences by hearing them describing the process in their own words and sharing their hopes and concerns for the programme.

In addition, we filmed participants conducting **community research**. This enabled us to not only capture how they applied what they had learned in the workshops, but also to understand how the Transform Ageing programme fitted within the context of their lives.

Finally, we joined one of the Insights Days with local Delivery Organisations to hear their views on the impact of the programme so far and on next steps.



Workshops filmed:

Torbay 1 3 4

Somerset 1 3 4

North Devon 1 2 4

Cornwall 1 3 4

Interviews

Over 50 interviews with 33 participants

Torbay 9

Somerset 8

North Devon 9

Cornwall 7

Community research

Torbay 1

Somerset 2

North Devon 1

Insights Day

One feedback session with Delivery Organisations [Torbay Community Development Trust](#), [Community Council for Somerset](#), [Devon Communities Together](#) and [Volunteer Cornwall](#).





2.1 TORBAY

Overview

Local Delivery Organisation:

Torbay Community Development Trust

Facilitators

Jonathan Ball & Lesley Gulliver

Total participants

29

Challenges chosen

- *Staying active in the community*
- *Effective hospital discharge*
- *Having options for assistive technology*
- *Feeling supported as a carer*

Team followed

In Torbay, we followed the journey of the team working on the ‘*Staying active in the community*’ challenge. The team comprised 8 members:

- 2 commissioners
- 2 people in later life
- 1 social entrepreneur
- 3 health and social care providers

Team journey

Day 1

Feeling included - Participants interviewed during Workshop 1 were overall very positive about being part of the programme. As the teams got to know each other, they mentioned being impressed with the diversity of people in the room. *“I feel I’ve already made friends for life” (Pam).* Some of the participants in later life reported feeling grateful for being included and seeing their voice being heard. *“They had the expertise of working in various things [...] very clever ladies, and when I went I thought they made a mistake. Why did they get me? A 78 years old lady. But I could bring things to the group that they haven’t experienced and mine was first hand” (Sylvia).*



The team

A broad challenge - The team we followed was allocated the challenge ‘*Staying active in the community.*’ The exercises designed to help them explore what that challenge meant encouraged them to lay down their assumptions, and to go through a rapid ideation process. The team decided to explore intergenerational relationships as a potential solution. However, they also reported that the challenge felt broad, and left a lot of room for diverging interpretations. *“We’ve just evaluated the problems as they are perceived around the table and I think everyone has a different view of the scale and the importance of that problem. [...] It is quite challenging in terms of focus. We’re talking about problems which can be all things to all people. We’re talking about a huge section of the population.” (Paul H.)*

Day 2

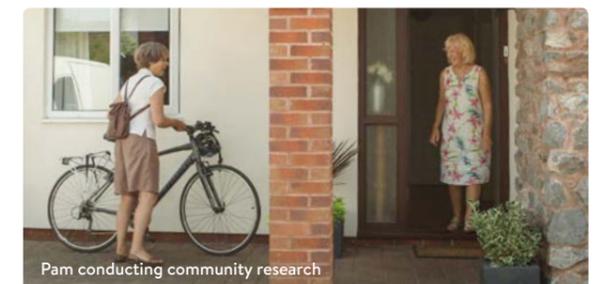
Finding focus - The second workshop introduced participants to research methods, and encouraged them to plan community research activities. One of the core tasks was to formulate research questions that would generate useful insights. *“It was a bit of a challenge to pick what questions we were going to ask because they were huge, and how do you compact that into something that you can easily get across to other people.” (Claire)* Eventually, the team settled for the following core question: *What does staying active in the community mean to you, and what enables you to do so?*

“We’ve got this amazing opportunity and rather than seeing it as a challenge and being a rabbit in the headlights and being forced into inertia by fear, we’ve got this great chance to rebuild communities.”

CLAIRE, SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Community research

Pressure to get it right - For the community research, we met Pam, a retired nutritionist, as she interviewed an acquaintance from the local Women’s Institute. While she enjoyed the interview, and found it easier than she expected to build trust and dig deeper, she also mentioned she *“was a bit nervous in the sense that I did feel a responsibility to get it right and to extract the information needed for the process to move on.” (Pam).*



Pam conducting community research

Navigating formality and informality - Other participants talked about finding it challenging to approach friends or neighbours, as they felt the interviewing process brought an inappropriate level of formality and eroded trust. Frank, who is retired and volunteers for a carers organisation, tried to interview people he is currently supporting, and although he has a good rapport with them, and knows their stories well, they refused to be interviewed. *“The consent form put everybody off. [...] I’d say it came out as very legalistic. [...] To get them to consent to it, it’s got to be a much gentler form.” (Frank)*

Day 3

Reframing the challenge - The third workshop invited participants to share what they had learned from their community research. For our team, a strong insight came through around the importance of attitude and self-motivation in driving people's community-inclined behaviour. *"At the end of day 2, we were looking at how to bring older people and younger people together in a community setting. And now we've been looking more at older people's attitudes and motivations [...] something around keeping people motivated."* (Pam).



The limits of community research - The group also realised that their insight around attitude was strongly influenced by the sample of people who had come forward to be interviewed. They reflected on one of the limitations of community research: *"It was interesting that generally we interviewed quite positive and motivated people. It was kind of a self-limiting group. In other words, the people who wanted to be interviewed were probably those who wanted to be motivated anyway. So [...] I then went off between the last 2 meetings and purposefully sought out people who had reasons for not doing activities"* (Mike).

Day 4



Assumptions challenged - Having done a number of additional interviews with less forthcoming individuals, the group came back together on Day 4 to listen to new stories. *"The thing that I was surprised by was that there were groups of people who were intentionally lonely or isolated because that's what they wanted to do. I was talking earlier about this chap who doesn't want to join groups because he doesn't want to be patronised, he doesn't want to be organised."* (Mike).

This realisation brought some nuance to the team's understanding of the challenge, and they reviewed their Project Canvas to accommodate more diverse views of what 'being active' and 'community' meant to people. The final concept they presented was a community 'marketplace' connecting people to groups and activities based on their individual needs and preferences.

Who is a social entrepreneur? At the end of the fourth workshop, participants were introduced to the next phase of the project by UnLtd. This raised some questions around who qualifies as a social entrepreneur. In an interview at the end of the workshop, Pam a retired nutritionist who used to care for her father revealed that she had come to the process with an idea for a new service. However, while Pam felt positive about the programme and where her team had come to, the process did not particularly enable her to explore her idea, nor give her the confidence to see herself as a social entrepreneur. *"Well there is something I wanted to do previously, but I don't think it fits with any of this. It had to do with dementia. My father had dementia and I wanted to create somewhere to go to find out about all things dementia related, whether that was to find out the best wheelchair to buy, drugs, medicine... And that was my dream - after my dad died I thought gosh wouldn't that be fantastic if I could develop something like that! But that's not exactly what we are here for!"* (Pam).

This raises a question around how the programme can find a balance between supporting individual aspirations and generating deep insight through meaningful collaboration.

"Each tool has been quite focused on what it's there to deliver, and has really helped to focus our thinking on a specific task at hand. And take us through a staged process, which has meant it's been more difficult to jump to solutions when you've got a tool in front of you that's asking you to complete some very clear and concise tasks. So that's been really helpful, and I think there's a lot of learning we can take away from that. We'll be looking at how much of the material we can reuse."

PAUL H, COMMISSIONER

Meet the participants



Pam, retired nutritionist, former family carer

Team: "Staying active in the community"

"I suppose we feel it's our baby, and it's good to know we still have a part to play in the rest."



Claire, director of a CIC providing domiciliary care, currently setting up new social enterprise

Team: "Staying active in the community"

"I think the process is good for me because it's getting me to think around possible solutions."



Mike, NHS Service Manager, & Denise, Mike's carer

Team: "Staying active in the community"

"I think we should have spent more time right at the beginning to understand what the brief was rather than rushing to the solution, before we realised that actually that wasn't what we were trying to solve."



Sylvia, retired, former carer

Team: "Hospital discharge"

"Because I'm an old person, and recently I've had a bit of bumpy ride with my health, I wanted to come and I want the experience I had to help other people."



Paul H, commissioner, Torbay and South Devon

Team: "Staying active in the community"

"We've got a diverse group of people working completely hand in hand, there's no subdivision of tasks based on which organisation individuals come from."



