Involving and Supporting Older Volunteers

Hello and welcome to this Volunteer Co-ordinators network meeting where we will be discussing involving and supporting older volunteers. By older volunteers rather scarily referring to those people aged 50+

This is the first in a series of blogs and future Volunteer Co-ordinator network meetings where we will be discussing inclusive volunteering practice for members of our communities.
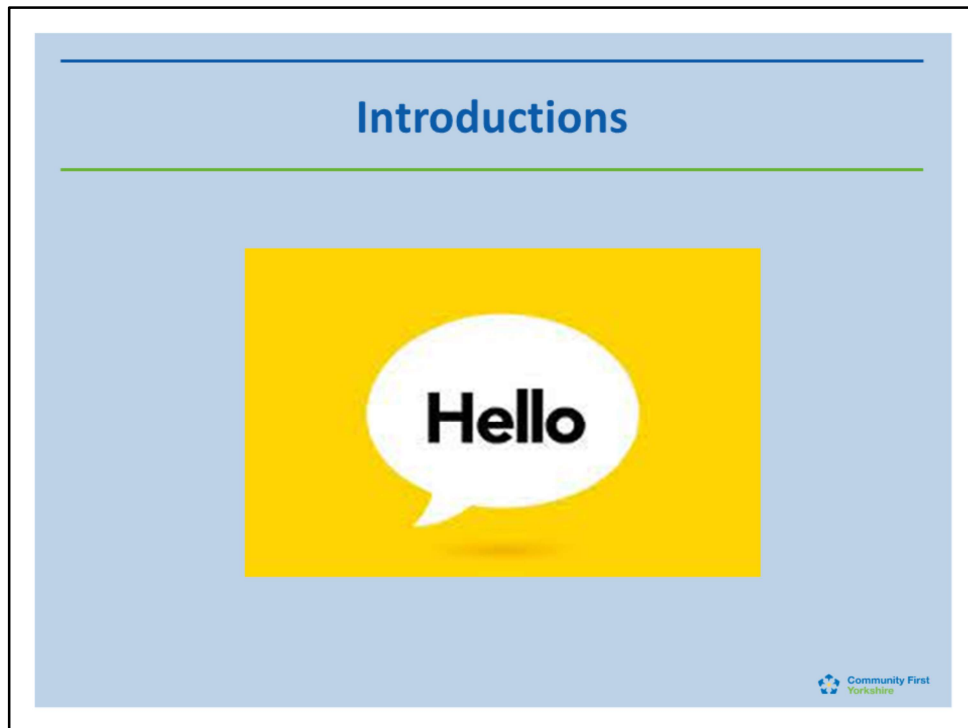
Given the number of people on the call please can I ask you to use the chat box to introduce yourselves and let us know where you are joining us from this morning.

If you have any questions related to the session or any other areas you would like to ask the group please pop them in the chat or use the reaction hand and we will come to you. My lovely colleague Stella (wave) will be monitoring the chat and helping with all things tech throughout the meeting. We are also joined this morning by Fiona from Dementia Forward and Viv Fleming from the Voice & Representation of people aged 50+ network who you will be hearing from later.

Slides and notes with lots of links to reports mentioned will be shared after the session
Please can I ask you to stay on mute.
Whilst it is lovely to see faces, albethey little on my screen today, it is OK to turn off cameras. Grab a cup of tea take a comfort break.

Session Outline

- Changing Population
- Principles of Age Friendly Volunteering
- Barriers to Participation
- Benefits of Volunteering for Older People & Organisations
- Considerations when involving Older Volunteers
- Useful Resources
- Supporting Volunteers with Dementia
  - Fiona Andrews from Dementia Forward
- Voice & Representation of people aged 50+
  - Viv Fleming from Community First

Community First Yorkshire

In this session we are going to explore:

1. A little bit of context – I will talk briefly about the 2021 census which shows England's changing population and the State of Ageing Report (2022) which explores some of the societal changes being observed for older people. I'll touch on World Health Organisation Age Friendly Communities (and we will hear more from Viv about this later) and NCVO and Centre for Ageing Better's recent project and outcomes framework.
2. Discuss barriers to Participation identified from Centre for Ageing Better research.
3. Benefits of volunteering for older people and organisations
4. Considerations when welcoming and involving older people as volunteers.
5. A little about how theory translates into practice at Hambleton Community Action (where I am Volunteering Development Officer)
6. Useful resources

Following a short break
1. We will hear from Fiona about supporting volunteers with dementia
2. We will then hear from Viv about the relatively new Voice and Representation of people aged 50+ network and how you and your volunteers can get involved
3. We will then go into break out rooms with myself, Fiona and Viv to consider your experiences of involving older volunteers and discuss any other questions you may

