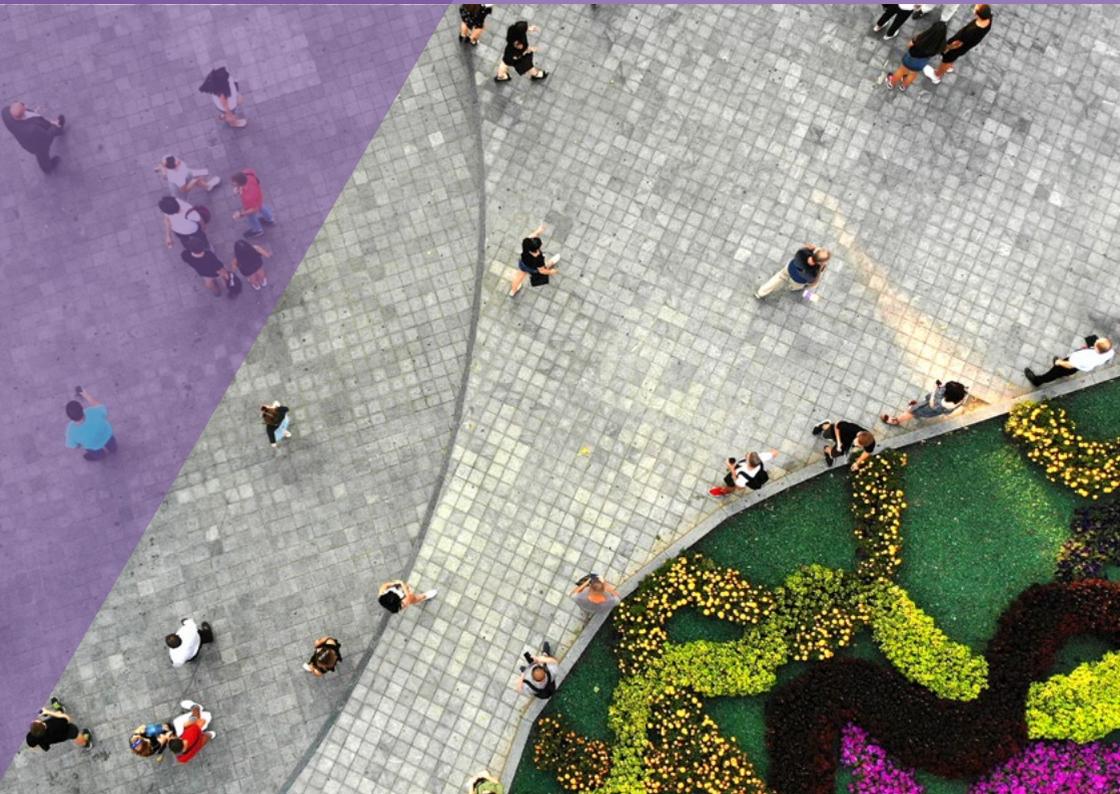


A year in review

Our impact in
2019–2020

ageing-better.org.uk





Our mission at the Centre for Ageing Better is that everyone should enjoy later life. We work across four priority areas – **employment, housing, health, and communities.**

We also work across wider issues that underpin these priorities – including shifting public attitudes to ageing and addressing inequalities in how we age.