Tina, project manager of charity providing transport and social activities to people in later life

Team: "Staying active in the community"

"Having found the first part of the process a little confusing in parts, I think it became clearer with the research. It also helped me to realise that there are things out there that will make a change to people like me 20 years from now."



Paul, retired

Team: "Staying active in the community"

"I came to Transform Ageing in the hope that I would glean from it some tools to be able to reach out in the community. I have a desire to make friends because my partner died, and I was completely isolated."



Frank, retired, former carer, Carers Trust volunteer

Team: "Staying active in the community"

"I think the research has reinforced a view I've held, but not quite as strongly as I now hold it. And that is that when somebody first becomes a carer, they should get much more support."



2.2 SOMERSET

Overview

Local Delivery Organisation:
Community Council for Somerset

Facilitators
Jonathan Ball & Lesley Gulliver

Total participants
23

- Challenges chosen**
- Preventing mental and physical ill health
 - Mobility and transport
 - Preventing loneliness and social isolation
 - Staying active in the community

Team followed
In Somerset, we followed the journey of the team working on the 'Preventing mental and physical ill health' challenge. The team comprised 6 members:

- 1 commissioner
- 3 health and social care providers (voluntary sector)
- 1 social entrepreneur
- 1 person in later life

Team journey

Day 1

A sense of anticipation - In Somerset, there was a sense that most of those present in the room were already familiar with the idea of using design to solve societal challenges. As a result, expectations were high. *"There is a number of people I recognise from previous design workshops. I suspect they're here because they're jaded with what they've seen in the past and want to see change. So there is a lot of feistiness and motivation. We want to get into it [...] I think there is going to be a challenge about how we don't leap straight into the solution and follow a process."* (Sue).

Different world views - The team we chose to follow focused on 'Preventing mental and physical ill health.' From early on, participants realised that their understanding of the challenge and their assumptions about what a solution might look like diverged. The team spent a lot of time navigating those diverging world views, and as a result, felt frustrated that they weren't able to move towards more a constructive discussion. *"I think we still think we've got the answers. But I'm not sure we do. And we don't have a common agreed shared view of the world or the issues. In terms of producing anything, if we don't have that shared purpose, we might be slightly stuck."* (Sue).

This lack of common ground seems to have been partly due to the fact that the team members came from different backgrounds. *"As a community group leader, I don't know how clinical commissioning works, and I don't think a lot of people in clinical commissioning understand how community services work as well. It's very different ways of working."* (Patrick)

By the end of the first workshop, the team felt concerned they hadn't come up with a specific concept they could all get behind. *"I still don't have great confidence that our group is going to come up with something concrete."* (Sue).

Day 2

New team members shift the dynamic - Two new participants joined the team for the second workshop. Having to explain where they had got to at the end of the first workshop to 'neutral' listeners helped to shift team dynamic and move towards a slightly more cooperative mode of working.

Scepticism about community research - The day was designed for participants to learn, practice and plan for their community research. *"We were being enabled to be researchers. It was really helpful to try out how to practice interviewing. It made us realise how difficult it is to put aside assumptions."* (Sue). However, while the day felt more productive than Day 1, some members of the team expressed a degree of scepticism about the value of community

"When we've commissioned the voluntary sector, or organisations outside the statutory sector, the different approach has been positive. It's not about being cheaper. It's about a different approach that has value to the individual."

SUE, NHS COMMISSIONER

research. John, Director of a CIC, felt that he had already done a lot of research through his work in the community, and was keen to build on it to move towards a solution. Sue, NHS commissioner, compared this type of qualitative research to her experience of research in a clinical setting. *"I find this process quite alien in thinking that in half an hour we can gather data that will help to support the development of services. [In the NHS] we analyse data in a very traditional way, and we wouldn't dream of developing something without prevalence data."* (Sue).

Nevertheless, the team left Day 2 willing to give community research a go, and planned a number of interviews to explore what triggers people to join community activities and what barriers they may face on the way.

Community research

Human connection - Each team member completed between two and three interviews. We filmed Patrick and Sue, as they paired up to interview members of the Frome Men's Shed, which Patrick manages. Having fostered a relationship based on trust and mutual support with members of the Shed, Patrick expressed some concern about the consent and interview forms being too complicated, and worried about upsetting people by potentially asking them to talk about a vulnerable time of their life. *"Before the interview I did feel quite nervous because I worried about*

them reacting badly or going off track. And that's always a risk that people may become quite emotional." (Patrick).

For Sue, joining Patrick as a fellow community researcher helped to connect with the issue as it was experienced by people on the ground. "Coming here today as part of the Transform Ageing project has been liberating. It's been about the project rather than about my job. It's been nice to talk and listen without an agenda. Hearing it first hand has been really powerful." (Sue).

Challenging assumptions - For others, the community research was an opportunity to slow down, listen, and challenge assumptions and broaden their understanding of the challenge. "I've never done any interviewing before. It's surprising in some ways, the more you interview, the more confused you get about what you need to do! I think it's because in your own mind you set your own ideas about what the problems are. And it's only when you listen to what other people say - they come at it with their experiences and it throws a completely different light upon it." (Ian).

The process has also helped to challenge assumptions about where the answers to a problem might be. "It forced me to do interviews in the community. Would I have done them in the same way if I wasn't part of this process? No, I would have jumped, I would have talked to the leader. But because I was forced to sit down and do interviews in the community - they have all the answers! And I've learned a lot from that. Yes, you can have all the research and data you like, but it doesn't beat going out in the community and asking people." (John)



Stepping into other people's shoes - Participants from another team, looking at mobility and transport, found a different way to explore their challenge, and went further than interviews to try and empathise with the issues faced by people in later life. Heather, from the Community Council for Somerset paired up with Wendy, a local resident, to explore what life in a wheelchair felt like. "I think people's experience is really valid, but if I haven't walked in their shoes, it's more difficult for me to understand what challenges they have, so I chose to try to use a wheelchair for the first time, and Wendy was kind enough to enable me to do that. But the thought was that I would actually experience it, so I would feel the emotions, I would feel the challenges, and experience it from a first hand basis." (Heather) Both reflected on the value of this 'embodied' approach to research. For their team, it seems to have enabled a deeper understanding of the emotional impact of having mobility issues. Subsequently, the team shifted their idea from being "another transport solution" to being an approach focused on growing people's confidence through peer support.

"The fact that there has been huge ownership is a huge success, and I guess that's why there is such tension. We own it, this is ours, but you are not letting us do it."

SUE, NHS COMMISSIONER

Day 3

Finally being a team - On Day 3, only three members of the team were present: Sue, John and Patrick. While this could have discouraged them, it actually helped them to bond and set aside some of their differences. "I do think that we started off with a completely different attitude today. We started off feeling very different as individuals. [...] There is something about being the only 3 remaining men standing that has helped us to bond. [...] It was also difficult to get your voice heard when it was 6 of us. But today I think I was able to participate more. We all had time to give our own views and contribute. Trying to find common ground with 6 different opinions was impossible. Trying to find common ground with 3 was possible." (Sue)

Finding common ground - Going into Day 3, the team was concerned about finding commonality between the different pieces of research everyone had conducted. However, through one exercise that encouraged them to actively listen to each other's research findings, and to theme their insights, they felt able to reach a shared understanding of the challenge. "I think it's because on day 1, when we were talking about our challenge, we were talking of our own knowledge base, and our own lived experiences. Whereas here we were talking on behalf of the people we had interviewed, so it made it less close to our own emotions this time." (Sue)

The group reviewed their project canvas, and settled for an approach focused on overcoming barriers to community participation that is mindful of the individual needs of people, whatever stage they are at in their life.

Day 4

Ownership and emotional attachment - The atmosphere on Day 4 was both celebratory and charged with anticipation. After each team reviewed their Project Canvas, and presented to each other, the Design Council and UnLtd held a Q&A session about the next steps of the programme. This raised many questions, and some participants' frustration was palpable. Part of the frustration came from the fact that questions about the next phase had been raised as early as the first workshop, and had remained unanswered until now. It also partly came from a perceived lack of clarity around who was eligible for funding, leaving some participants feeling that they had given away their time and insight, to realise their organisation might not qualify for further support. Although this was only voiced by a small number of participants, it suggests that they might have brought with them expectations about what they would gain from the programme. Addressing those expectations earlier by clearly stating the next steps of the programme might have helped to mitigate these reactions.

