



Moving towards an age-friendly UK

Age-friendly Communities
impact report

Executive Summary

February 2025



UK Network of Age-friendly Communities

The UK Network of Age-friendly Communities, overseen by the Centre for Ageing Better, inspires, connects and supports 91 Age-friendly Communities around the UK to improve the lives of older people.

Over 50% of members of the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities were engaged to understand the benefits of the Age-friendly Communities approach, the role of the UK Network in realising these benefits, and the mechanisms that support change.

Quotes provided are from local Age-friendly Coordinators unless otherwise stated.



29 million people

live in Age-friendly Communities in the UK.



91 members

across the UK in January 2025.



Estimated 4,277 partners

are taking action to make their communities more age-friendly across the UK.

What is the Age-friendly Communities approach?

In Age-friendly Communities, a variety of organisations work together with older people to follow the World Health Organisation's (WHO's) Age-friendly Communities framework, taking steps to ensure that everyone can age well, which consists of:

- ▶ **Eight Domains:**
the areas of the built and social environment that require focus to address barriers to ageing well, including transport, housing, social participation and communications.
- ▶ **Four-Step Programme Cycle:**
outlines the steps needed to develop age-friendly policies and practices, from engaging and understanding to evaluating change.

“[The Age-friendly Communities approach means] changing the dynamic, seeing older people as an asset rather than a burden.”
(Torbay's Member of Parliament)

“[Age-friendly is] layered into our structure top-down – age-friendly comes into everything – bin collection, planning.”
(East Lindsey Councillor)



What does the Centre for Ageing Better do to support UK Network members?

The Centre for Ageing Better tackles inequalities in ageing and aims for communities, workplaces and homes to be more inclusive of older people. A key part of this work is growing, supporting and overseeing the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities by:

- ▶ **Facilitating the network:** through weekly virtual peer calls, in-person events, regular newsletters, and connecting communities across the UK.
- ▶ **Upskilling and capacity building:** through a virtual Knowledge Hub, one-to-one support, sharing evidence and research, and providing training.

“Knowing there are so many resources available to us, and so much support, made the decision to join the network very simple indeed.”

(Corsham)



Impacts of Age-friendly Communities

Age-friendly Communities create a multitude of positive impacts for the local systems they represent and the older people that live there.

Impacts for local systems

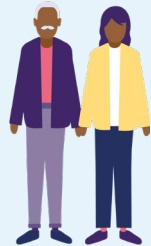
The Age-friendly Communities approach encourages organisations in local areas to work together, changing and adapting their local systems in ways that improve outcomes of older people across a range of areas with five core impacts.

What is the impact?	What does this mean?
Creating partnerships that drive local action and build in efficiencies	Developing and strengthening partnerships to drive action for priority areas, enable efficient use of resources and avoid duplication.
Supporting evidence-informed decision-making	Gathering and considering local context and national learning to allow evidence-based decision-making and prioritisation.
Enabling meaningful co-production in policymaking	Developing strong mechanisms for engagement and co-production to meet the needs of older people.
Changing policies, mindsets and language	Generating understanding of ageing that changes mindsets and language, and encourages integration of ageing in all policies.
Embedding and enabling a preventive way of working	Encouraging activities that directly and indirectly support prevention, in a lifecourse approach.



100% of members reported four or more system-level impacts.

They all believe adopting the Age-friendly Communities approach creates positive change through:



Building new partnerships



Ensuring ageing and older people are considered in local strategies



Ensuring older people's voices are heard by decision-makers



Building awareness and understanding of ageing-related issues

Impacts for older people

The Age-friendly Communities approach creates and supports a wide range of benefits and impacts for older people and their communities, ensuring everyone can age well.

What is the impact?	What does this mean?
Expanding older people's access to and use of local spaces	Making local spaces more accessible and improving independence through access to transport, outdoor spaces and buildings.
Expanding older people's access to support and services	Helping improve design of, and communication around, local services to improve accessibility and better meet older people's needs.
Increasing older people's connections to and inclusion in society	Encouraging activities that improve social participation and inclusion, increasing intergenerational and cross-cultural connections.
Enhancing older people's voice, representation and inclusion in decision-making	Creating mechanisms to enhance representation and inclusion of older people in decision-making to shape public life.
Improving older people's health and wellbeing	Developing opportunities and activities that support the health and wellbeing of older people.



100% of members reported one or more impacts for older people.



91% of members reported older people had “improved inclusion and choice in decisions that affect them and their community”.



93% of members reported “improved social connection and participation in activities” for older people.



90% of members reported “improved health and healthy behaviours, including reduction in falls” for older people.

“It [the Age-friendly Communities approach] is influencing the culture, tone and focus of the system-wide strategic groups in Kirklees. We now have a robust framework to enable co-production, upstream approaches, and whole-system partnership engagement/involvement.”

(Kirklees)

“[Older champions] lead our age-friendly drop-ins which take place in shopping centres, health centres, libraries and supermarkets to engage with the public and spread information about age-friendly Barnet. This has made our project much more people-focused and allowed us to better represent the people we serve.”

(Barnet)

“Our services no longer duplicate support for the residents. This has freed resources for [two] services meaning that community transport provision has been expanded with one service and transport to support social interaction has been expanded in the other.”

(Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole)

“I feel I’m part of the community and able to have a role and worth to society through my volunteering.”

