Bolton's Age Friendly Strategy 2025-2028

MAKING BOLTON AN EVEN BETTER PLACE TO GROW OLDER, CREATING POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR EVERYONE.

FOREWORD

As Bolton's Older People's Champion, I believe it is important to acknowledge what a great asset older people are to our communities with their vast knowledge, expertise, wisdom, skills and community spirit.

As a town we know our 70–90 year olds population is growing and will increase rapidly over the next ten years.

This ageing population will present us with challenges for our health and care systems as well as our capacity to create environments in which all of us can flourish as we age, leading healthy, active engaged lives.

Bolton Age Well Partnership is therefore tasked with forging the first Age Friendly Strategy which puts older people at the heart of our communities.

This is very much a collaboration where we co-produce with older people and so the robust action based on four themes has genuinely been decided by older people themselves.

Creating a more Age -friendly culture will ensure Bolton is an even better place to grow older establishing positive outcomes for all.

This is implicit in the publication of Bolton's Age-Friendly Strategy and Action Plan which ratifies the process that will be delivered by a co-ordinated approach embraced by organisations and communities. "What is most certain is that no matter who we are or what we do, in Bolton we all have a vested interest in making this a place where our people can Age-Well! Adopting this Strategy helps pave the way and it holds us to account to make it happen."



Best Wishes Cllr Linda Thomas Bolton's Older People's Champion



INTRODUCTION

We are incredibly proud to present Bolton's Age Friendly Strategy, a roadmap for ensuring our borough is a place where everyone can age well—not just today's older generation, but for generations to come.

This strategy has been a true labour of love, shaped in coproduction with older people themselves, our Ageing Well Community Champions, and partners across the borough. The voice of older people runs through every aspect of this strategy, much like a stick of rock, providing a foundation that ensures our aspirations, objectives, and action plan are meaningful and impactful.

We believe that together, we can achieve real, lasting change for older people in Bolton, making it a place where they can live with dignity, independence, and joy. Importantly, this strategy does not sit in isolation. It is one piece of an intricate and interconnected patchwork, aligning with Bolton's VCSE Strategy, Anti-Poverty Strategy, and the broader Brand Bolton vision. It also reflects global perspectives, aligning with the World Health Organisation's 8 Domains of Ageing and the Chief Medical Officer's 2023 Annual Report: Health in an Ageing Society.

This strategy marks a new chapter for Bolton—one in which we work collectively to build a future that allows all our residents to age well in a vibrant, supportive, and inclusive community. Together, we can make this vision a reality.



Lauren McKechnie Co-Chairs of Bolton's Age Well Partnership



Julie Riley Co-Chairs of Bolton's Age Well Partnership

Age Friendly Bolton We are proud to introduce our new Bolton Age-Friendly logo, representing our commitment to creating an inclusive, accessible, and supportive community for people of all ages, in line with Age-Friendly communities across the UK.

BOLTON'S AGE-FRIENDLY STRATEGY 2025-2028: OUR APPROACH

We want older people in Bolton to stay healthier, independent, fulfilled and connected for longer

JSNA: AGE WELL

Using local data and research to examine key issues affecting older people in Bolton.

A tool for local people, partners and organisations to understand where and how older people are living, and the issues affecting people's ability to experience the good later life that should be available to all.

Highlighting changes in the age demographic, diversity and needs within our ageing population.

Sharing our knowledge, national and local evidence about the health and wellbeing needs of people in Bolton.

A living resource continually updated

STRATEGY

Painting an updated picture of the experiences of ageing in Bolton the opportunities and challenges.

Informed by our JSNA, insight and learning, coproduced with local older people, partners from across the Bolton system including health and social care, education and VCSE sector.

Recognising the cumulative impact of austerity, coronavirus, the cost-ofliving crisis and the climate emergency.

Including objectives, indicators, and examples of current good practice.

Planned release: March 2025

ACTION PLAN

Securing commitments to new ways of working and a timeline for delivery Responding to need and issues identified by older people in Bolton.

Short and long-term goals for change, identifying outcomes, ensuring robust monitoring and evaluation.

Linking with strategies across Bolton to transform our communities fit for older people, now and in the future.