But this conversation was also a reflection of the success of Phase 1 of Transform Ageing in Somerset. "I think what we have come up with is a very good scheme, and I would like to take it further to see if it works because I think it has great potential. There is a bit of frustration to think that at this point we have to let it go for other people to look at. [...] I was getting very excited about the fact that this will be something that might be very beneficial for the village." (Jenny).

Meet the participants



Sue, Health NHS Commissioner

Team: "Preventing mental and physical ill health"

"What's intrigued me about this programme is that it's not led by us in health service or social care."



Patrick, Frome Men's Shed manager

Team: "Preventing mental and physical ill health"

"I think it's very valuable to use different methodologies, to get people with different backgrounds to solve a problem. It works extremely well in the scientific arena and my belief is that the design process could be such a facilitator."



Jenny, retired

Team: "Staying active in the community"

"The name social entrepreneur sounds very distant and suggests someone very high up and very important. But I've come to realise that it's not, that it could be me if I was a lot younger."



Heather and Wendy

Team: "Mobility and transport"

Heather: "I think people's experience is really valid, but if I haven't walked in their shoes, it's more difficult for me to understand what challenges they have."

Wendy: "I've got first hand experience of mobility problems and I'm getting older. When you get older your confidence goes, and life becomes slightly more challenging, so I thought this programme might help me with that and other people."



John, Director of a CIC

Team: "Preventing mental and physical ill health"

"I'm a jumper - I always jump to the assumption and to the solution, so hopefully this process will slow me down."



Rhys, Social entrepreneur

Team: "Preventing mental and physical ill health"

"For me the best part of it has been to be on a table with such diverse people and passionate people as well. We were more defined by the disagreements we had than the agreements. I found it stimulating, it challenged my own assumptions."



Ian, retired, Samaritans volunteer

Team: "Preventing mental and physical ill health"

"Why am I here today? I think my answer is fear. I'm now 76, so I'm part of the ageing population."



2.3 NORTH DEVON

Overview

Local Delivery Organisation:
Devon Communities Together

Facilitators
Sean Miller & David Townson

Total participants
45

- Challenges chosen**
- Effective hospital discharge
 - Opportunities for informal care
 - Staying active in the community
 - Preventing physical and mental ill health
 - Preventing social isolation and loneliness

Team followed
In North Devon, we followed the journey of the team working on the 'Opportunities for informal care' challenge. The team comprised 9 members:

- 1 commissioner
- 2 social entrepreneurs
- 4 people in later life
- 1 delivery organisation

Team journey

Day 1

A great turnout - Almost twice as many participants turned up on Day 1 in North Devon compared to the other locations. This was partly intentional from the Delivery Organisation who was anticipating drop-outs, but it also came as a surprise, as people who hadn't signed up joined spontaneously. While this was a positive sign of interest and local engagement, it also presented some facilitation challenges. *"You can't have the level of interaction you'd like to have. There's only two of us, we can't get around the teams as much."* (David). This was further emphasised by technological issues with sound and projection, which raised questions around accessibility and inclusiveness.

Intergenerational collaboration - The group we followed looked at *"Opportunities for informal care."* Participants noticed the diversity of people in the room. *"We've got people from younger later life, older later life [...] It's a good mix of people."* (Paul). However, despite the fact that out of the four locations, North Devon invited the largest proportion of people in later life, this diversity wasn't felt by everyone. *"We don't have too many older people here. I feel I'm trying to speak on behalf of all older people in Torrington."* (Brian)

Brian's perception may have been influenced by the fact that other participants in later life tended to be in the slightly younger bracket and were still very active. Most joined the workshop wearing two hats, representing not only the perspective of someone in later life but also of the work they were involved with in the community. For Brian, this perceived age gap between himself and other participants also implied a gap in empathy that seemed hard to reconcile, even through the collaborative work encouraged by workshop facilitators. *"They are talking about people like me, and I reckon I know more about me and people like me than some of the younger people do, and I just want to try and add something to the discussions. [...] Younger people cannot possibly understand the problems of older people."* (Brian)

Day 2

Reduced numbers - On Day 2, numbers had significantly reduced. While there were other factors, like the summer holidays, the fact that the first workshop had felt challenging contributed to people dropping out. *"I think it helps that we have chosen people, we have given them a brief, we haven't thrown them in the deep end. [But] there have been people who have dropped out after the first one and said look it's not really for me. It's outside of their normal comfort zone and their normal routine."* (Dawn).

"We don't have too many older people here. I feel I'm trying to speak on behalf of all older people in Torrington."

BRIAN, RETIRED ENGINEER



For some participants, the drop in numbers felt demotivating and limiting. *"On my table we had a full group last week, and this is the second workshop, and we are depleted. Half of the group is not here, and that's challenging, I think you do need a bigger group. [...] You've got quite a broad spectrum of people here from different areas. If you've got fewer people around the table, then you've got less of a playground to play with."* (Owen). However, this was balanced by the fact that they were able to have better quality conversations. *"Something worked in the building of the relationships, which has meant we were more constructive this week."* (Owen)

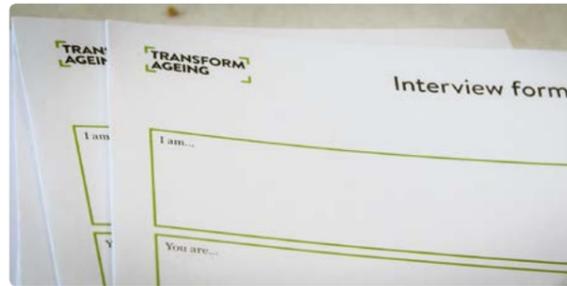
A new approach to research - As in other locations, the group was introduced to research methods. For some who had experience of research, the way it was introduced in the context of a design thinking process felt new and refreshing. *"I think it was really clear how it went over the different research methodologies and how they talk about confirmation versus inspiration. I loved that. And the difference between quantitative and qualitative: you might interview 100 people and get 10 truths, and 10 people and get 100 insights. That stuck with me."* (Rosie)

Honing it down to one question - The last task participants were given was to decide on a research question. The team found it difficult to come to a clear question. This was mainly due to the language linked to the challenge they were working on. The task of having to ‘translate’ it into everyday language to take to the community highlighted the fact that the challenge wasn’t clear for everyone. “You’re either cared for in a professional or family way, or you’re not cared for. But I don’t understand informal care, I don’t understand that phrase.” (Brian)

Community research



Managing expectations - Although they had an opportunity to practice with each other during the second workshop, having to conduct interviews within the community felt challenging to some participants for a number of reasons. Firstly, it was seen as a significant task that participants perhaps didn’t realise they would have to commit to when signing-up to the workshops. “In terms of people’s expectations, although it was mentioned in some of the guidance notes, I don’t think people took the community research on board. Who is going to be doing that research? With whom? It’s an extra piece of work in their own time.” (Dawn).



Secondly, the language used to describe the research felt alienating to some. Brian, who chose to interview people attending the memory café he helps to organise, felt unclear about what was expected from him. “You’re supposed to do interviews and feed this information back to them, but they gave us an interview form which to me is not very good. [...] Older people, they don’t want to be formalised. [...] I find it easier just to talk to people rather than doing interviews. [...] You need to get the confidence of a person. Just interviewing somebody cold is not easy.” (Brian).

He felt that having to ask a number of pre-defined questions limited the depth of insights he was able to gather. However, what he described as his preferred method - building trust with people informally and connecting over common interests before going into deeper questions - was aligned with what the facilitators described as interviewing.

This potential misunderstanding raises questions around the language used to describe the process. It also poses a challenge in terms of how well the programme enables participants to make the most of the skills and insight they bring to the process.

Day 3

On Day 3, the team had reduced further. Few participants had found the time to conduct community research. “I was the only one who had done it. So how seriously are people taking this?” (Brian). This further emphasised Brian’s doubts about the intentions of the programme. “You need to understand people’s problems before you can help them, and I didn’t feel that’s what we were aiming to do.” (Brian). Nevertheless, the group built on Brian’s insight into the community to start building their Project Canvas.

