

Vision 2025: Age Friendly Rotherham – conversations about a strategy for meeting the challenge of an ageing society

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Rotherham
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This document is a report about the thinking and conversations that took place at an event organised by **Rotherham Older People's Forum** (ROPF) and **Age UK Rotherham** (AUKR) as part of **ROTHERHAM OLDER PEOPLE'S MONTH 2017**.

The event heard updates on developments in the past year including the launch of ROPF's recent **Loneliness Conversations**. We then focused in on key issues, opportunities and solutions for our ageing society.

We concluded with a Call to Action that identified key ways that people in the room could influence change within the borough towards **Vision 2025**



Vision 2025: Rotherham is
a great place to grow
older and live in later life



Liz Booth

Chair, Rotherham
Older People's
Forum

Welcome

The aim of today is to look back at what has been achieved since last year's event and then we will talk about how we can work together to make Rotherham a better place to grow older in. We will also be presenting the results of our loneliness survey, which we have been working really hard on these past few months.

Today's event is the second of 3 events in October, which we have now called Older People's month.

Lesley Dabell

CEO Age UK
Rotherham

The Story So Far

Slides available on request

- Rotherham Older People's Forum and Age UK Rotherham working together to raise the profile of older people's issues in the Borough
- CSE meant a necessary focus on children/young people since 2014
- But numbers of older people are growing steadily and we live in 'unprecedented times' re living longer but not necessarily living well
- 1st October is Older People's Day each year
- 2016 – we made October Older People's Month in Rotherham to give more profile to older people's issues
- This year we wanted to pick up on things we talked about last year and look at how these are developing
- We also want to look forward to 2025 and develop the aspiration that Rotherham will become more Age Friendly in the intervening years!

Lesley built up a picture of the way in which our vision for an Age Friendly developed from the voices of older citizens and the 5 things that they have said are the key issues for them.

Programme

1. The Story So Far
2. Loneliness Conversations
3. Public Health & Older People
4. Table Talk
5. Plenary
6. Table Talk
7. Vision 2025
8. Call to Action

In 2011 and 2014 consultation by ROPF with older people across the Borough showed their main areas of concern were:

**Priorities
stated by
Rotherham
Older People**

- Being and feeling **SAFE**
- Feeling **LESS LONELY**
- Staying as **HEALTHY** as possible
- Remaining as **INDEPENDENT** as possible
- Keeping **CONNECTED** in the community



“It’s about the things that the voluntary community sector could do together to actually improve people’s lives as they’re ageing in Rotherham.”

At last year’s Age Friendly Rotherham event, older people identified:

- Wanted more influence in planning and decision making
- Town centre and other town planning – needs to involve older people in planning, more age friendly – loos and seats!
- Intergenerational opportunities for interaction needed
- Travel and transport issues – buses and bus station, taxi drivers training re older people’s needs
- Opportunities for social interaction need increasing
- Quality health and care to meet needs – more joined up
- Staying and feeling safe at home and in the community – housing meets changing needs, street lighting, policing
- More social activities – especially in rural areas, different kinds e.g. sport
- Access to universal services – libraries, banks and shops, support to access green spaces

“Today you will hear more about how these things are developing. You will have chance to ask questions and make comments about how these address older people’s needs and concerns”