have around this area

Changing Population

### National Picture (2021 census)
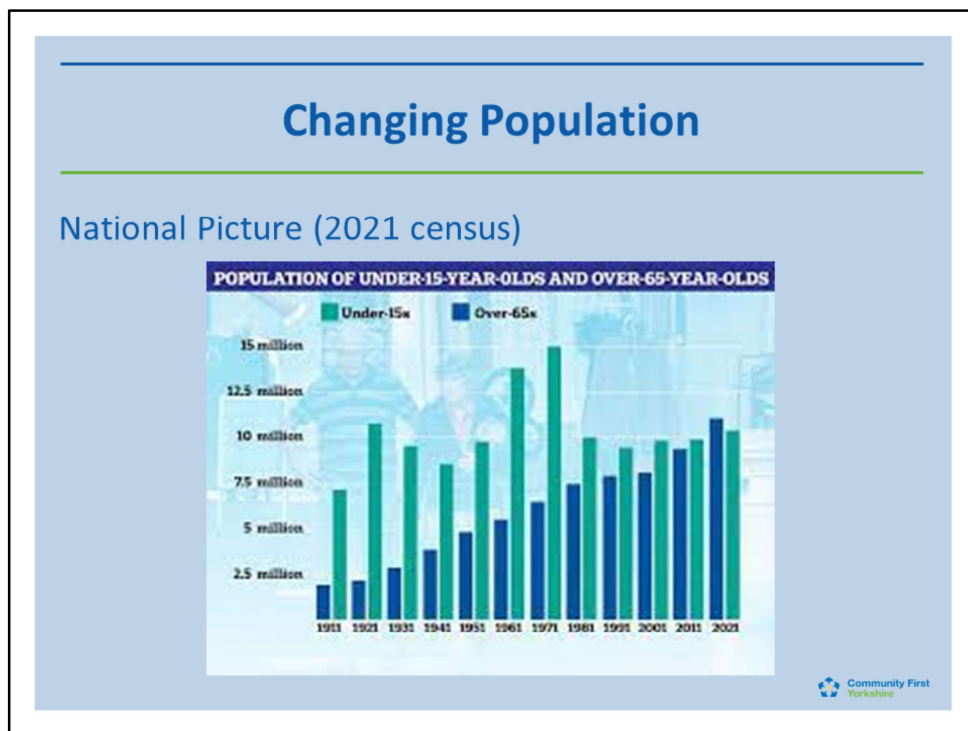
The 2021 Census reveals almost one in five of people living in England are aged 65 or older and this will increase to 1 in 4 in 20 years time.

The Census also highlights that we have a greater proportion of older people in the population. This is the consequence not only of greater numbers of older people, a result of historical birth rates, medical advances etc but also because of declining numbers of younger people, due to falling birth rates.

The number of people over 85 – the fastest growing age group – is predicted to more than double in the next 23 years to over 3.4 million. Healthy life expectancy is not keeping pace with longevity – which means many of us will need to manage multiple long-term conditions.

By 2025, it is estimated that just over 1 million will be living with dementia and over 2 million by 2051.

We know from NCVO Time Well spent report (2019) that 65 – 74 years olds are the group most likely to formally volunteer (particularly women) so it is likely we will be involving older volunteers for longer periods of time.
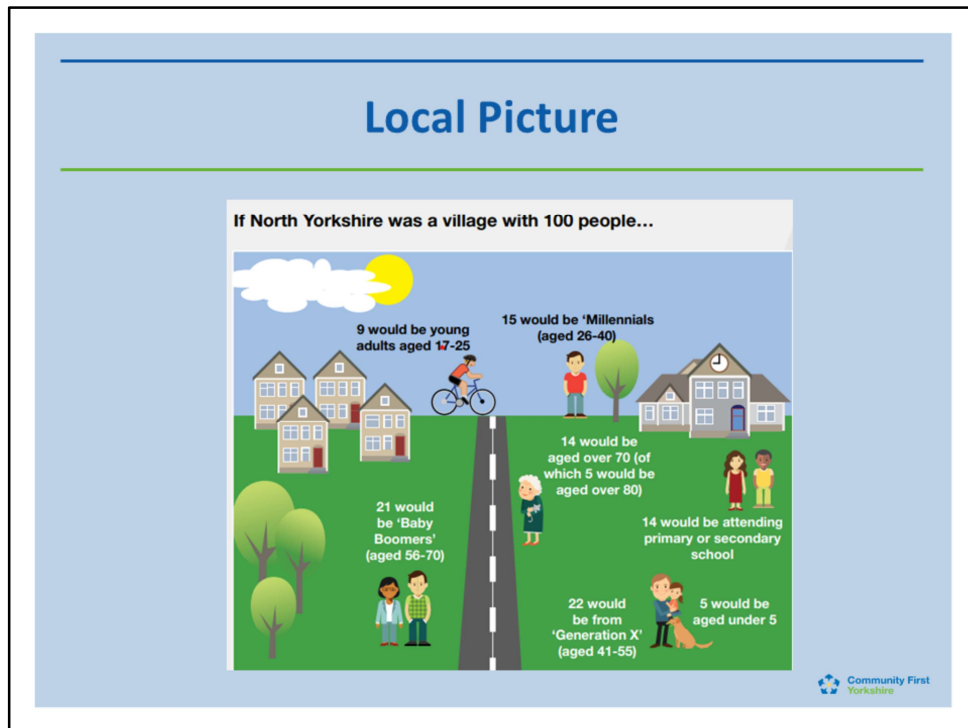
diagram shows if North Yorkshire was a village of 100 people how old would they be 35/100 would be 56 or over (with a high proportion of people in Generation X)

In some areas of North Yorkshire the percentage of people aged 65 and over is much higher than the national average. The 2017 Report suggested older people made up 23.3% of the total North Yorkshire population, compared to 17.7% across England in 2015. (2021 census results still to be analysed).

At that time there had been an increase of 30,000 older people (27.6%) since 2005 in North Yorkshire whilst the overall population had grown by only 19,500 (3.4%) for the same period.

Two thirds of the population growth in North Yorkshire over the last ten years has been as a result of increased numbers of people aged 65 and over.