Day 4

Reviewing assumptions - On Day 4, most of the team members came back, and were able to share some of the research they had done with each other. This helped them to review their vision and project canvas, taking on board Brian’s challenge around not being prescriptive about what people in later life want and need. “We quite easily fall into this trap of making assumptions about people in later life.” (Owen)



What is a social entrepreneur? As in Somerset, the Q&A about Phase 2 of the programme raised questions about who qualified as a social entrepreneur. Despite participants having the opportunity to work closely with social entrepreneurs in their teams over 3 months, confusion about the term still remained on Day 4. “I know what an entrepreneur is, it’s somebody who tries different things for a gain of some sort. But social entrepreneur, I’m not quite sure what it’s all about to be quite honest.” (Brian).

Maintaining the community - Some participants felt that the biggest value of the programme was the fact that it had built a productive community of people willing to work together to solve problems linked to ageing. While Phase 2 is about handing the work over to individual social entrepreneurs, there was a desire to keep that network alive. “I think the best way to solve some of the challenges that we have been working through in our teams is for us not to disappear back into our burrows. Not for me as the social entrepreneur to return to the slightly lonely life it can be sometimes. There really does need to be that group mentality, that needs to be sustained. Otherwise there is a lot of good work that could just fall away.” (Owen)

Meet the participants



Brian, retired, volunteers at Memory Café
Team: 'Opportunities for informal care'

"I think a lot of older people they prefer to be involved in things, they don't just want to be an add on. I didn't get the impression that that was the target of this exercise here."



Owen, Social entrepreneur Remarkable Lives
Team: 'Opportunities for informal care'

"I think the outcome of this series of 4 workshops for someone like me as a social entrepreneur will be a much better understanding of people I'm trying to help."



Rosie, laughter yoga instructor

Team: 'Opportunities for informal care'

"I was invited by Devon Communities Together and as soon as I saw it I was interested because I think the whole perception around ageing can be quite negative, there is a lot of negative press about older people being a burden."

"The Transform Ageing process is a really good one in terms of enabling us that freedom of thought in a really nice supported environment with a wide range of different perspectives, different stakeholders, so that you can really get together and think positively, which is such a change from the pressure which the NHS and social care is under on a daily basis."

PAUL, COMMISSIONER



Dawn, Delivery Organisation

Team: 'Opportunities for informal care'

"We try to set people's expectations in advance, I think on the whole people have accepted that it's what they've come into. It has hopefully been what people expected. They have probably found it more intense."



Paul, commissioner

Team: 'Opportunities for informal care'

"Occasionally there was a challenge where people like myself would lapse into jargon. But this meant that we took the time to hear each other's perspective."



2.4 CORNWALL

Overview

Local Delivery Organisation:
Volunteer Cornwall

Facilitators
Sean Miller & David Townson

Total participants
23

Challenges chosen

- Options for assistive technology
- Mobility and transport options
- Opportunities for informal care
- Remaining physically active

Team followed

In Cornwall, we followed the journey of the team working on the 'Options for assistive technology' challenge. The team comprised 6 members:

- 2 commissioners
- 1 health and social care provider
- 1 social entrepreneur
- 1 person in later life

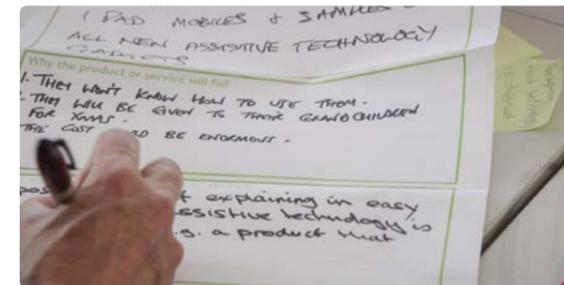
Team journey

Day 1

Reframing the challenge from the start - In Cornwall, we followed the team looking at assistive technology. Most individuals in the group admitted that this was not a challenge they had chosen to work on. This led to one person deciding to change teams half way through the workshop. However, the rest of the group stayed put, despite some feeling initially out of their depth with the subject. "I'm a technophobe. So when I saw that, I thought, no I can't do this! [...] What on earth is it? And then I found out there are loads of lovely things out there called assistive technology. But I think older people would have those preconceived ideas too." (Kerry) They decided to embrace the fact that they themselves found it daunting, and reframed their challenge to be around attitudes towards technology. "What we looked at specifically was how to remove the fear related to tech." (Sue)



Positive team spirit - In Cornwall, spirits were high and the team bonded from the first workshop. One team member attributed that to the first exercise, which encouraged people to not only introduce what they did professionally, but also why they personally cared about the challenge. "When you take the individual roles out of it and just work as a team of human beings it's really different. [...] I found myself contributing more as a member of the community who is over 50 than as a director of a social enterprise. I'm also finding that other members of the team whom I know as commissioners have dropped their guard to a certain degree." (Reuben)

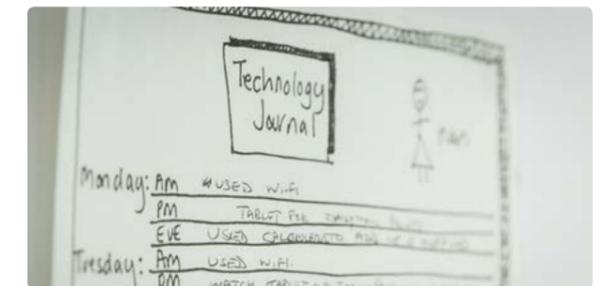


Encouraging collective imagination - Being pushed to think as creatively as possible by building on each other's challenges and ideas also contributed to building a strong sense of team. "I really enjoyed the Round Robin because it's meant we had to work collaboratively, we had no choice. My natural tendency would have been to take the original question and work through that on my own. And I think we would all be in that, in the sense that most of us are leaders of people [...] It made us think on a different level, it gave us an opportunity to expand our imaginations together." (Reuben)

Day 2

Embracing creative research methods - On Day 2, the team was introduced to a range of research methods which inspired participants to try alternatives to interviewing. "I thought about doing an interview, but journaling felt less intrusive. So I hand drew a journal template, which was more enjoyable for me, and I think more personable for them. And I asked them to do a journal about when they use technology over a week, and also to note where there were opportunities where they could have benefited from using technology." (Kate)

Kate also reflected on how the methods she was exposed to in the second workshop have directly influenced her work in commissioning. "I went back to my team thinking OK, I think we can get a bit more creative with our engagement methods. The methods we learned on the workshop included things like service safaris, journaling, being more creative in terms of visually presenting things. And it's already started to have an impact on the work we are doing in commissioning." (Kate)



Keeping people engaged - On Day 2, the team was reduced to 3 people. However, this didn't stop participants who missed the session from conducting their own research. This reflects, the strong sense of engagement that was generated in Cornwall. Sean, one of the facilitators, attributes that to the Delivery Organisation. *"Angela has very quickly built a strong relationship with every participant. [...] She does a lot of work between workshops, so if there is any confusion about what to do, she is there to support people."* (Sean)

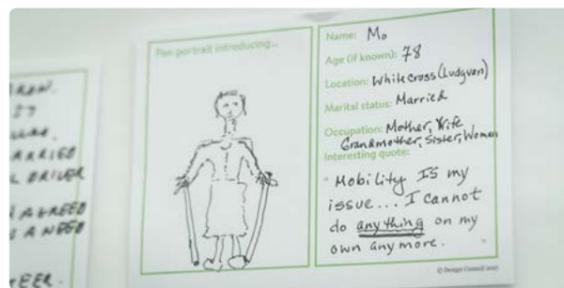
Community research

The power of listening - Participants reflected on the impact the community research had not only on them, but also on the people they had interviewed. It was seen as an opportunity to talk about aspects of their lives they rarely opened up about, and to feel heard. *"One of the things that surprised me - he said he enjoyed the interview, he said at the end can we do some more? Because he was being listened to, and his views were taken into account. He wasn't being sidelined because he was past 66."* (Sue).

