

## **Your Retirement: Your Choice (Participant Feedback)**

### **Introduction**

WLO c.i.c, supported by a grant from the Big Lottery Fund developed and ran the six-week pilot course starting October 2017 which was repeated from mid-February 2018. A total of 8 attended the first course and 12 the second -16 women and 4 men. Participants were self-selecting and either responded directly to publicity or, in the case of the second presentation of the course, were recommended by a third party.

### **Results of the e-Survey**

A short follow-up e-survey was sent out in May 2018. 15 out of the 20 participants responded to the e-survey. The full results are shown below with the main points as follows:

- The main age range of participants was from 61 to 70. (See 2)
- 7 of those who responded were doing some form of work either paid (3) or as volunteer (4). (See 3)
- The main objective of the programme was to get people thinking about how they could manage change and develop new opportunities to make those changes. The majority of these related to improving health, learning new things. (See 4)
- The programme and accompanying Resource Booklet were designed around three themes of managing resources (including time and money); health and well being and learning. The programme through using external speakers and discovery exercises tried to extend participants' understanding and knowledge of what was available to them. The tables below show that they made least use of the inputs on financial advice and managing money. There are two reasons for this. Firstly it came early on in the programme when people did not know each other and secondly it is an area where the individual differences are most marked and where detailed advice has to come from qualified practitioners.

### **Responses to the e-survey**

**1. Gender of respondents:** Female 11    Male 4

**2. Age:**

50 to 55	6.7 %	1
56 to 60	13.3%	2
61 to 65	26.7 %	4
66 to 70	40.0%	6
71 to 75	0	0
Over 75	13.3%	2

### 3. Employment status:

Paid work part time	13.3%	2
Paid work full time	0	0
Self employed	6.7%	1
Voluntary work	26.7%	4
Not working at all	53.3%	8

### 4. What changes have you made to your life as a result of taking part in Your Retirement: Your Choice? (14 responses, 1 skipped)

No major changes at present time as still working. However, have embarked on a weight loss programme and increased my physical exercise regime.

Signed up for courses. Thinking about voluntary work. Looking into exercise programmes.

Reviewed the voluntary work I was doing.

When I attended the course I had only just retired (end of December) so I was adjusting to retirement and also to being newly separated. I guess ensuring that I have a weekly structure that includes having fun, volunteering and also caring for my parents.

Accessed some new venues, e.g. Rally Hall. Continued activities at Hangleton and Hove – table tennis and swimming. Looking at a social bowls taster.

None at the moment as I changed my life considerably when I left teaching two years ago. However, I feel very confident that when I finally fully retire I will have a lot of good ideas for how to cope and keep my life going forward.

Had health check and joined Dancing for Health, also took up walking in Stanmer Park. Bought myself a pedometer which I regularly use.

Not well at moment, but getting better. On diet and now looking for volunteering work.

I now take regular exercise. I am now following a more healthy diet. I am more aware of healthy activities in the community.

Have one meat free day a week. Try to implement 'small changes'.

Thought about different activities.

### 5. Please identify the areas where you now have increased knowledge and understanding – tick as many as you like

Managing my money	33.3%	5
Where to go for financial advice	20.0%	3
Healthy eating	53.3%	8

Taking exercise	66.7%	10
The benefits of learning new things	86.7%	13
The benefits of meeting new people	60.0%	9
Local volunteering opportunities	80.0%	12
Where to find free and low cost learning opportunities	73.3%	11

(Note: Not all participants were able to attend all sessions)

### **Further feedback**

In addition to the e-Survey, feedback was also collected at the end of the course and as a review a few weeks afterwards. This was designed to help those who were still thinking and planning what to do. Participants also offered their own views on how it had gone for them. A selection of these comments is shown below.

- Very enjoyable seems to cover most of what is to come in retirement.  
Elizabeth
- Interesting and varied ideas and information.  
Catherine
- The course was extremely helpful .It enabled me to marshal my thoughts in a practical and meaningful way.  
Jane
- It has helped me to look at retirement as a series of transitions and broadened my horizons on many levels.  
Sheila
- A wide range of topics, very good resources that will enable me to follow up my interests.  
Charlotte
- I have already recommended it to many of my friends. Chris and Debra were excellent facilitators. I am still helping the Recovery College; in fact, I am training to become a "classroom buddy" on 17 April as well as having the peer trainer qualification (the role which I have not pursued as I thought it could be a bit too "full-on" after the brain haemorrhage I had two years ago.)  
Pat
- So pleased I did your course and remind myself every now and again of the "5 ways of wellbeing" and the 150 minutes I am supposed to do each week. Oh! And I have bought a stepometer which I carry with me! Also got the health check! Keep up the good work!  
Margaret

- Chris, just to say thank you to you and Debra for the retirement course I attended a couple of weeks ago, sorry late to get back, but have not been well. I have decided to learn a foreign language preferably Spanish, and will let you know how I get on, any advice would be appreciated, thanks a lot.  
Nigel
- I want to let you know how much I enjoyed the course and how I feel it has encouraged me to go out of my comfort zone and explore new opportunities. It was a pleasure to meet you and thank you for being such a dynamic, warm and highly organised course leader.  
Richard
- I have applied to Brighton Festival and had introductory session last week. Also joined U3A but that is still being processed. Other than those just continuing with yoga, mindfulness and dancing for health! Drop in occasionally on lunchtime music sessions. Also up to date will all the latest films and since X-mas have been focussing on Screen Arts opera which is now coming to an end. Looking forward to weather improving so I can get out and about – has been such a very cold and miserable winter and looks like going on forever.  
Rose

### **Conclusion**

Although not particularly rigorous, the feedback does show that the programme and its content were well received. Participants enjoyed the style of delivery and external contributions. As the feedback and comments suggest, the call to action was answered very positively by the majority of participants. This is pleasing for a limited pilot and provides a solid foundation for further development of the programme in partnership with local organisations.

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