



# Ageism in London

Research by Age UK London

April 2026



# Background

- London is the fastest ageing major city in the UK. This decade will see a 30% increase in Londoners aged 65 and over.
- In Age UK London's [2023 research](#) only 20% of all older Londoners agree that 'London is a place where older people are valued'.



# Survey

- 1,372 Londoners, from across all 33 local authority areas in the capital, completed the survey.
- 300 Londoners completed the survey using paper forms, with the rest completing the survey online.
- 46% of survey respondents were 75 or older.

# Survey topics

- **Regularity** of experiences of ageism
- Regularity of experiences of being ignored/overlooked
- **Other discriminations impacting** experiences of ageism
- How ageism **makes people feel**
- Experiences of ageism in different **areas of life**
- **Calling out ageism**
- What needs to **change?**



# Summary of survey findings



## Frequency of experiencing ageism

This figure refers to respondents saying that they experienced ageism 'sometimes', 'often' or 'always' in their everyday life in London.

# 1 in 2

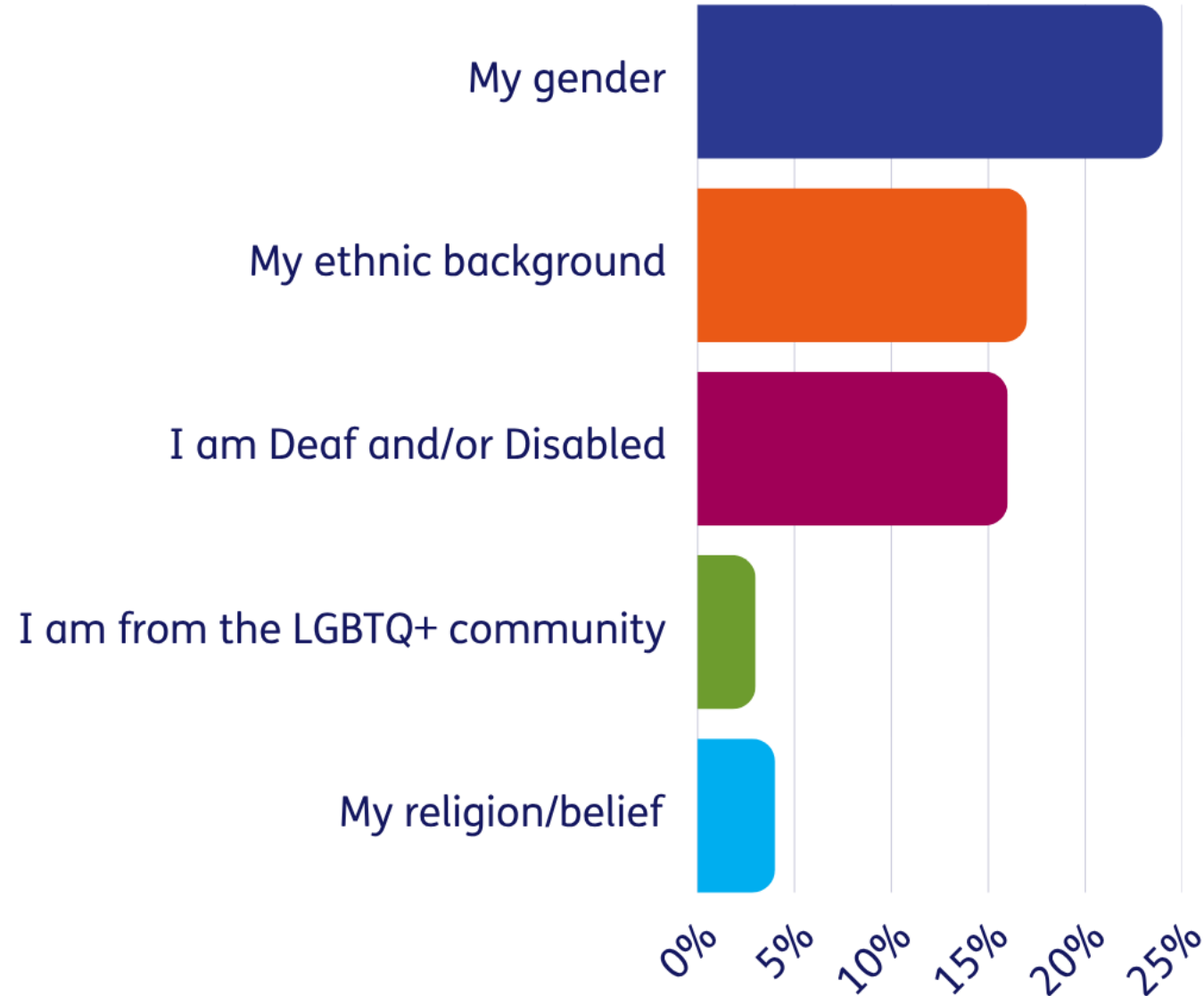
older Londoners experience ageism in their everyday life living in London.





