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RESEARCH PROJECT REPORT

UNDERSTANDING EUROPEAN EXPATS OVER THE AGE OF 50 IN GREATER MANCHESTER

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Ambition for Ageing is a Greater Manchester wide cross-sector partnership, led by GMCVO and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, aimed at creating more age friendly places by connecting communities and people through the creation of relationships, development of existing assets and putting older people at the heart of designing the places they live.

Contents

Executive Summary

This report aims to discover and understand the challenges around ageing faced by European Expats living in Greater Manchester, particularly in light of the Brexit referendum decision and to see the effect that has had on these communities. We wanted to get an idea of what improvements European Expats over the age of 50 would like to see to help them age more comfortably and with better well-being.

We interviewed twenty-four European Expats living in Greater Manchester, these people often having chosen to come to the UK because their former country had some kind of political turmoil or hardship. Three quarters of the respondents were from ex-communist states (Romania and Lithuania).

Due to the difficulties in obtaining respondents our sample size was small, which meant that our focus was on qualitative rather than quantitative data; this report therefore provides suggestions rather than definitive conclusions.

Our results, however, strongly indicate the importance of English Language skills and a sense of belonging as being key elements in the well-being and experience of European Expats living in Greater Manchester.

We would recommend that efforts to improve their lives to be focused upon these factors, with further research to be run into how best to utilise the skills and knowledge of these communities.

Introduction

Other than the research on Polish nationals conducted by Europia in 2018 and 2019, there is no other research available to understand the specific challenges around ageing faced by European Expats living in Greater Manchester. With the Brexit result the well-being and identity of European expats have been under constant threat.

Potentially, many vulnerable families rely upon their grandparents to care for the children, often with the potential of abuse and exploitation involved in such arrangements. In some cases, older people are leaving behind a painful past to start a new life; often with very limited English, low skill levels, and low income. All this in a forced multicultural society where different ethnicities, sexualities, religions, etc. have to be accepted as the norm.

Europia conducted the project as part of a larger programme of Ageing Equally? research commissioned by Ambition for Ageing to explore what makes a good place in which to grow older for people who belong to specific minority communities.

Europia is the only registered charity to focus on the development and integration of European Expats in Greater Manchester, with projects including welfare advice sessions, legal surgeries, EU Settlement Scheme support, Hate Crime reporting and support, etc

The research project was undertaken with the aim of discovering what the experiences of these communities in Greater Manchester actually have been, and to see what might be created or changed in order for these communities to thrive.

We chose to look at seven different areas for our research questions:

1. What challenges do the individuals and their collective perceived community face as an older person?
2. What additional limitations do they have when compared to their younger European expat counterparts?
3. What would help them age better?
4. What community assets/ local services they are aware of in their local neighbourhoods?
5. Are they willing to contribute or engage with their local services? What could they contribute?
6. What is most important for their wellbeing and how can their neighbourhood help them feel well-rounded and confident as an older person?
7. What is the impact of Brexit on their well-being and identity?

Introduction ... continued

...

This report will first explain the methodology used, then will move on to a discussion of the findings, followed by a concise explanation of the conclusions drawn from the project and a number of recommendations from the researchers.

Methods

We targeted over 50 aged Romanian, Czech, Portuguese, and Roma communities living in Greater Manchester. We aimed to achieve a balance of respondents across these different communities, but we were not able to predict precise numbers for each community at the beginning of the project.

We aimed to reach 20-25 individuals for detailed research interviews, securing the candidates through the contacts of Europia and those of the researchers, interpreters and translators.

Our research participants were scattered all over Greater Manchester, however we had originally aimed to focus on Salford, Tameside, Oldham and Bolton. We found we had to follow the lead of where the respondents we could obtain lived, rather than target specific locations.

We created the questionnaire in English first, then translated it into Portuguese, Lithuanian and Romanian, with the idea of translating into further languages if the need arose from interviewing additional communities.

The questionnaire consisted of fifty-five questions across eight sections. Seven sections addressed the specific research questions (as outlined in the introduction). The final section was the largest section, recording the demographics of the respondents.

The questions were asked in English first by the researcher, and then if needed in the relevant language by the research assistant. The respondent answered in whichever language they felt most comfortable answering in, and translated into English, to be recorded on paper by the researcher. We had started off the interviews directly recording the answers into the google form, but this took too long and moved away from the feeling of having a conversation.

The interviews took anywhere from forty minutes for the quickest, to an hour and forty minutes for the longest, depending on the length of the respondent's answers, the interview situation, and the translations of the interpreters.

Methods ... continued

In a separate process, after the interview, the researcher recorded the answers into the google form, ready for analysis. This picked up from the previous research project Europia conducted and minimised the amount of work in the analysis stage.

The questionnaire was designed with a combination of closed and open questions, some multiple-choice questions, some questions that led to other questions to capture more detail, and other questions where we asked for a satisfaction rating from 1 – 5. In a number of instances, we decided to ask a question, or very similar questions, twice. This was to allow an unguided response from the respondent, and then a response which was prompted, or choices from a list, to ease comparison between the respondent's answers.

In total we conducted twenty-four interviews. Sixteen of the respondents were originally from Lithuania and four each from Romania and Portugal. All of the interviews were held face-to-face; we had thought we might conduct some by telephone, but this did not transpire. Nine of the interviews were held at the respondent's homes and nine were conducted at a community event in a restaurant in Bolton. The rest were conducted in public places; Manchester Central Library, University of Salford Library, New Hope Fellowship Church, and Café Nero in central Manchester.

Before every interview, candidates were presented with a short verbal explanation in their relevant language and given a document explaining the research's purpose and a brief introduction to the questions. Research participants were asked to sign research (see attachment), photo and Europia's consent forms. All the above were translated from English into Portuguese, Lithuanian and Romanian.

The interviews were mostly conducted by the three main researchers Ineta Simelionyte, James Baker (author of this report), and Karolina Koscien, who interviewed the respondents alongside a research assistant who acted as interpreter. The research assistants were Inga Zeimyte (Lithuanian), Ana Cristina de Souza Soares Gomides (Portuguese), Daniela Chifor (Romanian), Kristina Valvadiene (Lithuanian) and Jonas Jakubauskas (Lithuanian). Some of the interviews were conducted by research assistants independently, due to time constraints.

Where relevant, we offered to connect the respondents to Europia's help and advice services. In the interview process we identified a number of areas in which the respondents told us or showed us that help was required, for instance in applying for EUSS, health advice, or legal advice.

Methods ... continued

Once the interviews were complete, we analysed the findings. After this the original idea had been to run a focus group with some of the respondents to discuss the findings and help with making suggestions and recommendations. Due to time constraints this was not possible, so the opinions of the main researchers, Ineta and James were used as the basis of the conclusions and recommendations section.

Once the final report is submitted, a summary of the report will be created, then translated into Portuguese, Lithuanian and Romanian. It will then be distributed to the respondents who expressed a wish to receive a copy, and a decision will be taken on whether to hold an event as a get together for the respondents.