The increase is due to three key factors:
• Baby boomers (born between 1940 and 1964) population ageing now. Baby boomers account for 97% of the increase.
• People migrating to North Yorkshire when they are aged between 50 and 64

accounting for 2% (2480)
• Those migrating to North Yorkshire in older age accounting for around 1% (970)

In 2017 the largest number of people aged 65 and over was in Harrogate District (34,503, 25% of all people aged 65 and over in the county). The fewest were in Richmondshire (10,227, 7.4% aged 65 and over in North Yorkshire) although initial figures for Richmondshire census indicate that whilst its population decreased by 4.4% there has been an increase of 28.9% in people aged 65 and over.

Office for National Statistics https://www.ons.gov.uk/help/localstatistics has details for different geographies.

State of Ageing Report 2022

- Increasing Diversity
- Income Levels
- Life Expectancy
- Employment Rates
- Living
- Caring commitments
- Ageism

- Declining Health
- Digital Divide

Little more context and up to date information - The Centre for Ageing Better's annual 'The State of Ageing 2022 report' https://ageing-better.org.uk/summary-state-ageing-2022 indicates

Diversity – The older population is set to become more ethnically diverse over time. Currently 5% of people aged 60 and over in England and Wales are from BAME backgrounds, increasing to 21% of people aged 29 and younger.

Low Income – the report suggests a financially secure and healthy later life is becoming increasingly unlikely for millions of people. Data shows a sharp increase in pensioner poverty, meaning that almost 1 in 5 people were living in poverty in the 2019/20 period. With the cost of living crisis this only looks set to continue

Reduction in Life Expectancy – There has been a small reduction in life expectancy (of 0.3 years for women and 0.4 years for men) although this varies in different areas with significant differences between the richest and poorest in our communities.

Employment Rates – with the state pension age increasing more people are working longer yet employment rates among people approaching retirement age have fallen to their lowest levels since 2016. Until the pandemic, the employment rate of people aged 50-64 in the UK had been increasing over time – from 60% in 2000 to 73% in March

2020. There are three times more women than men aged 50-64 working part-time in the UK.

Living Alone - The number of people in mid and later life who live alone – many without the traditional family structures our approach to ageing has historically relied on – has been increasing steadily. More than 2.1 million men and 2.2 million women aged 45-74 live alone in the UK. The number of men within this age group living alone has increased by 68% since 2000. 1 million older people said they haven't spoken to anyone in a month and 4 million say the television is their main form of company. The number of older people in private rented accommodation is also at highest ever rates.

Caring Commitments – people are facing increased caring commitments for grand children/family members and for longer periods of time. 22% of men and 33% of women aged 55-64 in the UK provide unpaid care.

Ageism – most common form of discrimination. It refers to the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) towards others or oneself based on age. This isn't of course only related to older people it can also impact younger people.

Declining Health - According to WHO as people age there is an increase in health challenges – particularly hearing loss, cataracts and refractive errors, back and neck pain and osteoarthritis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, depression and dementia. There is large geographic variation in the proportion of people with three or more long-term conditions.

Digital Divide – whilst the use of technology is increasing in over 65s there is still a gap in use of digital. 3 in 10 people aged 54–74 and two-thirds of the over 75s are not online.

Ageing Better have recently produced infographics and evidence cards, which summarise key stats and context around our ageing population.
Living-longer-infographics.pdf (ageing-better.org.uk)

