



newexperience

smart research for a connected world



Conducting research with older people

Some hints and tips



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It can be a lot of fun...

May be best participants
you'll ever work with

Reliable

Have time to give you

You'll make them feel
needed and valued

You will come away
enriched



...but you may be affected

Aging mostly isn't fun

You may start thinking
about your own parents

Choosing care for a parent
is the most stressful life
event *CQC/Mumsnet 2015*

...and even about your
future self and your
own mortality



The main thing is
to be prepared ...

What do we mean by old?

Depends on study

A difference between those who used technology in their final working years and those who did not

A big range of abilities and engagement with technology

Just 3 in 10 over 75's used the internet in the last 3 months *ONS 2015*



‘There is no agreed definition of older or old people and people differ widely in what they consider to be old. Members of each age band are a very heterogeneous group and age is a very unreliable indicator of state of health or mental or physical capacity of any individual.’

Public Health England

Where to conduct research?

Inviting people in to a facility will filter the type of person you get

Expect higher-than-usual cancellation rate if weather bad

Make sure facility is accessible

In-home may be the best bet



SCAM

Overcome concerns

Stress you are not trying to sell to them

Highlight the opportunity to help others like them...as well as the incentive

Send out photos of researchers in advance

Suggest a relative or a friend is in attendance

A letter from the company can be helpful



Questions and answers about this research

How do I know this is genuine research commissioned by E.ON?

To reassure you, check that your account number on the front of this letter is the same as the one on your bill. If you are still concerned, please contact our Caring Energy Team on **0800 051 1480**.

Why will I receive high street retail vouchers? What is the catch?

There is no catch. We estimate that this research will take up to 9 hours of your time over a week or so. We feel it is only right to thank you for your time.

Who will benefit from this research?

Based on what we learn from this research we expect to supply easier-to-use heating controls to selected customers

Will taking part in this research cost me any money?

No. You do not pay anything to take part and we will not expect you to use any extra heating during this research.

Will E.ON or the research agency try to sell me anything?

No. At no time will we or our researchers try to sell you any products or services because you are taking part in this research.

Will I have to go out of my home to take part in this research?

No. Our approved researchers will come to you to do the research in your home.

I'm not sure I understand how to use my heating controls. Does that matter?

Not at all. The research aims to make heating controls easier to use. So if you are finding your heating controls hard to use we will be very keen to learn from you.

I am not sure about inviting strangers into my home. Can I ask someone else to be there?

Yes, of course. We are very happy for you to ask a friend, relative or carer to be there when our approved researchers visit you.

Put them at ease

Call to introduce yourself before you go to their home

Establish how they want to be addressed

Send them information about the session

Consider sending out questions in advance

Discuss video; it may be a no-no



Be considerate

Turn up on time, with photo ID

Maybe bring a cake or
some biscuits

Print consent form and receipt and any
instructions in a **large font**

Remember that you
may be a rare visitor
and this be quite an
event for them; be
mindful of their feelings

Limit your team ideally
to two visitors



Structuring the session

Allow up to 50% extra time

Do any home tour early in the visit

Build in breaks

Allow them to talk about themselves, their family and their past career

Older people take longer to think, they talk more and are more detailed



Conducting the interview

If they are nervous about video
ask if you can try for 5 minutes

Sit on their 'good' side

Speak clearly and
louder than normal

Beware that care-givers
may answer for them

Be patient but not
patronising

Probe but don't be
intrusive



Use of self reporting

Offer both print and digital options if possible

Provide simple instructions and worked examples to refer to

Check in with them and make sure they are happy

If a longitudinal study bear in mind the risk of illness interfering



Doing laboratory work?