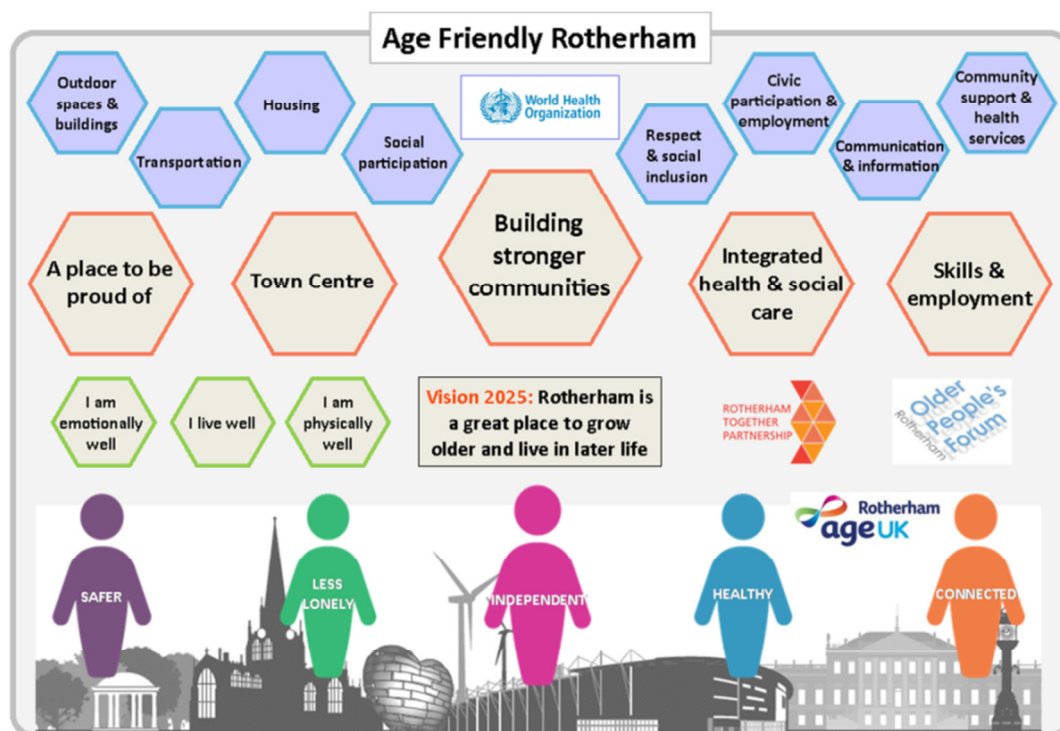
Older People’s Month 2016 concluded “We have no strategic plan(s) to respond to Rotherham’s Ageing Communities”

Since then we have worked on:

- Healthy Ageing Framework
- Director of Public Health Annual Report
- Older People’s Strategy Development Group
- Research on Loneliness
- Rotherham Together Partnership Plan

This event gives people the opportunity to help us to start to shape up what an Age Friendly Rotherham might look like in 2025 and develop some ideas about what we need to do to make this happen

All the
frameworks
on 1-page



Iain Cloke

EngAge
Rotherham
Development
Officer

Loneliness In Rotherham

Slides available on request

We launched a report about local research we have conducted by talking to older citizens about the impact of loneliness in their lives. The Rotherham Loneliness Conversations took place during the summer of 2017 in conjunction with EngAge Rotherham.

What's the
issue?

This research built on the learning from the Rotherham Less Lonely Campaign and data from Age UK about the Risks Of Loneliness at a neighbourhood level. The report explores the issue of loneliness. Almost everyone will have felt lonely at some point in their lives, it's part of being human, it is a natural warning sign which we need to recognise and then respond to. For many life moves on and the feelings of being lonely soon pass. For some, however, loneliness becomes chronic and then it can have a serious effect on a person's health and well-being.

Age UK estimates over 1 million older people are lonely and that it can lead to increased risks of conditions such as diabetes, heart conditions, strokes, depression and dementia. 90% of GP's say some patients were coming to see them because they are lonely.

Older people told us loneliness means different things to different people. Older people often feel embarrassed to admit that they are lonely or even realise they have become isolated.

What did we
learn?

