

Party responses to questions on five key issues affecting older people in Wandsworth

Party	Question and response
1. How will you ensure older people in Wandsworth have access to high quality, responsive local care services?	
Conservative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are committed to the provision of high quality and responsive services for all the communities we serve. To this end we are embarking on a range of recommissioning programmes to ensure improved quality of services and a focus on the promotion of independence. • Wandsworth Council works very closely with our NHS partners to support people's health and wellbeing and continues to remain in the top quartile in London performance tables in terms of hospital discharge delays attributable to social care. • Our well-developed team of co-located health and social care staff work in an aligned approach to best respond to local people's needs. • We have invested heavily in preventative services, and our highly regarded in-house reablement service has recently been rated as "good" by CQC. We also have a long-standing and highly effective partnership with Leonard Cheshire which offers practical assistance, companionship and promotes independence. • The Council works closely with local community organisations, through a range of consultation and partnership arrangements and regular strategic discussions with Healthwatch.
Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour will pay the London Living Wage of £10.20 per hour to our contractors. One of the first contracts for review is the Home Care Service for Adults, due for renewal in April 2019. Labour wants to make sure carers are well-paid, so caring becomes a proper career choice and workers feel valued and stay as carers. This approach has been tried successfully in Winchester and has resulted in better service to residents, who now have consistency of care – which we know is a key requirement for older residents to feel that they have a good service. • We will not make new placements; or take out new contracts, with contractors or homes that are not rated CQC good or excellent. • Labour will continue to take the Social Care Precept from Council tax to fund Adult Social Services. We know that demand for Social services are growing and we understand we need to make sure we do all we can to keep a good level of funding. • In addition, we will review the "Respite Care" policy & budget. Local groups have told us that what's on offer does not meet the needs of family carers. We want to provide respite care that best meets the needs of families who help and take on huge responsibilities looking after their relatives. • Voluntary and community organisations play a vital role in the life of the borough. That's why we will appoint a member of the Cabinet with the job of strengthening our partnership with these groups. Labour know we need to work closely with the Voluntary sector as this group have excellent experience and can deliver local services – and let us know what works for residents.
Liberal Democrat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for social care is an issue nationally. We will continue to have the social care precept but we will also work with the VCSE sector. There's a lot of knowledge out there in the community and we will work with the sector to ensure the best

	<p>outcomes for older people. We will put people first and redesign services around people so they are not passed from pillar to post.</p>
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Green party believes that healthcare is about keeping people well as much as treating the sick and that integrated primary health care plays a vital role in this. • Locally we will work to ensure the council stops underspending on Adult Care and Community Services budgets which has happened too often in recent years. • We also opposed cutting grants to local charities and voluntary organisations who are now experiencing increasing difficulty with delays and complexities in grant applications and we are concerned about the extent to which this hampers the ability of these organisations to make full use of the wonderful staff and volunteers on hand to help in our communities. • We believe that Wandsworth Council's boast of having the lowest council tax in the land rings hollow in the age of austerity when central government funding for local authorities has been slashed (by around 50% in recent years!) and we are in favour of increasing the council tax in order to provide adequate funding for front line services like adult social care, mental health support and a full range of community services. On a national level our policy includes deferral on tax for asset rich and cash poor.
2. How will you ensure we have an 'Age friendly' borough that supports the needs of older people and tackles the issue of 'loneliness'?	
Conservative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wandsworth Council is committed to helping older people to continue to live in their homes and community. We have increased spending on alternative community services to minimise the need for residential care placements. • We work closely with a number of partners to support older people and tackle loneliness. In addition to a long-standing partnership with Shared Lives we have recently teamed up with Homeshare UK to support isolated older people to continue to live at home with the support and companionship of a home sharer. • The Council supports a range of day care services and activities and are proud to work in partnership with Age UK Wandsworth who provide a range of support services including befriending, property maintenance and home shopping.
Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour will enlist the support of Voluntary & Community Groups in working to end isolation for older people in Wandsworth. We will launch a Loneliness Commission, bringing together experts and residents to tackle the issue. Health services, religious groups and voluntary organisations all have a role to play. Every older person who wants will be able to have a companionable lunch with other people at least once a month. • Our first step will be to implement the "companionable lunch" policy and then review the results of the Loneliness Commission with the aim to develop new policies to combat loneliness. Part of their brief will be to examine initiatives such as becoming a "Dementia Friendly" borough like our neighbours in Merton.
Liberal Democrat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again we will invest in the community and voluntary sector. Loneliness has a detrimental effect on health and with more community centres, community activities and neighbourhood networks we can make sure that growing old in our borough is