For others, the research was an opportunity to connect on a deeper level with acquaintances. *"Because of the questions I was asking it did offer a unique way of us sharing where we were with each other. Talking through all that with her brought sunshine both to her and to me. [...] I noticed just as I was leaving, just the value of listening. Asking each other questions about our experience, and how we feel about where we are in our life brought value."* (Isabella)

Day 3

Reframing the challenge once more - On Day 3, the group met to share stories from their research. *"We had to create some pen portraits which caused quite a bit of hilarity in the group."* (Angela K)



After a process of theming their insights, the group then realised that they had to reframe their approach once more, from being about trying to convince people in later life to use technology to being about growing their confidence through intergenerational skills exchange. The research enabled them to dig deeper, and to focus on *why*, rather than just on *how*. *"When they wrote up their story mock-up [on Day 1], it was quite campaign-like, and I was worried because that's the kind of stuff we already know. And what we've seen today, is that they have reframed their challenge. The group now really understands that it's about why people are not using technology, rather than just trying to get people to use it. That shift is really important. I think it's what is needed for social entrepreneurs to respond in the right way."* (Sean)

Day 4

What will be the legacy? - While the experience of participants in Cornwall has been positive throughout, reaching the fourth workshop raised some questions about how to maximise the impact of the programme on local communities, and build on the momentum generated locally. *"One thing I'm passionate is that I don't want it to be parked as another programme [...] The legacy needs to be one of change. Yes, sure it's going to take time, but it's important that this was the impetus for the change."* (Angela D)



"When I arrived today, I wasn't without cynicism. I have been to so many events like this where our brains are picked, we get into conversations about what we do and what the challenges are, only to find that I've wasted my time and could have been doing something more valuable that day. However, I have to say, the approach today has been excellent. Very engaging, very dynamic."

REUBEN, SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Meet the participants



**Angela K., Cornwall Council,
Head of Adult Social Care**

Team: "Options for assistive technology"

"Everyone has something to bring to the table: different skills, knowledge and experience."



**Reuben, Director of a social enterprise
providing end of life care**

Team: "Options for assistive technology"

"I found myself contributing more as a member of the community who is over 50 than as a director of a social enterprise."



Kerry, Social entrepreneur, mindfulness teacher

Team: "Options for assistive technology"

"I think the rest of the process will be very useful for me because I'm setting up my own company and I do need to do more market research. And I'm getting more knowledge about how to do that and who to ask."



Angela D, Delivery Partner, Volunteer Cornwall

Team: "Options for assistive technology"

"We came away thinking more about what can we do, as opposed to we can't do that because there isn't the funding."



Sue, retired

Team: "Options for assistive technology"

"I found this design approach quite fun, I think it's a fun approach! I probably chose the wrong career, I should have been a designer!"



Kate, Cornwall Council, Commissioner

Team: "Options for assistive technology"

"In my role as a commissioner it's really important that we use an evidence-based approach to developing services, based on what people really want. I think the programme has really reinforced that with the people in the room."



Isabella, social entrepreneur

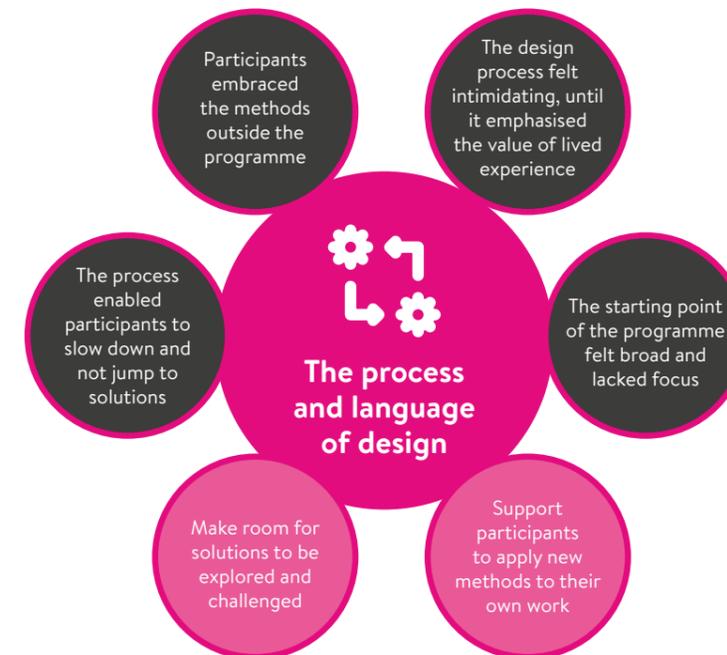
Team: "Mobility and transport"

"Six years ago, I participated in the school for social entrepreneurs, as I was 60, and I formed Menopause Self-Care, which is a social enterprise that designs and puts on courses for women in the menopausal years. I'm interested in healthy ageing, and that's why I'm here."

3. INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

This section brings our findings to life through stories around 5 broad themes. This spread summarises those themes, as well as related insights (●) and opportunities for improvement (○).

At the end of the description of each insight, we indicate how our observations relate to the indicators defined at the start of the programme (see p5). We also indicate whether the relevant indicators were positively met (→), whether the process could be improved to achieve this ambition (✕), or whether the impact is ambivalent (○).





3.1 DIVERSITY & COLLABORATION

One of the core objectives of Phase 1 of the programme was to bring together people in later life, health and social care professionals, carers, and social entrepreneurs in order to collaboratively explore a challenge. Particular attention was paid to ensuring each team included representatives from each group. What were the benefits and challenges to bringing together such a diverse group of people, from different professional backgrounds and walks of life?

3.1.1 Challenging assumptions through diversity

When asked about what they felt were the positive aspects of their experience, most participants mentioned the diversity of people in their teams. They felt this allowed for enriching conversations, and helped to challenge personal assumptions.

“I think that can be quite sobering when you are thinking ‘this is the absolute big hitting issue’ and someone else doesn’t agree with you, that challenge is useful at times.” (Paul H. Torbay).

In particular, this was felt by participating commissioners, whose understanding of the challenge is often more strategic, and less directly anchored in people’s lived experience.

In addition, having to work in a focused way across 4 workshops with a consistent team of people seems to have fostered a better understanding across the different groups. It not only helped to challenge assumptions about later life, but also helped to shift perceptions about what each individual can bring to such a programme. *“Through this process, my role as a social entrepreneur has changed. First, I felt I was perhaps treated with suspicion. The word entrepreneur suggests that you are this hard-nosed robot coming to capitalise on everything. I had to go through the process of explaining that businesses like mine have a social mission [...] Now, people have gotten used to me contributing as another person in the team.” (Owen, North Devon).*



Relevant indicators:

- Health and social care leaders better understand social entrepreneurship.
- Health and social care leaders understand the needs of people in later life and work with them to commission services.

3.1.2 Reconciling diverging agendas

One effect of having recruited such diverse participants was that each individual joined the programme with different expectations and motivations. Some saw it as a way to learn new methods to bring into their current work, be it as a commissioner, provider, entrepreneur, or active community member. Others wanted their voice, or the voice of someone they felt they represent to be heard. Others mainly saw it as a networking platform. Finally, some were hoping to get funding for their organisation at the end of the programme.

This diversity of agendas meant that, in order to generate solid, sustained engagement, the programme needed to help participants to find a shared sense of ownership and purpose. At first, this was a challenge. Some participants reported feeling unclear about what the programme was aiming to concretely achieve and what the next steps would be up until the fourth workshop.

However, despite the lack of clarity, most participants stayed engaged until the end. This can be attributed to the level of passion they individually brought to the process. But it can also be observed that, to some extent, having designed the programme to get small teams working on a shared mission in a very focused way helped to create a shared sense of accountability.



Relevant indicator:

- Design workshop participants feel they had a role in the design process.

3.1.3 Finding a shared language

One of the consequences of bringing together such diverse teams is that every individual brings with them their own world view informed by their lived experience and professional background. This may at first have represented a challenge, particularly when professional jargon came into play.

In Somerset, for example, the team we followed often saw their conversations take an unproductive turn when they struggled to find a shared definition for some of the core concepts linked to their challenge. This was not only due to language barriers across different expertises, but also to the fact that each participant brought with them a different value systems. For instance, a debate around what was the right approach to solving their challenge highlighted an implicit disagreement around what should be viewed as valid insight, based on whether they favoured clinical data or lived experience to implement new ideas in their day job.

In other teams, however, while some language issues also arose, the diversity had a positive impact on the way they chose to communicate their insights, as it pushed them to set aside professional jargon, and find a common ground. *“I think that’s been a real strength of this process and that’s reflected in how pragmatic and plainly described our solutions are.” (Paul H. Torbay).*



Relevant indicator:

- Design workshop participants reflect on the barriers and facilitators of the co-design process.

