

DIY Jury Pilot

Pilot background

Funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, led by Dr Tom Shakespeare, with Dr Tom Wakeford as researcher/developer.

The DIY jury was developed by PEALS as a more bottom-up adaption of the well known citizens' jury deliberative technique. Like the citizens' jury it is a means of providing concerned citizens with information to allow them to develop arguments to influence those with power over their lives.

First used in the US during the 1980s, they are based on the conviction that non-experts can make informed and important recommendations on issues concerning the current and future well-being of their fellow citizens.

In order to be able to make those recommendations people need:

- clearly presented information from a number of perspectives
- an opportunity to interrogate them
- a facilitator who ensures balanced debate

The concept of a 'Do-it-yourself' jury has been the subject of continuous action learning at PEALS since 2001.

The first ever DIY jury was piloted on Tyneside in 2002, when a steering group of older people from the area chose to examine the subject of healthcare for the elderly, eventually focusing on the development of improved services for the prevention of, and treatment after, falls in the elderly.

The Teach Yourself Citizens' Juries video and handbook enables community groups and other organisations to facilitate the running of their own Citizens' Juries in the future.

- The jury project has developed the following juries over the years:
- a pilot project (DIY Jury on Issues Prioritised by Older People) which concluded in January 2003
- juries focusing on GM Jury which took place in both Tyneside and Hertfordshire in 2003
- a jury concentrating on project report

DIY Jury on Issues Prioritised by Older People

This pilot focussed on issues affecting older people and explored issues of health and resources for later life. The whole process was documented with a video and a handbook to enable other community groups and constituencies to facilitate the running of their own Citizens' Juries in the future.

The project began by inviting older people from around Tyneside to be part of a Steering Group that gradually focussed on the issue of falls and the development of improved health technologies to prevent and treat them.

The Steering Group then recruited a jury of six men and seven women ranging in age from early 20s to late 60s, and of multiple ethnic and economic backgrounds.

They then invited the witnesses who addressed the jury at six hearings between October and November 2002. The Jury's final verdict was reached at a session held on 6 January 2003.

The project itself recommended a number of developments, for example:

- the development of a multidisciplinary 'falls pathway unit', to be based within local hospitals, to co-ordinate and deliver the care given to older people prone to falls
- more integration of elderly people's community support groups into mainstream NHS and social services
- better training for medical practitioners and care home staff in the needs of elderly people
- regular reviews of elderly people's home circumstances by social services staff
- better communication of the services and benefits available to elderly people