



Make London's Boroughs Age Friendly!

Manifesto from Age UKs in London for the
London Borough Council Elections

May 2018



Contents



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Foreword	4
Introduction & Executive Summary	6
Key Issues for Older Londoners	14
- Quality, Responsive Local Care Services	15
- Age Friendly Boroughs and Neighbourhoods	16
- Better Communication with Older People	17
- Make London's Housing Age Friendly	18
- Accessible Transport for Older Londoners	20
The Work of Age UKs in London	23

Foreword



Dear Reader,

I am delighted to present the manifesto for the local elections in May 2018 from the Age UKs in London.

In many ways we live in challenging times – pressures on funding for services, uncertainty about the future due to Brexit and perceived intergenerational antagonism all go towards making this a difficult time for older people.

And yet there is much that is positive – stereotypes of older people are being challenged and the terrible weather in February showed how communities can come together when needed, with older people giving and receiving the kindness of strangers.

Against this backdrop, all London Boroughs are electing their councillors for the next four years, and so it is timely to be putting our case to them for how local authorities in London will support older people in these “interesting times”.

Age UKs in London are committed to making sure that all older people in London, regardless of faith, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or circumstance, are able to enjoy a fulfilling and valued life, and we hope all candidates of all parties will be able to support this and the recommendations in this manifesto.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Goulden
Chief Executive
Age UK London



Introduction & Executive Summary



A Growing and Ageing City

London is growing, with the population forecast to increase to 10.5 million by 2041. Londoners also include an increasing number of older people, particularly in the oldest age groups – in 2016 over a million Londoners were aged 65+, with 140,000 aged 85+. Outer London boroughs mainly have more older people than Inner London boroughs but people are living longer everywhere. It is a huge success that Londoners are living longer.

Older people contribute massively to London and to all our boroughs as paid workers, volunteers, carers, grandparents, community activists and in other ways. More older people means that this contribution will increase in future.

At the same time, many older people, like others in our communities, experience poverty and inequality. Poverty among pensioners was falling but has increased again recently. London's housing crisis affects older people as well as younger generations, with a serious lack of affordable and accessible housing in many areas. Loneliness affects Londoners of all ages including many older people: the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness found that "more than 1 in 3 people aged 75 and over say that feelings of loneliness are out of their control".

Very significantly, the pressure on local government finances has driven adult social care services to breaking point. Nationally, some 1.2 million older people with care needs receive no help. This has very serious and harmful results for older people who need support, and family members who care for them. The broken care system results essentially from central funding cuts but local government is in the front line with statutory responsibility to support those who need it. Over half of Londoners aged 65+ have a long term health condition or are disabled, and in 2017 almost 67,000 older Londoners were estimated to have dementia.

Older Londoners are very diverse in terms of their ethnic and cultural background, their religion, their sexual orientation and in many other senses. Some 22% of Londoners aged 65+ are from "non-White ethnic groups" and 36.7% of Londoners aged 65+ were born outside the UK. 14% do not have English as their main language.

We call on candidates in the London borough Council elections to commit themselves to make changes in the five key areas listed overleaf.

1. Quality, Responsive Local Care Services:

- Give top political priority to ensuring that older people with identified care needs are not left without support
- Meet the 2014 Care Act duty that the local authority ensure that information and advice about support for older people and their families or carers is available and that this sets out details of what services are available, connections between different services, and how accessibility requirements will be met
- Ensure that commissioners and providers meaningfully involve older people in making informed decisions about their care needs and care planning – co-producing local services
- Make sure that the borough and the local NHS develop a shared understanding and definition of what integrated care means for their population in their local area, and then work towards delivering this shared aim
- Keep on the agenda the importance of a preventive approach to reduce the future need for long term care
- Make services responsive to the needs of older people living with dementia and mental health issues

2. Age Friendly Boroughs and Neighbourhoods:

An Age Friendly Borough

- Bring the borough into line with the Age Friendly Cities approach and cooperate with other local authorities and the Mayor of London to develop this concept. Work to make the borough dementia friendly if this is not already in progress
- Incorporate ageing and older people positively in all work areas including business, the economy and regeneration; develop positive and non-ageist messages about older people, including their contribution to society.
- Ensure inclusive and effective consultation of older people in developing key policies
- Encourage provision of accessible community meeting places, residents' lounges etc.: these are valuable to community groups and people of all ages

