



From Insight to Action 2026

The B&NES State of Ageing Report

Executive Summary

1. Why this report matters

Bath and North East Somerset is changing. The number of older residents is rising, and people here tend to live longer than the national average. At the same time, the area is also seeing growth in its younger population. This creates a vibrant place to live, but also risks widening inequalities linked to income, housing, transport and access to services.

As the area grows and evolves, it is essential that the experiences and priorities of older residents help shape how it develops. Nothing about older people should be decided without older people.

More than 1,300 older residents took part in the 2024 Community Survey, sharing what helps or hinders them to live well. Their voices, combined with national and local evidence, form the foundation of this report.

This report brings together publicly available data about later life in Bath and North East Somerset. It identifies shared priorities and actions that can help make ageing a more positive experience for everyone, and is intended as a shared reference point for planning, commissioning and community action across the area.

2. What the evidence tells us

The evidence shows that ageing does not affect everyone equally. People on lower incomes are more likely to depend on public transport, live in poorer-quality housing, and have less access to the activities and services that help prevent loneliness and poor health. Although Bath and North East Somerset is often seen as a prosperous area, this hides pockets of deprivation.

Bath and North East Somerset includes both a historic city and a large rural area, and ageing is experienced differently across these communities. As the area continues to develop, it is important that older residents remain visible in planning and investment decisions.

Supporting people to age well is not only important for individuals and communities, but also for the long-term sustainability of health, care and public services.

3. Key issues affecting later life in B&NES

Housing	High house prices and a shortage of smaller, accessible and adaptable homes make it difficult for many older people to remain in their communities as their needs change.
Transport	Reliable and affordable public transport is essential for independence, particularly in rural areas, yet many older residents report difficulty accessing health services, shops and social activities.
Health and Care	Although life expectancy is above average, this masks significant inequalities. Access to GP appointments, NHS dentistry and continuity of care are major concerns, and the number of people living with dementia is expected to rise as the population ages.
Caring	Many older people provide unpaid care, often for a partner, including caring for people living with dementia. High levels of caring can affect carers' health and wellbeing.
Loneliness and Wellbeing	Loneliness is closely linked to housing, transport, income and health, particularly for people who live alone, are widowed or are carers.
Safety and Scams	Fraud and scams are among the most common crimes affecting older people and can have a serious impact on confidence and independence.
Digital Access	As more services move online, digital exclusion is becoming an increasing barrier to accessing healthcare, information and services
Communities	Older people make a significant contribution to community life through volunteering, caring and informal support, but this contribution is often overlooked.
Local Environment	Pavements and access to public toilets were consistently raised by older residents as essential for confidence, mobility and independence.

These issues are interconnected and often affect those on lower incomes and those living in rural areas most strongly.

4. From insight to action

This report highlights both what we know and what we still need to understand about ageing in Bath and North East Somerset. While there are gaps in local data, the national evidence, local insight and the voices of more than 1,300 older residents provide a clear foundation for action.

The report sets out recommendations for local government, health services, businesses, voluntary organisations and community groups.

These recommendations focus on:

- Improving the collection and use of age-specific data
- Increasing the supply of suitable and adaptable housing
- Developing a more joined-up approach to transport
- Ensuring digital systems do not exclude people from healthcare and services
- Recognising and supporting unpaid carers
- Strengthening volunteering and community capacity
- Targeting action to reduce loneliness and improve wellbeing
- Improving pavements and access to public toilets
- Building digital confidence while maintaining non-digital options

The State of Ageing Report is not an endpoint, but a starting point for partnership action to make Bath and North East Somerset a place where people can age well, stay connected, remain independent and continue to contribute to their communities.

Next Steps

Following the launch of this report:

- Organisations are invited to make pledges and commitments in response to the report
- Partners will work together to take forward priority actions
- Older People's Voice will continue to help shape this work
- Progress will be reviewed and reported

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