Sample Set - About the Respondents

Apart from two people who live in Warrington (fig.1 - 11), all of the respondents live in Greater Manchester. Five of respondents live in Salford (fig. 1 - 10), while three of the respondents live in Moston (fig.1 - 6). Two respondents lived in each of Bolton (fig.1 - 3), Middleton (fig.1 - 5), New Moston (fig.1 - 7), Oldham (fig.1 - 8), and Prestwich (fig.1 - 9). Central Manchester (fig.1 - 1), Blackley (fig.1 - 2), Eccles (fig.1 - 4), and Wigan (fig.1 - 12), all had one respondent living in each.
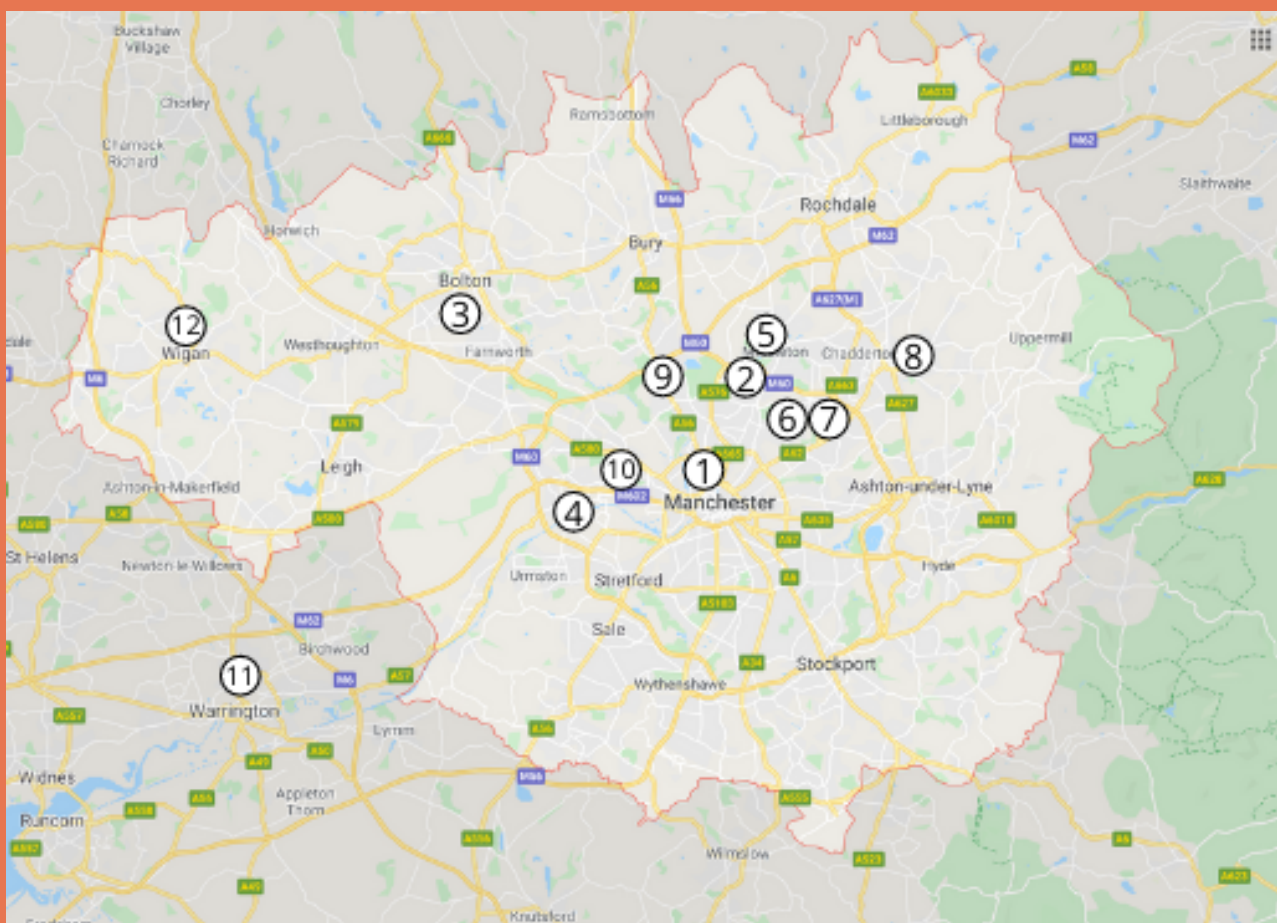

fig. 1 - Where the respondents live
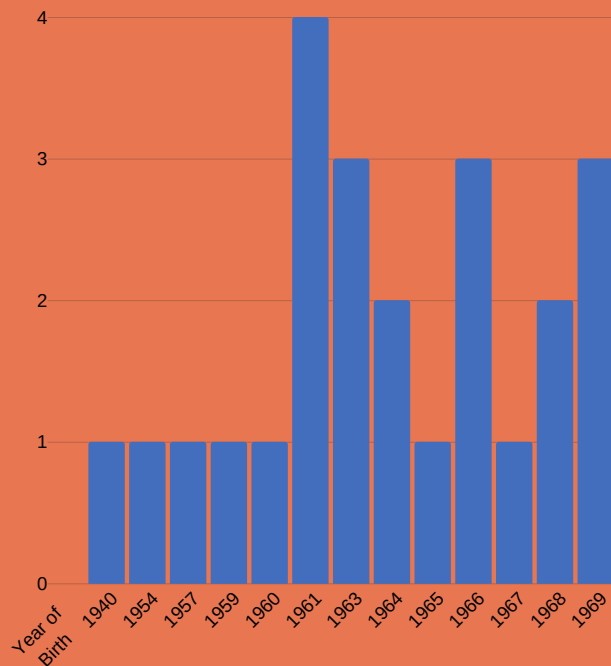
About the respondents ... continued

fig.2 - The oldest respondent was born in 1940, whilst the youngest respondents were three people born in 1969.

The earliest arrival to the UK came in 1997, and the most recent arrival to the UK was 3 months prior to the interview. Comparing the figures between the arrival to the UK and the length of residence in the current neighbourhood shows that of the respondents, sixteen of them have lived in different neighbourhoods, whilst eight have lived in just their current neighbourhood in the UK.

The average (mean) length of residence in the current neighbourhood across the respondents was 6.26. The most common years for the respondents to arrive were 2009 (five arrivals), and 2010 (four arrivals).

Sixteen of the twenty-four respondents describe their gender identity as female, with the remaining eight describe their gender identity as male. (fig. 3) All of the respondents said their gender was the same as at birth.

Two of the respondents preferred not to disclose their sexuality, whilst the remaining twenty-two all said they would describe their sexuality as heterosexual/straight.
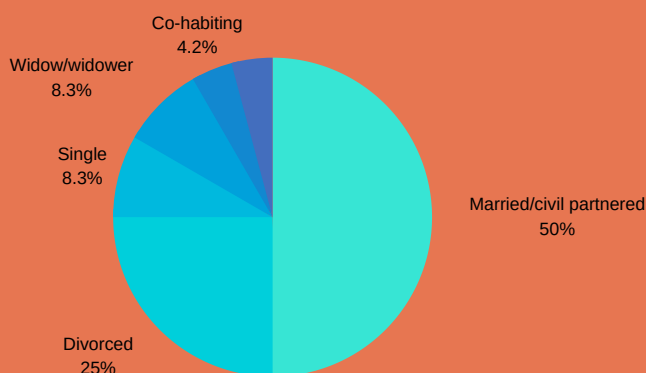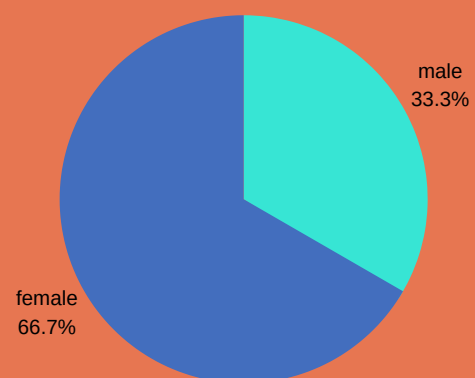

fig. 3 - gender

fig. 4 - marital status

Twelve, or half of the respondents were married/civil partnered. Six, or a quarter were divorced. One said they were co-habiting, two were single, two were widowed, and one preferred not to say. (fig. 4)

Aside from one Jehovah's Witness and one respondent who said they were an atheist, all of the respondents said they were Christians.