Over 200 Older citizens from 19 out of 21 Rotherham electoral wards participated in this research including 174 postcard responses. Loneliness Conversations were conducted in 8 locations around the borough



It feels like nobody cares about me, I'm invisible

- 50% of responses came from the South Locality, 38% Central and 12% North
- 82% of respondents were lonely sometimes or most of the time.
- Loneliness is a feeling – it is how we perceive ourselves to be rather than physically being alone
- People said loneliness had the greatest effect on peoples' confidence (26%), health & wellbeing (23%) and motivation (21%).
- In most areas we need more social activities for older people - 46% said there aren't sufficient activities in their area but with 30% don't know many felt they need more information about what's on.
- People face greater risks of loneliness at transition points in their life, with many talking about the effects of bereavement.
- There are strong links between loneliness and mental health. People become unable to help themselves as it quickly affects their confidence and motivation which then in turn affects their health and it becomes a downward spiral.

What 'solutions' did older people suggest?

The long-term effects of loneliness can be so profound we need to find effective ways to tackle it all the demand on statutory health and social care services will only continue to increase.

- In addition to the need for more groups, older people came up with a range of 'self help' and active ageing ideas to help with feelings of loneliness.
- Some emphasised the need to get involved in the wider community including helping to lead activities for others.
- There is a need also for 1-1 approaches such as befriending that help isolated and/or frail elders

Its about not knowing where to go – and not having someone to take you there

What else is needed?

Rotherham Older People's Forum and Age UK Rotherham are committed to tackling loneliness in the borough. Our next steps are:-

- To share our findings with political leaders and statutory service providers.
- To promote neighbourhood level community development approaches.
- To provide meaningful opportunities and support to encourage older people to get involved, to volunteer as befrienders or drivers, for example.
- To tackle the barriers that increase people's chances of being isolated, such as transport and making sure older people are getting their benefit entitlements.
- To promote a more positive approach to ageing by tackling stereotypes of older people being seen as a burden and a drain on resources rather than actively being part of the solution.
- We call on all older people to get involved with ROPF to campaign for an Age
- Friendly Rotherham and support our Vision for 2025 that "Rotherham is a great place to grow older and live in later life". Contact us to sign up.

"Talking about loneliness has reminded me to count my blessings and be grateful for the friends I do have and for this group. Try to see the glass half full."

**Rebecca
Atchinson**
Public Health
Principal

Public Health and Older People

Slides available on request

This year's Director Of Public Health annual report considers the changes that are developing within our older population in terms of health, and shines a light on the rich asset that older people are within Rotherham.

Why focus on
Healthy
Ageing?

- In Rotherham the number of people aged 75+ is increasing rapidly, with the numbers aged 85+ rising faster than nationally.
- There is a gap between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy and there are significant numbers of people who will be of ill health before they are 60.
- As retirement age increases there are additional challenges for older people. This will place growing pressures on local health and social care services to a greater extent than are experienced nationally.
- For people aged 65 and over, the main difference between Rotherham and the national average concerns health and disability where older people in Rotherham are far more likely to be disabled and in poor health than England, and therefore are living longer in poor health.

The report identifies 4 key strands

Age Friendly
Rotherham

- Rotherham's Health and Wellbeing Board agreed that we should implement the WHO 'Age Friendly Cities and Communities' and become the first area in South Yorkshire to achieve this accreditation, learning from other UK cities that have already begun this work. This would be complementary to the Borough's aspiration to be young people and dementia friendly.

Healthy
behaviours &
lifestyles

- All services should **encourage lifestyle behaviour change** in older people where appropriate, particularly in the most disadvantaged communities. This could be achieved through taking a systematic approach to **making every contact count**.

Encouraging
social
inclusion

- The **social inclusion** of older people in Rotherham needs to be at the heart of policy and delivery across the Rotherham Partnership, addressing issues such as **maintaining independence, income and participation, mental health, loneliness and isolation**. To achieve this goal, older people must experience **proactive involvement** and participation in life and society as a whole.

Quality
integrated
services and
preventative
interventions

- All partners to deliver against the aspirations and commitments within the Rotherham Integrated Health & Social Care Place Plan, and to continue to strive for the highest quality services for older people.
- This is to include an increased focus on prevention, early identification and self-management, with clear pathways for lifestyle behaviour change for older people that support individuals to make changes when the time is right for them.