Couple of other pieces of research:
NCVO Time Well Spent report (July 2022)
Vision for Volunteering (May 2022)
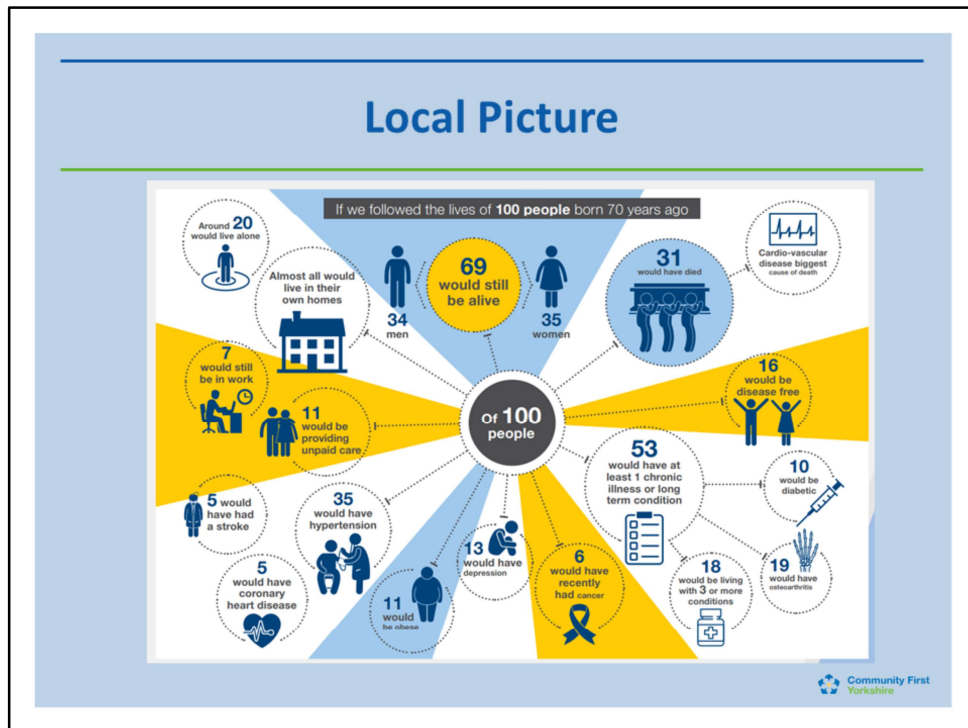
Director of public health annual report 2017 | North Yorkshire Partnerships (nypartnerships.org.uk) diagram shows what would happen if we followed the lives of 100 people aged over 70 and what statistically might happen to them.
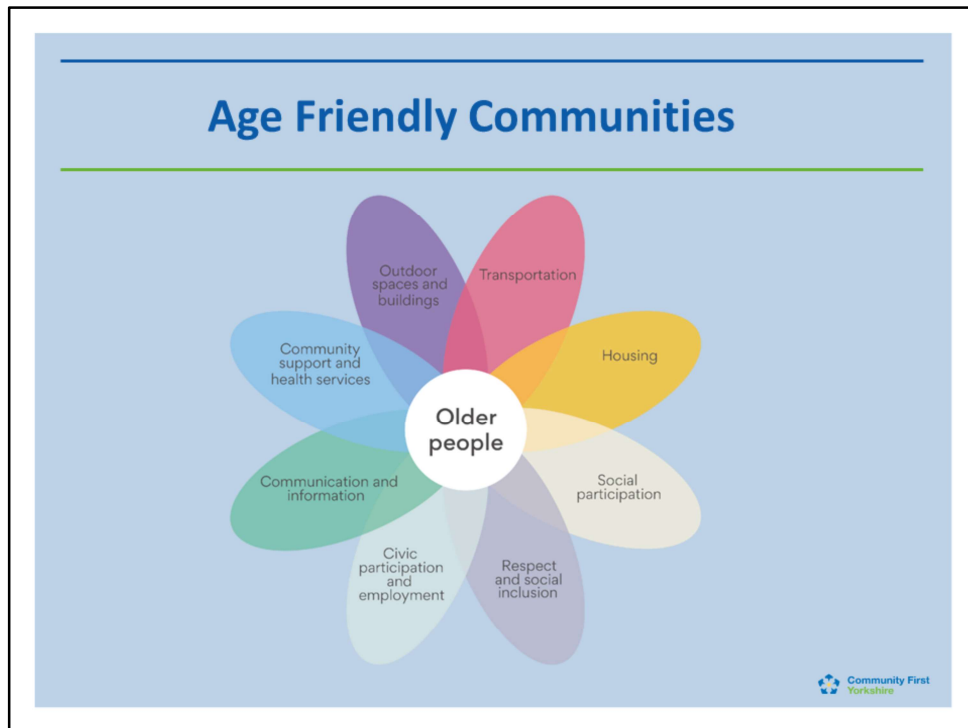
Alongside that some of you may be aware of the movement to develop Age Friendly Communities.

Age-friendly communities are places where age is not a barrier to living well and where the environment, activities and services support and enable older people to: have opportunities to enjoy life and feel well to participate in society and be valued for their contribution. We will be hearing more about this in a little while from my colleague Viv.

I recently attended a webinar delivered by The Centre for Ageing Better about developing Age Friendly Communities. The value of volunteering in the areas of social participation and social inclusion was acknowledged. Copy of slides and links to useful resources are available to share
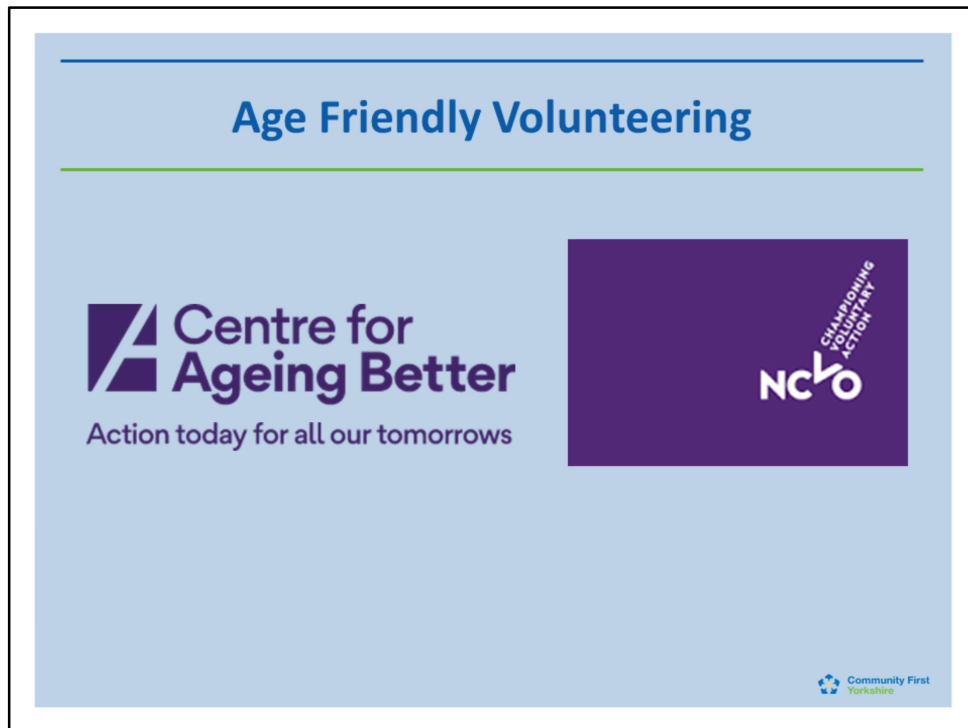
In March 2022 NCVO announced it will partner with the Centre for Ageing Better to support its efforts to increase age-friendly inclusive volunteering in England. NCVO will do this through the delivery of training and the creation of an action learning group of 'advocates for age-friendly inclusive volunteering'. They offered up to ten organisations a place to join an action learning set, meeting once a month over a six-month period, from July 2022 to January 2023. Did anyone sign up??