About the respondents ... continued

Six of the respondents live alone, seven live with their children or grandchildren, five with their partner and children or grandchildren, three with their partner, one with their mother, and one said they lived with 'family'.

Healthwise, fifteen of the respondents indicated no long-standing physical or mental illness or disability, eight of them said they did have, whilst one preferred not to respond. Nine of the respondents described themselves as having dependents, financially or otherwise, whilst fourteen said they did not.

Employment

Thirteen of the respondents describe themselves as being a full-time employee, working 35 or more hours a week. Five describe themselves as part-time and work less than 35 hours a week. Two said they were self-employed, two said they were unemployed, and one respondent said they were now retired due to their age (our oldest respondent, born in 1940). One respondent preferred not to say, but then said they worked as a driver in a subsequent question. (fig. 5)

fig. 5 - employment status

Nineteen of those who work said the reason for working included financial or money reasons, or to "provide for my family", but there were also comments about working for health reasons, to help with depression and leaving the house, and for enjoyment also.

Six of the respondents gave a rating of 1 to 3 for how satisfied they were with their employment situation and eight respondents gave a rating of 4 for satisfaction. Nine of the respondents gave the maximum rating of 5 for their satisfaction. One respondent was not forthcoming. (fig. 6)
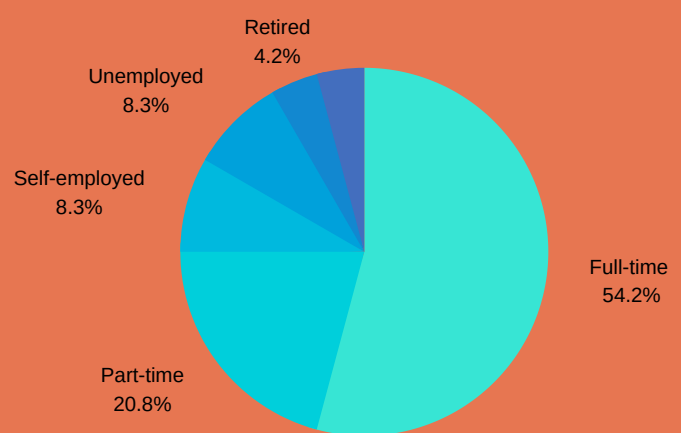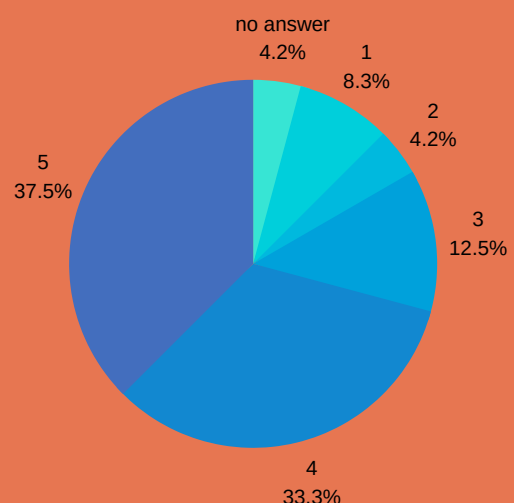

fig. 6 -- satisafaction with work

It's perhaps important to note here that nearly all of the respondents are economically active, which highlights a potential limitation of the study. Further research would be useful to specifically target those aged over 50 who have actually retired.

Findings/Discussion
Challenges

We asked the respondents to describe the challenges they have encountered as a European Expat over the age of 50 in the UK.

Sixteen of the respondents mentioned English Language as being a problem, twelve of those stating it as their major issue. Some of the respondents said they came to the UK with very little English, and a number of them would still like to improve.

Seven of the respondents mentioned health as a challenge in some capacity. This was mentioned as lack of competence on the side of the healthcare professional, or as difficulty in getting needed tests done. One Lithuanian respondent said this led to her going back to Lithuania to receive treatment. Another pointed out that although his cancer treatment was provided and paid for, there was no financial assistance available for him from the government.

Other concerns were in finding work (mentioned by six respondents), and particularly decent work. One Lithuanian respondent worked in the UK for a Lithuanian Charity and said she did not get paid in cash for two years (though she was housed). She attributed this partly to her lack of English Language skills, and general lack of social knowledge.

One Romanian respondent said it took five years to integrate, it took a long time to adjust to being considered as working class here, when they had been considered middle class in Romania.

Three of the respondents said they had no issues.

Asked if the respondents felt they had additional limitations compared to their younger European Expat counterparts, again, the main focus was on language, with fifteen of the respondents mentioning good English language skills as either something they already have, or something they find easier to learn. The respondents also pointed out that younger people have better opportunities for studying and learning (seven of the respondents mentioned this), and also for making work connections (again, seven of the respondents mentioned this).

"The UK offers more for younger people, it's harder to learn English when you are older as your mind is already full of problems, it is easier for youngsters to learn English."

Three of the respondents mentioned that younger people are healthier, stronger and more active; while four of the respondents said there were no additional limitations for older people compared to their younger counterparts.

Challenges continued

We asked the respondents about their reasons for coming to the UK and whether that had caused any further limitations or difficulties for them.

Not everybody had one clear reason for coming, four of the respondents mentioned more than one reason for coming. The primary reason was for work, money or economic reasons – seventeen of them mentioned this as at least part of the reason for coming to the UK.

The next most quoted reason was to be with a family member, mentioned seven times as a factor, either to be with adult children who moved here first, to be with partners, or in three cases to give their children the opportunity of a better education. Four respondents talked about coming to the UK to explore, or because of the culture and lifestyle.

These results show that compared to our initial considerations a larger proportion of aged 50+ European Expats came to the UK primarily for their own well-being than that of their family members. We were expecting a greater percentage of the respondents to have moved here to look after grandchildren as the primary reason than our results found. This correlates with the fact that most of the respondents are economically active and in some kind of work.

In relation to further limitations or difficulties, this question seemed to be a difficult one to explain to the respondents, which might explain why eighteen of the respondents said their reasons to come to the UK had not created further difficulties. The respondents who did say there were further limitations mostly either repeated or expanded upon their reasons for coming to the UK.

We asked the respondents to tell us what, in their opinion would help them age better as a European Expat in the UK, firstly as an unprompted question, then by asking them to choose their top three factors from a list.

The 'top three' part of these questions perhaps didn't translate so well, as many of the responses were either one, two, or four answers. But the answers still give an idea of what the respondents feel is important to them. It was interesting to note the difference between the prompted and unprompted versions of this question.

Language support was only mentioned by three of the respondents of their own accord, but then became the highest response when given the list to choose from, with sixteen of the respondents mentioning it. It's possible the respondents simply needed some time to warm up to realise and articulate what was important to themselves, and that perhaps their initial responses were not the truest reflection of their concerns.

Challenges continued

In other sections of the questionnaire there were also differences between prompted and non-prompted questions, which would be an interesting direction for further research to explore.

From the unprompted question, the responses mentioned can be loosely grouped into various categories; health, lifestyle, finances, work, accommodation, and English language. Grouped in this manner, there were the following number of mentions: (fig. 7)

Lifestyle factors - 13 mentions (free time x2, events/activities x2, socialising x4, being active x5)
Financial factors – 13 mentions (financial state/income x9, benefits/pension x2, wages better x2)
Health factors – 12 mentions (good health x4, good food x2, good healthcare x5)
Work – 6 mentions (good job/better work x6)
Accommodation – 4 mentions (better accommodation x3, own accommodation x1)
English language – 3 mentions

Although wages are clearly a factor in what makes a good job, Work is kept as a separate factor here from Finances because wages are not the only factor. At least one of the respondents was talking about how a job that recognises the physical demands of work and how they affect an older person to be a factor how they would define 'better work'.