The full Director of Public Health Annual Report can be downloaded from this link:
www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/3466/2016_dph_annual_report_%E2%80%93_healthy_ageing_living_well_and_living_longer

**Carole
Haywood**
Partnership
Manager

Rotherham Together Partnership Priorities

The Rotherham Together Partnership involves representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. The Rotherham Plan 2025 sets out the most important things we as local partners will do over the next few years to help improve Rotherham as a place and make life better for local people.

Slides available on request

The Rotherham Together Partnership ‘Game Changers’ are:

Building Stronger Communities

- Finding new ways to bring people together to break down barriers
- Focusing on what people can do and the skills they have rather than what they need or lack
- People having respect for each other as citizens and respect for Rotherham as a place
- Working more closely with neighbourhoods to resolve local issues

Skills & Employment

- A new university centre for Rotherham due to open in Autumn 2018
- Helping local people gain higher level skills and find jobs in growing industries such as advanced manufacturing and engineering
- Tailored support to help people get and keep good quality jobs: “We need good quality jobs to give people a real sense of worth” (consultation response)

Integrated health and social care

- 24-hour urgent and emergency care centre opened in July 2017, helping to reduce waiting times and emergency admissions
- Partners introducing new ideas and doing things better by working in a more joined-up way
- Focusing on prevention and early intervention to avoid problems becoming severe

Town Centre

- A cinema, hotel and leisure complex to be built on Forge Island (the old Tesco site) with work due to start in 2018
- 420 new homes, including 270 riverside properties
- Renovating the markets
- Reducing all forms of anti-social behaviour aided by the proposed public space protection order

A place to be proud of

- Celebrating what Rotherham has to offer: “We don’t do enough to defend our town and fight the negative image we have gained” (consultation response)
- Local treasures such as Wentworth Woodhouse and Roche Abbey
 - Major companies such as Rolls Royce, Boeing and McLaren based at the Advanced Manufacturing Park at Catcliffe
 - Gulliver’s Valley – a £37 million family theme park opening at Rother Valley in 2020