# Interaction between ageism and other experiences

## Do you think how you experience ageism is affected by any of the following reasons?



Data source: Age UK London

## Gender

- 54% of women respondents reported experiencing ageism 'Sometimes', 'often' or 'always'.
- Women were 10% more likely to say they experienced ageism, compared with men.

## Ethnic background

- Londoners from Black backgrounds were more likely to report experiencing ageism (62.4%) compared with people from White or Asian backgrounds.
- Londoners from Asian backgrounds were more likely to report experiencing ageism (56%) than Londoners from White backgrounds.

## Deaf and Disabled people

- Deaf and Disabled people were more likely than non-deaf or disabled people to report experiencing ageism.


## Sexual orientation

- LGBTQ+ older Londoners (particularly gay women) were more likely to say they experienced ageism than people that described themselves as heterosexual.

## Age

- The 50 to 64 age group and the 85+ age group were most likely to report that they 'always' experienced ageism.

## Gender



54% of older women  
experience ageism in their  
everyday life in London,  
10% more than men.

## Gender

- Qualitative findings from the research suggest that older women in London are experiencing ageism in strongly gendered ways, particularly through judgments about appearance.
- Participants frequently referred to stereotypes and expressions including “silly old woman”. Social invisibility was a recurring theme with respondents describing being ignored in public spaces and treated as less deserving of respect compared to younger women and older men.

## Ageism against women in healthcare settings

- Female respondents described being spoken over, ignored, or addressed indirectly through male partners. Multiple respondents reported that healthcare staff spoke to husbands rather than directly to them. These experiences were described as distressing and belittling. Participants also highlighted how women’s health concerns are frequently dismissed or minimised.

62% of Black older Londoners experience ageism in their everyday life living in London, 14% more than their white peers.

## Ethnicity



## Ethnicity

- The compounding impact of experiencing multiple and interacting forms of discrimination over a long period of time can have a significant impact on people.
- A significant number of responses to the survey indicated that ageism in London is frequently experienced jointly with racism. Participants described how they believed that their race shaped how seriously they are treated; how they are spoken to; and how their concerns are handled.
- Several respondents reported that a combination of their race and age made them more likely to be ignored or treated unfairly. Delays in addressing complaints were linked to racialised assumptions. Participants contrasted these experiences with perceptions that younger or white individuals would be treated more respectfully.



# In what areas of your life have you experienced ageism in London?



## Where Londoners experienced ageism



Data source: Age UK London



## Public transport

Public transport is where society meets. Older Londoners described feeling ignored and being treated with a lack of patience.



Sometimes in London I feel invisible. I find sometimes going through doors people push in front, or crossing the busy roads people walk in front of me even though I'm close to edge of pavement.

I am invisible on the street and on transport, people look through me, even walk through me.





## Retail and leisure

Respondents mentioned being ignored or rushed when doing activities such as packing bags at a checkout. Some people said that customer service staff addressed the younger person if they were with someone younger than them.



I am frequently ignored in shops when waiting to be served [...]  
I am ignored and any questions are directed to my daughter.

Sometimes people treat you as if you are not very bright because you are old and as I have to remind them I might not be as physically able but there is nothing wrong with my brain.

## Health care settings

Respondents mentioned being patronised, ignored or feeling that their health concerns were not adequately investigated or taken seriously. Some said they were made to feel like they were being a nuisance.



**When a patient in hospital, I repeatedly had to prove to doctors and others that I was not demented and unable to understand what was going on or what I was being told. I was spoken down to and had to take the trouble to inform or prove to them that I was fully in charge of all my senses.**

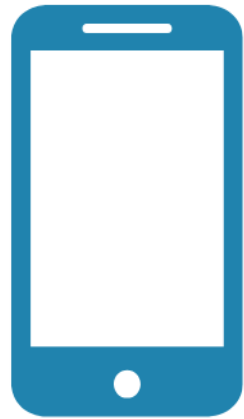
**We are constantly told we are the problem with the NHS and having homes.**



