



## Our Priorities for Action

One of the biggest challenges facing the government is how it will prepare and plan for our increasingly ageing population. It is vital that, once elected, our MLAs **#Act4Age** and deliver a better future for us all as we age. **Make the election count. Get involved! Ask candidates in your constituency to listen to the views of older people and #Act4Age.**

You can find out more about Age NI's **#Act4Age** campaign by visiting [www.ageni.org/act4age](http://www.ageni.org/act4age)

### 1 *Staying well, feeling good*

**Why this matters:** Although people are living longer, many are spending a significant part of their later life unwell, or living with a disability or long term health condition that affects their quality of life. Being able to stay in good health, and to remain independent for as long as possible, makes sense for individuals and our 'already stretched' health and social care services.

**We want to see:**

- concerns addressed about the quality and availability of health and social care and the safeguards in place to protect older people;
- a clear legal framework for social care, providing clarity on the support people are entitled to receive;
- investment in practical, low level services which provide care at home and prevent deterioration of wellbeing;
- a public debate around how we fund and sustain social care services.

### 2 *Tackling pensioner poverty*

**Why this matters:** Poverty in later life can mean a miserable existence which leads to ill-health and isolation. Older people tell us about their struggles to make ends meet. The positive news that the overall level of pensioner poverty has reduced is welcomed but masks the fact that the poorest pensioners have seen no real improvement in their income. Having access to expert financial advice and guidance is vital as people approach retirement and at key times in later life. Scams and financial abuse are a major threat to the financial security, health and wellbeing of older people.

**We want to see:**

- a commitment to tackling pensioner poverty, ensuring every older person receives the financial help they are entitled to;
- effective, targeted measures in place to address fuel poverty experienced by older people;
- flexible working practices and opportunities in place for older people to enter, return or remain in work;
- a coordinated approach to tackling scams, fraud and financial abuse.

## 3 Equal and engaged citizens

**Why this matters:** Older people contribute to the economy through work, caring and volunteering but face a number of barriers to being treated as valued and equal citizens. This includes outdated, ageist perceptions of older age, discrimination in accessing health and financial services, poor transport links particularly in rural areas, and digital exclusion which prevents many from living a fulfilling, independent later life. There is still no legislation in place to protect older people from being discriminated against in the provision of goods, facilities and services. The creation of Age Friendly Communities provide opportunities to develop ‘good’ places to age, connecting older people to each other and their local community.

### We want to see:

- the introduction of legislation extending age discrimination to goods, facilities and services;
- older people and the age sector involved in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the government’s Active Ageing Strategy;
- an age discrimination review of all aspects of health and social care;
- the active involvement of older people and the age sector in the development of Age Friendly Communities across Northern Ireland.

## 4 Ageing at the heart of government policy and action

**Why this matters:** Our ageing population represents many opportunities and challenges for our society - for employers, the economy, as well as the welfare, housing, health and social care systems currently in place. The development of a Programme for Government, setting out the government’s future direction and priorities, provides an opportunity to place planning and preparing for an ageing population at the heart of government policy and action. Looking at new ways to join up government will be important if we are to respond effectively to complex, cross-cutting issues in a coordinated way and improve outcomes for older people.

### We want to see:

- ageing as a cross-cutting theme in the Programme for Government (PfG);
- a specific outcome on older people in the PfG to address the inequalities, discrimination and exclusion experienced by older people;
- active engagement with older people in shaping and improving how service delivery is designed and delivered;
- older people involved in monitoring the impact of the PfG.

Thank you for getting involved in **#Act4age**

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