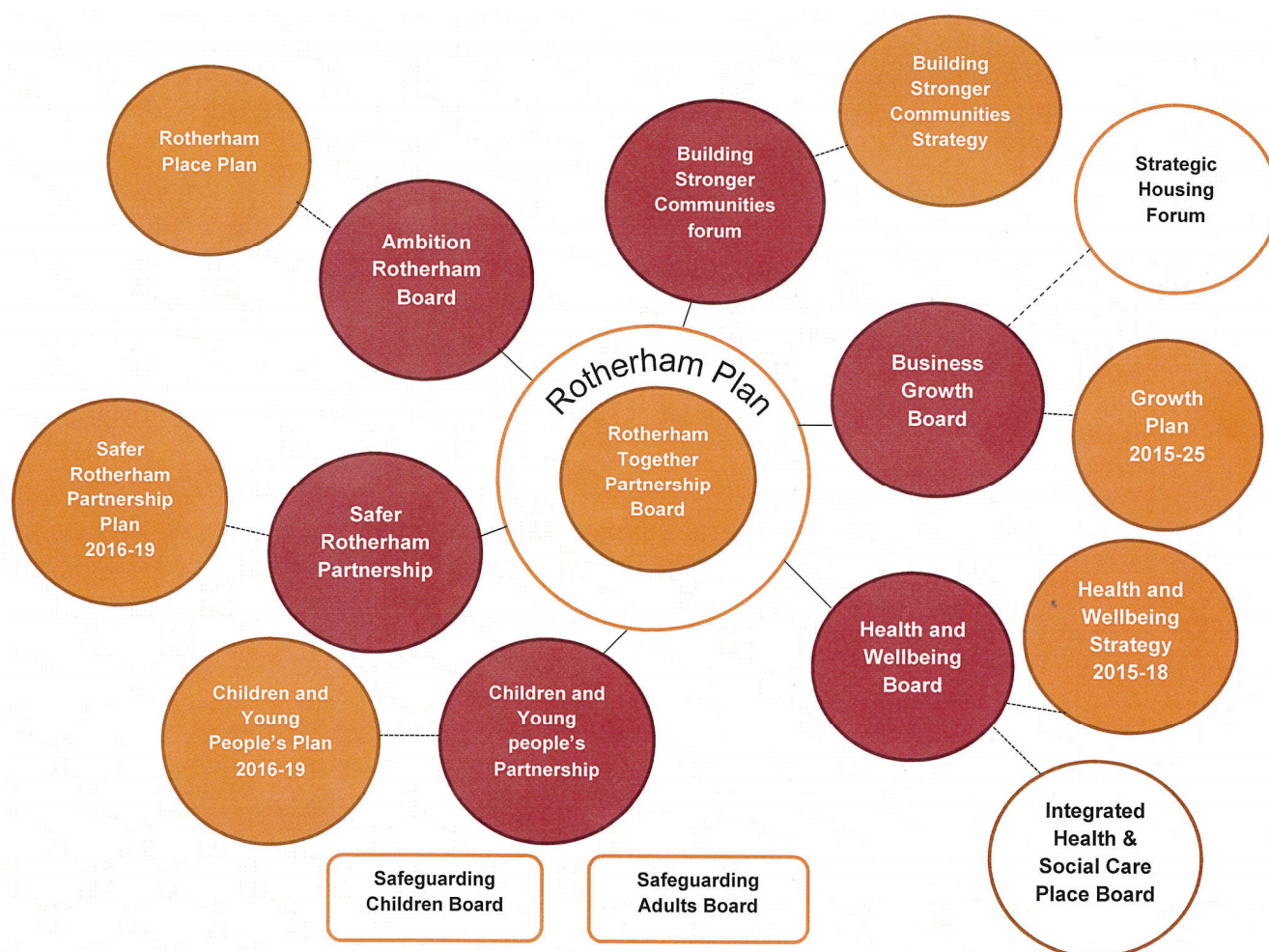
We need to talk about:

- By 2025 - older people's month – what does Rotherham need to look like?
- Based on the game changers – which are older people's priorities and why?
- Who can help us get there? Who are your influencers? How can you use them?
- Where are the gaps – what are the main things missing from making this happen for you?

"How can we influence all partners about being more age friendly?"

Influencing pathways

The meeting noted that there is currently no dedicated channel for older people to influence partners around the full range of issues faced in later life or the WHO Age Friendly domains.



Reactions,
comments,
issues &
questions

Supporting
People

“People often
need just a little bit
of help to have a
good later life.”

“We need to build
stronger
communities
where everyone
is valued and
feels able to
contribute their
skills and
experience.”

Working
together with
a common
vision

“The Vision 2025
diagram illustrates
that there is the
potential for
working together
towards an age
friendly Rotherham
based on what
everyone is saying
are the priorities.”

Age Friendly Table Conversations (1)

Following conversations at tables the following comments were shared in the wider group. They have been grouped by theme rather than in the order they were spoken:

- Many older people struggle to come out in the winter and at night so how can we help them feel less lonely at this time? Low temperatures badly affect our mobility.
- It is easy to feel invisible and without support after being in hospital.
- Mental health needs to be recognised as a part of loneliness and isolation. A joined up plan is needed to plan services and this will require collaboration between agencies and sectors to work.
- Public Health have been tasked with writing a Mental health & Wellbeing Plan and will be linking up with RDASH around prevention.
- The CCG are doing work on new ways of supporting people such as the Eastwood Health Village. There will be a report soon and hope to extend this to other areas.
- The Council need to understand how best to help people access help. There are different issues in different places. Digital isn't the answer for everyone – we need more help to be more confident at this.
- Social activities won't solve everything for older people – you can easily be lonely in a crowd.
- Early intervention and prevention need to be key to responses to loneliness and to developing and age friendly Rotherham.
- We want intergenerational work, sharing memories, cooking and other skills.
- Within the Asian community, our extended families can be a great source of support but there can also be generational barriers that are in play within families and communities. Language barriers still exist for some, even within families. We want to meet friendly people.
- Can we utilise Home Care providers to tackle loneliness – working together to make every contact count. Do we know what is available?
- There are too many 'initiatives' and it doesn't feel like we are all on the same page. It is essential that we have a single joined up vision and a plan for implementing it.
- We need to get better at working together in the voluntary and community sector and get past our competition for scarce funding. Can we share resources? We want extra sessions at the Unity Centre for older people –if we open this up and share with others it would help the money go further.
- We should aim to work more closely across cultures, learn from each other, gathering stories and telling them. This would build a shared sense of belonging and enable older people to share their knowledge and skills with the wider community.
- Could we have a writing group that will record and share stories from Rotherham's older citizens? Can we involve schools somehow?
- We need to have more effective ways of sharing information about what's going on in the borough.
- We've got limited money and we need to spend it on the important priorities – including on an age friendly Rotherham – friendly for all!

Transport

- Transport is a barrier to involvement for many older people who have been affected by changes in bus routes, reductions in services and a lack of accessible vehicles. Busy bee service has finished.
- We feel positive about getting life back in to the Town Centre but transport links will be an important factor in getting it well used. Bus routes are important – these need to be not just to bus station.

Town Centre

- The regeneration of the town centre should help to revitalise the area but there must also be work to tackle anti social behaviour if we want older people to feel safe there
- Riverside Library is in the wrong place for older people to make the most of this resource.

What positive changes will Rotherham need to be Age Friendly by 2025?

Age Friendly Table Conversations (2)

In the afternoon we began to focus on the things that need to change in Rotherham. The responses have been recorded against each of the WHO Age Friendly Communities domains.

Transportation

- People need to use the buses or we will use them
- Transport providers need to have more accessible vehicles running more often – this should be stipulated in the contract.
- Changes in the transport system can have a huge impact on staying active and being independent.
- Taxis are expensive but I am forced to use them now that the bus routes have changed and there are less buses than there used to be.
- The new tram link will soon be in place?

Transportation**Outdoor spaces & buildings****Outdoor spaces and buildings**

- In terms of feeling proud of Rotherham, there are places like Clifton Park and Wentworth Woodhouse but also lots of places and issues we are not proud of.
- Better street lights are needed so that we can see where we are going
- I want to feel safer and confident to go anywhere at any time of day or night.
- Is the town a safer, cleaner place as a result of the changes? Is this a priority? What are we doing about anti social behaviour?
- We need a nicer atmosphere in town
- I would like a greater police presence (or PCSOs)
- We don't want cycle lanes in town centre – stop bikes!
- We need to improve transport links around the borough.
- More police on the street
- Panic alarms for older people
- Money for improving outdoor spaces is impacted by cuts to the local authority so any investment in spaces/buildings would not then be well maintained. We should be encouraging community ownership.



Housing

Housing

- Some of our existing (RMBC) housing stock is not fit for purpose (egs given in Harley and Brinsworth) due to the size and/or the amenities available.
- Tenants don't feel fairly dealt with and are told that there is no money but the council have money to spend on other things. RMBC need to be more responsive when we raise issues.
- Rents are too high. Private landlords need to be challenged around issues of quality and price.
- Downsizing in later life is popular but not everyone wants to do it and at the moment some feel forced to do so because of bedroom tax, low incomes, worry about the future.
- There is often no safe space for securely parking or storing a scooter without creating a fire or trip hazard. I have been told by the council I can't build a small shelter/extension.
- Landlords need to be taken to account for empty buildings
- We need affordable housing for older people. There are similar schemes for younger people. Much of the current stock is not affordable
- Older people are not able to down size and stay in the area where they want.
- Enable more people to be actively involved with the planning and design of new housing.