Age Friendly Neighbourhoods

- Develop Lifetime Neighbourhoods which are walkable, with good access to sufficient shops and facilities, public transport links and green spaces
- Prioritise tackling litter and fly tipping: older people have told us this is a key concern about local neighbourhoods
- Encourage the provision of clean, well-maintained, free public toilets
- Encourage the maintenance of pavements, without obstructive street furniture or tripping hazards and ensure that adequate lighting is provided for pedestrians
- Do everything possible to ensure local communities keep vital services like libraries and post offices

Tackling Loneliness

We support the recommendation of the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness that:

“Metro mayors and council leaders need to understand how their communities are affected by loneliness; to identify people who may be particularly at risk in their areas; and to set out plans for local action to address these challenges. Ensuring communities have spaces in which they can come together will be vital.”

We call on candidates to support this recommendation.



3. Better Communication with Older People:

- Make particular efforts to engage with isolated older people
- Make information and advice accessible to all older Londoners, including disabled people with physical and sensory impairments and those who are not online
- Provide resources to tackle digital exclusion and get more older Londoners online
- Encourage information and support to be provided for older people in relation to a wide variety of topics, including energy-saving guidance, benefits and services
- Improve automated systems for phone-based information provision, which many older people find difficult to use
- Work with and support voluntary and community sector networks which can be effective in providing advice and getting key information to older people and others
- Develop information-provision within the community. For example, leaflets in libraries or doctors' surgeries can reach many people who are not online

4. Make London's Housing Age Friendly:

- Ensure provision of more genuinely affordable, accessible housing to rent (long term) and buy for people of all ages
- Meet at least the London Plan targets for provision of good quality, affordable specialist housing for older people across all tenures
- Act to ensure acceptable standards for private sector tenants, including through landlord licensing and improved housing enforcement, and respond to the needs of older private sector tenants
- Ensure social housing is both adequate and safe; ensure there are adequate emergency plans safeguarding vulnerable people
- Ensure information and advice on housing choices (like mobility schemes for social housing tenants) and on housing support and adaptations is accessible to older people. Many older people in social housing currently struggle to use online mobility schemes

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- Strengthen the connection between housing and health and social care, particularly the addition of housing policies and actions to improve health and reduce NHS and social care costs
 - Prioritise the best possible support to repairs, aids and adaptations to enable older people in all housing tenures to remain independent at home
 - Support practical housing solutions to improve housing conditions for lower and middle income older homeowners living in older housing stock
 - Support proposals for innovative housing solutions such as co-operatives and co-housing which can benefit older people

5. Accessible Transport for Older Londoners:

- Ensure that the borough supports retention of the Freedom Pass and TfL 60+ Oyster Photocard and that they are not means tested
- Improve the street environment for pedestrians, for example limiting street furniture and ensuring older and disabled pedestrians and public transport users are not disadvantaged by the design of new facilities like Cycle Superhighways
- Improve bus connections to London hospitals, which are insufficient in some cases
- Ensure that pedestrian crossings always allow sufficient time for older people to cross the road
- Work to improve Door-to-Door transport services for older and disabled people, building on the positive features of Dial-a-Ride, TaxiCard and other services and encouraging support to community transport providers



Key Issues for Older Londoners



1. Quality, Responsive Local Care Services

London's boroughs have the important responsibility of providing social care to older and disabled adults with long term support needs. Government underfunding is putting social care under huge pressure, and in many respects the care market is broken. Nationally some 1.2 million older people with identified care needs receive no help at all from the official system. Need is growing as the safety net shrinks, and more and more of the burden is landing on family carers – many themselves older people. Nationally, in 2015-16 over two and a quarter million older people provided unpaid care, often putting their own health at risk.

We support the national campaign to achieve a fair and sustainable funding settlement for social care. This is clearly necessary to meet increasing needs and achieve the quality support system we all want. However local government has the key legal responsibility for older adults needing long term care, and must do everything within its power to improve the support that older people and carers receive. Some of the problems blighting many older Londoners' lives are avoidable.