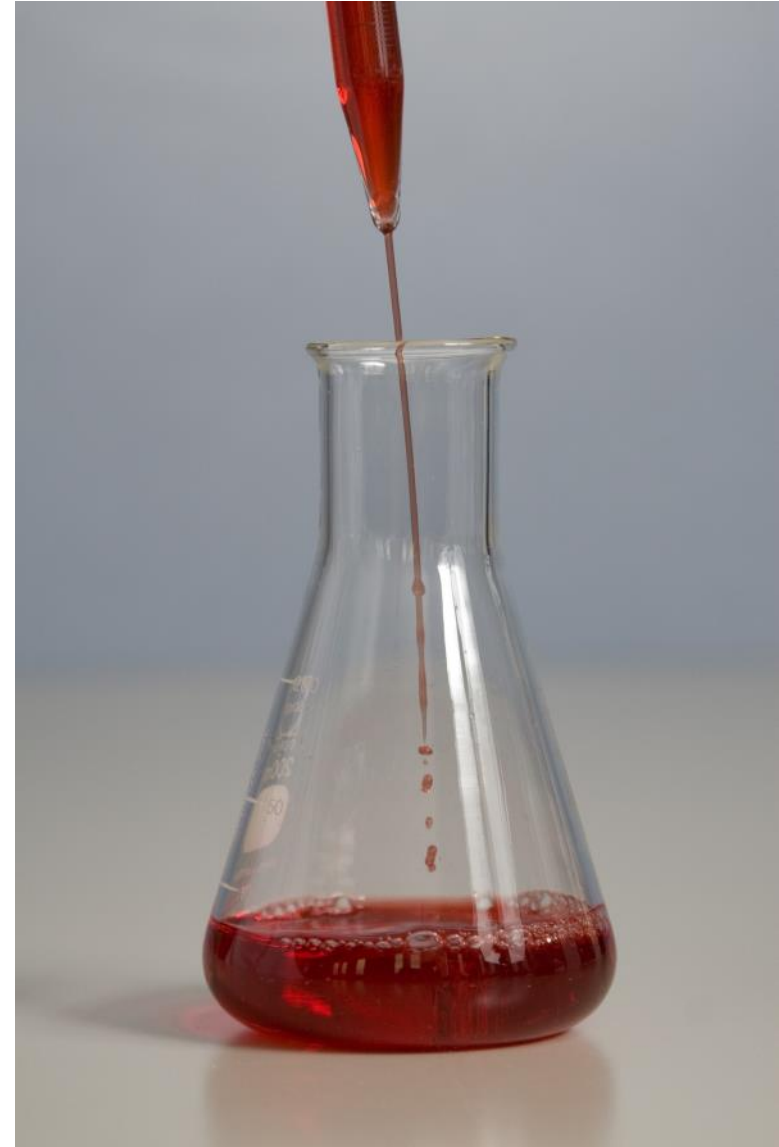
Rely more on behavioural observations

Remember that old people blame themselves... while young people are more likely to blame the system

Don't make them feel a failure

Be aware that older people also gesture very differently to young people

Consider using older/younger friendship pairs so you can see differences in the quality of movement

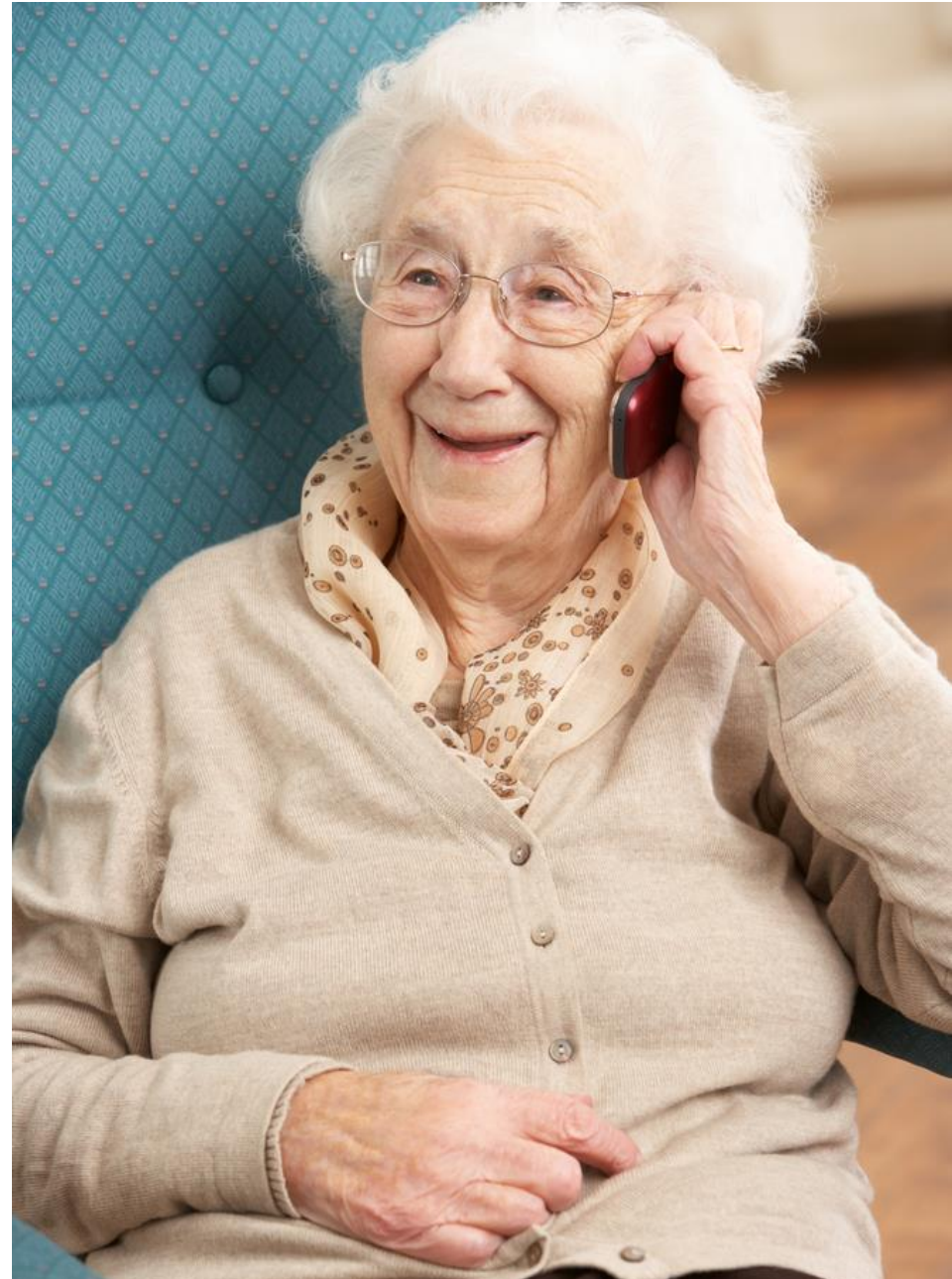


Follow up

They appreciate a courtesy call

They may have thought of
other things to tell you

Consider sending them
photos of your visit



Further reading...

UX magazine Volume 8, Issue 1,
Q1 2009

Especially:

*'Conducting Field Studies with
Older Adults' by Engdahl et al*





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Thank you

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