

An age-friendly London: Age UK London's manifesto for the 2024 London mayoral elections



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Foreword

An age-friendly London

The launch of the Mayor's Action Plan for an age-friendly London in November 2023 was a significant milestone in the city's age-friendly journey. Research commissioned by Age UK London showed that older Londoners love London – 59% feel positive about it and only 5% negative – but older Londoners nonetheless face many profound challenges, and an age-friendly plan is essential to addressing them. However, the existence of a plan alone is not enough. The Mayor has a vital role to play in ensuring the plan is put into practice and the next mayoral term of 2024-2028 must have at its forefront tangible action to improve the lives of older Londoners.



Abigail Wood
CEO,
Age UK London

The rising cost of living and tackling inequalities

The network of local Age UKs across London does vital work supporting hundreds of thousands of older people, including the increasing number struggling with the rising cost of living. One in four Londoners over the age of 50 now live below the poverty line and a third live below the 'Minimum Income Standard'. Those living with a disability or long-term health condition, and those who rent rather than own their home are far more likely to report financial worries. An age-friendly London must be one that does not price out those on low incomes.

Listening to older Londoners

Age UK London has consulted with the local Age UK network and pan-London bodies and, most importantly, older Londoners themselves on what actions they would like to see from the next Mayor. We were delighted to receive feedback from over 600 of our supporters about the issues that they most want to see the mayor act on, and the recommendations are reflected here in our manifesto. Age UK London calls on all mayoral candidates to listen to London's older population and commit to making London a much better place in which to grow old.



To make the capital a better place for older Londoners, we call on the next Mayor of London to:

Commit to an age-friendly London

- Ensure that the Mayor's new action plan, 'Towards an age-friendly London', is delivered in full and able to be measured in terms of outcomes, with the plan's actions consistently promoted to staff across the Greater London Authority (GLA) and its functional bodies.
- Meaningfully engage a broad range of older Londoners over the course of the plan's implementation, with clear reporting on the effectiveness of actions made available to the public.

Tackle poverty

- Continue the GLA Pension Credit uptake campaign, while taking steps to improve its effectiveness based on learning.
- Call on the Government to simplify the application process for Pension Credit.
- Ensure promotion of both the Energy Advice London service and the Warmer Homes Advice service is reaching older Londoners most likely to be unaware of these services, such as those without access to the internet.

Support the health and wellbeing of older Londoners

- Monitor and report on the number of Londoners over 60 involved in the Wellbeing Champion Campaign, which is part of the Mayor's Mental Health and Wellbeing mission developed to help London recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Support partners such as Thrive LDN to ensure older Londoners are better represented in and benefit from pan-London initiatives to promote good mental health.

- Increase social prescribing funding to more community projects for older Londoners, specifically targeting those that are experiencing or at risk from social isolation.
- Support communities in building on the success of the Dementia Friendly London and Dementia Friendly Venues Charter projects, to create a more inclusive city for those living with dementia. This will see the development of new initiatives, such as a brain health campaign to raise awareness of dementia including the risk factors and prevention.
- Support London's Integrated Care Systems to reduce inequalities across the city and ensure everyone has access to a dementia diagnosis and high-quality care and support services.

Address digital exclusion

- Support all London boroughs in meeting their Public Sector Equality Duty to provide offline access to their public services.
- Advocate for affordable internet access by collaborating with London internet providers and encouraging them to promote their social tariffs more publicly.
- Strengthen and expand the Get Online London programme, supporting digitally excluded Londoners to get online by providing access to devices, free mobile connectivity, and basic digital skills training.

Promote good housing for older people

- Work with accessible housing partners and the London Housing Panel to increase older Londoners' awareness of accessible housing support. Awareness activities should include

information on how to access aids and adaptations, so that more older Londoners can live safely and well in their existing homes.

- Engage with age sector organisations to increase awareness of advice services for private renters, as well as the tools available to renters to check their rights and what they are entitled to.

Provide accessible transport

- Reinstate concessionary travel for Older Persons Freedom Pass and 60+ Oyster photocard holders before 9am on Mondays to Fridays.
- Commit to protecting accessible transport services and work with community organisations, such as local Age UKs, to monitor the quality of services for older Londoners for whom mainstream travel options are not possible. This should include the London Dial-a-Ride service and the London Taxicard service. The Mayor should also ensure Transport for London (TfL) are taking measurable steps to increase awareness of its Travel Mentoring service.
- Ensure organisations led by older Londoners are engaged in the monitoring and reporting of actions outlined in TfL's 'Equity in Motion' and 'Action on Inclusion' plans, as well as delivery against its equality objectives.
- Call on the government and work with dockless bike and scooter operators to ensure that local authorities are equipped to enforce the responsible parking of e-bikes and e-scooters, reducing the impact of pavement clutter.

Foster welcoming and safe communities

- Support London boroughs to ensure large developments include seating and places to rest in sheltered areas, through effective use of London Plan 2021 and the next London Plan policies. Planning and design should ensure these spaces are comfortable, feel safe and foster positive connections between people of all ages.
- Work with boroughs to ensure that changes to London's streets make them more accessible for older Londoners, by ensuring that the views of local older people are listened to and that Equality Impact Assessments are implemented in full prior to any changes.

- Develop a Greater London Authority public toilets plan to coordinate action on improving public toilet provision in areas where the Mayor has a role, such as the TfL network, Night Time Guidance for boroughs, London Plan policy and funding from programmes such as the Good Growth Fund. A designated GLA representative should oversee the strategy, whose responsibilities would include working with boroughs and community organisations to identify 'loo deserts' and develop solutions.
- Work with partners, including the Metropolitan Police, to tackle crime targeted at older Londoners such as online, telephone and doorstep scams.
- Support local authorities and community organisation to provide public warm spaces for older residents and others during colder months.

Encourage good work for older Londoners

- Call on the Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus to provide more personalised careers advice and support to all people over 50 seeking employment. This support should be tailored to the specific needs of the individual, such as health, caring responsibilities, and reskilling for those who are looking to change careers.
- Develop and promote widely an Employers Toolkit for older Londoners in the city to help employers become age-friendly, based on similar examples in other parts of the UK.
- Set an example as an age-friendly Employer to encourage other employers in London to adopt age-friendly practices to support older workers.

Champion accessible and anti-ageist communication

- Proactively celebrate the contribution of older Londoners and challenge ageist stereotypes in GLA communications and publications.
- 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.