## Technology as a cross-cutting theme

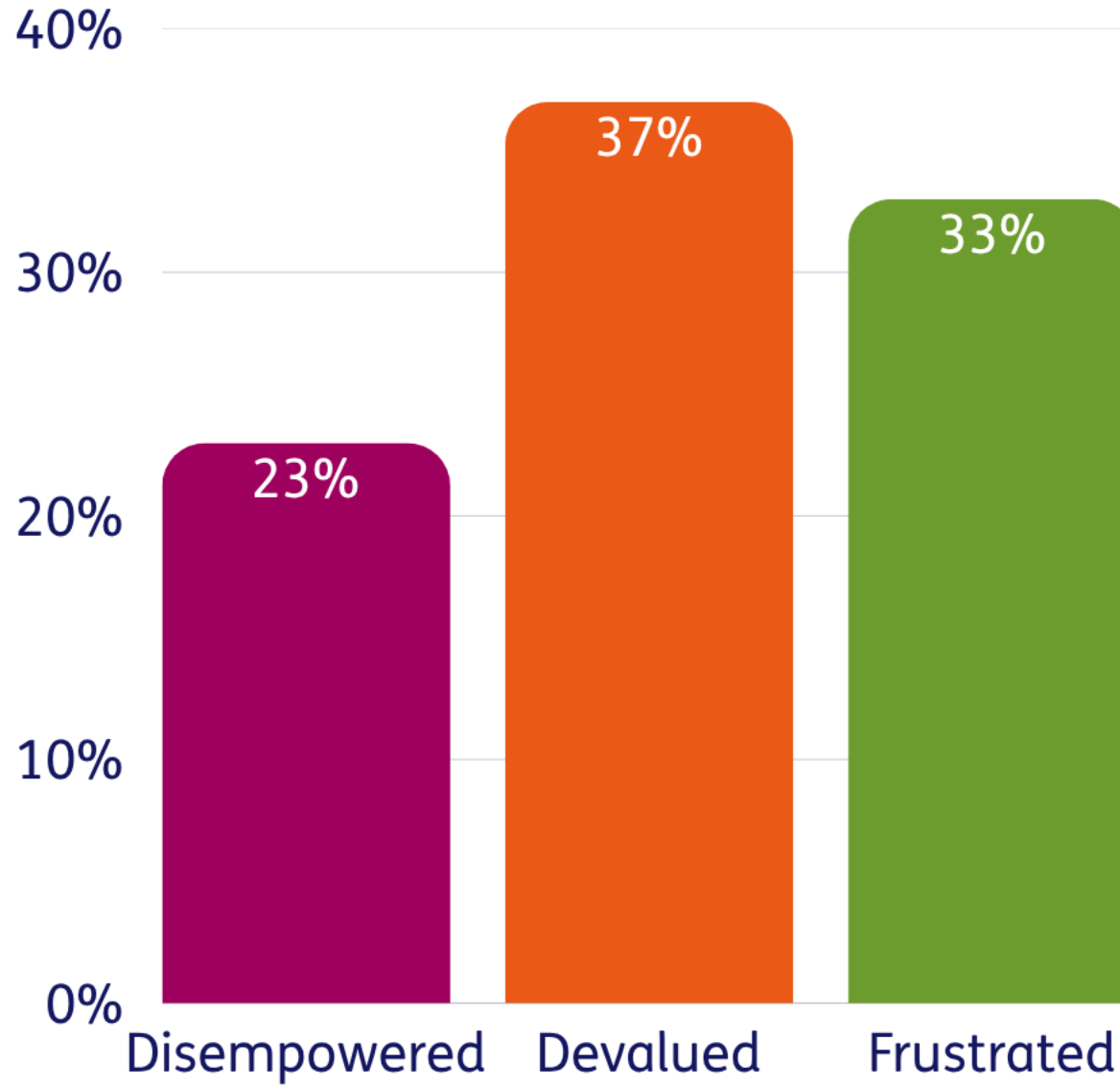
Whilst respondents spoke about digital exclusion as a barrier to services and support, it was often cited as a place where people would be on the receiving end of negative attitudes.

Information only proved by phone apps disadvantages those of us with visual impairment, even if its at a minor level. Presumption everyone is as confident in using tech as are the designers of software.



I am often excluded from using public services if I cannot master the digital technology required.

# How does ageism make you feel?



# 62%

of older Londoners do  
not feel comfortable  
to out ageism.



## Ageism in London: *Calling it out*

- Respondents were 3 times more likely to say they have called out an individual's behaviour, compared with reporting it formally to an organisation or institution.
- Men were slightly more likely to say they didn't feel confident calling out ageism and Disabled people were slightly more likely to say they called out ageism to an organisation.
- Respondents from an Asian background were more likely to say they did not feel confident calling ageism out compared to their White or Black peers.
- There may be a relationship between 'disempowerment' being the second most associated feeling, with the fact that the majority of respondents did not feel comfortable calling out ageism.

# What people want to see change

- More awareness about ageism
- More awareness about the contribution of older people
- More awareness of ageing
- More positive imagery
- More intergenerational opportunities
- Action to tackle negative attitudes of employers resulting in (conscious or unconscious) discrimination

# What people want to see change

- Ensure training opportunities are available and accessible for older workers
- Make older women more visible in the media
- Calling out language that is both ageist and sexist (ageism interacting with misogyny)
- Tackle ageism within the LGBTQ+ community
- Health professionals less likely to investigate concerns
- Health professionals displaying patronising behaviour



**To find our more please visit**

**<https://bit.ly/LondonAgainstAgeism>**

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