



Making London a Great Place to Grow Older

Age UK London's Manifesto for the London
Mayoral and Assembly Elections 2016

Foreword



Each and every one of London's 2.2 million older people deserves to have their voice heard when it comes to the future of their city.

In early 2015, before the General Election, Age UK, our national partners, published their ambition for the next Parliament. Age UK wants 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 feel our manifesto for London reflects what older people want across the country.

We have consulted with hundreds of older people, as well as organisations representing thousands more individuals, across every London borough to ensure we best represent what they want to say to the candidates.

This is not the first time we've published a manifesto before a London mayoral election. Four years ago we called for the successful candidate to raise awareness of the contribution of London's older population, work with Transport for London to ensure buses were fit for purpose and promote intergenerational activity in communities. We also work with the Mayor of London, on programmes like Know Your Rights, which are essential in giving older people in the capital what they need. We trust programmes like this will continue into the future.

We are delighted to be able to say the voice of older Londoners was heard on these issues. Research reports on older Londoner's economic contribution to the capital, bus driver training programmes and a host of intergenerational projects are to be commended. The London Plan has also set standards for age friendly housing.

However, much remains to be done.

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Some areas have seen policy changes, but a question remains over whether practical changes to real life have taken effect. Other areas were ignored. In a city as fast-paced as London, it should be unsurprising that new challenges have presented themselves since 2012.

Not everything is positive for older Londoners.

Loneliness and social isolation remain an issue for older people in London, while poverty and equality are two more areas in which more needs to be done.

Age UK London propose that a Deputy Mayor or Mayoral Adviser to an Age Friendly London portfolio be appointed.

We have called for a commitment to older people, from the candidates, throughout this manifesto. We ask them to listen to what older people want to say to them, and pledge to act on that.

Older people have pointed out that changes are needed in housing, that more needs to be done to get them online, that London needs to become more 'age friendly' in terms of attitudes and that the physical environment can be modified and designed to be better to age in.

In this manifesto we have identified three key areas, housing, digital inclusion and transport, that are of most importance to older Londoners where the Mayor can make a tangible difference and have written specific sections on them. We then move on to five more areas in which the Mayor of London will also be able to support older people.

We want the candidates to hear what older people are saying.

We simply want London to be a great place to grow older.

Sam Mauger
Chief Executive
Age UK London



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London's Older People

There are 2.2 million people aged 50 or over living in London.

Population

There are 2.2 million people aged 50 or over living in London¹. There are over 980,000 people aged over 65 and that number is expected to grow to 1.2 million by 2024 – an increase of 22% in 10 years². There are 130,000 people aged over 85 in London, and that is expected to increase to 180,000 over 85 by 2024, which is a 38% increase in 10 years³. London's population, like that of the rest of the UK, is getting older.

Diversity

London's older population is very diverse; for instance, of London's nearly 1 million population aged 65+, 22% are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities⁴ while 37% were born outside of the UK⁵. Opening Doors London estimate there are 100,000 older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in London⁶. Older Londoners speak a broad range of languages and follow a wide variety of faiths and beliefs.

Economic Situation

While many older Londoners do have enough money to live on, many live in poverty. National statistics in 2015⁷ showed 23% of older people in Inner London living in poverty after housing costs and 26% living in material deprivation. Poverty for older people in London as a whole was above the national average. There are reasons to fear poverty and inequality among older Londoners may increase.

Contribution of Older Londoners

The 2013 GLA report 'The Economic Contribution of Older Londoners'⁸ found that the paid work of those aged 50+ in London contributed £47 billion annually to London's economy, which is a huge contribution to the capital. It also stated that Londoners aged 65+ contributed £6.3 billion annually to London's economy through paid work, volunteering, as carers and looking after grandchildren. It is vital to highlight and celebrate the contribution made to active communities in the capital.

What can't be captured by data are the experiences, knowledge, dynamism and energy that London's older population brings to the city, all of which are an invaluable contribution to the capital.

Manifesto

Age UK London consulted with hundreds of older people, as well as organisations representing tens of thousands of older people, before writing this manifesto. We hosted a consultation event in July 2015 to gather older Londoner's views and have asked 400 organisations, across every London borough, to gather and communicate their member's views.