We call on candidates in the May 2018 London borough elections to commit themselves to:

- Give top political priority to ensuring that older people with identified care needs are not left without support.
- Meet the 2014 Care Act duty that the local authority ensure that information and advice about support for older people and their families or carers is available and that this sets out details of what services are available, connections between different services, and how accessibility requirements will be met.
- Ensure that commissioners and providers meaningfully involve older people in making informed decisions about their care needs and care planning – co-producing local services.
- Make sure that the Local Authority and the local NHS develop a shared understanding and definition of what integrated care means for their population in their local area, and then work towards delivering this shared aim.
- Keep on the agenda the importance of a preventive approach to reduce the future need for long term care.
- Make services responsive to the needs of older people living with dementia and mental health issues.

2. Age Friendly Boroughs and Neighbourhoods

All of London's boroughs will see an increase in the proportion of older people, including the "oldest old" (aged 85+). This is both a challenge to ensure local areas are planned in an age friendly way, and an opportunity to take advantage of the contribution of people who are staying active in the community and workforce in later life.

The World Health Organisation has developed the concept of Age Friendly Cities. This covers the areas of housing; outdoor environment and neighbourhoods; transport; social, cultural and civic participation; employment, skills and income; community support and health services; communication and information; and respect and social inclusion. Many of these are fields where boroughs play a key role.

An Age Friendly Borough

We call on candidates in the 2018 London Borough Council elections to commit to:

- Bring the borough into line with the Age Friendly Cities approach and cooperate with other local authorities and the Mayor of London to develop this concept. Work to make the borough dementia friendly if this is not already in progress.
- Incorporate ageing and older people positively in all work areas including business, the economy and regeneration; develop positive and non-ageist messages about older people, including their contribution to society.
- Ensure inclusive and effective consultation of older people in developing key policies.
- Encourage provision of accessible community meeting places, residents' lounges etc.: these are valuable to community groups and people of all ages.

Age Friendly Neighbourhoods

We call on candidates in the 2018 London Borough Council elections to commit to:

- Develop Lifetime Neighbourhoods which are walkable, with good access to sufficient shops and facilities, public transport links and green spaces.

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- Prioritise tackling litter and fly tipping: older people have told us this is a key concern about local neighbourhoods.
 - Encourage the provision of clean, well-maintained, free public toilets.
 - Encourage the maintenance of pavements, without obstructive street furniture or tripping hazards and ensure that adequate lighting is provided for pedestrians.
 - Do everything possible to ensure local communities keep vital services like libraries and post offices.

Tackling Loneliness

We support the recommendation of the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness that:

"Metro mayors and council leaders need to understand how their communities are affected by loneliness; to identify people who may be particularly at risk in their areas; and to set out plans for local action to address these challenges. Ensuring communities have spaces in which they can come together will be vital."

We call on candidates to support this recommendation.

3. Better Communication with Older People

Local Councils are hubs for key information for older people in many areas of life, from health and social care services, to how to take part in community life and influence local priorities. How this information is provided has shifted under pressure from funding restrictions, and especially with the "Digital by Default" agenda. Many older people, especially in the older age groups, find the switch to digital very challenging. Although more and more older people are getting online, the majority aged 75+ are still not using digital technology. It is often the people who most need the information who find it the most difficult to access it.

We call on candidates in the 2018 London borough Council elections to commit themselves to:

- Make particular efforts to engage with isolated older people.
- Make information and advice accessible to all older Londoners, including disabled people with physical and sensory impairments and those who are not online.

- Provide resources to tackle digital exclusion and get more older Londoners online.
- Encourage information and support to be provided for older people in relation to a wide variety of topics, including energy-saving guidance, benefits and services.
- Improve automated systems for phone-based information provision, which many older people find difficult to use.
- Work with and support voluntary and community sector networks which can be effective in providing advice and getting key information to older people and others.
- Develop information-provision within the community. For example, leaflets in libraries or doctors' surgeries can reach many people who are not online.