The purpose of the group is
- to problem-solve
- be candid about barriers
- bold about developing solutions together.

It is hoped the group will develop and embed age friendly inclusive volunteering principles and practice that have been tested and documented in pilots funded by the Centre for Ageing Better.

You will notice I refer a lot to Centre for Ageing Better https://ageing-better.org.uk/ during this presentation. They are a charity funded by an endowment from the Big Lottery. Since 2015 they have produced series of reports, evidence reports, offered funding, photo library. You can sign up to the newsletter https://ageing-better.org.uk/enews much of today's information comes from their research

Centre for Ageing Better Report Age-friendly and inclusive volunteering report (2019) suggested some principles of age friendly volunteering. These will be referred to in outcomes framework being explored by Ageing Better and NCVO
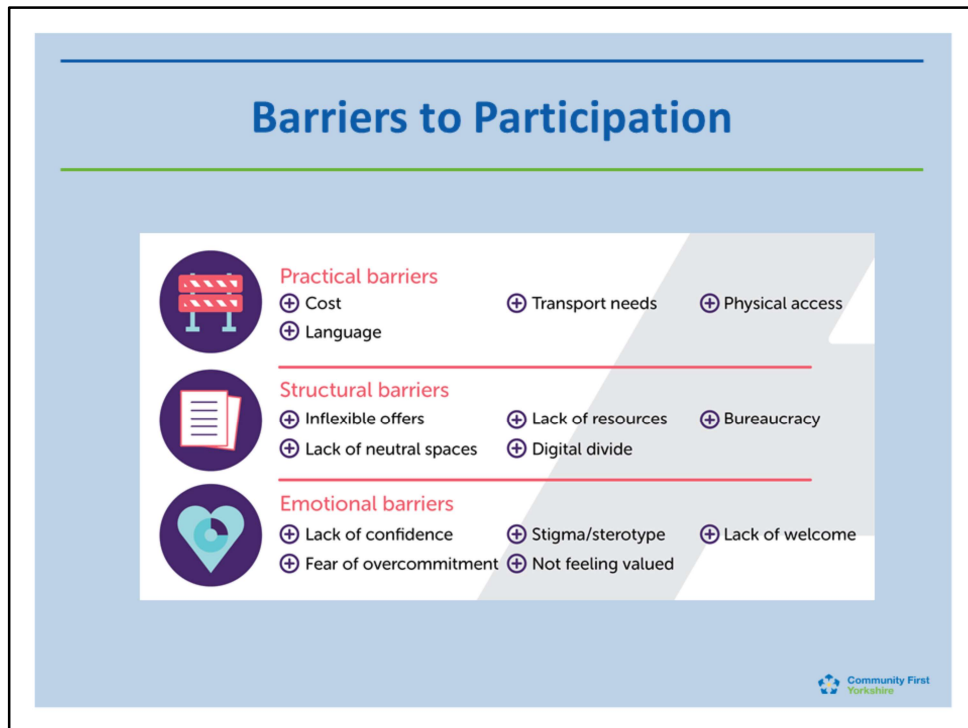
Centre for Ageing Better Report Age-friendly and inclusive volunteering (2019) also identified three kinds of barriers to formal volunteering that can stop older people from giving their time – practical, structural, and emotional

Practical barriers – the financial cost of travel and food, accessibility of buildings and sites, and lack of available time as people balance volunteering with work, caring responsibilities or looking after their own health and wellbeing. These barriers can take real thought and creativity to overcome eg. expenses, lift sharing - make use of assets that already exist in the community.

Structural barriers - those put up by systems and processes, and the infrastructure and resourcing available to support volunteers. Allocate tasks, not roles, to volunteers can make it easier for people to take on the amount of responsibility and time commitment that's right for them.

Emotional barriers - often the most significant barriers people face; lacking confidence, fear of over-commitment and letting people down, or not feeling that volunteering is for 'people like them.' These can compound practical and structural barriers, especially within groups traditionally excluded from volunteering. Overcoming these barriers isn't just achieved by working with potential or current volunteers, however – it's crucial that organisations build links with other bodies where people make contributions, including