In the prompted version of the question Financial Support was the second most chosen option, with Financial Support mentioned by fifteen of the respondents. Healthcare support was the third most chosen factor, with fourteen mentions from the respondents. (fig. 8)
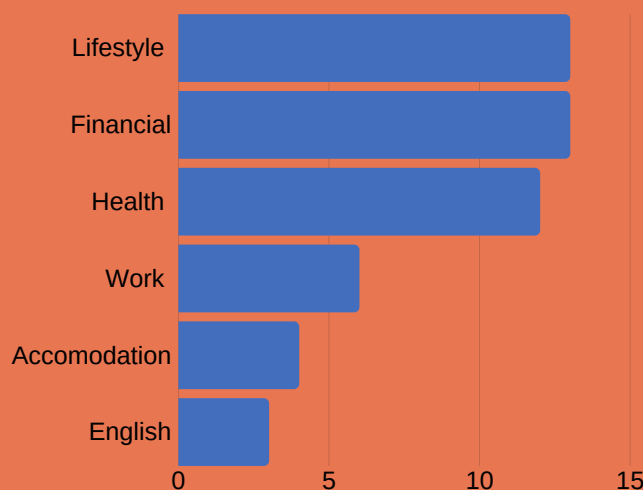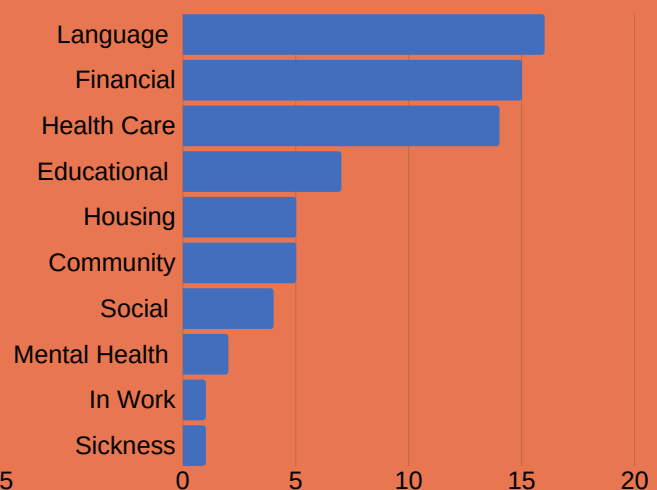
fig. 7 - unprompted factors to age better   fig. 8 - prompted factors to age better

Language

Aside from one Lithuanian who speaks Russian as their first language, all of the respondent's first language tallied with the main language of their country of origin. Asked to rate their confidence in speaking English on a scale of 1 to 5, only three respondents gave a rating higher than a 3, correlating with the results elsewhere in the questionnaire. Eighteen, or three-quarters of them have attended English lessons in the UK, leaving six who have not.

Twenty of the respondents use English whilst shopping, eighteen of the respondents use English at work, seventeen whilst accessing services, fifteen for socialising, and twelve watch television in English.

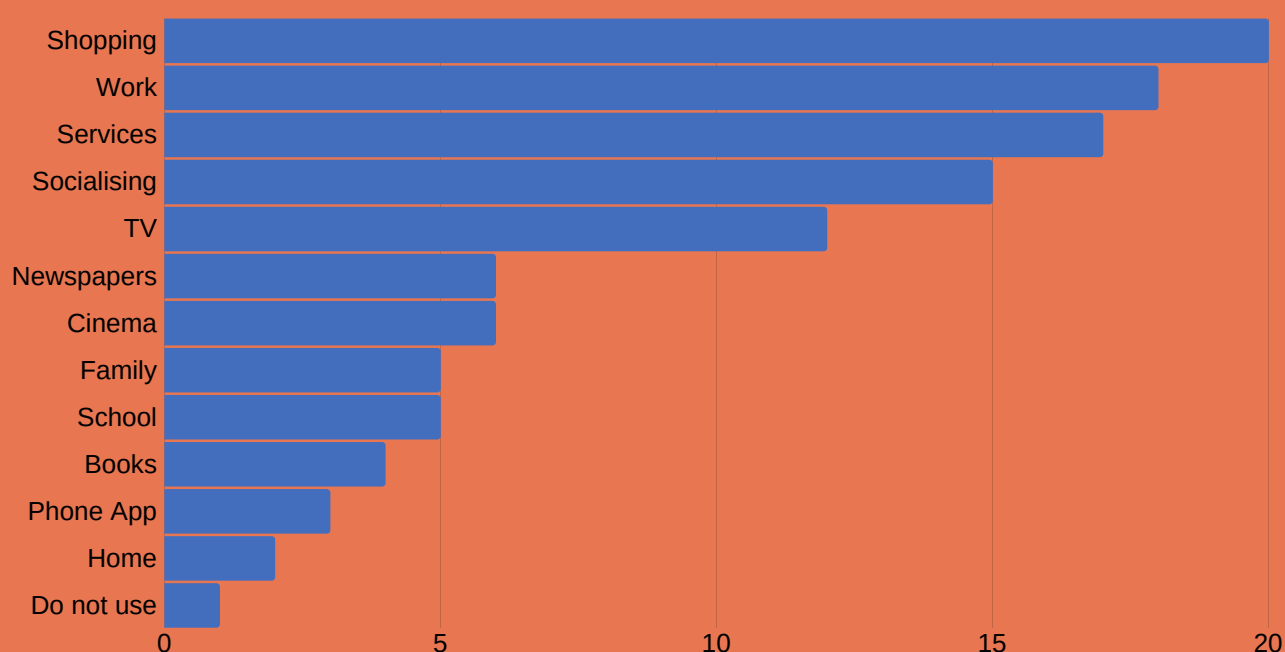Only one respondent said they don't use English at all.

fig. 9 - where the respondents use english

Living conditions/area/status

The earliest arrival to the UK came in 1997, and the most recent arrival to the UK was 3 months prior to the interview. Comparing the figures between the arrival to the UK and the length of residence in the current neighbourhood shows that of the respondents, sixteen of them have lived in different neighbourhoods, whilst eight have lived in just their current neighbourhood in the UK.

The average (mean) length of residence in the current neighbourhood across the respondents was 6.26. The most common years for the respondents to arrive were 2009 (five arrivals), and 2010 (four arrivals).

Living conditions/area/status continued

When we asked the respondents about the local services they were aware of in their neighbourhood, the most often mentioned were shops (x20), GP (x15), Post Office (x7), leisure centre/gym/swimming pool (x7), and hairdresser (x5).

A number of the respondents needed prompting here with the examples, or the researcher gave the prompts when asking initially, so the results here are to be viewed with caution, as it could be that the respondents were merely repeating back the suggestions.

It's possible that the use of the term 'local services' was something that didn't translate too well, and the respondents did not relate to. Further research into these communities should take into account how a seemingly obvious phrase or term in English may not easily translate into different languages.

We asked the respondents whether they travel outside of their local area to access any services, how far they travel, and why

Seven of the respondents confirmed that they do not travel outside of their local area to access any services. One of the Portuguese respondents who said that local services were ok in her area (New Moston) and works two different jobs outside of her local area, said that if she did not have a car then she would not be able to work.
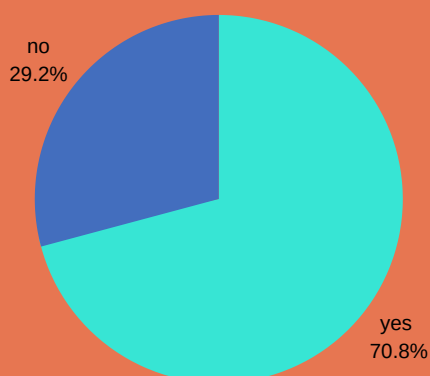

no
29.2%

yes
70.8%

fig. 10 - travelling to access services

This was echoed by a male Lithuanian respondent who said "My employer gives me a lift to work. If I had to go to work by myself, then it would take me up to an hour to get there by bus." He also travels outside of his local area to access health services, and again is collected: "I am grateful that the NHS staff come to my home, pick me up and take me to the hospital."