This manifesto presents the views of older Londoners themselves, giving them a voice in the 2016 London Mayoral and Assembly Election.

We ask all candidates to listen to what London's older population has to say and, if elected Mayor, to use this manifesto to make London a great city to grow older in.

¹ ONS Mid-year Population Estimates 2013

² ONS Mid-year population estimates 2014

³ ONS Mid-year population estimates 2014

⁴ DC2101EW – Ethnic group by sex by age

⁵ WD203EW – Country of birth

⁶ www.openingdoorslondon.org.uk

⁷ Households Below Average Income, DWP, 2015

⁸ Report can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/1MA186z>

Three Key Areas for Action 1: Digital Inclusion

78% of Londoners aged over 75 are not online and a total of 661,000 people over the age of 55 have never used the internet.

The number of older people in London who are not online is one of the biggest challenges the capital faces. The digital by default agenda, which pushes more and more services online, is increasingly making it difficult for older Londoners who cannot access the internet.

Research shows that 78% of Londoners aged over 75 are not online and a total of 661,000 people over the age of 55 in London have never used the internet.

These statistics are significant and frightening, but also represent real people, who are often excluded from services that should be available to them and may lead to the risk of loneliness and isolation.

There are many reasons for older people not being online. Some are uninterested, and don't want to engage with digital technology. Others are interested, but access is blocked by any number of barriers, including cost, time, opportunity and help. Some older Londoners are online but lack support networks to enable them to increase their skills.

More needs to be done to engage with those who are not interested in being online. Awareness campaigns, showcases of the benefits of being online and encouragement for this group of older Londoners are essential.

Those experiencing barriers to getting online need funded programmes, learning spaces and, at least, good information on affordable options; at best, grants and subsidies to help them afford to get online. Single costs like equipment, as well as ongoing costs like upgrades and internet access, can all be barriers for older Londoners.

Those who are already online need more support; voluntary, funded, intergenerational, peer-to-peer, on-going and ad-hoc support are all needed to help older users increase in confidence and build on what they have already learned.

Getting more older people online can also help reduce loneliness and isolation in London, helping older people stay in touch with family and friends and also make new social connections.

We know the Mayor of London cannot do all of this. However, the voluntary sector is already stretched in trying to bridge the gap of inequality online and it's clear that more needs to be done to help older Londoners get online.

For example, Age UK London research the issue, campaign on it, run digital training sessions with older people's groups and individuals, link digital champions with older people and connect corporates with opportunities to volunteer.

We need the Mayor of London to be fully invested in getting more older people online, and helping those who already are online to continue to build up confidence and skills.

We need the Mayor of London to fund programmes to help older people online, and put pressure on local councils, corporates and funders to do the same.

We call on candidates in the 2016 London Mayoral elections to commit themselves to:



- Provide funding for digital inclusion so older Londoners can access affordable computer-training at locations like libraries and community centres
- Ensure all communication is available through non-computerised channels
- Engage with and use voluntary sector communications channels so information can be signposted by local groups and organisations
- Ensure there is support for completion of online forms at a face-to-face local level through amenities such as the local library or post office
- Ensure additional support and advice is provided for older Londoners with specific needs related to impairments they might have



Three Key Areas for Action

2: Make London's Housing Age Friendly



In 2014-15 there were an estimated 3800 so-called 'excess winter deaths' of Londoners aged 65+.

London faces a housing crisis for people of all ages. While attention focusses on rising prices and rents and the lack of suitable homes for young families, many older people also face serious problems. Many live in homes which are of poor quality, physically inaccessible and difficult to heat. Each winter many older Londoners die or fall ill unnecessarily because they live in cold homes. In 2014-15 there were an estimated 3800 so-called 'excess winter deaths' of Londoners aged 65+.⁹

Future generations of older Londoners may be more likely to be private sector tenants than current older people. This may leave them increasingly exposed to living in poor conditions, as well as raising the issue of how people on largely fixed incomes from pensions will cope with rising rents. Housing costs already contribute to the high level of pensioner poverty in Inner London in particular.

Many older people are also concerned about how their children and grandchildren will be able to afford to live in London and how families will be able to continue living close to each other given spiralling house prices and rents across the capital. Housing future generations of older Londoners well requires genuinely affordable, quality housing to be built now.

