

European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012

DWP is the coordinating organisation in the UK for this European Year.

What is this initiative seeking to achieve?

The overall aim for the Year is to facilitate the creation of an active ageing culture in Europe based on a society for all ages. This ambitious and wide-ranging initiative seeks to encourage and support the efforts of Member States, regional and local authorities, social partners, civil society and the business community to promote active ageing and to do more to mobilise the potential of the rapidly growing population in their late 50s and over. In particular, promoting active ageing means:

- creating better opportunities so that older women and men can play their part in the labour market;
- combating poverty and social exclusion;
- fostering volunteering and active participation in family life and society; and encouraging healthy ageing in dignity .

What activity will characterise the Year?

Whilst member states will develop their own responses to the opportunities 2012 brings, a number of commonly agreed objectives have been agreed:

- to raise general awareness of the value of active ageing and to highlight the useful contribution that older persons make to society and the economy, promoting solidarity between generations and the vitality and the dignity of all people;
- to do more to mobilise the potential of older persons, and to enable them to lead an independent life;
- to stimulate debate, to exchange information and to develop mutual learning between Member States and stakeholders at all levels in order to promote active ageing policies, to identify and disseminate good practice and to encourage cooperation and synergies;
- to provide a framework for commitment and concrete action to enable the European Union, Member States and stakeholders at all levels to develop innovative solutions, policies and long-term strategies through specific activities, and to commit to specific objectives related to active ageing and intergenerational solidarity;
- to promote activities which will help to combat age discrimination, to overcome age-related stereotypes and to remove barriers, particularly with regard to employability.

What tangible results might we see during and after the Year?

During 2011, organisations, including national and local government, voluntary and community sector and business are being **encouraged to commit themselves to specific goals and activities to be achieved in 2012 and beyond.**

The first UK commitment is from Dorset POPP, who have committed to:

- Develop a Social Enterprise to further expand opportunities;
- Expand into areas of health and social care that are currently a 'medical model' as opposed to 'social model' of delivery including supporting 'singing for the brain' and memory cafes for those suffering with dementia;
- Work closely with the voluntary sector;
- Respond to the hopes, desires, needs and aspirations of older people as they are identified;
- Support opportunities to develop sustainable communities in which people can remain living for as long as they wish;
- Promote a culture of early intervention, health, well-being and inclusion with older people as part of the solution, not the problem;
- Continue to promote Safe And Independent Living (SAIL) with a broad range of partners, as a method of multi-agency referral;
- Provide community capacity supported by intergenerational activities;
- Develop access to: food and nutrition, transport, exercise, stimulation, art and culture, education, information, and positive mental health;
- Recognise 'localism' and 'The Big Society' within a vast rural county;
- Endeavour to share the model and disseminate learning.

Other examples of commitments can be found on the useful websites listed below

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/ey2012.jsp>

<http://www.age-platform.eu/en/age-policy-work/solidarity-between-generations/latest-news/1231-2012-european-year-on-active-ageing-and-intergenerational-solidarity/>