Planned release: March 2025

PROPOSED THEMES

Health and Wellbeing

Ensure the wellbeing and dignity of older people. Enhance access to preventative services and mental health support; continue to embed delivery of active ageing; Falls Collaborative and other recommendations of the Falls Prevention report.

Economic Challenges

Create an inclusive and supportive environment for older people's financial wellbeing. Increase awareness on benefit entitlement and support to claim. Increase awareness and access to reskilling, employment support and age-friendly employers.

Social Implications

Alleviate social challenges faced by older people and create a more inclusive and connected society. Test approaches to support Ageing in Place. Inform regeneration of high streets and town centres, including homes and transport. Continue to deliver projects to decrease isolation.

Transport

create a more inclusive and age-friendly transportation system that promotes the independence, well-being, and active engagement of Boltons older individuals within their communities.

WHO eight domains of an age-friendly community Social Respect Civic participation Communication Community Outdoor spaces Transportation Housing and employment and social and buildings participation and information support and inclusion health services

WHAT IT IS LIKE TO GROW OLDER IN BOLTON

BOLTON'S OLDER PEOPLE

1 in 6
Bolton residents are aged 65+1
1 in 50
Bolton residents are aged 85+1

There is variation in proportion of 65+ residents across Bolton



9% in Rumworth South²31% in Harwood²

Many Bolton 65+s hold no formal gualifications³



51% of women 32% of men

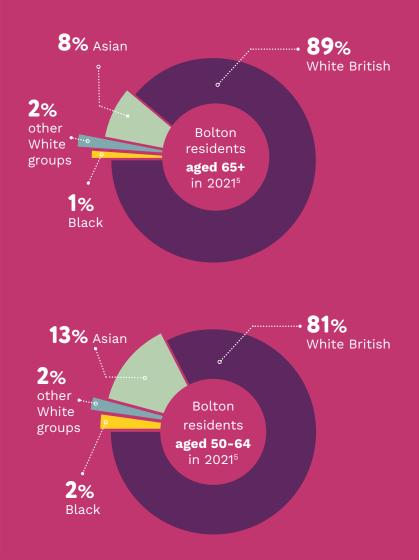
Confidence their household can use wanted and needed online services is generally high among older GM residents:



83% aged 65-74 are confident⁴
72% aged 75+ are confident⁴

FUTURE OLDER PEOPLE

Bolton's older people are increasingly diverse



Bolton's older population is increasing, particularly the oldest

2023 Bolton:¹

Age 65+ **52,000**

Age 85+ **6,000**

2040 Bolton:⁶

Age 65+ **64,000**

Age 85+**10,000**

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES



19% of people aged 60+ in Bolton are income deprived⁷



1 in 3 Bolton residents aged 50-64 are economically inactive⁸

Higher **than England** Higher **than Bolton pre-pandemic**



26% of Bolton 65+s couldn't afford to pay an unexpected but necessary expense of £850⁴



30% of people aged 65+ in Bolton found it difficult to pay their rent/mortgage⁴



8% of people aged 65+ in GM have cut the size of or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food⁴

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS



62% of Bolton 65+s felt a strong sense of belonging to their local area⁴



3 in 4 Bolton 65+s agreed that if they wanted company or to socialise there were people they could call



1 in 4 Bolton 50+s live alone⁹



36% of adult social care users aged 65+ have as much social contact as they would like¹⁰



63% of Bolton 65+s thought their local area was a place where people look out for each other⁴

WHAT IT IS LIKE TO GROW OLDER IN BOLTON continued

TRANSPORTATION



Bolton's over 65's take on average **3.1** bus journeys a day¹¹



55% of Bolton's 65+ are satisfied with availability of public transport in their local area⁴



52% of Bolton's 65+ are dissatisfied with the condition of local paved/pedestrian areas⁴



159 people aged 60+ were injured or killed on Bolton's roads 2021-2023¹²

43 while walking or cycling¹²



UK disabled older adults are most likely to have a mobility (69%) or **stamina, breathing or fatigue** impairment (46%)¹³

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Among Bolton residents:



62% aged 65-74 are in good health¹⁴

47% aged 75+ are in good health¹⁴



14% of GM 65+s had skipped accessing a health or social care service because of cost implications⁴



