A great place to grow older.

Age UK’s ambition for the next Parliament 2015-2020
Our vision is a world where everyone is able to love later life. Living longer is a cause for celebration, as is our vibrant and diverse older population.

#votelaterlife
A great place to grow older.
Feeling well

We want everyone in later life to be able to enjoy life and feel well

Why does this matter?
We are living longer, but at the end of our lives often with disability and long-term conditions. Loneliness also has a profound impact on quality of life, with serious implications for physical and mental health, and a million older people say they are often or always lonely. The possibility of losing thinking skills is the most feared element of later old age. In 2013 there were 816,000 people with dementia in the UK and on current trends the number is forecast to increase to more than a million by 2025 and more than two million by 2051.

By 2020 we want to see:
• A ‘wellbeing network’ in every community to provide older people with friendship and support and to encourage good physical and mental health.
• ‘Social prescribing’ available at all GP practices in England to respond to older people’s social, emotional and practical support needs.
• All public services and essential private sector services ‘dementia friendly’.
• Support packages available for people to self-care if they have long term conditions, including (voluntary) self-management training courses and more local and online forums to join if they wish.

This is what the political parties need to focus on immediately:
• Ensure Health and Wellbeing Boards give increased priority to preventing and tackling loneliness in their community.
• Assess, through a pilot scheme, the benefits for all of co-locating older people’s provision with other community facilities, including children’s resources.
• Establish a right to ‘adjustment leave’ for carers to help them when changes in their care arrangements have to be made.
• A properly resourced, on-going public education campaign on how to stay as physically and mentally fit and well as possible through later life.
• Ensure that Government funded and promoted research into dementia and other forms of cognitive decline focuses as much on developing effective, practical ways of helping older people and their families and carers, as on biomedical research.
Safe at home
Everyone in later life should feel comfortable, safe and secure at home

Why does this matter?
Older people should be able to live safely and with dignity in good quality, warm, comfortable housing. At present only 3% of housing in England is accessible to people with restricted mobility.

By 2020 we want to see:
• A much broader range of affordable housing options available for older people.
• Much quicker access to home adaptations in every local area, before rather than after a fall.
• An ambitious energy efficiency programme underway to tackle fuel poverty, with no homes so ‘leaky’ that they are graded E or F.
• Every older person admitted to hospital offered a home safety assessment, with follow-up support if needed.
• A duty on postal, telephone and internet providers to reduce the volume of scams.

This is what the political parties need to focus on immediately:
• Require all new housing to be built to the accessible ‘lifetime’ homes standards, which means it can be easily adapted for people with reduced mobility.
• Review the funding and administration of home adaptations with a view to moving to a single budget and assessment.
• Include energy efficiency in the national infrastructure plan.
• Establish a National Financial Abuse and Scams task force, with a statutory duty to report annually on progress.
• A percentage of the community infrastructure levy to go towards making local areas more age-friendly (e.g. better lighting, seating).
Enough money
We want a world where everyone in later life has enough money.

Why does this matter?
There are 1.6 million older people living in poverty in the UK, 900,000 of them in severe poverty – and an extra million older people only just above the poverty line. Poverty in later life means a miserable existence which can lead to ill health and isolation.

By 2020 we want to see:
• Pensioner poverty halved and every older person who is entitled to extra help due to their low income actually receiving it.
• Real progress towards all pensioners being included in the new state pension system.
• The proportion of workers paying into a private pension increased by a third.
• A joined-up journey for information and advice for all, from a mid-life career review to guidance at retirement and throughout later life on your money, care and housing options, and with everyone receiving a single combined pension forecast to help plan.
• A range of good-value products available for people drawing down their pension savings.

This is what the political parties need to focus on immediately:
• Ensure the state pension provides a decent income for all by guaranteeing the ‘triple lock’ in legislation to maintain its value.
• Launch an ambitious programme to boost take-up of entitlements by raising awareness, simplifying systems and ensuring older people have the support they need to claim any benefits due.
• Reform pension tax relief to provide better pension saving incentives for people on modest incomes, the self-employed, women and BME groups.
• Establish an independent review into pensions, retirement savings and income in later life to inform policies that will be fit for the next thirty years, as our population increasingly ages.
• Abolish the financial services exemption in the Equality Act 2010 to end discrimination against older consumers because of their age.
Active communities

We want a world in which everyone in later life can participate in their community and feel part of our wider society.

Why does this matter?

Older people contribute a massive £61 billion to the economy each year through work, caring and volunteering, but they face barriers including ageism, poor transport links and digital exclusion that prevent many from having a fulfilling, independent later life. For example, long-term unemployment is particularly severe among older workers. Nearly a third of people over-65 are not online and some may never be.

By 2020 we want to see:

• Every older person has access to essential services, including banking and the ability to make basic payments, whether they are online or not.

• Every area’s local transport plan promotes wellbeing through co-operation between partners, including community transport, to support older people to get out and about.

• Every job ‘flexible by default’ by 2020, so the onus would be on the employer to justify why a role cannot be done flexibly.

• Long-term unemployment among older workers halved.

• Older people able to access adult learning in their local area.

• More incentives and support in place for volunteering among people of all ages.

This is what the political parties need to focus on immediately:

• Require banks to report annually on access to their services.

• Require all essential services moving online (including local government and private sector services) to provide non-digital as well as digital alternatives.

• Provide access to quality training and bespoke support for older workers at risk of long-term unemployment, from day one of a Job-Seekers Allowance claim.

• Explore new ways of funding and delivering cost-effective adult learning, including help for older people to develop digital skills.

• To support older people around the world the UK Government should lead global efforts to put in place a UN Convention on the Rights of Older People, and an ambitious set of post-2015 sustainable development goals which take fully into account the world’s ageing population.
Quality health and Care
All of us should receive high quality Health and Care services as we age

Why does this matter?
Older people should be able to expect high quality health and care services that are joined up around them. We need services which look after the person rather than just treating a set of symptoms. Poor quality care is never acceptable but it is often only when it amounts to abuse and neglect that it becomes a matter of public concern. Only 40% of the public are confident that older people are treated with dignity when receiving social care and while the numbers of us needing care are growing, funding is currently shrinking.

By 2020 we want to see:
• The funding gaps in health and social care filled through a new funding settlement.
• Every older person with a social care need receiving a social care service.
• A high quality, fully joined up, personalised health and care service in place for older people living with frailty in care homes.
• A health and care coordinator offered to every older person living with multiple long term health conditions, including dementia and frailty, to make sure they get the help they need.
• Full age equality across the NHS so everyone is cared for according to their health needs and not their age.
• Staff trained to work together across health and social care, and with the community and voluntary sectors, to understand and meet the needs of older people.

This is what the political parties need to focus on immediately:
• Urgent steps to reverse the cuts to social care.
• The Care Act 2014 fully funded so its new duties can be fairly and consistently implemented.
• Incentives for more social investment in health promotion and social care.
• Supporting the direction of travel set out in the NHS’s Five Year Forward View, including by: Stressing the importance of the NHS helping older people to stay well and manage long term health conditions, and the crucial roles of GPs and other community based health practitioners in achieving this.
• Encouraging the NHS to make more strategic use of trained volunteers, especially to help older people who are vulnerable or alone to have their voices heard.
The Age UK sofa

We toured the country with the Age UK sofa to hear from older people about what they think would make the UK a great place to grow older.

They also told us what they thought the priorities of the next Parliament should be for older people today and tomorrow.

Watch our film to find out what older people want political candidates to do to make the UK a great place to grow older.

To hear their views and add your voice, visit www.ageuk.org.uk/votelaterlife

Why not get involved on social media #votelaterlife