



Rural Wisdom Evaluation Briefing Document 1: Influencing policy in Scotland January 2020



Rural Wisdom is influencing a range of policy issues to support older people to continue to live in rural communities. This document describes how this is happening in Scotland.

“Policies in Scotland and Wales support older people to continue to live in the rural communities they know and encourage older people’s contribution to their communities”.

(Rural Wisdom Outcome 3)

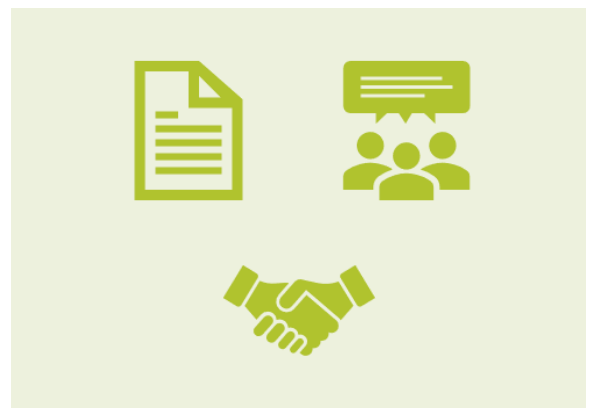
One of the four outcomes for Rural Wisdom focuses on supporting older people to live in rural communities at a policy level. The Scottish Government have long recognised issues facing people living in those rural communities that cover much of the country and they are aware of the challenges that people face in maintaining their quality of life as they age. But there has been a gap in policies that address issues faced by older people living in rural communities and the role older people themselves can play in leading change in these areas to enable them to continue to live there.

This is an opportunity to use learning from Rural Wisdom to influence Scottish Government policy.

By early 2018, learning from local engagement of older people in the three Scottish Rural Wisdom sites enabled Outside the Box (Rural Wisdom Partner and Lead in Scotland) to take priority issues

forward with local authorities, Health and Social Care Partnerships, Health Boards and the Scottish Government.

Outside the Box (OTB) is participating in these forums and responding to Scottish Government consultations (e.g. on Fuel poverty, Transport, Social connections, Food and healthy diet and National Council of Rural Advisors’ strategy for the rural economy) to include the experience of older people in rural areas. Additionally, people in Rural Wisdom areas and other places are being encouraged to contribute directly to consultation and events as a way for people to know they have a voice.



Older people contributing to national strategies

Through Rural Wisdom, older people were invited and encouraged to contribute to national government strategy consultations e.g. on tackling loneliness and social isolation strategies – which resulted in **‘A Connected Scotland: Our strategy for tackling social isolation and loneliness and building stronger social connections’**, published in December 2018.

OTB has also given presentations on Rural Wisdom and been invited to be part of policy-related events such as the Scottish Rural Action Annual Conference and Rural Housing National Conference. Rural Wisdom took part in the Scottish Rural Parliament in November 2018 (which happens every 2 years), and have been asked to take part in focus groups for planning rural policy, etc.

Regular ‘get together’ sessions in Scotland are arranged to share learning from Rural Wisdom and check out issues and views with people in other rural areas in Scotland.

During 2019 Rural Wisdom has continued to feed in this learning at national policy level in Scotland through the membership of the Cross-Party Group on Older People and the Older People’s Strategic Action Forum.

This has contributed to shaping policies as evidenced by rural issues being picked in the new older people’s strategy **‘A Fairer Scotland for Older People: A Framework for Action’**, published in April 2019. This includes examples from Rural Wisdom and quotes from people involved in Rural Wisdom in Eaglesham (anonymised in the strategy document). It also cites a recent report by the National Council of Rural Advisors which has consulted OTB/Rural Wisdom.

Outside the Box is continuing to use learning from Rural Wisdom to feed the perspective of older people in rural communities into other policy-related discussions, e.g. with Scotland’s Futures Forum, and into Scottish Government and other topic-specific consultations.

Resources

Find out more about how Rural Wisdom is influencing policy in Wales:

www.ndti.org.uk/news/rural-wisdom-evaluation

The Rural Wisdom website provides regular blogs from the communities and publications, including soon to be released **‘Tips on Multigenerational Communities’** and **‘Having a Voice and Being Heard’**.

www.ruralwisdom.org

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