

Audience Snapshot: older people

“Older People” refers to individuals aged 65 and older. NI is an aging population. So understanding and investing in ‘age friendly’ content could help your organisation become more sustainable.

What is the potential audience in your area?

On average, **18%** of people in each council area are aged over 65. This ranges from a low of 14% in Mid-Ulster to a high of 30% in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon.



Council Area	Older People
Belfast	49,507
North Down & Ards	34,451
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	31,683
Newry, Mourne & Down	26,578
Mid & East Antrim	25,347
Causeway Coast & Glens	25,004
Lisburn & Castlereagh	24,109
Antrim & Newtownabbey	22,801
Derry & Strabane	21,505
Mid Ulster	20,147
Fermanagh & Omagh	18,623

One size doesn't fit all

The view that **ALL** older people are vulnerable or frail and live on the margins of society is untrue. Some are and that creates barriers for them which may need to be addressed, but many older people remain active in later life.

By 2025, over 65s will outnumber children in Northern Ireland.



One in 10 older people are still employed or actively seeking employment.



In 2014/15, only 24% age 65+ had spoken to a doctor versus 18% of 16 to 44 year olds.



In 2016, 23% of older people volunteered, compared to 29% of younger people

Did you know? As baby boomers hit retirement age, Tourism NI see this segment of visitors to Northern Ireland as being increasingly important. [Find out more.](#)

Are older people interested in the arts?



Older people **are engaged** in the arts, more so through attendance rather than participation. **74%** of older people engaged in 2016/17, but they are the least likely of all age groups to attend (**55%**) or participate (**30%**).

However, they **engage less frequently** during the year with the arts than any other age bracket.

89% of older people engaged with the arts saw a positive impact on their wellbeing.

BUT... 74% of them experience barriers when trying to engage with the arts

Cost, poor health and not being interested were key barriers.

What can you do to engage older people?

Think about their Individuality

As with any attempt to target a particular “group” of people, be careful about treating everyone the same. Today’s 65 year olds were born in the 50s and grew up in the 60s, which will have been a very different experience to those in their late 70s and 80s.

Gender is another thing to consider. Older men may enjoy activities specifically geared towards them

Programme to their Interests

While the majority of older people in NI engage with the arts, it’s across a diverse range of product, and there’s no one activity that they all enjoy. They are most likely to attend Film (23%), Museums (20%) or Plays (17%), or participate in textile crafts (11%).

Remove barriers

Make your venue or event accessible and list information on your website about public transport, parking, and taxis.

Make it easy to plan in advance

Culture Republic in Scotland found that older people tend to plan ahead, with over half booking a month in advance. They typically attend in pairs, are more likely to attend during the week and many don’t have access to the internet so make sure alternative booking methods are made clear.

Consider your price-point.

You may already offer a senior discount or an early-bird deal, but how about putting together a special package or programme for the over 65s that’s responsive to their needs and interests?

Sources of Information

To put this snapshot together, we used the following sources.

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