

Age-proofing regional policy – a UK first

Case Study

Background

ODS was commissioned by 5050vision – a strategic partnership working on behalf of the North West Development Agency and other key partners – to lead the development of a Regional Framework for Ageing in the North West.

The first framework of its kind in the UK, the aim was to engage key regional stakeholders in agreeing a coherent policy approach to the opportunities and challenges of the rapidly ageing population. The framework was seen as an important underpinning for the development of the Regional Strategy 2010–30.

The demographic challenge is particularly acute in the North West, which has seen an estimated 40% increase in the over-60s' population in the last 20 years.

Partners

Key partners and funders were: The Northwest Development Agency; 4NW, the Regional Leaders' Forum for the North West; NHS North West; Department of Health North West; the Care Services Improvement Partnership; Government Office North West.

Activity

- ODS played a leading, strategic role – challenging the partners about their objectives for the framework and acting as a catalyst for their expertise and ideas
- ODS coordinated a stakeholder engagement process involving more than 150 representatives of different organisations – including private sector, voluntary and third sector groups
- ODS authored the framework document itself – bringing clarity to the complex policy responses by grouping them under four interdependent themes: the economy, housing, transport, health and wellbeing

Results

- Despite some conflicting priorities, all of the key stakeholders signed off the framework and have committed to taking it forward within their own organisations – ensuring an integrated regional policy approach
- The framework has broadened the debate around ageing beyond purely economic issues to include wider issues such as health and housing
- The framework has been recognised as a flagship national project; both the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health see the framework as an example of good practice

“We couldn't have achieved this quality of outcome in such a tight timescale without ODS. They brought an invaluable external focus to the project, creating clarity from a myriad of expert opinions and helping the sum of our parts become greater than the whole.”

Val Michej — Transitional Adviser, 5050vision

“From the word go, ODS took an extremely proactive, leadership role. They also facilitated an extremely effective and broad stakeholder engagement process, ensuring that all the agencies involved remained engaged and on board throughout.”

Liz North — Project Manager, 5050vision