GM residents aged 55+ had **greater 'health confidence'** than overall suggesting they are more likely to feel in control of their health⁴

Bolton's healthy life expectancy at 65¹⁵



Male **8.5 years** Female **10.6 years**



3000 disabled people aged 65+ live in Bolton¹⁴

FALLS



30% of people aged 65+ **50%** of people aged 80+ fall at least once a year



5-10% of falls in older people result in serious injury or hospitalisation





- Falls history
- Mobility, balance, gait impairment
- Cognitive impairment
- Polypharmacy
- Fear of falling
- Visual impairment
- Urinary incontinence
- Home hazards



Up to **70%** of recent fallers report fear of falling, of which half will limit their daily physical and social activities.

Many risk factors can be addressed e.g.

- Strength and balance training
- Environmental changes
- Vision assessment and referral
- Medication review



Older people who do 30+ mins of moderate physical activity a day have **35-40%** lower falls risk

DEMENTIA

Dementia is not only about memory loss. It can also affect the way you speak, think, feel and behave.

Dementia is not a natural part of ageing.



There are over **200** subtypes of dementia.

- The most common are:
- Alzheimer's disease
- vascular dementia
- Lewy body dementia



There are currently 2,419 people over 65 living in Bolton with a dementia diagnosis^2



Dementia prevalence in Bolton is estimated to increase by **22%** by 2030⁴



Up to **40%** of cases of dementia are linked to modifiable (adjustable) risk factors³

Keeping your brain healthy⁵:



• Love your heart – what's good for your heart is good for your brain



- **Stay sharp** take time for your mental wellbeing, sleep well & regularly challenge your brain
- **Keep connected** social isolation is linked to an increased risk of dementia

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Bolton Vision

Start Well B C

Our children get the best possible start in life, so that they have every chance to succeed and be happy.

Live Well

The happiness and wellbeing of our residents is improved, so that they can live healthy, fulfilling lives for longer.

Age Well

rit in

Older people in Bolton stay healthier for longer, and feel more connected with their communities.

Prosperous



Businesses want to work and invest in the borough and through their corporate social responsibility maximise social value opportunities, whilst creating good inclusive and sustained employment across the system.

Clean and Green

Our environment is protected and improved, so that more people enjoy it, care for it and are active in it.

Safe, strong and Distinctive



Stronger, cohesive, more confident communities in which people feel safe, welcome, and connected. These six outcomes clearly articulate the ambitions for the Borough and underpinning each are key partnership groups leading on delivery. Partners have the ability to refine where to put efforts, reflective of current position and what matters, to then be firepower to drive delivery of outcomes including those highlighted with the Age Friendly Strategy. These partnerships are rooted in principles of equality and fairness, in support of our broader ambitions for the borough.

Greater Manchester Ageing Hub

The Greater Manchester Ageing Hub was established in 2016 and brings together Greater Manchester-based research institutes, public services, businesses and the voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise sector, working with national and international partners.

The Hub is facilitated by a core team based in the Public Service Reform Directorate in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The work of the Hub is overseen by an executive group, chaired by Sara Todd, Chief Executive, Trafford Council, and the Hub reports to the Greater Manchester Reform Board.

The Hub supports thematic task groups across a broad range of policy areas to develop age-friendly policy and works alongside the Greater Manchester Older People's Network and the Greater Manchester Older People's Equality Panel to ensure older people's voices are heard in policy-making.

Strategies and plans

Local:

• Active Lives Strategy

active-lives-strategy-for-bolton-2023-to-2028

• Independent living Strategy

www.bolton.gov.uk/downloads/file/2490/independent-living-bolton-s-housing-strategy-forolder-people

- VCSE Strategy VCSE Strategy Bolton CVS
- Bolton Prevention Framework
- PH Annual report: Mental Health and Wellbeing www.boltonjsna.org.uk/downloads/file/189/phar-2022
- **Bolton's Tackling Poverty Strategy 2024-27** Tackling Poverty Strategy – Bolton Council

Greater Manchester:

GM Age Friendly Strategy

9A Greater Manchester Age-Friendly Strategy 2024 -2034.pdf (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

• GM State of Ageing

the-state-of-ageing-in-greater-manchester-january-2024.pdf (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

National:

- The State of Ageing (Centre for Ageing Better) The State of Ageing 2023-24 | Centre for Ageing Better (ageing-better.org.uk)
- CMO annual Report 2023: health in an ageing society

www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2023-health-in-an-ageing-society

WHO DOMAINS



Bolton's Age Friendly vision is that our older resident's will have a well-planned and designed built environment and public spaces with awareness of the needs of and in consultation with older people, recognising their diversity.