	not lonely. We must create more spaces where people can come together.
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Green party believes that older people have the same rights and hopes as everyone else. They should be treated fairly and equally in employment, education and avenues for enterprise. Ambition should not be shut off just because we get older. • We also realise that funding and policy in all areas of life need looking at to ensure that older people can continue to lead rewarding and active lives. We are aware that there are huge inequalities between older people, and many have difficult lives. • On a national level our policy calls for the reinstatement of provision for Lifelong Learning with a full range of local adult education programmes. • Locally we will work to ensure that the good work of voluntary organisations in providing friendship, support and contact is adequately supported by our council as outlined in our answer to question 1.
3. How will you ensure more effective communication with older Wandsworth residents, particularly those who are lonely, disabled or experiencing digital exclusion?	
Conservative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wandsworth Council is constantly reviewing how we communicate with local communities. In addition to an extensive range of information available in written formats we are currently developing an online information system with Care Place. • The Council and its partners, which include Age UK, the Older Peoples Forum and CAB, also provides a range of information and advice telephone services and drops ins for older people and carers.
Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Councillors take on lots of casework and we've learned how difficult it can be to get a response from the Council. We'll train all Council staff to use clear English in letters and review the telephone system as we know how important it is to speak to a person rather than an automated system.
Liberal Democrat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We advocate a more open borough at all levels. We would hold council meetings in different locations around the borough. We would improve the website, while also ensuring that it is not the sole way of contacting the council. • We support the use of advocates within the council organisation to help intermediate communications. Liberal Democrat councillors will make strenuous efforts to reach out to all residents in the wards where they are elected.
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Green party candidates in Wandsworth have pledged to be library champions and support the work of CILIP, the UK library and information Association, because we appreciate the importance of libraries as community hubs and the role they play in disseminating vital information as well as mitigating the problems of digital exclusion. • We also support the call we often hear for improvements in the council's telephone services so that people can get through to a human more easily instead of being left stranded with pre-recorded messages that refer to on-line information only.
4. How will you ensure good quality, affordable and accessible housing for older people in Wandsworth so they can remain independent for longer?	
Conservative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our partnerships with Homeshare UK and Shared Lives aim to provide opportunities to support older people remain in the own homes and communities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a number of highly popular sheltered housing schemes in the Borough, and older tenants will be given priority for low rise housing in the estates we are regenerating. • The Council has an ambitious strategy to increase the number of extra care and assisted living schemes over the next five years. One has already been built and two are currently under construction, all of them on Council owned land.
Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour knows how important it is to make sure people can stay in their own homes for as long as possible. We have a detailed housing policy, including planning changes to ensure that more affordable and social housing is available in the borough. We are also committed to building accessible housing in new developments.
Liberal Democrat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our housing strategy seeks to ensure a better flow of affordable housing for everybody. We strongly believe that all new property should maintain high standards of accessibility.
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a national level Green Party policy is to base the definition of affordable on median earnings not property markets, lift the cap on council borrowing so that councils can invest in housing and end 'right to buy' so that investment remains in public hands keeping homes available to those who need them most. In the private rented sector our policy is to bring security of tenure into renting, introduce caps on rent increases and abolish letting agent's fees and insurance-based deposit schemes. • On a local level we are lobbying for better consultation on development plans, and through our London Assembly members have recently achieved a requirement for London Councils to ballot all residents on regeneration plans. We are working to hold councils to account and put ordinary people, not property speculators first in housing developments. • We deplore the significant difference in standards of upkeep of council properties across the borough, especially those earmarked for regeneration.
5. How will you ensure that older people have accessible transport options so that they may travel safely and freely around London?	
Conservative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wandsworth Council has financially supported the Mayor of London's Freedom Pass and Taxi card schemes for many years and we will continue to do so. A number of our day centres offer a mini-bus service. • We have a strong partnership with Wandsworth Community Transport which offers a wide range of accessible transport options both within Wandsworth and further afield. • The Council provides advice and support to older people in terms of accessing relevant transport concessions.
Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know that the local community Transport is a life-line to many and want to continue to support this service. We'll also support the Mayor's initiatives on accessible public transport and use planning powers to obtain improvements - for example, via section 106 agreements. Examples of using these powers are improvements to the 170 bus along York Road & improvements to Wandsworth Town Station – supported by the Labour team at Planning Applications Committee.
Liberal Democrat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would ensure that the borough supports retention of the Freedom Pass and TfL 60+ Oyster Photocard and that they are not means tested. • We would improve the street environment for pedestrians, for example limiting street furniture and ensuring older and disabled

	<p>pedestrians and public transport users are not disadvantaged by the design of new facilities like Cycle Superhighways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to make high streets more friendly to pedestrians. We would ensure that pedestrian crossings always allow sufficient time for older people to cross the road, and roll out step-free access to stations.
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will ensure our council takes full advantage of the GA/TFL Liveable Neighbourhood programme through which councils can bid up to £10 million to transform our borough into a place where everyone can walk and cycle safely and happily. We will continue to work closely with the excellent civic organisation 'Wandsworth Living Streets' who campaign and carry out research for improvements in this area. • We will keep the pressure up on town planners to embrace every opportunity to make our streets safer for pedestrians, reduce our exposure to toxic air and to protect local businesses and independent retailers so that we have a good range of services within easy reach of every locality. • We will ensure that the Freedom Pass and 60+ Oyster photocard remain without means testing. The Green party will campaign vigorously on any threat to these.

The questions were also sent to Renew and UKIP.

Renew responded as follows:

Renew applauds the initiatives detailed in Age UK's manifesto for the London Borough Elections to ensure that older people have;

- access to high quality responsive, local care services;
- for Wandsworth to be an 'Age friendly' borough that supports the needs of older people and tackles the issue of 'loneliness';
- more effective communication with older Wandsworth residents, particularly those who are lonely, disabled or experiencing digital exclusion;
- good quality, affordable and accessible housing;
- accessible transport options for safe and secure travel.

Renew is not standing to take control of Wandsworth council, but rather on national issues to oppose Brexit and build a new centrist party. Locally we will ensure that there is balance on the council with a genuine voice for residents. As such we will support policy proposals by the party controlling the executive, either Conservative or Labour, to implement these proposals.

UKIP did not respond.