3.1.4 Finding common ground through research

Interviewees reflected on how broad the challenges felt at the start of the process. They found that each challenge had many different entry points, interpretations, and solutions. Each individual brought their assumptions along with them, and the first two workshops saw participants having to navigate each other's assumptions, sometimes with difficulty. However, the third workshop was experienced by many as a point in the process where they reached clarity as a team.

Some participants reflected on how, no matter how sceptical they may have been about the validity of the community research, it helped them to focus their conversations away from their differences of opinion, and onto the needs of people in later life. The community research provided a common evidence-base grounded in the real lives of people that helped each team to build a shared understanding of the challenge and a shared vision.

“What I think is so brilliant about [Transform Ageing] is that instead of starting from the NHS or statutory organisations, it starts from the grassroots.”

PAM, RETIRED NUTRITIONIST



Relevant indicator:

- *Commissioners and health and social care providers understand the needs of people in later life and work with them to commission services.*



OPPORTUNITIES

Enable facilitators to build close relationships with the teams

Some participants expressed that they would have liked more guidance, particularly at the start of the process, when they found it challenging to agree on a shared definition of their challenge. While in some teams, some participants naturally took on a facilitation role, in others, people were careful not to step on each other's toes. Some of the facilitators also remarked that the team discussions felt most constructive when they were able to join in and provide some guidance or challenge to push the group further.

Smaller numbers would allow for more meaningful contributions

While participants recognised the benefits of being part of a large team for richer discussions informed by a diversity of experiences, some teams also reflected on how challenging it was to meaningfully contribute in a large group. This was echoed by facilitators, who felt better able to build trusted and supportive relationships in locations with fewer numbers. *“The groups [in Cornwall] have been between 4 and 5, which has made it easier to manage. It's not always just the loudest voice being heard.” (Sean, facilitator).*



3.2 ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSIVENESS

A key ambition of the programme was to place people in later life at the heart of the design process, in order to increase their influence on the design and delivery of solutions that better meet their needs. This implies that the programme team had to not only ensure that people in later life were well represented at the workshops, but also that they felt they could fully engage with the content and format of the workshops. What were the enablers and barriers to reaching and engaging the programme’s target audience? To what extent did participants feel included in the process?

3.2.1 Feeling heard and trusted

Engaging and retaining people in later life throughout the process and making them feel they were equal contributors was key to the success of the programme. Most teams developed a strong sense of camaraderie as the programme evolved, and this fostered a sense of inclusiveness. While some people in later life expressed feeling intimidated by the process and by the expertise of people in their groups at first, this evolved as the process evolved. Some suggested they felt surprised to be trusted to conduct their own research and contribute their own insights.

To some extent, the process helped them to value their own lived experience. *“I could bring things to the group that they haven’t experienced and mine was first hand.” (Sylvia, Torbay).* Some also reported feeling there was no sense of artificial hierarchy. *“It’s doing the consultation at the right stage with a very wide range of people, and we are all on a level playing field, we’re all starting from the same position. Nobody is more important than anybody else and I think that’s a good way to do it.” (Pam, Torbay).*



Relevant indicator:

- People in later life feel they made a contribution to the design process.

3.2.2 Practical issues get in the way of accessibility

Despite mostly positive returns about inclusiveness, some participants also reported feeling concerned about the accessibility of the workshops, both in terms of format and content.

In places like Devon and Torbay, for example, the venues presented some acoustics and visibility issues. This had an impact on how participants felt able to engage with the content. In some cases this seems to have been further reinforced by issues around pride and dignity. *“What we need is some sort of written guidance, because I don’t always hear really well, and I don’t like interrupting, so I miss quite a lot.” (Brian, North Devon).* This led to some participants partly misunderstanding the intention behind some of the tasks, and as a result feeling sceptical of the whole programme.

The pace of the workshops also seems to have represented a barrier to engagement for some participants. In North Devon, a few people dropped out after the first or second workshop, feeling it was too much for them to take in. *“My impression is that it is hard work. Particularly for the older people, 5 hours of workshopping is not something you are used to doing. [...] It’s quite a tiring and demanding process.” (Dawn, North Devon).*



Relevant indicator:

- People in later life feel they understood the design process.

3.2.3 What about ‘the hidden people’?

Although most participants felt positive about the diversity of the groups, some also highlighted that the most vulnerable voices were missing from the process, and that perhaps the proportion of people in later life compared to professionals was too low. *“We don’t have too many older people here. [...] I feel I’m trying to speak on behalf of all older people in Torrington.” (Brian, North Devon).*

While the community research also aimed to bring the voice of people in later life to the centre of the design process, participants observed how the interviews they conducted tended to be with people who felt positive about their life, and were less vulnerable than they might have assumed. In Torbay, the team reflected on how this was due to the fact that their research participants were self-selecting. *“The people who wanted to be interviewed were probably those who wanted to be motivated anyway.” (Mike, Torbay).*

This raises a challenge for the next iteration of the programme around how to reach more isolated and vulnerable people both through the workshops and the community research.



Relevant indicator:

- Health and social care leaders understand the needs of people in later life and work with them to commission services.

“I do wonder whether it could be broken down into smaller bite-sized chunks, and whether those chunks could be taken to older people where they are [...] to a luncheon group or a dementia cafe and do just an hour facilitated session.”

DAWN, NORTH DEVON



OPPORTUNITIES

Meet people where they are to enable more voices to be part of the process

Participants and facilitators suggested that the process could be better designed to meet people where they were at. There was a suggestion, for example, to run smaller, lighter sessions in places like dementia cafés and lunch clubs to enable participants who would not be able to commit to a full workshop to contribute to the process.

Make time to uncover the expertise and skills people bring

Meeting people where they are is not just about practical considerations. It is also about skills and capabilities. For example, some participants felt they needed more training to be able to ‘perform’ what they thought should be formal interviews, and found it puzzling because chatting to older people was “something I do all the time.” (Brian, North Devon). There was therefore perhaps a missed opportunity to build on the insights and skills people bring into the room, and to design a more bespoke journey for some individuals.



3.3 HUMAN BEINGS FIRST, PROFESSIONALS SECOND

The health and social care system is under pressure, and the constraints of the sector can sometimes lead to losing sight of what matters. When applied to a complex social challenge such as ageing, design thinking aims to re-address that. The design process is driven by methods that aim to generate deep empathy for the end users of a product or a service. Additionally, because it requires collaboration, it fosters empathy between different actors involved in designing, commissioning or delivering a solution. What enabled participants to connect with the challenges, as well as with each other, on a human level?

3.3.1 A team of human beings

While for some teams, it was a challenge to find bridges across different professional backgrounds and world views at first, most teams found themselves connecting on a human level, rather than on a professional level. This was in part modelled by the facilitators who steered away from formality. “A lot of what works in Cornwall is people talking to each other. The way it’s been facilitated, [participants] can relate to that. We all came along with preconceived ideas about what this is going to be. Some felt it was going to be too corporate, but they made it very easy to slip into from Day 1.” (Angela, Cornwall)

Some of the activities enabled that. Participants referred to the Round Robin activity at the first workshop as an exercise that enabled their team to break the ice, through collaboratively exploring ideas without the constraints of reality. “When you take the individual roles out of it and just work as a team of human beings, it’s really different to when you are talking from your professional perspective. So I found myself contributing more as a member of the community who is over 50 than as a director of a social enterprise. I’m also finding from other members of the team whom I know as commissioners - I’m seeing them in a different light. They have dropped their guard to a certain degree as well.” (Reuben, Cornwall).



Relevant indicators:

- Design workshop participants reflect on the barriers and facilitators of the co-design process.

3.3.2 The emotional weight of the research

For their community research, participants did not hesitate to tap into their personal networks. Some conducted interviews with family members, friends and neighbours. Others with service users of their organisations. As a result, participants not only felt more emotionally engaged with the stories and insights they brought back to their groups, but also reported feeling closer to the people they had interviewed. *“I noticed just as I was leaving, just the value of listening, and asking each other questions about our experience, and how we feel about where we are in our life brought a value [...] a new way of relating to each other. The platform of the subject of Transform Ageing allowed us to talk. We have begun a relationship on a deeper level just by asking the question.” (Isabella, Cornwall).*

This meant that the third workshop felt particularly emotional. Participants enjoyed feeding back on the stories they had heard. For some, the process was also an opportunity to open up about their own experience through the stories of other people. This deepened connection with the subject matter helped the teams to re-frame their overall challenge and concept, paying more attention to end users’ attitudes and inner motivations, rather than focusing on the problems of the system.