community groups and faith institutions, to reflect the diversity of our communities, and to support more diverse recruitment and smoother pathways for people to move between roles and organisations as life changes. In this way people from all backgrounds feel comfortable, welcome and able to participate in ways that work for them.
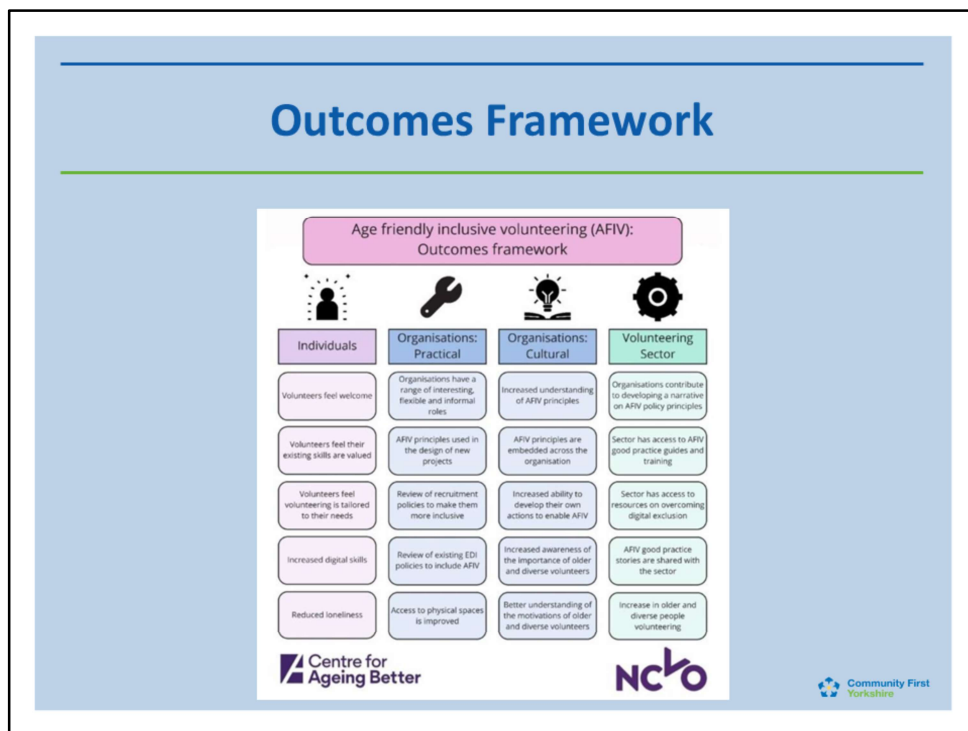
The NCVO Ageing Better project will be collaborating on the development of the outcomes framework, to make sure it is valid and rooted in the everyday context for volunteers and volunteering organisations.

That learning is focused on identifying the key barriers and enablers for people aged 50+ and exploring what prevents them from engaging in volunteering opportunities.

The outcomes in the framework centre around three fundamental areas:

Outcomes for individuals: skill development and how they feel about their volunteering experience.
Outcomes for organisations: practical actions to take and changes to culture.
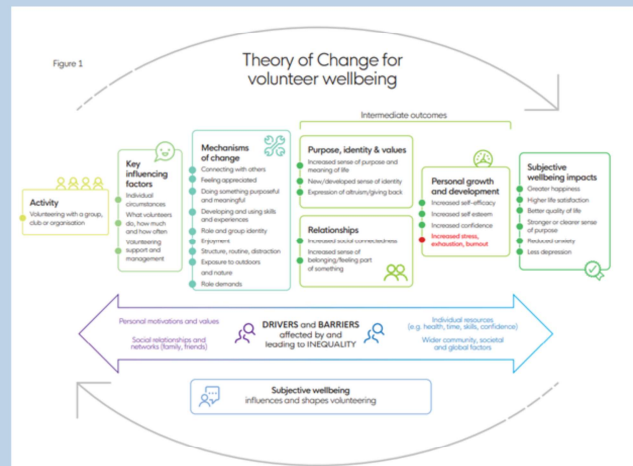**Outcomes for the volunteering sector:** access to training and resources, and developing the narrative on age friendly inclusive volunteering.

The framework will be used to shape the project and as a basis for monitoring, evaluation and learning approach.

I look forward to finding further details in due course.

There is a growing body of research on the links between volunteering and wellbeing.

https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/1920/10/volunteer-wellbeing-Oct-20_briefing.pdf – Volunteering What works and who benefits

offer a theory of change model for how volunteering can impact people. They also pose lots of questions organisations can ask themselves about how volunteers are involved , and engaged and how this might enhance or hinder the positive wellbeing effects of volunteering.

The questions asked are based on NCVO Time Well Spent report about what makes a positive volunteer experience.

For example

What are the potential barriers for people who might really benefit from volunteering with you, and what could you do to remove them?
» Is it easy for your service users to get involved as volunteers? What extra support do they need?
» When recruiting volunteers, how can you use targeted messaging that emphasises the wellbeing benefits of volunteering?

» Is the culture and environment inclusive and welcoming to volunteers? What could you do to make your organisation more inclusive? What could you do to address potential discrimination and bias?

» Do volunteers have opportunities to move between roles, reduce their commitments or step back from volunteering when their personal circumstances change?

» Are your volunteers supported to get involved in roles that are purposeful and meaningful to them?

»How do you find out what is important to individual volunteers: how and why do they want to volunteer and what do they want from the experience?

» Do you co-produce roles and activities with volunteers?

» Do volunteers have opportunities to share their knowledge or develop new skills?

» Do volunteers have opportunities to see the impacts of their work and the difference it makes?

» Do you provide opportunities for volunteers to take up more diverse responsibilities if they want to or to step back if their circumstances change?

» How can you include volunteers in conversations about future plans and changes?

Resources on sight on how to measure wellbeing https://whatworkswellbeing.org/about-wellbeing/how-to-measure-wellbeing/

Benefits for Individuals

- Good for physical and mental health
- Offers better social connections
- Provides structure
- Increases physical activity
- Can reduce sense of loneliness
- Offers opportunity to share and learn new skills
- Improves life satisfaction and wellbeing

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A growing number of studies are looking at the effects of volunteering on those in later years of life.