Older Londoners deserve to be safe at home. The availability of home adaptations and effective links between housing support, social care and health services is vital to help people live independently in their own homes for as long as they wish without needing the most intensive health and care services.

Older people have the same right as younger people to live where they choose. Many older Londoners would like to move to more suitable accommodation if they could. National research shows that 33% of older people would like to downsize but meet barriers from a lack of affordable, age friendly options in their area. If they were able to move, many larger properties would be vacated¹⁰. Making London's housing age friendly is part of solving London's housing crisis as a whole.

We call on candidates in the 2016 London Mayoral elections to commit themselves to:

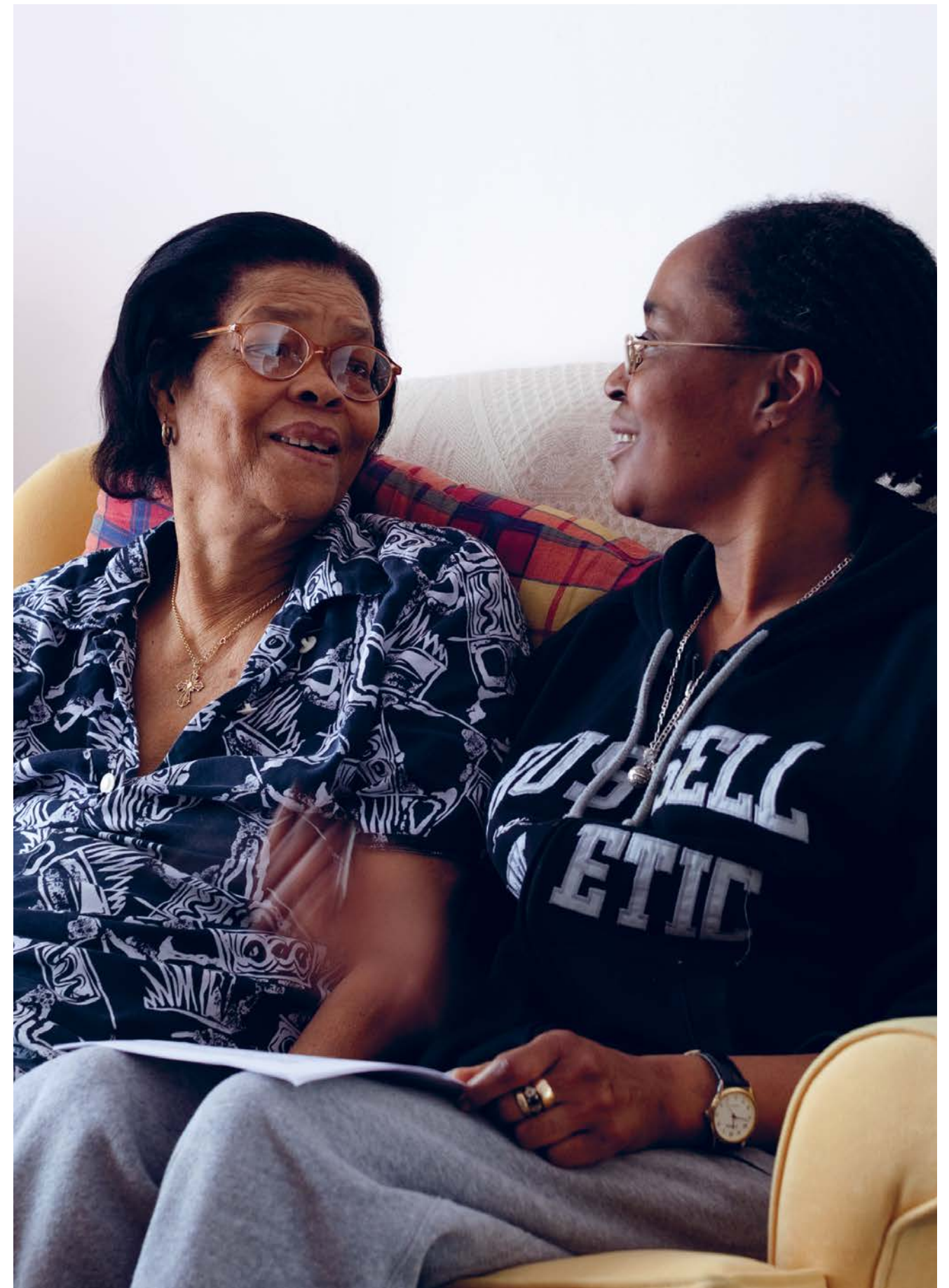
- Through the London Plan, ensure that a range of suitable, accessible and genuinely affordable housing options (to buy and to rent) are available for older people in all London boroughs
- Ensure provision of genuinely affordable housing to rent and buy for people of all ages
- Ensure that London programmes to make homes energy efficient benefit older people in fuel poverty