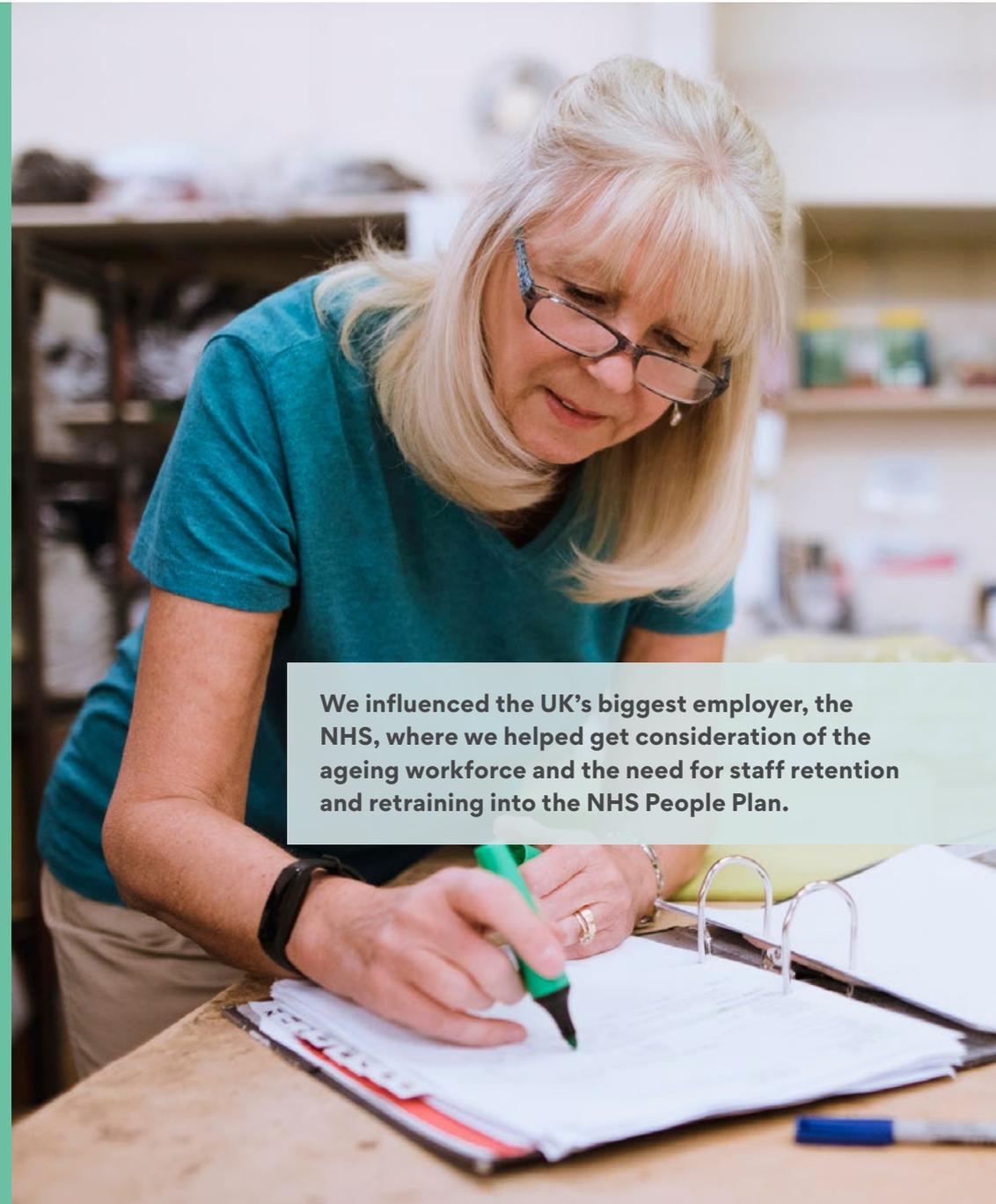
We focus mainly on those approaching later life and those at risk of financial insecurity, poor health or social isolation in later life.

This is a concise report of our activities and impact during 2019-2020.

The last month of the reporting year was dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and this crisis has given an ever-sharper focus to our mission. We show here how we quickly adapted our work and will continue to try and create positive change in what is an uncertain future for people approaching later life.



There are currently around **10.6 million over 50s in work.** That's almost 1/3 of the UK workforce.



We influenced the UK's biggest employer, the NHS, where we helped get consideration of the ageing workforce and the need for staff retention and retraining into the NHS People Plan.

Our goal is 1 million more people aged 50 to 69 in fulfilling work by 2022. We were on track to reach this target before Covid-19 hit, having spread our age-friendly employment message far and wide – including influencing the UK’s biggest employer, the NHS, where we helped get consideration of the ageing workforce and the need for staff retention and retraining into the NHS People Plan.

We also launched an ‘anti-ageism in recruitment’ campaign with a technology recruiter and, in a partnership with The Caterer.com, have supported promotion of age-friendly employment across the hospitality industry.

The economic impacts of COVID-19 unfortunately have the potential to reverse this positive trend by increasing the numbers of people aged 50 and over out of work as a result of redundancy. That’s why our work to understand the evidence for existing employment support programmes and the co-design of new models of employment support in partnership with Greater Manchester Combined Authority and DWP will be vital in shaping the future of employment support for this age group.

But there have also been positives – with many workers given greater flexibility – something that makes a big difference to older workers.

Our work with Timewise to evaluate approaches to flexible working has already influenced the BEIS Flexible Working Taskforce and we hope to see more employers offer greater flexibility to older workers in future.

We are also helping to stimulate and learn from new interventions such as mid-life reviews which are designed to support people from mid-life onwards to plan and prepare for the future. This year we supported the roll out of pre-retirement support by Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust to other NHS organisations following a successful pilot and evaluation.

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When I was working, I saw first-hand the attitude to the older workforce. When I started, older workers were valued, but that all went by the wayside.

(David)



Nine out of ten people aged 65 and over live in ordinary homes, rather than care **homes** or retirement housing.



We lobbied hard during the year for all new housing to be built to higher accessibility standards, and set up a new campaigning coalition.

“

The peace of mind is just worth anything; it's just priceless. To not to have to worry that there is water coming pouring through the ceilings anywhere. To be able to go into the loo and go to the toilet without having to struggle. That's a very very big thing. And having a proper low level shower with anti-slip.

(Rosaline)

We lobbied hard during the year for all new housing to be built to higher accessibility standards, and set up a new campaigning coalition, Housing Made for Everyone (HoME). We gained a government commitment to consult on Part M of the building regulations to make all new homes more accessible by law.

Our work on reform of the private rented sector informed new National Landlords Association guidance, and we influenced the Home of 2030 challenge so that it included an understanding of the needs of people in later life.