→ Relevant indicators:

- Design workshop participants reflect on the barriers and facilitators of the co-design process.

3.3.3 Navigating formality and informality

As highlighted by the previous points, one of the successes of the programme is that it has enabled professionals to bring their whole selves to it.

However, some of the people in later life experienced a tension between being part of a formal programme and being a member of the community, particularly when it came to the research. On the one hand, the process required people to use their community connections to contribute meaningfully to the process. On the other hand, when stepping into the role of researchers, participants sometimes felt the pressure to formally represent Transform Ageing, and felt hindered by some of the language and processes they had learned. Some were concerned about damaging trusted relationships with neighbours and friends by getting them to sign a consent form. Others were puzzled by the fact that they had to conduct formal interviews around subjects they felt deeply familiar with through their lived experience or everyday conversations they were having with other community members.

✘ Relevant indicators:

- Design workshop participants feel they understood the design process.



OPPORTUNITIES

Find the right balance between a formal process and a human approach

Feedback from participants in later life has highlighted that small details, like the design of a consent form can have a significant impact. There is an opportunity to offer more targeted support to grow participants’ confidence around how to build trust and conduct research in a non-threatening way while at the same time maintaining the ethical distance of a researcher.

“What it means is that some professionals they can come to this and some of the boundaries that normally led to them thinking in siloed ways can begin to come down, and it’s coming down because of the way they are able to relate to the community and the voluntary sector people that are in the room.”

PAUL BURSTOW, CHAIR OF TRANSFORM AGEING NATIONAL ADVISORY PANEL



3.4 THE PROCESS & LANGUAGE OF DESIGN

Participants joined the programme with varying levels of understanding and experience of using design thinking to approach complex social issues. One of the challenges was to engage all participants, regardless of their familiarity with design, without alienating or patronising them. To what extent did workshop participants feel they understood the design process? How did it impact their overall experience?

3.4.1 Confidence and expertise

People have joined the programme with varying levels of confidence and emotional resilience. While overall participants felt able to have an equal weight in conversations, some interviewees alluded to feeling out of their depth, particularly at the beginning of the process. Some referred to the intensity of the workshops, the challenge of having to think creatively quickly, or having to process some of the jargon used by other members of the team. *“The last task we were given I had to admit defeat. I could not make any contribution.”* (Paul F., Torbay). In some cases, it was apparent that being surrounded by professionals familiar with the design process or with some of the technicalities of the subject matter led to a negative assessment of their own level of expertise.

However, as the process progressed, more emphasis was placed onto the value of lived experience, which helped to grow the confidence of some participants in later life to contribute from a place of expertise. *“With the exception of one person and my carer, everyone was a professional. The gentlemen who wasn’t a health professional had a lot of personal experience, and it was useful to get his perspective as a user of the system.”* (Mike, Torbay).



Relevant indicators:

- People in later life feel they have a role in the design process.

3.4.2 Looking for focus

The challenges given to participants at the start of the process included *‘Preventing social isolation and loneliness’, ‘Feeling supported as a carer’, ‘Preventing physical and mental ill health’, ‘Staying active in the community’,* and more. Many noticed the overlaps across the different challenges, and found it difficult to see how the design process would help them to move from a big abstract theme to a concrete brief. *“We are looking at the whole gambit. We probably chose something that is too big. We’re looking at what society needs to do!”* (Ian, Somerset).

Some also felt bemused by the programme’s definition of ‘people in later life’ as anyone over 50. It encompasses a broad spectrum of people, with diverse needs, aspirations, health conditions, and mindsets. By being inclusive of younger and potentially more active people, this definition positively challenged assumptions around older people being a burden, and pushed participants to adopt an opportunity mindset. However, it also added a level of complexity for participants who had to tackle a broad challenge without a clear segmentation. For most teams however, this initial confusion turned into clarity as the process progresses. *“Each tool has been quite focused [...] and has really helped to narrow [...] our thinking on a specific task at hand.”* (Paul H, Torbay).



Relevant indicators:

- Design workshop participants feel they understood the design process.

3.4.3 Not jumping to solutions

Phase 1 of the Transform Ageing programme led participants through the early stage of the design process, which consists of exploring a challenge with an open mind. This phase often requires that we explore a range of opportunities before we are able to focus on a solution. This implies being comfortable with ambiguity and trusting the process. For people who were used to more traditional approaches, or were already working on solutions, having to hold back wasn’t easy *“As a wider system we’ve been working on solutions to some of these problems for a while. Which has meant that there have been times that I’ve had to bite my tongue, and deliberately not drop a solution in when we’ve been having a complex discussion.”* (Paul H, Torbay).

For some, this offered a refreshing alternative to their usual way of working, and enabled a different way to listen. *“I think the conversations I had were really open-ended and unguarded, while in my job I am trying to talk to people trying to reach some sort of conclusion or diagnosis or some solution to their problem.”* (Mike, Torbay).

However, others who were used to more consultative approaches found it confusing to be several steps removed from the solution. *“They should have said what they are trying to do, and we could have said no, that’s not a good target. We don’t know what they are trying to do.”* (Brian, North Devon).



Relevant indicators:

- Design workshop participants feel they understood the design process.

“Having to get your thought process going quite quickly, [...] is obviously good for us with an ageing brain!”

PAM, TORBAY

3.4.4 Embracing the methods

As highlighted by the previous points, some participants felt ambivalent about the design process as a whole. However, others really embraced the programme as a learning opportunity, and talked about applying some of the design, facilitation and research methods they experienced to their own work. *“I think the rest of the process will be very useful for me because I’m setting up my own company and I do need to do more market research. And I’m getting more knowledge about how to do that and who to ask.”* (Kerry, Cornwall).

This suggests that the impact of Phase 1 of the programme goes beyond the quality of the briefs created for social entrepreneurs. The workshops have, to some extent, served a capability building purpose, with the potential to impact on some of the working cultures and practices within the health and social care system. *“I think the workshops have already started to make a real difference in the way we are working in commissioning. After leaving one of the workshops I went back to a meeting with my team and we were planning to have a conversation about how we do some engagement with older people living in care homes. And we had a really amazing experience. We sat down together, put some flipcharts up on the wall and started to think more creatively about what we could do. So traditionally, we would put some questionnaires together and go and ask people. But we started to think about the different methodologies to get the best we could from the engagement.”* (Kate, Cornwall).



Relevant indicators:

- Design workshop participants feel they understood the design process.
- Commissioners understand the needs of people in later life and work with them to commission services.

“I think one of the main things about the process is that they have encouraged us to think differently. It’s been done in such a way that we didn’t realise we were actually doing it. We just sort of dived straight into it. We came away thinking more about what can we do, as opposed to ‘we can’t do that because there isn’t the funding.’”

ANGELA CORNWALL



OPPORTUNITIES

Make room for solutions to be explored and challenged

Participants all brought with them some ideas about what they felt might be a solution to the challenges of ageing. While Phase 1 is about Exploring the Challenge, there is an opportunity to surface those solutions and allow these to be challenged by the research. This would help to bring more direct value to participants by enabling to see how the design process might inform their own projects while contributing to the collective effort of generating briefs for social entrepreneurs. *“I think that would be an interesting treasure map of ideas that the social entrepreneurs could tap into to just test what folks think are the things that they need. And I think as a health system we currently don’t have a really good understanding of what people think will have the most impact on their lives.”* (Paul H., Torbay).

Support participants to apply new methods to their own work

Some participants have already started to use the methods they have learned in their own work. Some also suggested that there is an opportunity to further support that, in a very light-touch way. *“Having some sort of toolkit for people where they can look at the approaches we have been using in the workshops would be very helpful. Particularly the creative approach that has really gone a long way to engage not just people in the workshops, but also people who have been interviewed.”* (Kate, Cornwall).

This would deepen the impact of the programme through influencing the culture and ways of working of participants who might not be involved in Phase 2.