To support ageing in place, we will develop initiatives to create age-friendly outdoor environments looking at retrofitting existing neighbourhoods in addition to following good practice in the design of new neighbourhoods increase the opportunities for residents to remain physically and socially active and independent for as long as possible



Transportation

Bolton's Age Friendly vision is that our older resident's will have safe, accessible, appropriate and reliable transport services and infrastructure for active living.

This will enable people to maintain their mobility, independence and connections as they get older, continuing to be engaged with their communities and able to access health and care facilities.



Housing

Bolton's Age Friendly vision is that our older residents will have support to access, appropriate housing options that enable them to live longer in their own home, living a healthy and fulfilled live, feeling safe, supported and valued.



Social participation

Bolton's Age Friendly vision is that our older residents, regardless of any limitations of age, memory or health, feel well connected.

They are mentally, physically and socially active, with a sense of belonging, being cared for and with something fulfilling to do with others. They have someone to turn to, to share their concerns and enjoy a laugh with.



Respect and social inclusion

Bolton's Age Friendly vision is that our older residents have their basic needs met so they can live with dignity.

They feel valued, respected and listened to and that they have a say in the decision making that affects their lives.

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Civic participation and employment

Bolton's Age Friendly vision is that our older residents have opportunities to contribute to their communities through different channels including informal and formal volunteering, charities, and through paid employment, if they so choose.

We will also continue to encourage older people to remain actively engaged in the political processes at both local and national levels through a variety of forums and initiatives.



Communication and information

Bolton's Age Friendly vision is that our older residents will be involved in the development of communication and information messages that will provide timely, accessible, effective and practical information to stay connected with events, news, activities and important health information.

Support to be digitally connected is also important as the digital first approach is more widely used.



Community support and health services

Bolton's Age Friendly vision is

that our health and care systems are fit for an ageing population by integrating how we deliver our health, social and care services and delivering in the most appropriate setting which includes the home, community or specialist centre.

ACTIVE CONNECTED PROSPEROUS VISION

Bolton is a place that's Active, Connected and Prosperous.

AGE WELL VISION

We want older people to stay healthier, independent, fulfilled and connected for longer.

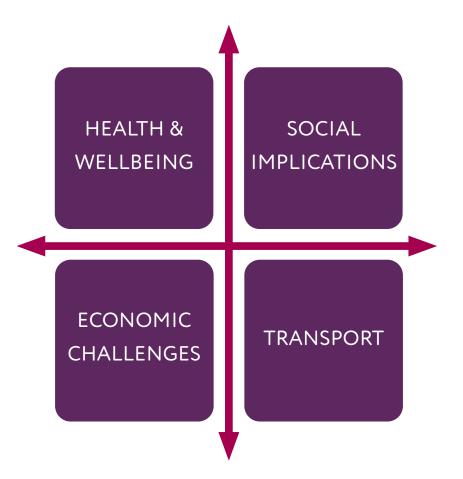
AGE FRIENDLY STRATEGY GOAL

Older people in Bolton will feel safe, supported, involved, engaged, connected, respected, and empowered to live healthier and more active lives.

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO OLDER PEOPLE IN BOLTON?

The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent cost of living crisis had profound effects on individuals of all ages, particularly populations such as older adults. As such, Bolton Community and Voluntary Services (CVS) were commissioned via Bolton's Aging Well Partnership (AWP) to conduct engagement activity to identify any additional considerations to the findings in the previous 'Developing an Age Friendly Strategy' report carried out by Healthwatch Bolton.

This report was to provide a comprehensive analysis of how the COVID-19 pandemic and the costof-living crisis have impacted the lives of older adults living in Bolton, shedding light on the challenges they have faced and identifying potential strategies to address these issues which should be considered in the development of Boltons Age Friendly Strategy.



