



## Age Friendly Places

Making our community a great place to grow older



# Our vision is that everyone can live well in later life.

Living longer is a huge opportunity if we adapt our neighbourhoods and communities to work for us as we age. As we grow older, we often spend more time in our homes and communities, so our immediate environment has a significant impact on our health, wellbeing and the quality of our lives. **Age Friendly Places are essential for our ageing population.**

As we all live longer, more of us will need to get out and about as consumers, to volunteer, to work and as care givers. We will need to ensure that those who are less mobile or not online are not left behind. There is a growing recognition that too many of our communities are significantly underprepared to manage the challenges and unlock the potential of our ageing population. In a significantly challenging financial context for local government, service providers and the communities they serve, there is a real need to work together to remove the barriers older people face to participating in their communities.

By **2040**, nearly **1 in 4 people** in the UK will be **over 65**.

The number of people **over 85 – the fastest growing age group** – is predicted to more than double in the next 23 years to **over 3.4 million**.

**Healthy life expectancy** is not keeping pace with longevity – this means many of us **will need to manage multiple long-term conditions**.

By **2025**, just over **1 million** of us will be **living with dementia** and over **2 million by 2051**.

As well as ensuring an accessible environment, local councils and communities need to consider the wider context in which we age:

**1.6 million** older people in the UK are **living in poverty**.

**1 million** older people haven't spoken to anyone in a month and **4 million** say the **television** is their **main form of company**.

**870,000** older people who need care and support **miss out each year**.

**25,000** older people **die needlessly of cold** each winter.

**3 in 10 people aged 54–74** and two-thirds of the over 75s are **not online**.

This means that too many older people and their families are struggling, finding themselves unable to access the essential elements to live a good life.

## What is an 'Age Friendly Place'?

Living longer presents huge opportunities to create vibrant and resilient communities where older people can develop their interests and aspirations. Whether at city, region, local authority, ward, or neighbourhood level, 'Age Friendly Places' are communities where age is not a barrier to living well and where the environment, activities and services support and enable older people to:



Have opportunities to enjoy life and feel well.



Participate in society and be valued for their contribution.



Have enough money to live well.



Feel safe, comfortable and secure at home.



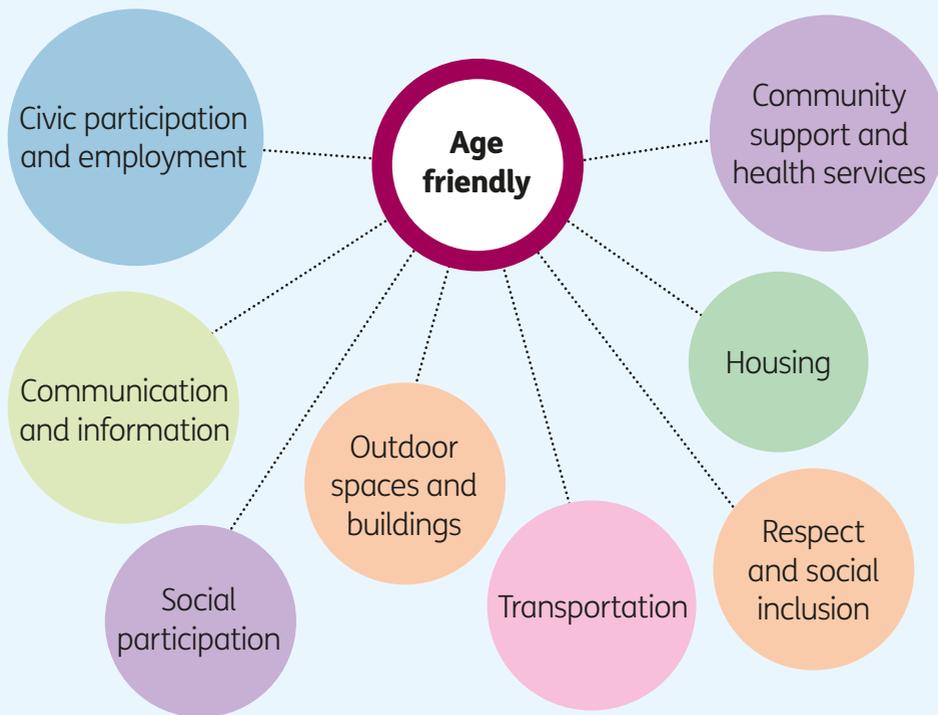
Access quality health and care.