3.5 OWNERSHIP & LEGACY

Phase 1 of Transform Ageing engaged more than 120 participants. Over 4 months, they contributed a significant amount of their own time to generate briefs for individual social entrepreneurs to turn into real impactful solutions in Phase 2. How did the programme enable participants to feel enough ownership over the process to stay fully engaged? How do they feel about the next phase of the Transform Ageing?

3.5.1 Building on local momentum

Being a participant of Phase 1 of Transform Ageing was no small commitment. *“A challenge with the way this process has been designed, is that it is a big commitment in a relatively small period of time, and in the summer when people are quite rightly going on holidays or having family to spend their holidays with them.”* (Dawn, North Devon).

Despite that, some of the sites were particularly successful at ensuring people stayed engaged. Delivery Organisations prioritised people with a clear passion for the aims of the Transform Ageing programme, and undertook consistent follow-ups with participants in-between workshops. This helped to generate a sense of belonging and momentum.

In addition, a few participants reflected on how the timing of the programme felt right for them. The aims of Transform Ageing aligned to their priorities, whether they were commissioning new services or developing their own enterprise. They also linked to current conversations within the health and social care system. This helped to make the research feel relevant and build on local momentum. *“There is real excitement that has been created, and I think we need to jump to the back of that, and keep the excitement, because this is certainly the best time to make change.”* (Angela D, Cornwall).



Relevant indicators:

- Design workshop participants feel they made a contribution to the design process.

“It feels we are still at the early stages of coming up with a product. And if this is about real co-creation that’s where it feels a bit disingenuous. We’ve got this far with co-creation but now our ideas are going to be taken from us. So we’re not co-creating anymore.”

SUE, SOMERSET

3.5.2 Who owns Transform Ageing?

Although the programme overall generated positive momentum, participants raised questions around ownership throughout the process.

Firstly, some participants found the language of design thinking alienating, and, as a result found it difficult to join in at times. As a result, there was a sense that they were working *for* the Transform Ageing team, rather than being part of a collective effort *on behalf of* their community.

In addition, some participants expressed some anxiety around fidelity and were left wondering how the Transform Ageing team would interpret the rich local insights and data each site generated. *“Bearing in mind that we are designing for specific communities, I’ve certainly lost how on earth what we have designed, if it’s going to be merged with what’s come across in other counties, is still going to relate to the area that we have in mind, and the service idea we are developing.”* (Sue, Somerset).

Finally, some participants felt that the objectives of the programme were not clearly communicated. *“The last talk with UnLtd should have been said at the beginning, but I think it’s still not 100% clear who qualifies for that money.”* (Frank, Torbay). This raised questions around the value participants were getting in exchange for their contribution. *“I think tensions are running really high, because we are all here with our different agendas about what we want to get personally for our work environments or community and so on. Some of our members today are clearly aspiring entrepreneurs, and taking part in the process not just to explore the challenge in itself, but with*

the hope that there would be some benefit about potentially attracting some funding around their idea.” (Sue, Somerset).

These reflections hint at a certain level of misunderstanding around the role of Phase 1 in relation to the rest of Transform Ageing. They may also imply that participants had higher expectations around ownership than the design of the programme has enabled them to experience. Finally, they suggest a desire to see the impact of their contribution.

Relevant indicators:

- Design workshop participants are satisfied with the level and nature of their involvement.
- Design workshop participants feel they understood the design process.

“I’m wondering how will the information we gathered from our conversations with older people be shared? Because it is important that this does get shared to make a difference.”

ISABELLA, CORNWALL

3.5.3 Emotional investment

For some participants, the sense of ownership described above went beyond simply wanting to see a tangible return on their contribution. It was apparent that some of the teams felt emotionally invested in the programme and in the briefs they had developed. *“I suppose we felt it’s our baby.”* (Pam, Torbay).

This meant that, when questions around Phase 2 were raised at the fourth workshops, some participants expressed frustration and sadness. They talked about feeling that the hard work they had put in over four months was being ‘taken away’ from them to be given to mysterious ‘social entrepreneurs.’ This suggests that the emotional attachment that the process would generate was perhaps underestimated in the original programme design at the start. *“Ideally, we would be marching to the top of the hill. The end to end process isn’t there.”* (John, Somerset).

Some participants also pointed out that the emphasis on *individual* social entrepreneurs in Phase 2 contrasted with the effort to build a community and nurturing a collaborative mindset in Phase 1. *“It’s not just about the briefs, it’s also about the experience we are all bringing. It would be great as a midway process if there were 10 potential social entrepreneurs here, and we could meet them face-to-face and share our insights and ideas with them.”* (Rhys, Somerset).

Unsurprisingly, as a result of the sense of ownership generated by the process, participants expressed a strong desire to see the community they had been part of for 4 months being sustained and having an impact beyond the boundaries of Phase 2 of Transform Ageing. *“I think I will take away from this the fact that I have met people I would never have met before, and most of us are going to keep connected. And we are going away and keep talking to each other about ideas, and maybe we are going to try to do something on a small scale based on what we discussed, and if someone has an idea and wants to chat it through then we’ve decided that we will be there willing to support one another.”* (Jenny, Somerset).

Relevant indicators:

- Design workshop participants are satisfied with the level and nature of their involvement.



OPPORTUNITIES

Build better links between social entrepreneurs and participants

The ownership generated by Phase 1 suggests that there is an opportunity to enable Workshop participants and social entrepreneurs to work together in Phase 2. *“My instant thought was that rather than letting it go, if a social entrepreneur could come and sit with us, and from a different perspective say yes that’s a good idea or no that would never work... It would have been nice to have interaction with the social entrepreneurs. I think both sides would have benefited from that to take it a step further.”* (Jenny, Somerset)

Nurturing an emotionally invested community

Some of the insights and ideas that emerged in the Design Workshops are related to how the system or the community might better work together and are not necessarily suitable for being solved by single social entrepreneurs. Finding ways to maintain and nurture the sense of community generated by Phase 1 would help to ensure that the programme has a local legacy and that those ideas have a chance to be explored further through collaboration.

3. NEXT STEPS

What happened after the workshops?

Phase 1 ended with a series of Insights Days inviting Delivery Organisations and workshop participants to review the draft innovation briefs. Their feedback was then used by the Transform Ageing team to shape the final 6 innovation briefs.

1. **Steps to a positive future**
2. **Mobility and transport**
3. **Life transitions**
4. **Caring about carers**
5. **Right information, right time**
6. **Making connections**

The briefs were then published as a wider call for applications from social entrepreneurs to launch Phase 2.

Keeping participants involved

The concerns described in the previous section around ownership and legacy were taken into account by the Transform Ageing team.

The team is now working with Delivery Organisations to give workshop participants a bigger role in Phase 2 than originally planned, and to keep people involved through:

- Sending regular updates on Transform Ageing news, activities and events.
- Supporting participants to use the design tools and techniques in their work with the community.
- Working in partnership with UnLtd to connect to local social entrepreneurs.
- Supporting people in later life to develop their ideas and apply for funding under the innovation briefs.
- Involving workshop participants in the assessment of social entrepreneurs, to ensure they best meet the needs of local residents.
- Supporting local social entrepreneurs to prototype products and services with people in later life.
- Capturing and sharing people's experience, knowledge and learning from Transform Ageing.

Evaluation questions for Phase 2

Our ethnographic work during Phase 1 has highlighted what mattered most to participants. Therefore, we would suggest that an evaluation of Phase 2 includes the following questions:

- ***Do workshop participants feel their involvement was worth it?***
- ***Have workshop participants stayed in touch with each other? If so, what is the nature of their relationship, and what impact is it having their life / work?***
- ***To what extent do workshop participants feel their work is valued and reflected in the responses from social entrepreneurs?***
- ***How well does Phase 2 of the programme maintain the momentum and build on the ownership generated by Phase 1?***
- ***What is the impact of the programme in each location, beyond the new social ventures?***
- ***Do social entrepreneurs feel confident they understand the 'local flavour' of the challenge they are responding to?***
- ***Do social entrepreneurs feel confident they can have a significant social impact?***

“This is incredibly personal to each of the different groups. The next step should be a build, not a different conversation.”

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT,
SOMERSET



To find out more about the programme
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“There is real excitement that has been created, and I think we need to jump to the back of that, and keep the excitement, because this is certainly the best time to make change.”

ANGELA, VOLUNTEER CORNWALL