

New rules of engagement for older people and climate change

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A new study by researchers at the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) at the University of York calls for better engagement of older people on climate change issues.

The report, prepared in partnership with the Community Service Volunteers' Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP), urges the scrapping of stereotypes which suggest that older people are incapable of engagement, passive or disinterested in [climate change](#).

Instead, the research team recommends new approaches to engage older people, which promote direct interaction and the use of trusted agents that are sensitive to the personal circumstances older people face. The report sets out a ten-point plan to engage older people more effectively on climate change issues and greener living.

The report claims that a combination of climate change and an ageing population will have wide ranging socio-economic and environmental impacts. It acknowledges that older people may be physically, financially and emotionally less able to cope with the effects of climate-related [weather events](#).

Lead author Dr Gary Haq, a human ecologist at SEI, said:

"The engagement and participation of older people in climate change issues are important as older people can be seen as potential contributors to, and casualties of, climate change as well as potential campaigners to

tackle the problem."

'Baby boomers' (aged 50-64) currently have the highest [carbon footprint](#) in the UK compared with other age groups. They represent the first generation of the consumer society entering old age. As they will move to older groups they will replace low carbon footprint habits and values with relatively high consumption.

Dr Haq said: "Recent evidence from the older age sector highlight the inadequacies of current methods of information provision and community engagement on climate change. It is critical to implementing policies to tackle climate change and to address the needs of an ageing population."

Dave Brown, co-author and member of RSVP, said: "While older people are concerned about climate change, they do not feel they will be directly affected. Nor do they feel they can personally take action to stop it. The older generation represent a missing voice and a missed opportunity."

Provided by University of York

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