By taking an age friendly approach, local areas can maximise the huge social and economic contribution older people can make to their communities.

Age friendly communities also support families and promote

intergenerational cooperation. More fit and independent older people means more people to support younger and older people to connect with each other, learn from each other and live well.

The World Health Organization (WHO)'s Age-friendly Cities model provides a useful framework for urban and rural place shaping that supports health, wellbeing and active living:



Source: Global Age Friendly Cities Guide, WHO, 2007.

The World Health Organisation's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities programme is the farthest reaching of its type in scope and geography. Launched in 2006, it now encompasses close to 300 communities in 33 countries and a growing number in the UK.

In practice, an 'age friendly' community is one where local people have decided their priorities to better support people as they age. These can include physical design, promoting better access and mobility, promoting people's social engagement and developing support and relationships between the generations. The most important aspect in creating an age friendly community is taking an integrated approach to thinking about the places where people live and how best to promote older people's wellbeing and engagement with their physical and social environments.

Local authorities have an important 'place shaping' role – knowing their communities and ensuring that everyone can participate in economic, cultural and social activity contributing to community wellbeing and prosperity.

## About this guide

This guide is a tool to support local dialogue in communities – with older people, decision makers and other key stakeholders – about the importance of 'Age Friendly Places', acting as a catalyst to prompt communities to live and age well.

Age UK's national ambition is for the UK to be 'A great place to grow older', and this guide suggests five themes which local communities will need to address to unlock the potential of their ageing population.

*'Older people are net contributors to the economy and places which take an age friendly approach can benefit from the contribution of older people locally.'*

**Bristol Ageing Better, Big Lottery funded programme to combat loneliness**



## Feeling well

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

### Why does this matter?

Life expectancy continues to rise but, for many, their quality of life in these extra years is not as good as it could be. More of us are likely to live with long-term conditions and may experience loneliness if our community does not support us to maintain meaningful social connections as we age. Councils have a key role to play in enabling communities to find new ways to maintain and manage health and wellbeing to ensure that everyone can feel well and has opportunities to stay socially connected throughout later life.

### Age Friendly Places will:

- Commit to ensuring that all aspects of planning, policy and practice consider the social inclusion of people in later life.
- Support neighbourhood networks which promote social connections and ageing well for a growing diversity of older people, including those otherwise unable to get out and about.
- Enable collaborative solutions and 'community networks' which enable social contact, easy access to information, advice, advocacy, activities and opportunities for participation, health and wellbeing.
- Have respectful and inclusive attitudes towards later life, treating older people as full citizens, creating opportunities for intergenerational contact and mutual support, and fostering positive attitudes to ageing.



### Success story: Leeds Neighbourhood Networks

As well as its broader ageing-well initiative 'The Time of Our Lives', and Leeds Older People's Forum led 'Time to Shine' funded projects, Leeds City Council has developed 37 neighbourhood networks across the city. These are community based, locally led initiatives that enable older people to live independently and proactively participate within their own communities.

Each network operates from a community hub and provides a wide range of services that reduce social isolation, offers opportunities for volunteering, acts as a gateway to information, advice, advocacy and services, promotes health and wellbeing and improves older people's quality of life. Many of the services are largely delivered by volunteers, carers or those managing long-term conditions themselves.



## Active communities

Everyone should be able to be active and participate in their community whatever their age.

