

# An age-friendly recovery

**Age UK London's Manifesto for the London Mayoral Elections 2021**







# Foreword

## The impact of the pandemic on older Londoners

The pandemic has had a devastating effect on the quality of life of many older Londoners, and revealed the extent of social isolation experienced by many prior to the impact of COVID-19. Too many older people have been cut off from friends and family, faced barriers to engaging with vital community services, struggled to access food and essentials, and tragically many have seen their physical and mental health decline. These challenges have disproportionately affected those on low incomes, people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, those with a long-term condition or dementia, and older disabled Londoners.

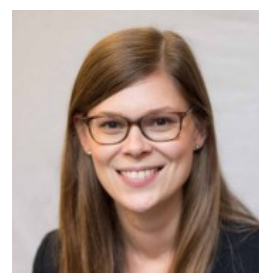
The crisis support for older people delivered by the local Age UK network to older people has been truly exceptional and a lifeline for thousands. Despite this vital work, too many Londoners still struggle to access the support they need to age well.

## An age-friendly recovery

The plan to build back London after the pandemic cannot ignore the contribution of older Londoners. As volunteers, carers, community leaders and active citizens, older Londoners play an important role in the city's social and cultural life. Through paid work alone, older Londoners contribute at least £47 billion to the capital's economy. As well as acknowledging their contribution, the plan for London's recovery as led by the London Recovery Board must also address the needs of older people that have arisen or been exacerbated by the pandemic.

## Age UK London's manifesto

Age UK London has consulted with older Londoners, the local Age UK network and pan-London bodies on actions they would like to see from the next Mayor. Representing more than one in three voters, we ask all Mayoral candidates to listen to what London's fast-growing older population have to say and to commit to making the London that emerges from the pandemic a much better place in which to grow old.



**Abigail Wood**  
Chief Executive  
Age UK London





## How the next Mayor can make London more age-friendly

### An age-friendly recovery for an age-friendly London

- Work with the London Recovery Board, Boroughs and pan-London bodies to ensure London's Recovery programme meaningfully improves the lives of older Londoners. Action should focus on those hardest hit during the pandemic including older Londoners from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.
- Monitor the short, medium and long-term recovery actions for their age-friendliness and publicly report on how progress on these actions can contribute to the development of the Mayor's age-friendly London programme.

### Healthy food

- Organise a conference for all London Boroughs that promotes best practice models of food access support for older Londoners.
- Build on the GLA's 2020 report, 'Experiences of Food Insecurity amongst Older Londoners before and during COVID-19' by developing actions that tackle barriers to accessing healthy food.
- Deliver a public health campaign to encourage wider adoption of local Food Poverty Action Plans and raise awareness of local food available support among older Londoners.

### Mental health and wellbeing

- Increase social prescribing funding to more community projects for older Londoners specifically targeting older Londoners that are socially isolated.
- Deliver a London-wide campaign addressing the stigma of loneliness in older age and promoting support for older Londoners in at-risk groups such as those that live alone, LGBT+ Londoners and people that do not have children.
- Actively support older people to be part of the Thrive LDN community mental health Champions Network with targeted bursaries for older people to attend the Leadership Development programme.

### Digital Access for older Londoners

- Raise awareness among adult education colleges, libraries and other training providers to ensure that the needs of older Londoners are included in the delivery of basic digital skills training.
- Work with the new digital exclusion taskforce to ensure that action to improve access to connectivity and expand a device offer for all those that need one (as outlined in the London Recovery programme) reaches digitally excluded older Londoners.

- Ensure that information provided by the GLA is accessible to all, including Londoners that are not online and support Boroughs to meet their statutory duties to provide offline access to public services.

## Transport

- Work with Boroughs to ensure changes to London's streets make them more accessible for older Londoners by ensuring that the views of local older people are listened to before changes are made and that Equality Impact Assessments are implemented in full.
- Deliver on commitments to protect the 60+ Oyster photocard and support Boroughs and other partners to promote the Older Persons Freedom Pass.
- Lift the suspension of concessionary travel for 60+ Oyster photocard and Older Persons Freedom Pass holders in place before 9am on weekdays.

## A robust safety net and good work

- Work with Adult Learning providers and career services to improve support for older jobseekers.
- Continue to work with partners to increase uptake of Pension Credit.

## Good housing for older Londoners

- Support and promote access to aids and adaptations so that older Londoners can live safely and well in their existing homes.
- Publish clear annual data showing the proportion of newly built homes that meet basic accessibility criteria and create an older people's specialist housing target.
- Support the creation of a London-wide advice service for renters in order to meet the needs of London's increasing number of older private tenants.

## Strong and inclusive communities

- Proactively seek the opinions of a diverse range of Londoners and increase access to inclusive civic participation opportunities provided by the GLA in order to ensure all older Londoners are listened to.
- Celebrate the contribution of older Londoners and challenge ageist stereotypes in GLA communications and publications.
- Work with partners, including the Metropolitan Police, to tackle crime targeted at older Londoners such as online, telephone and doorstep scams.

## Age-friendly spaces

- Work with Boroughs, local businesses and others to improve public access to toilet facilities including accessible toilets in accordance with London Plan policy and in support of the Toilet Manifesto for London.
- Support London boroughs to effectively use London Plan policy that ensures large developments include seating and places to rest located in sheltered areas. Planning and design should ensure these spaces are comfortable, feel safe and foster positive connections between people of all ages.

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