



Age UK London receives funding from:



Consultation Response

TITLE: Mayor's vision for a diverse and inclusive city

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About Age UK London

Age UK London raises the voice and addresses the needs of older Londoners. We promote and represent the views of older Londoners; we campaign on real issues that make a difference to older people; we work with older people's organisations across London to enhance services; we offer a range of products and services tailor-made for the over 50s (via Age UK London Trading). We are part of the national Age UK network and work in partnership with the national charity Age UK and with London borough Age UKs.

We also link to over 500 local older people's groups in all London boroughs, many of them volunteer led. We are currently funded by City Bridge Trust to build the resilience of these local age sector organisations and help them and older people to make their voice heard, as part of "The Way Ahead" initiative.

For a number of years Age UK London partnered annually with the Mayor and other agencies to deliver "Know Your Rights", a London-wide campaign to increase uptake of benefits which people are entitled to.

1. Introduction

We are pleased to have the opportunity to make an input to the consultation on the Mayor's vision for a diverse and inclusive city. We strongly welcome the Mayor's overall emphasis on social integration and on tackling inequality. As a charity focussed on ageing and older people, our key concern is to ensure that older people are part of this, contribute to it and benefit from it. 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 find much to welcome in the consultation draft, but also that there are a number of areas to strengthen in relation to older people and that the intention to include older people across all policy areas should be expressed more visibly.

2. Key points and recommendations

We will structure our points around the consultation questions identified in the consultation draft:

1. Are these the right priorities? Are there other priorities we should consider?

We agree that the priorities stated are all valuable in their own right. From the point of view of our own remit as a charity relating to older people, we strongly endorse the emphasis in a number of sections on catering for the needs of an ageing population in areas such as transport, urban planning and inclusive design.

This emphasis would be more structural and clearly visible were the Mayor to publicly commit to work towards making London an Age Friendly City in all the areas identified by the World Health Organisation and others. These are: 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. The Mayor's roles and responsibilities give him a mandate to take this forward. A public commitment to making London an Age Friendly City would in our view, fit very naturally into Section 1, A great place to live.

We've referred below to evidence about the considerable economic contribution made by older Londoners. We would suggest that the vision and strategy could refer more to the positive contributions made by different communities, as well as their needs and the barriers that they face.

We would urge that Priority outcome 5.1, Healthy Londoners, include addressing the health and social care issues affecting older and disabled Londoners. In 2016 it was estimated that 94,000 older Londoners with long term care needs got no help from the public social care system. Lack of access to social care affects both personal care at home, and care homes. The consequences of Brexit risk having a serious effect on health and social care workforce recruitment in London.

In our view, despite some signs of age awareness Section 3, A great place to work and do business, requires strengthening to better support the economic contribution of older adults who are in employment or looking for employment. Some of the policy measures which are announced might in principle benefit older people among others, but without this being stated explicitly it is hard to be confident of it.

Priority outcome 3.1, A skilled workforce, while referring to the lack of qualifications of some older and disabled Londoners, seems to focus on improving the skills of those entering the labour market rather than maintaining and improving the skills of those (like older workers) who are already within the workforce trying to maintain or regain employment. London will have growing numbers of older workers and jobseekers both because of demographic change and because of rises in the State pension age. In our view lack of equal access to workplace training for older workers is a serious issue.

We are disappointed that Priority outcome 6.1, An inclusive employer, makes no reference to age in the context of a diverse workforce across the GLA group (while other equality characteristics are listed, which we welcome). We would like to see an age breakdown of the GLA's and the GLA group's workforce along with a commitment to age diversity.

2. What evidence of inequalities do you or your organisation have that we could include in our evidence base?

In 2016 there were 2.2 million people aged 50+ in London of whom 980,000 were aged over 65. Older Londoners are extremely diverse in terms of their ethnic and cultural background, their religion, their sexual orientation and in many other senses.

In 2015 some 22% of Londoners aged 65+ were from "non-White ethnic groups" and

36.7% of Londoners aged 65+ were born outside the UK. 14% did not have English as their main language. The higher proportion of BAME Londoners in younger age groups suggests that in future the proportion of older people from these communities will increase.

The GLA itself has published very useful evidence of the economic contributions made by older Londoners in the areas of employment, volunteering, informal care and childcare:

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/economic_contribution_of_older_londoners-1.pdf

Research shows that age discrimination is prevalent e.g. <http://bit.ly/1KDSp4a>. This is the case across a variety of areas including employment, health and social care.

Inequality and disadvantage affecting older Londoners are also driven by factors including poverty, austerity, disability and health needs. Poverty among older people (pensioners) is on the rise nationally, and tends to be higher than average in London: in 2015 it was measured as 23% after housing costs in Inner London as against 14% nationally at the time. (From “Households Below Average Income”). This contradicts media comments that “older people are well off”. Economic austerity has also led to the crisis in social care for older people (and for disabled people) which we refer to above.

London’s serious housing issues impact on many lower and middle income older people including the growing number of older private renters. Research in progress for Age UK London projects that by 2039, the number of older private renter households (65+) may double to 122,000. Many older Londoners live in homes which are of poor quality, inaccessible and difficult to heat: in 2014-15 there were an estimated 3800 so-called “excess winter deaths” of Londoners aged 65+.

33% of Londoners aged 65+ are disabled according to the DDA definition. Among specific health needs, 72,000 older Londoners have a diagnosis of dementia.

With the increasing shift to providing information and services online, digital exclusion becomes an increasingly important equality issue and a large proportion of older Londoners are digitally excluded: see Age UK London’s report [Wealth of the Web](#).

3. What are the most effective actions we could take to act on our priorities?

Some key actions to ensure the inclusion of London’s older people would be:

- Engage with older people at an early enough stage in developing relevant policy initiatives so that older people have a chance to help shape policies
- Fund digital inclusion and digital skills initiatives to help older people and others take part in the online world and thus be better able to access services and maintain the skills needed for employment and volunteering
- Ensure that a range of suitable, accessible and genuinely affordable housing options (to buy and to rent) are available for older people in all London boroughs

- Take the measures necessary to ensure that London public transport and street environments become more accessible for older and disabled people.

4. What best practice exists in the areas we are focussing on that we can learn from?

Age UK London can refer to best practice in the following areas among others:

- Digital inclusion and digital literacy work to ensure that older people do not miss out on the benefits of being online. Borough Age UKs deliver a range of digital support to older people and Age UK London provided the successful MiCommunity intergenerational digital programme, funded by Team London and the Reuben Foundation.
- 50+ employment support where a range of VCS and specialist organisations (including AUKL and borough Age UKs) have experience in delivering tailored support to older workers and jobseekers.
- Involving older people in auditing the local environment, including its age friendliness
- Supporting older people towards self-care and better management of long term conditions.

5. Could we work together with your organisation on our priorities? How could we do this?

Age UK London would be delighted to work together with the Mayor and GLA to take forward common priorities. What Age UK London can offer includes:

- A channel for engagement with some 500 local older people's organisations able to reach tens of thousands of older Londoners;
- A link to the London borough Age UKs as organisations able to deliver projects reaching, supporting and involving older people locally;
- Expertise, research and information on a range of issues related to ageing.