• HealthWatch 'Developing an Age Friendly Strategy' report - pre covid www.boltonjsna.org.uk/downloads/file/121/developing-an-age-friendly-strategy

• Bolton CVS Age Friendly Strategy Engagement document - post covid www.boltonjsna.org.uk/downloads/file/208/bolton-s-age-friendly-strategy

Strategy themes and objectives detailed overleaf are not expected to be delivered by a single organisation, but a co-ordinated systemwide effort and active participation by all stakeholders.

This strategy is supported by an action plan that is a living document with a working group for each theme that will ensure alignment with existing strategies, action plans, and related programmes of work. For example, the transport group aligning with the existing GM Transport Strategy and the developing Bee Network to support local plans.

More details can be found in the action plan detailing existing partners and activity, priority actions, timelines, responsible partners, plus monitoring and evaluation indicators.



STRATEGY THEMES AND OBJECTIVES:

Theme 1: HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Access to essential healthcare has been hindered by the pandemic, leading to delayed treatments, limited options and widening health disparities. The digitalisation of healthcare has further marginalised older adults, leaving them feeling unseen and unheard.

Boltons Age friendly Vision is that our health and care systems are fit for an ageing population. By listening to older people about the services they need, access when they need, at a place where they need.

We can empower people to become healthy and remain healthy, through proactive prevention activities, enabling them to live happy, connected and independently in their community. Prevention is key to maintaining health and wellbeing, not forgetting the importance of maintaining dignity, comfort and choice during difficult times.



Objectives:

- 1. Ensure the voice of older people is heard and acted upon
- Provide opportunities and encourage older people to give feedback in different formats not just digitally.
- Co-produce services for older people with older people.
- Keep older people and their carers fully informed and able to make choices about health, wellbeing and care.

2. Enhance timely access to health and care services

- Provide different access options such as online, telephone and face to face.
- Provide appointment times that allow people to travel with concessionary passes.
- Provide care near to home or in the home.

3. Mental health and wellbeing support

- Provide health and care services alongside signposting/referral to community activities.
- Raise awareness with health and care staff to understand the impact of social isolation and the tools to support people in the community to access activities such as befriending.
- Encourage people to age well in their own homes.
- Motivate and educate people on the benefits of being active and living a healthy lifestyle.

Theme 2: ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Bolton's age friendly vision is to create an inclusive and supportive environment to build financial resilience for residents of Bolton.

The vision will also support individuals to maximise their income, increase awareness and access to skills and advice, whilst improving employment support. This will help create more opportunities for people to access support to plan for later life.'



Objectives

- 1. Maximising income and reducing costs for those in later life
- Improve awareness of where to go for help, including during an emergency or crisis
- Ensure access to good quality advice services, particularly welfare rights, debt and budgeting.
- Increase take up of benefits with a focus on later life benefits such as pension credit and attendance allowance.
- Deliver a targeted approach on under-claiming communities and improve support for specific groups that have additional needs such as carers and those with a disability etc.
- Bolton advice and advocacy services to work together, increase awareness of services with the public and each other.

2. Reducing economic inactivity and increasing good employment

- Utilise the Bolton Community Learning and Adult Skills offer to reskill residents to support them to find work.
- Utilise the Bolton skills offer to engage with those who face obstacles due to economic, social or structural inequalities.
- Bolton Council are working towards signing the 'Age Friendly Pledge' and will promote, encourage other organisations to do the same.
- Encourage older people to continue learning and building skills throughout their lives can help them stay relevant in the workforce.

3. Improve digital literacy

- Enabling Bolton residents to use digital apps and technology to help them stay healthy in later life.
- Maximising take up of free sim offer within the Library and Museum Service to enable residents to access internet.
- Promotion of free community based digital support.
- Develop a cohort of older Digital Champions to become role models and be a part of the Digital Champions Network.

Theme 3: SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Social implications for older people in Bolton refers to the effects of limited social interactions and reduced community engagement, which can lead to increased loneliness and decreased mental and physical health. It involves the availability and accessibility of support systems often provided by community centres, local VCSE organisations, and informal networks.

