

Case Study

Leeds Museums & Art Galleries

Looking Back



Age-Friendly

'Looking Back at the 50s and 60s' was an event run by Leeds Museums and Galleries (LMG) in collaboration with the M & S Company Archive. The event was a combination of reminiscence with artefacts from the Archive and LMGs social history collection, arts and crafts, a talk by the Archive, light refreshments and the opportunity to mingle and chat in a safe and secure environment.

The arts and crafts activity focused on making forget me nots for Dementia Awareness week and will form part of a wider display going into the main hall at the museum in October for the International Day of Older People. Different techniques included printing, painting, drawing and also a very simple colouring activity. We also showed films in a separate quieter space from the Yorkshire Film Archive which were well received, taking advice from the Dementia Alliance on the idea of a 'relaxed cinema' approach where the lights were dimmed but not a total black out, there was lots of space between seats and there were regular intervals for comfort breaks.

How did it aim to reach or have relevance to older audiences? What impact did you want it to have on the size or profile of your visitor base?

The event was aimed at older people including those living with dementia. The event was open to the public and was drop-in but marketing was targeted at older peoples groups and we invited specifically the Peer Support service for people in the earlier stages of dementia and older people from Age UK as they were our target audience..

What tools did you use to measure this impact? What key indicator did you use to measure this impact?

Measuring the success of events like this by footfall alone is problematic, but we hoped that we'd have at least 40 people in attendance – a figure that we exceeded. We hoped that attendees would spend at least half an hour at the event, but were pleased to see many staying much longer than that – taking great interest in the different displays and taking their time over craft activities. The object displays inspired many conversations with visitors, and informal feedback was gathered throughout the day, for example: 'This [printing] is very relaxing' and 'I could stay here all day!'



What other objectives were you hoping to achieve?

To continue our partnership and extend our offer across the museum and the M & S Archive for older people – LMG will go along to the M & S memory café and we will make this an annual event for Dementia Awareness week.

We wanted to raise awareness about the Forget Me Not project for IDOP

We wanted to support older people to access the museum and feel comfortable in the environment and return for more visits.

Were there opportunities for this activity to be intergenerational?

On this occasion we wanted to focus on older people and give them a peaceful environment but we will consider other events where there is an opportunity for families to engage too.

What worked well, what challenges did you face?

The combination and range of activities was just right.

We would have liked more people to attend but realised that actually because people stayed longer we would have been tight in terms of space so that would have been a challenge.

What have been the most important things you have learned?

Timings are crucial – 11am to 3pm was ideal for this group. Getting the balance right is hard between drop-in and invited groups and I think next time we would offer two separate events, one targeted at specific groups and then a more general drop in.

What will you do differently next time?

Arrange our marketing differently and spread across two days

Top Tips for engaging older audiences:

- Timings of events around public transport and winter/summer weather and light evenings crucial
- Organising events for older people in general and those living with dementia has to be thought through carefully – we took advice from the Dementia Alliance and Peer Support and consulted participants. We wanted to be inclusive but some of the feedback from carers and people living with dementia was that they sometimes prefer to have activities geared around their needs and they feel safer and more comfortable with their peers.

Reminiscence is great but people like to have choices and the option to be creative went down really well!

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