Social participation

Social participation

- People need to be motivated to help themselves and join in with what's going on.
- Cost is a barrier for many older people in being online and using smart phones.
- How do we afford all these activities with our limited income?
- Everything is digital these days, so we don't find out about anything if we are not online.
- Technology will be simpler and cheaper and less scary in future.
- There needs to be more available to more people and systems in place to support those who may be excluded.
- Wearable technology can help support people living independently and act as a contact/alarm in an emergency
- Encourage more social contacts including online
- Doing more online can stop people getting out and could increase isolation.



Respect & social inclusion

Respect and social inclusion

- Bad press about Rotherham has knocked people's confidence in the town. We feel stigmatised as residents of Rotherham.
- Encourage private sector to value the contribution of older workers in their recruitment and employment packages.

- Are older people's skills valued? For volunteering we need good support and training.
- We need to value the contribution of older people.



Civic Participation and Employment

- If we were involved in setting priorities at an early stage we could help spot issues and find solutions – but it feels like no one is listening.
- We can stay active in later life by working and by living life fully.
- We are not currently involved enough in planning and regeneration and consultation even when the issues directly affect us.
- You don't know what you don't know about our lives!
- We need key contacts for each area of these plans.
- We know that Area Assemblies have finished but we don't know what has replaced them.
- Community Leadership Fund – how do we access this?
- Community schemes that involve people in planning before the initiative starts and that the views expressed are seen to be taken account of.
- We need better work with our communities. More feedback to our communities. No advance decision making.
- There should be clear impact assessments relating to older people and all other groups before decisions are taken forward.
- All local communities and facilities need to be more age friendly – not just the Town Centre
- Better engagement of local communities in planning/decision making.
- Community involvement is very patchy



Communication and information

- Knowing what's going on is a real problem when everything is online
- We still need to include those who are not digitally included
- Online will be cheaper and easier – can we make cheap devices available?
- Create community hubs and/or buddying to get online – these could be intergenerational
- BUT also need to prevent abuse and ensure people's security



Community Support and health services

- I need more opportunities to keep my brain alive – not purely social or recreational activity groups. I want to keep increasing my skills. We want challenges, to keep making a contribution but there are barriers as I get older – such as the extra time it takes to do everything as my body ages.
- GP's are not recognising how housebound people feel which leads to isolation and invisibility.
- There should be more support for us to live independently with dignity.
- There is a concern that social care is currently inadequate and that this won't change which will continue to have an impact on our health services



Our Call to Action

Our Vision 2025: Rotherham is a great place to grow older and live in later life

We discussed and agreed how to respond to the issues by making a commitment to take this **Age Friendly Rotherham: Vision 2025** strategy forward.



1. **Join Rotherham Older People's Forum to help mobilise older voices at the heart of an Age Friendly Rotherham.** It is essential that we continue to harness older voices, experiences and priorities at the heart of any local plans or strategies that affect their lives.

To become a member simply contact Barbara Booton in person or email rotherhamopf@outlook.com or contact EngAge Rotherham on 01709 386836.



2. **Older people themselves need to be included formally with the Rotherham Together Partnership.** We will argue for a new Older People's Partnership as part of the family of partnerships, enabling older people to take a lead in helping Rotherham become a great place to grow older and live in later life.



Carole Haywood, Lesley Dabell and Liz Booth will take this up with the Rotherham Together Partnership.

3. **Our loneliness research and age friendly conversations indicate a need for additional activities in the borough for older people** that support us be active and independent, to alleviate the effects of isolation and loneliness and are preventative of a decline in older people's health and wellbeing in later life.



RMBC Adult Services are calling all Community Groups to register their interest by emailing commissioningenquiries@rotherham.gov.uk or phone the Commissioning Team on 01709 334069.