

What are they?

Age-friendly public and community buildings provide a place for people of all ages to gather, learn, and share. They do not exclude older people from equitably participating in community activities due to inaccessible design. Whether spaces are owned, leased, or rented, age-friendly features can be incorporated into the building.

Why do they matter?

Accessible, inclusive building features enable people to participate in health-promoting, purposeful activities. Existing buildings should be improved where possible, such as through seating or signage, and new buildings should be designed to be entirely age-friendly. Buildings should be chosen to host activities based on whether they provide these features.

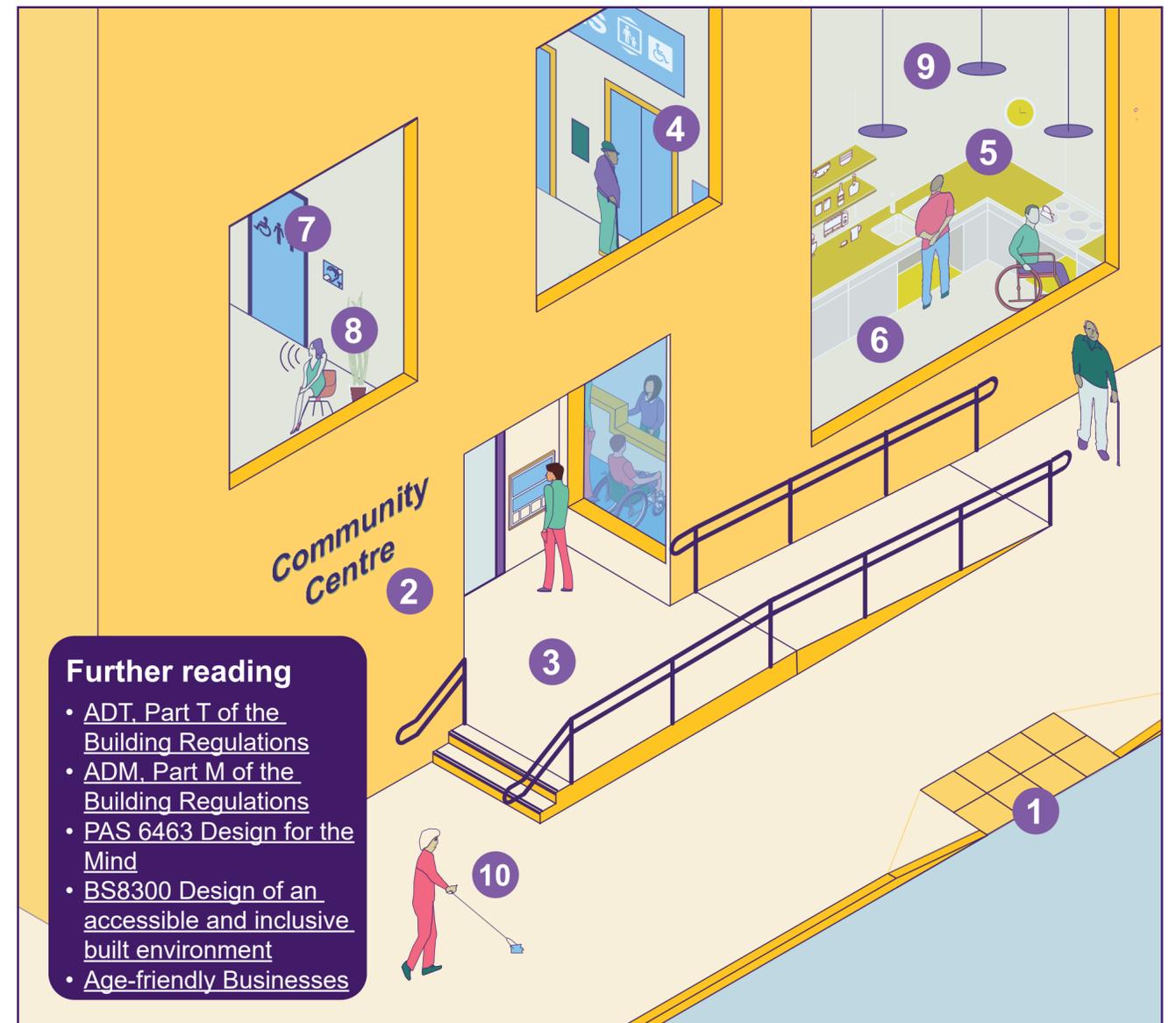
Age-friendly implementation considerations