⁹ ONS statistics Excess Winter Mortality in England and Wales 2014/15 (Provisional)

¹⁰ Demos, The Top of the Ladder - <http://bit.ly/1Ma9gp5>



- Continue requiring all new homes in London to be built to the best accepted standards of accessibility and adaptability, including provision of wheelchair accessible housing; resist any attempts to undermine these standards
- Develop realistic targets for provision of good quality, affordable specialist housing for older people in all boroughs and all tenures. Most provision of sheltered housing or extra care housing in London is currently social housing, while the majority of older Londoners are home owners
- Act to ensure acceptable standards for private sector tenants and safeguard older tenants against risk of homelessness
- 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 across London. Many older people in social housing currently struggle to use online mobility schemes



Three Key Areas for Action 3: Make Transport in London Accessible to all



PHOTOGRAPH TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

*In late 2015 only
67 out of 270
Tube stations
were step free.*

Being able to travel is a key factor in helping older people stay socially included and avoiding loneliness. For many Londoners the Freedom Pass is one of the most positive aspects about getting older. Concessionary travel plays a major part in enabling older people to remain in their own homes, live independent lives, contribute to the local economy, access health services and participate in family and community life. In planning any activities or services for older people across London an essential question that is always asked is 'How will I get there?'

Taking away, or changing the availability of the Freedom Pass would mean some older and disabled people spending more time at home alone and increase their risk of loneliness. Older Londoners make a tremendous contribution to London and the Freedom Pass is an essential part of that, enabling older people to travel, for free, across Zones 1-6. Losing the Freedom Pass would not just take away the freedom of older Londoners but would impact the capital as a whole.

While some good initiatives have been taken, barriers to travel for older and disabled people remain. We want to see convincing evidence of better experiences for older and disabled bus passengers following driver training programmes; limitations remain with the performance of door to door transport; in late 2015 only 67 out of 270 Tube stations were step free (5 out of 48 on the Central Line).¹¹

It will be very challenging to make sure the future, larger and busier London is an inclusive city for all to travel in. Transport will be more crowded and it could be more difficult to ensure people who need a seat get one. With a range of new facilities planned ranging from Crossrail 1 and 2 to Cycle Superhighways, care will be needed to ensure that these changes do not make life more difficult for older and disabled pedestrians.

We call on candidates in the 2016 London Mayoral elections to commit themselves to:

- Retain the Freedom Pass and TfL 60+ Oyster Photocard and ensure they are not means tested. Work towards ending the remaining restrictions on their use on National Rail services in London and ensure that they are valid on new facilities like Crossrail 1 and 2
- Speed up the programme to increase the number of step free Tube stations, roll out lower cost improvements like platform lifts and ensure all new stations in London have full step free access and accessible toilets that are well signposted
- 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

¹¹ Transport for All – <http://bit.ly/20LEMV9>



- 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
- Build on previous work to improve training for London bus drivers, involving older and disabled people in this. Follow up to ensure genuine improvements in passenger experience
- Work with London Councils 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







More Areas For Action 1: An Age Friendly London

There is a mandate to take forward the idea of an age friendly London.

London's older people already make huge contributions to the Capital but much more could be done to remove barriers to older people's participation. This applies both to older people in general and to those from specific communities or with specific support needs.

The concept of an age friendly city has been developed by the World Health Organisation, and UK and worldwide cities. It covers: 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. King's College London has produced a report 'An Age Friendly City'¹² assessing how age friendly London is.

The Mayor's roles and responsibilities give a mandate to take forward the idea of an age friendly London.