### Why does this matter?

Age should not be a barrier to participation in our communities. Older people contribute a massive £61 billion to the economy each year through work, caring and volunteering. However, significant barriers – including ageism, poor transport links, 50+ unemployment, and digital exclusion – prevent many from having a full and independent later life. Access to free and accessible meeting spaces is increasingly limited which threatens opportunities to connect and support others, across the generations, and hinders the growth of initiatives that enable communities to better help themselves.

### Age Friendly Places will:

- Enable people to participate in economic, social and civic activities, ensuring older people are involved in decision making which affects their lives. This supports the wider community by making services easier to access.
- Offer a choice of employment, volunteering and life-long learning opportunities for older people, flexible enough to address disability or caring responsibilities, and enable those who want to work in later life to have an income.
- Have accessible, affordable and integrated transport options, including forms of community transport, to ensure older people can get where they want and need to go.

- Ensure public places and green spaces are accessible for older people, including access to public seating and toilets, and street safety is improved by level pavements, adequate crossing times and street lighting.
- Allow communities places and spaces where diverse people of all ages can meet.
- Ensure easy access to essential services such as post offices, bank branches and community pharmacies, especially for those not able to access these services online.

### Success story: Age Friendly Coventry

Coventry City Council, Age UK Coventry and Coventry University have formed a partnership to create an 'Age Friendly Coventry'. The partnership works closely with Coventry Older Voices (COV), an umbrella of older people's groups and individuals passionate about their city and being heard.

COV has helped to identify three initial priorities to improve later life: 'social participation', 'transport' and 'communication and information'. By co-creating action plans for each area and supporting the partnership, older people in Coventry have been able to put their voices into action for the benefit of everyone in the city, helping the Council improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

Key benefits of this collaborative approach include the opportunity to pool resources and align strands of work across the different organisations for a more strategic and powerful approach.



Older people contribute **£61 billion** to the economy each year.



## Enough money

Everyone should be able to have enough money to live well in later life.

### Why does this matter?

There are 1.6 million older people living in poverty in the UK – 900,000 in severe poverty – and an extra 1 million just above the poverty line. Poverty in later life can lead to increased isolation in our communities, poor health and wellbeing, and can compound a range of inequalities which contribute to reduced life expectancy. Many people face barriers to working longer, with over 50s finding it harder to access employment, training and skills. Planning for later life and accessing support and entitlements at the right stage can help to improve health and wellbeing and ease future growing demand for public services.

### Age Friendly Places will:

- Ensure older people are able to access joined-up information, advice and advocacy, across all sectors and the community.
- Work in partnership across statutory and voluntary sectors and with communities to ensure that everyone who is entitled to extra support actually receives it.
- Work in partnership with banks and other services to provide face-to-face facilities in the community, promote digital inclusion and ensure older people can benefit from online savings.
- Encourage leaders in local businesses and other organisations to employ older workers, making the most of their skills and knowledge.



### Success story: Age UK Camden, Information & Advice

Age UK Camden received an email referral from Camden Council for Mrs P who was living on her own in Council accommodation with several health conditions. Mrs P was unable to travel to Age UK Camden's office, so an advisor met her at one of eight 'Outreach Advice' locations across the borough and carried out an assessment to check what benefits and support she might be entitled to. Mrs P was supported to apply for Attendance Allowance and a severe disability premium.

As a result of the referral from Camden Council and Age UK Camden's intervention, Mrs P was awarded an extra £144.15 per week. The advisor also took the opportunity to discuss and signpost Mrs P to various local activities of interest to her. Mrs P's wellbeing has greatly improved, she can now get help with her shopping and cleaning and has opportunities to socialise with others more frequently. Mrs P says that her dignity has been restored.

This case study illustrates the positive impact on an individual when the local authority and local voluntary sector join up their work.



## 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 in a setting of their choice. At the moment, only 5 per cent of housing in England is accessible to people with restricted mobility. There is a very limited choice of options available for older people who would like to move to more accessible housing.

