

# Becoming an age-friendly community

[ageing-better.org.uk](https://ageing-better.org.uk)



# What is an Age-friendly Community?

**An Age-friendly Community is a place where people are able to live healthy and active later lives.**

The Age-friendly Communities Framework was developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in consultation with older people. It is built on the evidence of what supports healthy and active ageing in a place. Using the framework enables more people to live independent lives, contribute to their communities and participate in the activities they value for longer.

In these communities, older residents are engaged in shaping the place that they live. This involves local groups, councils, businesses and residents all working together to identify and make changes in both the physical and social environment, for example transport, outdoor spaces, volunteering and employment, leisure and community services.

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**An Age-friendly Community enables people of all backgrounds to actively participate and treats everyone with respect, regardless of age.**

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# UK Network of Age-friendly Communities

**The Centre for Ageing Better is working to connect places that share our ambition of more people enjoying a good later life**

Established in 2012, the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities is made up of towns, cities and counties working together to share learning and examples of age-friendly practices.

The UK Network is affiliated to the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities, and has members across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Centre for Ageing Better works with the UK Network to facilitate and give a platform for local areas to discuss what kinds of approaches work, both in the UK and internationally.

Through various channels (such as conferences, workshops and webinars), we share examples and provide guidance, connect places and offer support to member communities in their efforts to become more age-friendly.

# How it works

**Changes across the physical and social environment are key determinants of whether people can remain healthy and independent.**

The Age-friendly Communities Framework includes eight domains, or areas, that places can address to better adapt their structures and services to meet people's needs as they age.

These aspects of community life need to be considered when making local plans.



# The eight age-friendly domains



1. Outdoor spaces and buildings



2. Transportation



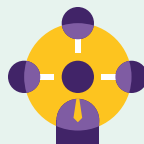
3. Housing



4. Social participation



5. Respect and social inclusion



6. Civic participation & employment



7. Communication and information



8. Community support & health services

# The eight age-friendly domains



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## 1. Outdoor spaces and buildings

The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life of people in later life.

Characteristics of the built environment that contribute to being age-friendly include: access and safety, green spaces, walkable streets, outdoor seating and accessible buildings (with lifts, stairs with railings etc).



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## 2. Transportation

Transportation, including accessible and affordable public transport, is a key issue for people in later life.

People's ability to move about in the community impacts on participation in and access to services. Looking at every aspect of transport infrastructure, equipment and service is integral to creating an Age-friendly Community.



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### 3. Housing

Safe, good-quality homes can maintain or improve physical and mental health, wellbeing and social connections.

It is vital to have housing and support that allow us to age comfortably and safely within the community of people's choosing.



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### 4. Social participation

Social participation is strongly connected to good health and wellbeing throughout life.

It is important to enable people to feel connected and have a sense of belonging, and maintain or establish supportive and caring relationships. Enabling accessibility, particularly for those with mobility issues, is also key.

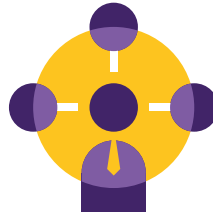
## The eight age-friendly domains



### 5. **Respect and social inclusion**

An Age-friendly Community enables people of all backgrounds to actively participate and treats everyone with respect, regardless of age.

Multigenerational activities are a great way for different generations to learn from one another.



### 6. **Civic participation and employment**

Age-friendly Communities provide options for people in later life to continue to contribute to their communities.

Those options can include paid employment or voluntary work and being engaged in the political process.





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## 7. Communication and information

Staying connected with events and people and getting timely, practical information to meet personal needs is vital for active ageing.

It is important to have relevant information that is accessible to those of us with varying capacities and resources.



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## 8. Community support and health services

Community support is strongly connected to good health and wellbeing throughout life, alongside accessible and affordable health care services.

Both criteria are vital for maintaining health and independence as people age.

# Age-friendly in action

## How the Isle of Wight is improving services for older customers through training

In 2016, Age Friendly Island, led by Age UK Isle of Wight, developed training to help service providers become more age-friendly.

The Isle of Wight's main bus operator, Southern Vectis, incorporated this training into its compulsory programme for all drivers, using an age simulation suit, hearing defenders and vision-impairment glasses to give its drivers an insight into common physical challenges experienced by those in later life.

Since introducing age-friendly training, Southern Vectis has seen a reduction in incidents

involving slips, trips and falls. The company achieved a 96% overall customer satisfaction rate in the Autumn 2017 Bus Passengers Survey, one of the highest rates in the country.

The training, which covers the 'Transportation' and 'Respect and social inclusion' domains, has also led to a range of steps being taken to improve bus services for older customers. Changes to timetables, for example, have enabled drivers to allow more time for passengers to board.

More than 400 bus drivers have now received age-friendly training. Southern Vectis is exploring how they can build on their age-friendly approach to improve transport services for passengers with learning difficulties.



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The training was a humbling experience. I've learned to be a lot more compassionate... and to know to lower the step, to give them a little more time, to help them if they need assistance.

Hannah Cundall, Bus Driver,  
Southern Vectis

# Becoming an Age-friendly Community

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## How long does it take?

Becoming an Age-friendly Community is an ongoing process, with most places starting with an initial five-year commitment, incorporating up to two years to deliver a baseline assessment and action plan. From there, progress is assessed, and the work continues.

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## How much does it cost?

Membership is free. There is no definitive set of costs associated with implementing your action plan to become age-friendly. The scale of improvements is determined by what is needed in your community.

Often no new money is needed for projects – becoming an Age-friendly Community can simply involve using existing resources better.

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## How do I get started?

The leadership in your town, city or county must make a written commitment to actively work towards becoming a great place to grow old in, for all of its residents. This is done with the support and engagement of older people and relevant stakeholders.

## Members of this expanding network enjoy many benefits

- ✓ Be part of a growing movement, giving you access to contacts, ideas and expertise from the UK and across the globe
- ✓ Share your own learning about what works to create the conditions for ageing better with a UK and international audience
- ✓ Gain access to support to build the evidence of your impact and build the case for an age-friendly approach
- ✓ Enjoy peer-to-peer insight to tackle emerging challenges across both the 'how to' and the 'what' of age-friendly
- ✓ Receive practical support, including examples of good practice on how to develop your age-friendly initiative
- ✓ Benefit from guidance and information to help you become a member of the WHO's Global Network
- ✓ Participate in member-only events and training, and gain access to travel bursaries for place-to-place learning exchanges with other Age-friendly Communities

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**Find out more about the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities:**  
w: [ageing-better.org.uk/afc](http://ageing-better.org.uk/afc)  
e: [AFC.Network@ageing-better.org.uk](mailto:AFC.Network@ageing-better.org.uk)

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# We are the Centre for Ageing Better

**The UK's population is undergoing a massive age shift. In less than 20 years, one in four people will be over 65.**

The fact that many of us are living longer is a great achievement. But unless radical action is taken by government, business and others in society, millions of us risk missing out on enjoying those extra years.

At the Centre for Ageing Better we want everyone to enjoy later life. We create change in policy and practice informed by evidence and work with partners across England to improve employment, housing, health and communities.

We are a charitable foundation, funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, and part of the government's What Works Network.

Let's take action today for all our tomorrows.  
**Let's make ageing better.**



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