Our 'Home truths' report demonstrated the need for understanding the local context and speaking to local communities when developing information and advice services.

This research, developed with local people and housing professionals in Leeds, is directly influencing local provision.

We've responded quickly to COVID-19, and following on from our ground-breaking report showing the extent of non-decent homes in England, we have commissioned work on what lockdown has meant for those older homeowners and tenants who have had to stay inside poor housing.

We'll continue our work to improve housing through the next year and launch an Inquiry with recommendations for local and national government, housing providers and others in the sector to make lasting positive change.



In the UK,
21% of people
aged 50-64 have
one long-term
health condition.



In 2019 we played a significant part in helping to shape the government's health prevention White Paper.

We've gained consensus on what healthy ageing means and how to create it, in partnership with Public Health England. Our consensus statement was signed by over 100 organisations who are committed to acting on its five pillars, including NHS England, Royal Colleges and several government departments, and in 2020-21 we'll work to make sure action is taken across all the areas.

Our evidence review on strength and balance resulted in a bigger focus on this in revised Chief Medical Officer physical activity guidelines for adults.

During COVID-19 we helped turn these guidelines into advice delivered to the door of thousands of shielding and self-isolating older people.

We played a significant part in helping to shape the government's health prevention White Paper last year, and we'll continue to work with colleagues to shape health policy.

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Once this is all over, I'll definitely get into some kind of healthier eating regime, I'd like to think once this is all over I'll carry on as best as I can with the exercise, the walking.

(Alan)



A higher proportion of those aged 65-74 contribute to their **community** at least once a month than any other age group.



Our principles for age-friendly and inclusive volunteering were taken up by voluntary and community organisations in the UK and internationally.

“

It's good for our physical health, the exercise, and the connection with the earth. Growing and eating our own vegetables and fruit can only benefit us and keep us alive for a long time and keep us healthy as well.

(Hilary)

Our local work has gone from strength to strength. We've spread tools and tactics to create age-friendly communities in over 40 local areas with a combined population of 21 million.

We know that transport is key in helping people to remain active and connected in their community.

This year we reported on how the fragmented transport system is leading to barriers in innovation and collaboration. In Leeds, our support has led to a complete remodelling of their community transport system to help more people in later life get around and feel connected to others.

Our principles for age-friendly and inclusive volunteering were taken up by voluntary and community organisations (in the UK and internationally), and we continue to support the five projects we jointly awarded £270,000 along with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to develop and share new approaches to age-friendly and inclusive volunteering.



Other areas of work.

There are currently more people **aged 60 and over** than there are aged 19 and below.



We ramped up our campaigning against ageism, with over 30 local leaders across the UK signed up to a letter committing them to tackling ageism.

We influenced major funders during the year as well. The Industrial Strategy Ageing Grand Challenge, framed by our priorities, began to grant £98 million worth of funds to innovative businesses to stimulate growth in products and services to help society adapt to the age shift.

**| As well as working in these specific sectors,
| we have been vocal in challenging ageism.**

Our insight study ‘Dodderly but dear’ showed how older people are seen as one homogenous, vulnerable group, and how damaging the associated attitudes of pity (and assumptions of incompetence) are to the diverse range of people there are in later life.

We ramped up our campaigning against ageism – on the UN International Day of Older Persons (1 October), over 30 local leaders across the UK signed up to a letter committing them to tackling ageism and talking more positively about later life.

We also used social media to promote the global and growing #AgeProud movement, through which we, and others, championed a more positive and realistic view of ageing.

We took the heat out of the debate on intergenerational conflict, providing balance, with the Lords Committee on Intergenerational Fairness including 10 references to our research.

Our Director of Communications and Influencing, Louise Ansari, launched her book ‘When We’re 64 – your guide to a great later life’. The book, a practical guide to planning and enjoying later life, using our evidence and recommendations, has sold over 4,000 copies to date.

“

I realised that this idea of what old age was like was just not right. The image that’s out there in the public eye was wrong. Nobody was saying hang on a minute, it’s actually a great period of life. You should be looking forward to it, it’s something that’s great that’s going to happen.

(Grandma Williams)



Looking ahead.

A girl born today has a **one in five** chance of living to 100 years old.



We have increased awareness across all these areas.

In 2019-20, we had nearly half a million page views on our website. Our publications were downloaded over 36,000 times. And through the year we also achieved over 2,000 pieces of media coverage.

We'll do more in 2020-21, with the release of research into language about ageing, and we'll carry out a programme of work to reduce stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination on the grounds of age wherever it appears.

Other pieces of work to look forward to in 2020-21 are the results of a major cohort study to understand what life is really like for those aged 50-70, and the State of Ageing in 2020 – a snapshot of what life is like for people aged 65 and older today, and the prospects for people currently in their 50s and 60s.

“

**Employers need to understand
that although we are getting older,
our minds are still very active and
we have so much to offer.**

(Valerie)



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

The Centre for Ageing Better creates change in policy and practice informed by evidence and works with partners across England to improve employment, housing, health and communities. Ageing Better is a charitable foundation, funded by The National Lottery Community Fund.