We call on candidates in the 2016 London Mayoral elections to commit themselves to:

- Appoint a Deputy Mayor or Mayoral Adviser to an Age Friendly London portfolio
- Make London an Age Friendly City and cooperate with other leading cities and local authorities to develop this concept
- Plan strategies and policies taking account of population ageing
- Champion the contribution of older people to London and its economy
- Promote positive images of older people and challenge age discrimination
- Support employment and volunteering opportunities for older people (including people aged 50+) in all work on business, the economy and regeneration
- Support intergenerational work which improves understanding between generations and gives older people opportunities to contribute from their experience
- Promote awareness of the diversity of older women and men in London, including older people from different ethnic and faith communities and older LGBT people
- Support older people in different situations including people with dementia and their carers, socially isolated older people and those without children or close family
- Ensure new housing built in London is age friendly
- Ensure inclusive and effective consultation of older people in developing key policies and encourage provision of accessible meeting places
- Join other cities by signing the European Covenant on Demographic Change¹³

¹²The report can be seen at <http://bit.ly/1O7HX0G>

¹³<http://bit.ly/1OPEE16>



More Areas For Action 2: Age Friendly Environments

Ensuring London is an age friendly environment will benefit Londoners for generations to come.

As a city with 2.2 million residents aged 50+, London must be an age friendly city – a great place to grow old, and an easy place for older visitors to enjoy. Ensuring London is an age friendly environment will benefit Londoners for generations to come.

Developing the London Plan and associated guidelines to ensure that inclusive design and the views of older people in London are at the centre of planning for London's future will go towards making London age friendly.

Older people benefit from having walkable neighbourhoods with shops and facilities within walking distance.

Well maintained pavements, free of obstructions and unnecessary furniture, with drop kerbs for crossing are a necessity for older Londoners. These measures help prevent falls and accidents, which can have an ongoing impact for older people.

There must be enough pedestrian crossings, particularly at busy crossing sites, and they must give all older Londoners enough time to cross the road without feeling rushed or pressured. Bus shelters should be well lit and maintained, provide seating and have kerbs that are the correct height for buses to stop.

Older people in London consistently tell us that they want more, accessible, public toilets that are clearly signed, clean and safe. There are best practice examples of communities making restaurant and shop toilets available to older people.

London needs more benches and seating in public spaces, allowing older people to rest and sit down while out, and encouraging them to spend more time outside. There should be adequate and reliable street lighting across London, allowing older people to go out at night, find their way home and feel safe.

Problems with and damage to street environments, for example street lighting, pavements and bus shelters, should be easy to report and quickly and efficiently resolved to ensure a continuing age friendly environment.

The closure of Post Offices and Libraries are concerning to older people, particularly when the alternatives for services are often online, which would pose a problem to the many older people without digital skills and not online.

Older Londoners appreciate and enjoy London's parks and want to ensure their continued upkeep, as well as the development of plans for more open spaces.

Older Londoners want affordable access to cultural, health and fitness resources in local communities such as museums, cinemas, exhibitions, swimming and sport

The views of older Londoners should be sought and incorporated into planning at an early stage, ensuring that decisions reflect their thoughts.

We call on candidates in the 2016 London Mayoral elections to commit themselves to use the London Plan framework to:

- Develop Lifetime Neighbourhoods which are walkable with sufficient shops and facilities, public transport links and green spaces
- Ensure pedestrian crossings provide sufficient time for people with mobility difficulties to cross. Visible countdowns, of sufficient length, should be provided as standard
- Ensure clean, well-maintained, free toilets are located across London. New initiatives based on best practice could provide alternative solutions
- Establish a Lifetime High Streets pilot programme
- Encourage the maintenance of pavements, without obstructive street furniture or tripping hazards and ensure that adequate lighting is provided for pedestrians
- Encourage best practice in consulting and involving older people and local communities. Ensure well lit, safe bus shelters with comfortable seats and kerbs of the correct height are standard
- Encourage the provision of community meeting spaces and premises for community and voluntary organisations
- Do everything possible to ensure local communities keep vital services like libraries and post offices





More Areas For Action 3: Crime and Safety

Older people must feel safe at home, outside, during the day and at night.

Older people must feel safe; in their own home or when they are out, during the day and at night.

It is often the fear of crime that is prevalent for older people, rather than the reality of being a victim. The effects of such a fear can lessen the quality of life of an older person significantly.