We did not ask a follow up question to ask why those seven respondents had said they do not travel outside, this would be something we would ask in future research.

Of the respondents who do travel outside of their local area for services, the most often mentioned were shopping and banks (x6 times each), hospital and health services (x5 times). Including the Portuguese respondent who'd said 'No' to travelling outside of her local area, but indicated she worked outside of her local area, five of the respondents stated that they travel for work reasons.

Two of the respondents travel outside of their local area to access the doctor, with one saying she travels back to Lithuania to see her doctor, for language reasons, as she finds it easier to explain in Lithuanian.

Living conditions/area/status continued

We asked the respondents to compare the availability and distance travelled to access services between the UK and their country of origin.

Thirteen of the respondents said that the availability and distance travelled to access services was the same in their country of origin as it is in the UK. It was also mentioned by one Lithuanian respondent that there are "similar distances and availability but easier to navigate in my country of origin due to being more familiar with the services available and the area/city."

Nine of the respondents said service are closer in the UK compared to their country of origin, whilst the remaining two respondents said access was worse in the UK.

When given a list of different types of services to indicate those actually used by the respondent's in their neighbourhood, the post office and GP services were the most often mentioned (22 mentions each), followed by shops/supermarkets (20 mentions). Half of the respondents use their local market (12 mentions), with eleven using either a gym or swimming pool, in their neighbourhood. Restaurants and takeaways were said to be used by ten of the respondents, whilst nine respondents use a place of worship in their neighbourhood.

One male Lithuanian respondent accesses a music and theatre group in his local neighbourhood, whilst one respondent goes to AA meetings, and another said they use a football pitch locally.
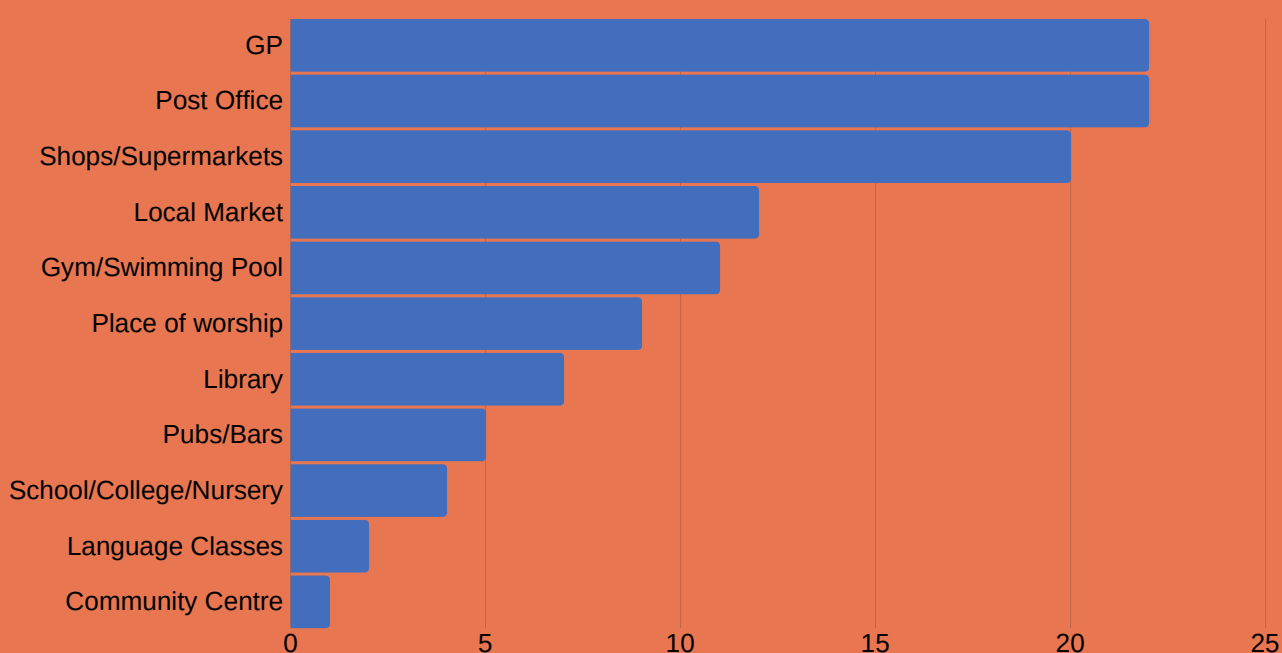
fig. 11 - local services actually used by the respondents

Living conditions/area/status continued

We asked the respondents if they felt there are any barriers stopping them from engaging with local services.

Fourteen of the respondents said they felt that there are no barriers stopping them from engaging with local services. Nine said there were barriers, one was unsure, and these ten respondents were first asked to name the top three barriers unprompted, and then from a list of potential barriers if they had been unable to come up with three.

Unprompted, English Language was again the most often mentioned barrier (7 respondents). Money is seen as a barrier for two of the respondents, and other barriers, each mentioned once, included; knowledge of services, a shy/modest character, lack of mobility, time/too busy, and libraries not having books in Lithuanian.

Given a selection to choose from, Language Barrier was chosen by eight of the ten, whilst the other reasons were nearly all chosen by one or two respondents. (Lack of information about services available x1, I don't know how to look for them or where to find them x2, Better access to the services somewhere else (for example in the city centre) x1, There is nothing available for people in my age x1, I am too shy x2, I don't know how to use a computer x2, I do not want to engage x2, money x1).

Accommodation

Fourteen of the respondents gave a rating of either 4 or 5 for their satisfaction with their accommodation, which would indicate a general level of happiness with their situations. However, even some of those that had rated their satisfaction as a 4 had criticisms, such as their flat being cold and damp due to heating costs, or the inconvenience of living on the second floor.

Of those ten respondents that gave a rating of 1 to 3, reasons for the level of dissatisfaction included disliking renting, their accommodation being too small, the accommodation needing repairs, or it just being of poor quality.

Brexit

It is important to note that from the time of the respondents being recruited, until the time of the interviews being held, the UK moved from a lot of uncertainty about what was going to happen in relation to Brexit, through the General Election, and the clarity that brought with it. All of the interviews were held before the Brexit date of 31st January.

Brexit continued

We asked the respondents how the referendum decision about Brexit made them feel as an EU citizen aged over 50 living in the UK.

Thirteen of the respondents had negative things to say about the Brexit decision, or indicated that it had impacted them in some manner. One respondent said: "I am worried about the final decision; I am afraid people in my age will find it difficult to live here or find a job."

Eleven of the respondents said there was no impact from the Brexit decision, or they felt OK with it.

We also asked if the Brexit decision had impacted on their daily life, or any of their major decisions

Perhaps surprisingly, only one of the respondents said Brexit had impacted their daily life, and again only three said their major decisions had been impacted. One of the respondents did point out that it hadn't impacted their daily life yet, because "nobody knows what is going to happen".

Of the three that were impacted for major decisions, one Portuguese respondent came to the UK earlier than previously planned, leaving work of 26 years in Portugal and had to "start all over again". She also said that Brexit made her feel less free, and less safe, and that she has concerns about being able to move freely.

