

Saltbox's older people engagement service is OPEN for business!

The Older People Engagement Network (OPEN) launch event took place on Monday, 11th April and covered how community groups and local people aged 50+ can become involved and make their voices heard.

Information stands from key service providers were on display and the new round of Age Friendly City Small Grants funding was promoted, which is now open for applications.

More than 100 Stoke-on-Trent community reps attended the event, along with The Lord Mayor Cllr. Jean Bowers and Dr Amit Arora (Consultant Physician and Geriatrician at University Hospital of North Staffordshire) - pictured right with Saltbox CEO Lloyd Cooke.



OPEN has been commissioned jointly by Stoke-on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Group and Stoke-on-Trent City Council who together fund the initiative which aims to increase the opportunities older people have to engage across the city and to give them a platform to feedback to the organisations who provide the various services they use.

Dave Sanzeri, Head of Commissioning for Elderly Care and Long Term Conditions at Stoke-on Trent CCG, said: *"Giving patients and their families a meaningful voice in decisions around their health care is at the very core of our work and we are delighted to be a part of this project."*

"We have worked extremely hard with Saltbox and the city council to create this service to ensure that patients and their families get the opportunity to engage with decision-makers, to challenge assumptions and make positive changes for the betterment of older people in Stoke-on-Trent and north Staffordshire. The service is a great example of how co-operation between organisations can empower people across the area and drive up the quality of their care."

Councillor Ann James, the city council's cabinet member for health and social care, said: *"We are committed to undertaking meaningful engagement with as many older people in the city as possible and the new service will help us in that journey."*

"We need to know their views on our plans and understand what is important to them. By having this two-way conversation with local residents we will be better enabled to ensure our local services are fit for purpose and meet local needs."

Saltbox is committed to providing opportunities for local people to be heard by key decision makers and will be seeking out a variety of voices amongst those aged 50 +, who can inspire new ideas and suggestions for improving services and lives. A key objective of the service is to establish an older people's committee made up entirely of local people & community leaders. This committee will not only support the service and inspire older people to actively get involved in decision making, but provide a forum to test and maintain the 'you said' 'we did' approach central to this project.

"It's a great opportunity for Saltbox and we are really excited about taking the service forward. We are committed to ensuring older people are at the heart of the service and are keen to hear everyone's views. If you want to get involved please give the team a call on 01782 207200. This work will support our commitment to helping older people make a difference." - Gill Butler, Director at Saltbox

For more information please contact the OPEN team on 01782 207 200 or kim@saltbox.org.uk