The evidence points to stronger effects of volunteering on the wellbeing of older volunteers compared to younger adult volunteers. Changes in wellbeing include improved life satisfaction and decline in symptoms of depression for volunteers. Evidence suggests that volunteering may play a 'compensatory' or buffering role for those who have experienced life transitions such as retirement or bereavement. Studies have also found that volunteering can bring a new sense of purpose, identity and sense of belonging.

https://ageing-better.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-05/Evidence-Review-Community-Contributions-2016.pdf

There are lots of reasons why organisations involve older people as volunteers.

People aged 64 – 75 are currently the most likely age group to volunteer. Many groups already do a brilliant job of making older people feel welcome, included and supported but we can focus on the same kind of volunteers – the so-called 'civic core' of highly engaged individuals, who are mainly healthier, wealthier and white – and in doing so can miss out on the talents, skills and enthusiasm of people who we know are less likely to volunteer particularly in formal settings. In particular, this means those who are less well-off, in poorer health, or from a BAME background – or those whose life circumstances have changed.

Volunteering in retirement | JRF (Joseph Roundtree Foundation) 2005 study classified older volunteers into three groups:
- those who volunteer because they have always done so ('lifelong' volunteers)
- those who have come back to volunteering later in life following a break for work and family responsibilities ('serial' volunteers)
- those who are inspired by retirement to volunteer for the first time ('trigger' volunteers).

Skills
Make up large % of volunteers (particularly in North Yorkshire)

Lots of free time (particularly following retirement)
More likely to see value of volunteering

Anyone got anything to add??

Now go onto consider welcoming and inclusive practice for older volunteers.

Centre for Ageing Better 'Helping Out' report (Oct 21) suggests 5 actions for more age friendly and inclusive volunteering for over 50s (post pandemic)

Connect and Listen
- Spend time listening and getting to know your volunteers. Find out what skills and experience they bring and what they want to do.
- Work to understand and embrace diversity. People in later life are not a homogenous group. They are increasingly diverse
- Consider individual circumstances, how they may change and how to support people to stay involved.
- Listen and empower people to do what matters to them – and in ways that work for them.
- Guided conversations – use questions to discuss issues, explore interests, strengths and expectations – can help you get to know people and build relationships, rather than formal applications.

Focus on What Matters
- Be mindful that the term 'volunteering' can be off-putting to some people. Find other terms and ways of talking about taking part or helping out people that may respond to. Eg. helping out, giving time instead of term 'volunteering'
- Recognise the skills and interests that people have had time to develop. Make your

activities fun and welcoming. The social aspect may draw people to other opportunities to help in their communities.
- Celebrate everyone's contributions and share stories, successes and experiences.

Play to Peoples Strengths
- Embrace people's different abilities, aspirations and needs.
- Design tasks or activities that people can dip in or out of rather than making them commit to formal volunteer roles.
- Encourage regular participants to welcome and support newcomers to help them develop confidence and new skills.
- Support people to be 'cocreators' in the tasks and activities they want to get involved in.
- Work with volunteers to create opportunities – such as being champions, ambassadors or session planners – for people who are keen to do more.

Remove Barriers
- Focus on the person and the support they might need as an individual. Often emotional barriers are overlooked, such as lack of confidence or self-esteem.
- Make the application, joining and induction processes simple, with clear and accessible information and concise forms.
- Provide regular support, such as training or regular catch-ups.
- Consider who is not taking part in your work currently and how you might seek to make links to organisations where under-represented people are getting involved already.

Be Flexible
- Try out different ways of communicating with people. Some people may need face to face conversations. Others may need support to get online.
- Create a range of opportunities to suit different circumstances, interests and abilities and different levels of commitment.
- Explore connections in your community and make links with like-minded people, groups or projects, both formal and informal. You may be able to share resources, ideas and experience.
- Consider developing 'taster' or 'micro-volunteering' sessions and activities. Offer a choice of quick, easy tasks, in shorter chunks of time that people can take part in with little or no commitment. For example: making cards, writing letters, creating care packages, setting out chairs, serving tea and cake, planning events.

7 steps to wellbeing through volunteering: How to link to social prescribing (socialprescribingacademy.org.uk)

[7 steps to wellbeing through volunteering: How to link to social prescribing (socialprescribingacademy.org.uk)](https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk)
This guide sits alongside a number of broader conversations about the future of volunteering. The 10-year Vision for Volunteering, launched in May 2022,

Do any of you receive referrals from social prescribers?

- **Meet people where they are**: be prepared for people who are unsure about volunteering, make sure frequency and type of volunteering appropriate to starting point, consider flexibility until confidence is gained, support in looking for other opportunities
- **Make it personal**: what matters to me conversations, offer additional support (plan and resource), identify support needs
- **Put Wellbeing at heart**: consider how can practically support to sustain involvement, wellbeing measures
- **Build Circles of Support**: offer training for staff and other volunteers, find out who is supporting someone, have regular check ins
- **Make it social**: Find out the amount and type of social connection people are looking for when you welcome and induct them as volunteers – look for appropriate roles
- **Remember it's a journey**: use personal plans to identify next steps and if things