Another respondent had been planning to buy a house but now is not so sure, and a female Romanian respondent said she was thinking of leaving the UK.

We asked if the Brexit decision had had an impact on the respondent's mental health.

When asked specifically about mental health, all of the respondents apart from three said there had been no impact on their mental health. The three who said there had been all mentioned being worried, or a little worried, and one of them said they had "some worry for a little while, but not now".

It is interesting to compare the difference between Q24 and how the respondents felt about Brexit with Q27 and specifying mental health. More of the respondents spoke in terms that relate to mental health for Q24 than Q27, using phrases such as "I felt bad and scared" or "It made me depressed", so there may be something to learn from the design of the questions. Using the term 'mental health' may have connotations that restricted the replies.

Well-Being

We asked the respondents what factors are most important to them for their well-being.

Again, we asked two similar questions with a non-prompted version, then a version where the respondents choose the top three from a selection of potential answers. Good Health was the most mentioned in the non-prompted version (18 times), and shared joint most chosen with work and financial stability in the prompted version (21 times each).

In the prompted version of the question, Family came third, having been chosen a total of 19 times, compared to having been mentioned by only twice in the non-prompted version. Again, Friends and social connections was more of a factor in the prompted version compared to the non-prompted, rising to nine mentions from five, respectively.

We questioned the respondents on how confident they felt contributing to their local communities, and what they could contribute.

Seventeen of the respondents gave either a 5 or a 4 when asked how confident they felt contributing to their community and/or local neighbourhood, indicating a high level of confidence in contributing.

The contributions they felt could make included sharing their time and skills, helping others with DIY/repairs, volunteering, lifts, moral and financial support, and communicating more. One respondent said that they felt confident to help, would like to help more, but the language barrier makes it difficult.

Belonging

We asked the respondents which communities they identify with or feel connected to, whilst living in the UK

12 of the 16 Lithuanian's recognise either the Manchester Lithuanian Community or Society. (Two different organisations). This is perhaps unsurprising as the respondents were in the whole recruited through these organisations, or directly through word of mouth from a member of said organisations.

5 of the respondents mentioned a religious connection (2x Portuguese community from New Hope Fellowship Church, 2x Romanian church community in Gorton, 1x Romanian Jehovah's Witness).

Belonging continued

A couple of the respondents mentioned work colleagues as being a community they felt connected to. Two of the respondents said they did not feel connected to or with any community here in the UK. This highlighted one of the limitations of our questionnaire. We left the description of community open to interpretation, so that we could record whichever communities the respondents felt connected to, be they expat communities or outside of those. As we didn't directly question further, we cannot tell if the respondent's understanding of community here included both expat and non-expat communities.

Asked how connected they felt within their communities, the aforementioned couple both gave an answer of '1', or least connected. From the other respondents, there was one answer of 2, five answers of 3, three answers of 4, but the majority of the respondents gave the maximum answer of 5, thirteen in total - more than half of all respondents. This suggests a strong feeling of connection to their relevant communities.

The respondents were asked what challenges they feel their communities have encountered.

Three of the four Portuguese respondents said there were no issues they had faced as a community. Obviously from such a small number it's difficult to draw any conclusions from this, but it is an encouraging answer, nonetheless.

The same reply came from five of the Lithuanians respondents, out of the total of sixteen Lithuanians. This makes ten of the total respondents who said their community faced no issues.

Eight of the respondents, all of them also Lithuanians, mentioned finances as being a problem for their community specifically. And seven of them mentioned the lack of a permanent venue for the Manchester Lithuanian Community.

One respondent also mentioned the scattered nature of the Lithuanian Community members across GM. "We would like to have more frequent community gathering but due to long distances this is not possible. [Our] Lithuanian community could be more active if we had a permanent venue."

Only one Romanian respondent mentioned the attitude of British people to be an issue, saying: "Different traditions, culture and language in the UK compared to Romania. British people thinking that foreigners come to the UK for the benefits, exploit the NHS. British people are happy about Brexit. [Within the] University community, people are regressing and do not trust each other."

Belonging continued

There's a potential difficulty in this question (and some others) that in the process of translation, even with definitions being given, that the wider meaning of community was not taken into account, particularly when the word Community is part of the title of one of the organisations we recruited respondents from.

Family - Twenty-one of the respondents gave a rating of 5, or the maximum, for how close they feel to their family, and twenty of those also gave the maximum rating for how satisfied they feel about this.

Friends - In relation to feeling close to their friends, eleven respondents gave the maximum rating, and all of those eleven gave the maximum rating for how satisfied they feel about that. Interestingly, two of the respondents were only a 3 for how close they feel to their friends (the middle answer) but said they were the most satisfied about that.

A third, or eight, of all respondents had a wish to feel more connected to their local neighbourhood, compared to ten of the respondents having a wish to feel more connected to their local community. In percentage terms, that is 33.3% for the local neighbourhood, and 41.7% for the local community.

Half, or twelve of the respondents felt no wish to feel more connected to their local neighbourhood, compared to eleven of the respondents having no wish to feel more connected to their local community.

In relation to feeling close to their friends, eleven respondents gave the maximum rating, and all of those eleven gave the maximum rating for how satisfied they feel about that. Interestingly, two of the respondents were only a 3 for how close they feel to their friends (the middle answer) but said they were the most satisfied about that, indicating being at ease with their situation.

Research Process

During the process of conducting the interviews there were potential difficulties in the translating of some of the concepts and ideas (for instance the definition of 'community'), and it was very difficult guarantee the compatibility of the results.

It was considerably more of a challenge to recruit the respondents for interview than we thought it would be at the outset. It is also worth noting that the respondents we did recruit were mainly from specific, quite close-knit communities, so it's a strong possibility that the people we interviewed were not as representative of the wider EU aged 50+ communities in Greater Manchester as we sought to target initially.

Research Process continued

As we progressed through the research project, we realised that we had a far greater success rate of obtaining candidates for the research when there was a social activity for the respondents to attend. If we had more time and were looking to recruit more respondents, we would repeat activities like the Lithuanian event in the restaurant.

Conclusions

The major conclusion to be drawn from the research is the importance of good English Language skills for the respondents as evidenced by it consistently being the most mentioned factor in the interviews.

It was, however, not the only factor of importance to the respondents, as financial stability and health concerns (both good health and access to healthcare), are also priorities for the respondents.

As is evident by the lack of previous research into the communities we were attempting to learn about, the aged 50+ European Expat communities are not easy target groups to research. As such our sample size was small, it's difficult to draw too many definitive conclusions, and the results should be considered with some caution.

The time involved in engaging with these groups was far greater than had been anticipated. Even with a developed network of community leaders, the success rate of gaing the trust and engaging with members of these communities was lower than we originally had hoped it would be. In particular, the members of ex-communist communities are very untrusting of any form of authority.

The process of obtaining respondents was a lot more successful when there was an event to invite people to. The combination of offering more of an incentive for people to come, and the opportunity for a social event increased the likelihood of the respondents participating.

Recommendations

Partly due to the lack of authoritative conclusions, we have a number of recommendations for areas of further study and/or approaches that could be taken by future organisations engaging with these European Expat communities aged over 50. Our recommendations are aimed towards, but not limited to: Government, Local Authorities, Voluntary Organisations, Researchers, service providers, funders, and Strategic decision makers.