Additionally, social implications can include the quality and frequency of intergenerational interactions, crucial for knowledge transfer, emotional support, and community cohesion, underscoring the need for enhanced opportunities for meaningful connections and sense of purpose and belonging.



Objectives:

1. Reduce social isolation and loneliness among older adults

• Implement and sustain initiatives that facilitate regular social interactions and community engagement for older adults, such as social clubs, events, and virtual meet-up's, aiming to improve mental health and overall quality of life.

2. Enhance access to support networks:

- Strengthen the capacity and reach of community centres, local VCSE organisations, and informal networks to provide comprehensive support for older adults, including carers.
- This includes increasing awareness of available services, improving transportation options, and offering personalised assistance to overcome barriers like ill-health and mobility issues.

3. Promote environments for connections:

- Develop programmes that encourage interactions between older adults and younger generations by creating physical spaces that consider the needs across the life course.
- This includes intergenerational mentoring, joint community projects and town centre regeneration.
- Designing these environments to facilitate intergenerational connections and meet the needs of older people is crucial for fostering mutual understanding, respect, and community cohesion.

4. Integrate health and wellbeing services:

Collaborate with health and wellbeing services to create a holistic approach to addressing the social implications faced by older adults. This involves ensuring that social, economic, and transportation needs are considered in health interventions and that social support is integrated into health care plans.

5. Monitor and evaluate impact:

Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at addressing the social implications for older adults. Regular feedback from participants, data collection, and analysis will help refine programmes and ensure they meet the evolving needs of the older population in Bolton. Attention will also be given to upscaling projects which have evidenced positive impact and creating a consistent offer across Bolton.

Theme 4: TRANSPORTATION

Bolton's Age Friendly vision is that our older resident's will have safe, accessible and reliable transport services and infrastructure for active living.

This will enable people to maintain their mobility, independence and connections as they get older, continuing to be engaged with their communities and able to access health and care facilities.



Objectives

- 1. Improve access to where people want to go, wider public transport to get in and out of Bolton (Level 1), local community transport and active travel, demand responsive (Level 2).
- Increase communication with different formats: what is available, when is it available and how do you access it, not just digital media.
- Concessionary passes:
 - o Not easy to acquire, can this be made easier/simpler?
 - o People aged 65 can still be working, yet bus passes are restricted to use during off peak times.
- Explore alternative options for travel e.g. volunteer driver scheme.
- Explore ways to support people to reach their destination, getting across the town centres when distances are great.

2. Improve experience and reliability:

- Age Friendly/dementia Friendly Training for transport staff, including bus, train and taxi.
- Improved wayfinding from transport hub to important places for example market, library, museum, Octagon theatre, Lever Chambers Health Centre.
- Heritage maps to way find and be proud of Bolton.
- Shared spaces require signage to indicate area used by pedestrians, scooters and bicycles. Walking and wheeling shared spaces.
- Age Friendly lens to be applied when looking at benches, dropped kerbs, crossing points, paving, safe routes, assisting anyone with mobility or sensory issues.
- Access to mobility scooters and wheelchairs at the transport hub for accessing and travelling through the town centre.
- Support for using parking apps and accessible parking.
- More access to blue badge spaces for longer.
- Timing of buses with better communication when there are delays.
- Apps need to be more age-friendly and easy to use for older people, show them how to use an app e.g. Bee App.

3. Ensure connection with other programmes of work e.g. transport strategy, town centre development and inclusivity, GM Ageing Hub strategies.

- Health and Wellbeing Action Plan: Royal Bolton NHS Foundation Trust Health Inequalities Conference, Transport and access to health care came up numerous times.
- Ageing in Place Pathfinder programme in Little Lever has raised issues regarding transport with challenges for some older people travelling from one end of Little Lever to the other.

THANK YOU TO CONTRIBUTORS:







AWP members and members of the community. And special thanks to our Ageing Well Champions and our ageing well Bolton Community Members who were integral in co-producing this strategy and action plan.



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TO BUILD A FUTURE THAT ALLOWS ALL OUR RESIDENTS TO AGE WELL IN A VIBRANT, SUPPORTIVE, AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY.

Bolton's Age Friendly Strategy

2025-2028