change
- **If you treasure it, measure it**: Think about what you may need to capture, at which stage and who is well-placed to help you.
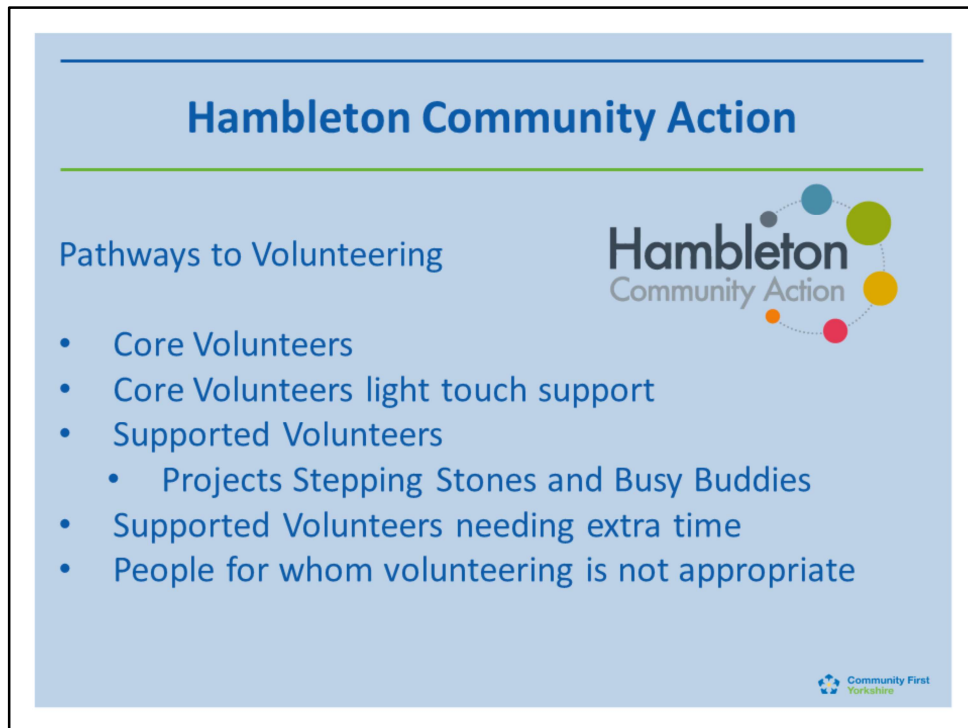
How does this relate in practice?

Hambleton Community Action aims to have a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship with volunteers; with their involvement, informing and developing our work, enabling individuals to learn skills and achieve personal development through their volunteering.

We strive to ensure the wellbeing benefits associated with volunteering are accessible to all. To this end, we provide and promote opportunities for people to volunteer their time for the benefit of others and themselves. Individuals who volunteer with or through Hambleton Community Action are encouraged to engage in activities appropriate to their personal interests, skills, motivations, values and preferences, and are provided with levels of support appropriate to their needs and preferences. We recognise that individuals have a range of motivations that influence their decision to volunteer. The focus is on beneficiaries who see themselves now or in the future in a volunteering role, whether for HCA, or potentially within another organization.

We have developed 5 pathways to anyone expressing interest in volunteering with or through HCA. We are working on the headings for these but broadly:

1. Core volunteers - fulfil core roles meet criteria for existing roles (community car

scheme, shopping angels, community visitors etc)

2. Core plus – core volunteers who require light touch support (internal or external) maybe following a change in circumstance, referral from social prescriber/Living Well (wellbeing benefits), may be a client who would like help to volunteer (rather than be a service beneficiary)
3. Supported Volunteers requiring moderate support, access to training and/or development (Two specific projects Stepping Stones and Busy Buddies)
4. Supported Volunteers who need time to get ready to volunteer whilst support given in other areas eg, might need period of getting ready to volunteer. Up to 6 months support made available specific action plan developed with each individual. They can then go onto volunteer with or through HCA or be signposted to other support
5. People for whom volunteering with or through HCA is not appropriate – for a variety of reasons. Wherever possible we signpost to other agencies/support.

People enquiring about volunteering are not made aware of their identified pathway

We have made a **commitment to give every volunteer the support they need**. The level and type of support is specific to that individual – it may involve training, skills development, employability activities, alleviation of barriers and obstacles to participation, encouragement and/or pastoral support.

Our approach is
      Person-centred
      Strength-based
      Inclusive
      Focused on community participation
      Enabling and facilitative

      The types of support available include a comprehensive induction, peer-to-peer mentoring, scheme meetings, general volunteer meetings, an annual volunteer celebration, a wide range of training opportunities, volunteers' newsletter, plus support and supervision meetings at a frequency agreed between the volunteer and staff member during induction.

Does anyone have any other examples to share??

Other Useful Resources

- Ageing Better
  - Guide to help organisations make volunteering practices more age-friendly and inclusive
  - Ageing-Better-Resources-Community-Groups.pdf (tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)

- TNL Evidence Library
  - Home | The National Lottery Community Fund (tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)

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We will share I the post session notes some documents with you that which show a snapshot of some of the resources available from Ageing Better and the National Lottery Evidence Library. There are lots of toolkits available from Mapping and working with marginalised communities to how to create a friendship group. Really worth exploring

Thank you

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So we've now heard about the theory and after a short break we will hear from Fiona Andrews from Dementia Forward about supporting volunteers with dementia.

Any questions??

Break Out Rooms

- What are your experiences of involving older volunteers?

Discuss either:
- One thing you have learned today?
- One thing you do, that you already feel confident about?
- One thing that you need to develop?

- Any questions?

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