Recommendations continued

1. The importance of English Language skills was evident all the way through our research. Therefore we would advocate for greater access to English classes, targeted specifically to these communities
2. We would also advocate for more information about local services to be available for these communities, delivered in their own languages where possible.
3. The respondents indicated that a process of continued learning into older age leads to better well-being, so we would recommend the promotion of courses and classes of all types.
4. To avoid potential isolation, we would suggest the creation and promotion of activities to give more opportunities for socialising. For instance the creation of specific over 50's groups, led by the members themselves.
5. Within the groups mentioned in 4, we would recommend including sign-posting to other groups in their own language.
6. More time is needed when researching these groups to develop the trust of the members of the communities. Particularly in respect of ex-communist communities who have a deep mistrust of authority.
7. More targeted research is needed into the retired members of these communities, as most of our respondents are still economically active.
8. Caution and more exploration is needed around the use of translations and choice of phrase. 'Mental Health' being a prime example, where the use of that phrase curtailed and affected the quality of the responses, due to the stigma surrounding.

In addition, there are a number of specific questions this research has raised, which due to the nature of the questions, and the small sample size, were unable to be answered in an authoritative manner:

1. We interviewed members from three different European communities. With only four members each from the Romanian and Portuguese communities, it's not possible to know from our results how National Identity affects the experience of people from these communities, nor whether this is more of a determining factor compared to other factors like age or social status. Further research would be required to answer that question.
2. It would be useful and interesting to know how and whether the respondents are contributing to their communities. Our questionnaire did not fully explore this, but knowing the answers would inform how to best provide for these communities.
3. It would be interesting to further questions those who were OK with Brexit and explore what makes them different to those who were less OK with it. All the more so now that leaving the EU is assured, when it wasn't at the time of many of the interviews. Also, do they still feel the same now?

Appendices

Appendix 1. About the research form

About the research project and the questionnaire

Researching the needs and wellbeing of EU Expats aged 50+ their neighbourhood and communities in Greater Manchester

Europia is the only Greater Manchester Charity (Registered Charity No 1161453) that works for the benefit of European Citizens and is a community organisation that focuses on the development, integration and general wellbeing of European Expats.

Europia has been selected to undertake an Ageing Equally research project which focuses on what makes a good place in which to grow older for people who belong to minority communities. The research project is funded by Ambition for Ageing.

Ambition for Ageing is a program aimed at creating more age-friendly places in Greater Manchester and empowering people across the city region to live fulfilling lives as they age. In order to make Greater Manchester a better place to live and age for you and for all - we need your input! We want to hear your opinion about your neighbourhood, your community, local services, challenges and limitations around it and to learn a little bit more about you.

The questionnaire is made up of eight short parts and the interview will last for up to an hour. The questionnaire is anonymous and will remain totally confidential, so you are free to say what you want. There are no right or wrong answers and what matters is your opinion and experience.

First, we would like to find out about the communities you identify with, the challenges and limitations you are facing as an over 50 individual and as a member of these communities. Another part is looking for factors which could help expats to live fulfilling lives as they age. We would also like to know how connected you are to your neighbourhood; how much you contribute and engage with local services and what (if any) are the potential barriers in accessing them. The next part is related to your wellbeing and the role of the neighbourhood

in creating a safe space where you can feel confident and well rounded. We also would like to find out if Brexit has any impact on your identity and decisions as a migrant living in the UK.

The last part of this questionnaire gathers your background information which would help Europia to analyse and to cross reference different data and look into diversity within and across communities which have been interviewed for the project.

We would like to ask for your consent to record our conversation and we are happy to pass the file to you. We guarantee full confidentiality of your personal data and the protection of your personal rights.

We would love to reward your participation in the research project with £10 gift voucher. As a collaborator in this research project, you have the right to withdraw from the project at any stage. The research results will be published in English language and can also be translated if requested.

In addition to conducting research, Europia is also organising various activities, events, offer welfare, legal, EU settlement scheme, Hate Crime support. Should you wish to receive more information about Europia, or perhaps, even become one of our dedicated volunteers, please refer to Client permission and consent "Can Europia contact you about other events, activities and support?" form.

Appendix 2. Communications Consent

Client permission and consent form for communications

Can Europia contact you about other events, activities and support?

Europia is working to support the needs and aspirations of European Communities in Greater Manchester. Europia would like to inform you about events, activities and offer help that may be of interest to you. Please tick the box if you agree to Europia holding your contact information.

☐   I agree to Europia holding my contact information and informing me about relevant activities.

1. How should we contact you?
I prefer to be contacted by (please tick all those apply)

☐ Email _____
☐ Mobile_____
☐ Home telephone_____
☐ Work telephone_____
☐ Post_____

2. Please indicate if you need help with or you are interested in any of the following:

☐ Welfare Advice Sessions
☐ Legal Surgery
☐ EU Settlement Scheme Support
☐ Hate Crime Third Party Reporting Centre
☐ Europia Art Collective
☐ Ławeczka Pod Jabłonią
☐ Various community events
☐ Volunteering

_____   _____   _____
Name and surname   Date   Signature

Appendix 3. Research Concent Form

Research Consent Form

"Researching the needs and wellbeing of EU Expats

aged 50+, their neighbourhoods and communities in Greater Manchester"

*If you would like to participate in the above project, we would like you to read through the following consent form and sign it, if you **agree** to the outlined terms.*

Please tick
X

1. I hereby confirm that I have read the attached information sheet about the research project given in the title. I confirm that I had time to reflect on it and ask questions, and that my questions have been sufficiently answered.

2. I hereby confirm that I participate in the research project voluntarily. I can withdraw from my decision to participate at any moment without further explanation or obligations.

3. I agree to a sound/video recording of the guided conversation with the research over the phone, or in person.

4. I agree for quotations from the guided conversations to be used in the report in the following form: anonymized, with name and surname, with name (please cross out the inappropriate options).

5. I agree to participate in the above described project.

☐

_____   _____   _____
Name and surname of the   *Date*   *Signature*
research collaborator

_____   _____   _____
Name of interviewer   *Date*   *Signature*

Appendices

Appendix 4 - Research Questionnaire

Researching the needs and wellbeing of EU Expats aged 50+, their neighbourhoods and communities in Greater Manchester

Interviewer's name: _____	**Date:** _____

Type of the interview:

Telephone Interview ☐   Face-to-Face Interview ☐

Place where the interview was held if Face-to-Face: _____

Respondent's name: _____

Respondent's country of origin: _____

Other people present: _____

A. CHALLENGES OF 50+ INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR COLLECTIVE PERCEIVED COMMUNITY:

1. What challenges do you feel have you encountered as a European Expat over the age of 50 in the UK? *[If needed, prompt by asking specifically about Work, Health, Language (eg ability to speak English), Accessing services (eg benefits), family/friends networks, etc.]*

_____
_____
_____
_____

2. Which communities do you identify with or feel connected to, whilst living in the UK? *[If the term community needs defining please use this definition: COMMUNITY - a group of people who share something in common, not necessary living in the same place (sharing language, religion beliefs, profession, interests, place of living, for example: Rome Catholics from North Manchester, people working in the hospitality sector, people from Longsight, Slovaks from Greater Manchester, etc.]*

_____
_____
_____

3. How connected do you feel within your communities? scale of 1 -5

_____
_____

4. What challenges do you feel your community has encountered?

_____
_____
_____
_____

B. ADDITIONAL LIMITATIONS WHEN COMPARED TO THEIR YOUNGER EUROPEAN EXPAT COUNTERPARTS.

5. What additional limitations, if any, do you feel you have when compared to your younger European expat counterparts? *[prompt if necessary - it could be things like language barrier, British education, British friends, not knowing systems/culture, etc.]*

_____
_____

6. What were the initial reasons you moved to the UK?

_____
_____
_____

7. Has this created any further limitations or difficulties? *[eg to look after children (therefore perhaps not mixing in a work environment), or illness, or work, do they feel more isolated]*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

C. BETTER AGEING

8. What in your opinion would help you age better as a European Expat in the UK? Please indicate your top three priorities. *[If struggling to answer, can give examples like (social) connections, go to activity (swim, walk, etc), finances/income (self sufficient/benefits)]*

_____
_____

9. What in your opinion are the top 3 factors from those listed below which could make life as an over 50 expat in the UK better?