4. Make London's Housing Age Friendly

London's housing crisis affects older people as well as younger generations. Many older Londoners live in poor conditions – including older homeowners who are “asset rich but income poor”. The number of older people forced to rent on short leases in the private sector is expected to double over the next 20 years and already, we are seeing older private tenants in financial hardship and dangerous housing conditions. Across all housing tenures, older Londoners who want or need to move struggle to find affordable, accessible and suitable housing in the areas where they want to live and have their family and social networks. Older Londoners in homes that are difficult to heat are particularly vulnerable in winter.

London boroughs are both planning authorities for local housing development, and responsible for social housing and housing-related support services. So boroughs have a key role in ensuring decent housing for older Londoners. Following Grenfell, local authorities have an important responsibility to ensure social housing is both adequate and safe.

We call on candidates in the 2018 London borough Council elections to commit themselves to:

- Ensure provision of more genuinely affordable, accessible housing to rent (long term) and buy for people of all ages.
- Meet at least the London Plan targets for provision of good quality, affordable specialist housing for older people across all tenures.
- Act to ensure acceptable standards for private sector tenants, including through landlord licensing and improved housing enforcement, and respond to the needs of older private sector tenants.
- Ensure social housing is both adequate and safe; ensure there are adequate emergency plans safeguarding vulnerable people.
- Ensure information and advice on housing choices (like mobility schemes for social housing tenants) and on housing support and adaptations is accessible to older people. Many older people in social housing currently struggle to use online mobility schemes.
- Strengthen the connection between housing and health and social care, particularly the addition of housing policies and actions to improve health and reduce NHS and social care costs.
- Prioritise the best possible support to repairs, aids and adaptations to enable older people in all housing tenures to remain independent at home.
- Support practical housing solutions to improve housing conditions for lower and middle income older homeowners living in older housing stock.
- Support proposals for innovative housing solutions such as co-operatives and co-housing which can benefit older people.

5. Accessible Transport for Older Londoners

Transport is a key concern for many older people: being able to get around is an important part of being able to take part in society and avoid social isolation and the risk of loneliness. Older Londoners often talk about how the Freedom Pass is the best thing about living in London. Older people use it to access services and shopping, see family and friends, take up volunteering and for some, continue in paid work. Without it there would be far more lonely older people and many charities would lose some of their volunteers.

As well as paying for the Freedom Pass, London's boroughs are in charge of the vast majority of streets in London and are key players in making streets and town centres healthy, accessible places.

We call on candidates in the 2018 London borough Council elections to commit themselves to:

- Ensure that the borough supports retention of the Freedom Pass and TfL 60+ Oyster Photocard and that they are not means tested.
- Improve the street environment for pedestrians, for example limiting street furniture and ensuring older and disabled pedestrians and public transport users are not disadvantaged by the design of new facilities like Cycle Superhighways.
- Improve bus connections to London hospitals, which are insufficient in some cases.
- Ensure that pedestrian crossings always allow sufficient time for older people to cross the road.
- Work to improve Door-to-Door transport services for older and disabled people, building on the positive features of Dial-a-Ride, TaxiCard and other services and encouraging support to community transport providers.



The Work of Age UKs in London



Age UK London

Age UK London helps London to love later life by campaigning for older Londoners, working on their behalf, and championing their cause. We work with London borough Age UKs and over five hundred older people's organisations across the capital to raise the voice and address the needs of older people in London.

Age UK London is a proud member of the Dementia Action Alliance a pan-London partnership which champions the needs and views of people with dementia at local and regional level.

Find out more on our website: www.ageuk.org.uk/london

Age UKs in London

Local Age UK charities work all over the capital providing hands-on local support to older people: providing advice, enabling independence and combating loneliness. Together we want to make London and all our boroughs great places to grow older. We want older people to feel well, be safe at home, have enough money, be active in communities and have access to quality health and care services. We are completely independent of all political parties.

There is a local Age UK working in every borough in London, providing services ranging from information and advice, healthy living services, financial brokerage and much more.

A full list of contact details for Age UKs across London can be found here: www.ageuk.org.uk/london/local-directory/

March 2018: All factual information is correct at the time of publication.

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