(Diane, an older person in Salford)



What enables impact?

Impact is enabled through the strength of the Age-friendly Communities approach and the work of the UK Network.

Age-friendly Communities approach

The WHO's approach enables Age-friendly Communities to deliver impact.

The Eight Domains encourages partners across different areas of policy and practice to take action and work together (Figure 1).

The Four-Step Programme Cycle structures what communities should do, when and how.

“The benefit of the age-friendly approach is the number of areas [or domains] it covers which supports a system wide approach.”

(Buckinghamshire)

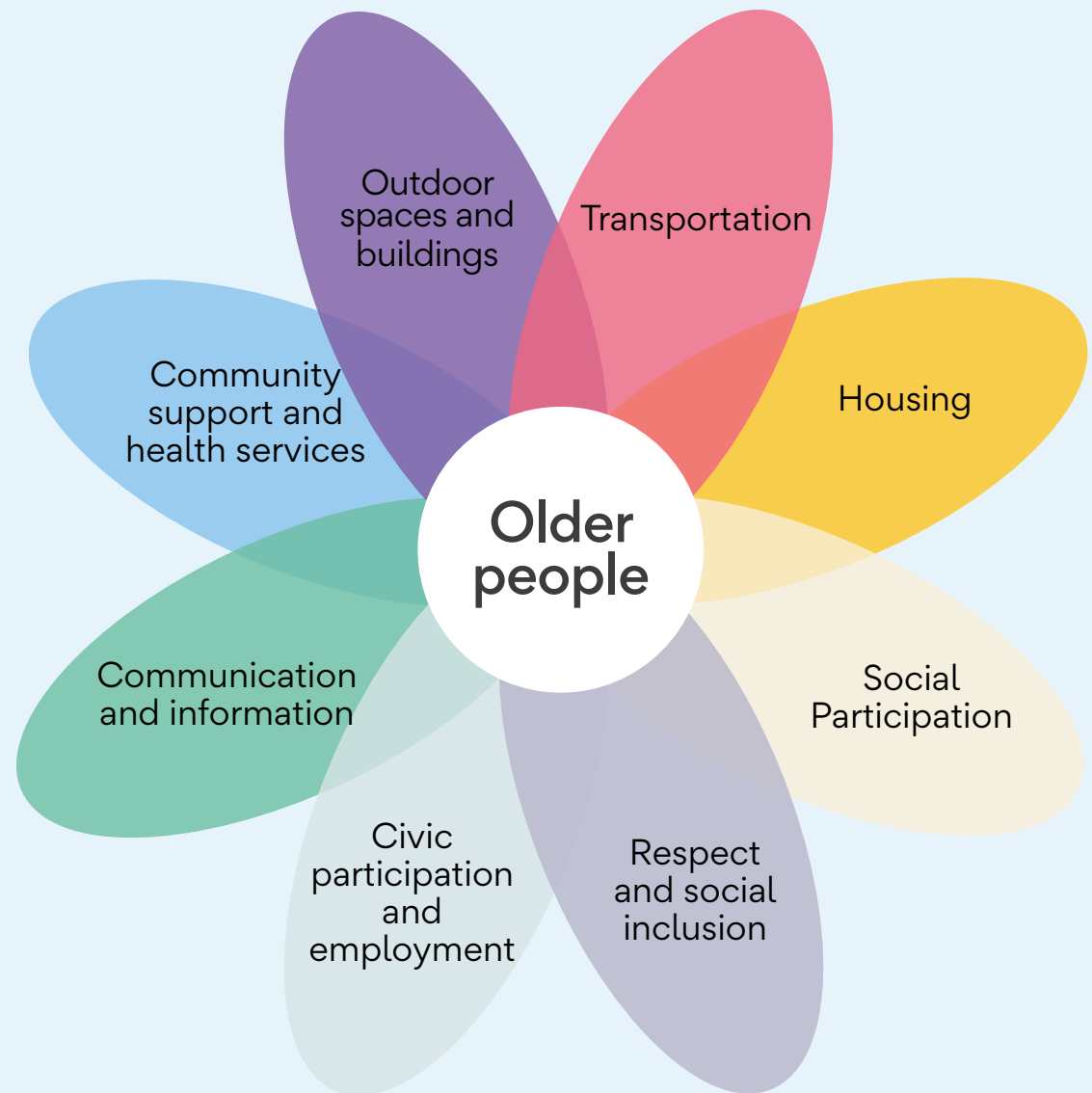
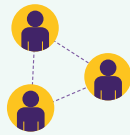


Figure 1: The WHO Eight-Domain Framework

The UK Network

The UK Network is a highly valued network that supports its members to achieve their impacts.

Five elements were identified as central to creating impacts:



1/ Connects people via a network of networks



2/ Helps individuals feel part of something bigger



3/ Builds capacity through a tailored, responsive approach



4/ Boosts engagement and change through high-quality resources



5/ Accelerates impact through shared ideas

“The resources are incredible e.g. ageism. I have used them to inform training and have just sent the pension credit guide to my benefit and revenue colleagues and our older peoples’ council who are planning a campaign.”

(Brighton & Hove)

“There’s always a council in England that has done something similar [...] the benefit of the UK Network is putting them in touch with people who can guide them through their experience.”

(Causeway Coast & Glens)

“The network and sharing of information and contacts is very impressive. The best I’ve experienced in 25 years of public service.”

(Kirklees)