☐ Language Support	☐ Social Support
☐ Financial Support	☐ Educational Support
☐ Housing Support	☐ In Work Support
☐ Health Care Support	☐ Mental Health Support
☐ Community Support	☐ Other (specify)

Appendices

Appendix 4 - Research Questionnaire

D. COMMUNITY ASSETS AND/OR LOCAL SERVICES IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD.

10. How long have you been living in your area/neighbourhood? _____

11. What local services are you aware of in your neighbourhood? *[Prompt if necessary with a limited number of suggestions, eg shops, community centre, GP, etc.]*

_____

_____

12. Do you travel outside of your local area to access any services?

YES ☐ *go to Question 12a*   NO ☐ *go to Question 13*

12a. Could you explain what kind of services, how far you travel and why?

_____

_____

13. How would the availability and distance travelled to access these services differ from your country of origin?

_____

_____

_____

_____

E. CONTRIBUTING AND ENGAGING WITH LOCAL SERVICES

14. What local services are you actually using in your neighbourhood from the ones listed below?

☐ Shops/supermarkets
☐ Post office
☐ Local market
☐ Restaurants/take aways
☐ Pubs/bars
☐ Gym/swimming pool
☐ Library
☐ GP

☐ Place of worship (church/mosque/temple, etc.)
☐ Community centre
☐ Sure start
☐ School/college/nursery
☐ Language classes
☐ Other activities/classes (*specify*)………….___
☐ Other (*specify*)…………………………………
☐ None

15. Do you feel there are any barriers stopping you from engaging with local services?

YES ☐ *go to question 16*   NO ☐ *go to question 17*   I DON'T KNOW ☐ *go to question 16*

16. If yes, what are the top three? *[Let them answer first, then possible prompt with the answers below if no reply]*

_____

_____

☐ Language barrier

☐ Lack of information about services available

☐ I don't know how to look for them or where to find them

☐ Better access to the services somewhere else (for example in the city centre)

☐ There is nothing available for people in my age

☐ I am too shy

☐ I don't know how to use a computer

☐ I don't have access to a computer

☐ I do not want to engage

☐ Other (*specify*)

17. How confident do you feel to contribute towards your community and/or your local neighbourhood? Scale 1-5

18. What are the top three contributions you could make? *[skills, time, knowledge, etc.]*

_____

_____

F. WELLBEING AND IMPORTANCE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD TO FEEL WELL-ROUNDED AND CONFIDENT

19. What is most important to you for your wellbeing? *[By wellbeing we mean 'the state of being healthy, happy or comfortable']*

_____

_____

20. From the following list, which do you feel are the three most important factors to your wellbeing?

☐ Work and financial stability

☐ Family

☐ Friends and social connections

☐ Health and physical condition

☐ Personal development

☐ Other factors (*if so, what are they?*)___………………………………………….

21. How could your neighbourhood help you feel more well-rounded and confident?

_____

_____

22. Do you wish to feel more connected to your local neighbourhood?

YES ☐   NO ☐   I DON'T KNOW ☐

23. Do you wish to feel more connected to your local community?

YES ☐   NO ☐   I DON'T KNOW ☐

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Appendix 4 - Research Questionnaire

G. IMPACT OF BREXIT ON WELLBING AND IDENTITY OF EU OVER 50 EXPATS

24. How has the referendum decision about Brexit made you feel as an over 50 EU citizen living in the UK?

_____
_____

25. Has the Brexit situation impacted your daily life? If so, how?

_____
_____

26. Has the Brexit situation impacted any of your major decisions? *[For example has it stopped or postponed any decisions to buy a house, change job, start a family, etc.]*

_____
_____

27. Has the Brexit situation had an impact on your mental health?

_____
_____

28. Have you applied for the EU Settlement Scheme? *[We can give information if they have not heard of this, or want help applying etc.]*

_____
_____

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H. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Now I will ask a few personal questions about you - this information will be kept completely anonymous.

29. What is your year of birth? _____

30. Gender identity
Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

Male ☐   Female ☐   In another way ☐   Prefer not to say ☐

31. Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were given at birth?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Prefer not to say ☐

32. When did you arrive to the UK *(just a year)*? _____

33. In which are of Greater Manchester do you live?

☐ Bolton	☐ Bury
☐ Manchester	☐ Oldham
☐ Rochdale	☐ Salford
☐ Stockport	☐ Tameside
☐ Trafford	☐ Wigan
☐ OTHER	

If OTHER, whereabouts do you live? _____

34. How long have you lived there? _____

35. What is your current employment status?

☐ Full-time worker *(35 hours or more per week)*

☐ Part time worker *(less than 35 hours per week)*

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☐ Self-employed

☐ Casual Work/Cash in Hand

☐ Retired

☐ Unemployed

☐ Other *(specify)*

☐ Prefer not to say

36. Is there a particular reason for working/not working?

_____
_____

37. How satisfied are you with your current employment situation? - scale 1 – 5 *[Give space for further comments if they have them]*

_____
_____

38. Are you working in the same field/industry as you were before you came to the UK?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Prefer not to say ☐

_____
_____

39.What would you consider your profession or field of work to be in now and before you arrived to the UK?

_____
_____

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40. How would you describe your sexuality?

☐ Heterosexual/Straight

☐ Gay or Lesbian

☐ Bisexual

☐ Other *(specify)*

☐ Prefer not to say

41. What is your religion?

☐ Buddhist	☐ Muslim
☐ Christian	☐ No religion
☐ Hindu	☐ Sikh
☐ Jewish	☐ Other (please state) _____
☐ Trafford	☐ Prefer not to say

42. What is your marital status?

☐ Co-habiting	☐ Single
☐ Divorced	☐ Widow or widower
☐ Married/civil partnered	☐ Prefer not to say

43. Do you have any long-standing physical or mental illness or disability?
By long-standing, we mean anything that has troubled you over a period of at least 12 months or that is likely to affect you over a future period of at least 12 months.

NO ☐   YES ☐   Prefer not to say ☐

If YES, and you are happy to do so, please briefly describe the condition:

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Appendix 4 - Research Questionnaire

44. Do you have any dependants, financially and/or otherwise? *[e.g. any sick, disabled or elderly relative, wife, husband, partner, child or friend who needs support whom you look after or give special help to]*

NO ☐　　　YES ☐　　　Prefer not to say ☐

45. Who do you live with?

46. How close are you to family members? Scale 1 – 5

47. How do you feel about this? Satisfaction Scale 1 – 5

48. How close are you to your friends? Scale 1 – 5

49. How do you feel about this? Satisfaction Scale 1 – 5

50. How satisfied are you with your accommodation? Scale 1 – 5 *[Please explain why]*

51 What is your first language? (*language spoken at home*)

52. Do you speak any other languages? (*Specify*)

53. How confident do you feel in speaking English? Scale 1 – 5

13

54. Where do you use English?

☐ Work　　　☐ Newspapers
☐ School　　　☐ Books
☐ Shopping　　☐ Cinema
☐ Services　　☐ Family
☐ Socialising　☐ Other (specify)……___
☐ TV　　　　☐ I don't use English at all

55. Have you ever attended any English language lessons in the UK?

NO ☐　　　YES ☐

Thank you for your time. Do you have any questions?

We inform the participant that we will write up the report, do a summary and send it to them (ask if they prefer post, email, or a voice message). Ask if they would like to attend the event where we will share the research findings. Give Europia's contact details.

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