### Age Friendly Places will:

- Include ageing in their housing and planning strategies, building to lifetime home standards.
- Provide a wide range of accessible and affordable quality housing options for older people to remain independent and connected to their communities.
- Provide ready access to aids, adaptations and assistive technology to help people maintain their independence at home as their needs change.
- Tackle fuel poverty, cold homes and the resulting health impacts by addressing damp, poor housing conditions and energy inefficiency in existing housing stock.
- Consider how housing and neighbourhood strategies can help discharge duties under the *Care Act*, *Equality Act* and *Human Rights Act*.
- Enable partnership working between social services, public health, trading standards, the police, banks, Royal Mail, the voluntary sector and Neighbourhood Watch schemes to prevent older people being scammed and to support people who are victims of scams.



### Success story: Springboard – Cheshire

Springboard is a partnership between Age UK Cheshire and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services (CFRS) that uses advanced data sharing to target home visits to older people by CFRS staff. These act as a gateway to a range of early intervention and support activity.

Springboard delivers around 30,000 ‘smart’ home visits per year. They have a 98 per cent success rate in being invited into homes, due to the trusted brands of partners CFRS and Age UK. At each visit a ‘contact assessment form’ is used, which outlines a range of support options including help with improving home safety, building or improving social networks, healthy lifestyles, advice and information, maximising income and reducing unnecessary expenditure.

Springboard’s work has led to more people receiving help and support at home – using community networks and developing community capacity – and an increase in the number of older people who are involved with their communities.



## Quality health and care

All of us should be able to access quality health and care support as we age.

### Why does this matter?

Everyone should be able to expect high quality health and care services that are tailored to their needs and aspirations. Age should not be a barrier to this. Integrated services which start with the person and treat them holistically, rather than as a set of symptoms or conditions, will not only increase quality of life but can also lighten the pressure on public health and social care services. There is an opportunity to prevent, delay and reduce future demand for health and care services by taking a joined-up, 'place-based' approach.

### Age Friendly Places will:

- Enable integrated care and effective collaboration between different statutory and voluntary agencies, developing 'Home from Hospital' schemes and supporting services from the voluntary sector to prevent re-admission.
- Enable people to manage their long-term conditions and to live independently as long as possible, accessing community and voluntary activities and services, including practical help at home and cultural activities to enhance wellbeing.
- Promote full age equality across Public Health, NHS and care services, ensuring that everyone is cared for according to their health needs and not their age.
- Co-produce Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) and Health and Wellbeing Strategies with the community and involve the voluntary sector in addressing the health and wellbeing needs of later life, including reducing inequalities.



### Success story: Cornwall's 'Living Well' Integrated Care Programme

Developed out of the award-winning Newquay Pathfinder, Cornwall's Living Well Programme supports older people living with long-term conditions and at risk of recurring hospital admissions to build self-confidence and self-reliance.

Using a 'guided conversation', an Age UK worker draws out the goals that the older person identifies as most important to them and creates a care plan bringing together services from across the health, social care and voluntary sectors. Early results demonstrate that wellbeing increases significantly for people participating in the programme and their unplanned admissions into hospital are reduced.

Age UK's model works with older people, their families and carers, Clinical Commissioning Groups, GPs, Acute Trusts, Community Trusts, Local Authorities and Voluntary Organisations.

Working with Age UK, nationally and locally, can help you understand more about the issues impacting older people today and tomorrow, and how Age Friendly Places can help create the inclusive and resilient communities in which we all want to grow older.

For more information, visit [www.ageuk.org.uk/agefriendlyplaces](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/agefriendlyplaces) or contact Age UK's national Helpline (England) on **0800 169 8787**.

## Further reading

- *'Ageing: the silver lining. The opportunities and challenges of an ageing society for local government'*, Local Government Association, 2015.
- *'Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide'*, World Health Organization, 2007.
- *'Ready for Ageing? Report'*, Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change, House of Lords, 2013.

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