Older people need help identifying crimes like scams, particularly those that are online and may prey on older people more than others. The Metropolitan Police are already working with voluntary organisations, including Age UK London, to help inform older people better.

Building relationships with older people, through effective and visible local policing, consultation and engagement with communities would help older people feel safer.

Similarly, creating spaces, physically, over the phone and online, to report crimes safely would encourage more older people to partner with Police in their local communities.

Preventative advice should be more prevalent, and should specific points for older and vulnerable people.

Age friendly environments (page 22), including adequate street lighting and safe bus shelters, can also help keep older people, and make them feel, safe.

We call on candidates in the 2016 London Mayoral elections to commit themselves to:

- Provide more visible, accessible and approachable policing in communities
- Ensure the Police engage with and listen to older people in their local areas
- Support awareness campaigns of crimes older Londoners could fall victim to, particularly scams and cyber-crime
- Encourage ongoing dialogue with those who have reported crimes, so they know the outcome



More Areas for Action 4: Information



Older people want information that is helpful to them to be available at convenient locations.

The Mayor of London has a responsibility to communicate clearly and effectively to older people about the information that matters to them.

Older people want information that is helpful to them to be available at convenient locations like GPs surgeries, day centres and libraries in languages that reflect local communities. Providing information through different channels, including older people's networks, community groups, housing associations and care homes, ensuring hard-copy provision in suitable locations is also necessary.

78% of Londoners aged 75+ are not online and 661,000 aged 55+ have never used the internet.¹⁴ More needs to be done to promote digital inclusion amongst London's older population. Funding is needed to continue training and equipping those who want to gain digital skills, which will in turn help older people access the right information for them. Intergenerational work sharing digital skills should be developed further, with the added advantage of building stronger local communities.

Information must not only be available online, for instance there must be alternatives to travel information in hard copy and through a face to face service.

There are many isolated older Londoners who also need information, sometimes more than those who have easy access to it. This would include older people who are housebound, have poor or no digital skills or access to the internet, can't speak English, have no family and are not involved in any older people's organisations or community groups.

We call on candidates in the 2016 London Mayoral elections to commit themselves to:

- Make particular efforts to engage with hard-to-reach, isolated older people
- Make information accessible to all older Londoners, including disabled people with physical and sensory impairments and those who are not online
- Provide resources and funding 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

¹⁴ Age UK London: 'Wealth of the Web: Broadening Horizons Online'. Report can be found at: <http://bit.ly/1d5T9be> or hard copies can be requested from Age UK London.

More Areas for Action 5: Health and Social Care



Loneliness and social isolation are far too common, and 72,000 older people in London have been diagnosed with dementia.

The Mayor has a legal duty to promote public health in London, and the first two Mayors have been involved in initiatives and partnerships for a healthier London. The Mayor champions London and has an important voice in national public life.

While older people make an important and vibrant contribution to London's communities, many also need support from health and social care services. Social care and the NHS are experiencing national funding crises: an estimated 94,000 older Londoners have social care needs which are unmet by formal support.¹⁵ Social care funding cuts are also decimating preventive services though their value is widely recognised.

Loneliness and social isolation are far too common, and 72,000 older people in London have been diagnosed with dementia.

Funding strains and problems affecting the National Health Service have an impact on older people, many of whom are concerned about the future of their local NHS which they value. Health and social care services need to work together. Recent reports show more and more older people suffering 'delayed discharge' where they are trapped in hospital because necessary support is not in place for them to return home. Age discrimination still needs to be eliminated from the NHS.

We call on candidates in the 2016 London Mayoral elections to commit themselves to:

- Include older people and voluntary sector representatives in bodies set up to improve health, social care and public health in London
- Support local initiatives to help older people stay fit and healthy and socially connected, combating loneliness
- Take into account the needs of older people in all public health initiatives such as on improving air quality in London
- Champion a national funding settlement to fill the funding gaps in health and social care
- Champion the value of preventive health and wellbeing services that help older people stay active and independent and keep people out of hospital
- Champion integrated health and social care, for example to ensure support is available to ensure smooth discharge from hospital for older people
- Plan and take the necessary steps to make London a Dementia Friendly city

¹⁵ Estimate by Age UK from ONS figures

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