- Listen to lived experiences** to learn what a diverse range of local residents, including older people, want and need from community and public buildings. Undertake an access audit with older people / intergenerational groups.
- Identify stakeholders** such as relevant council departments (e.g. planning, public health, environment, and community services departments), relevant authorities and local businesses.
- Develop solutions** with residents and stakeholders to ensure public and community buildings are usable for all. Discuss priorities and agree improvements for implementation.

- 1 Approach to the building:** Can you access the building by public transport? Is there ample step-free drop-off space, Blue Badge parking, and inclusive cycle storage? Is access to the building entrance step-free?
- 2 Wayfinding and signage:** Is wayfinding / signage to and within the building clear and intuitive? Does signage point to key destinations such as entrances/exits, toilets, reception areas, or rooms? Is it provided in multiple formats (visual, tactile, audio, large print)? Is information about what is going on and opening hours available and easy to find?
- 3 Entrances and doors:** Are entrances step-free and thresholds level? Are entrance doors at least 1000mm wide and easily openable either with limited force or an automatic door opening device?
- 4 Circulation:** Do routes to and within the building have at least 1800mm clear width to allow people to pass with mobility devices and at least 1200mm clear width for one-way movement? Do stairs have handrails and contrasting edge? Are lifts or ramps provided in addition to stairs? Are rooms with step-free access used for community events/activities so no one is excluded?
- 5 Social use:** Are staff trained to offer a warm welcome and support user needs? Do the building's activities appeal to all ages and enable social connection? Does the building promote what is going on in the community?

- 6 Facility use:** Are a range of seats including arm rests, back rests, and higher seats available? Are tables provided at appropriate heights for the activities? Is space provided around tables/chairs to comfortably navigate with a mobility device? Is the temperature inside comfortable to spend time there? Is drinking water publicly available?
- 7 Toilets:** Are a range of toilet types available, including wheelchair accessible toilets, ambulant accessible toilets, gendered toilet and gender neutral toilet options? Is a Changing Places facility available? If only one toilet is available, ensure it is a unisex accessible toilet with step-free access.
- 8 Acoustics:** Do the acoustics allow people to hear each other without strain? Are soft materials such as curtains used to improve the acoustics where possible? Are hearing enhancement systems (e.g. hearing loops) available in the building, or are alternatives like personal devices supported?
- 9 Lighting/finishes:** Is the lighting even and consistent so people can see the space and tasks they may perform? Are reflective finishes and highly-repetitive patterns avoided so people are not disoriented?
- 10 Maintenance:** Are management and maintenance plans in place to ensure the building is kept clean, lighting is working, and toilets, bins, and facilities are maintained so they are trusted and reliable? Are any trip hazards removed?

Age-friendly public / community buildings: top 10 design considerations



- Further reading**
- [ADT, Part T of the Building Regulations](#)
 - [ADM, Part M of the Building Regulations](#)
 - [PAS 6463 Design for the Mind](#)
 - [BS8300 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment](#)
 - [Age-friendly Businesses](#)

Public / Community Buildings

No.	Design considerations	Y/N	Issues and actions notes
1 Approach to the building			
1.1	Is the building accessible by public transport?		
1.2	Is step-free drop-off, Blue Badge parking, and inclusive cycle storage provided?		
1.3	Is access to the building step-free?		
2 Wayfinding and signage (see specific Quick Guide for more info)			
2.1	Is wayfinding / signage to and within the building clear and intuitive?		
2.2	Does signage point to key destinations?		
2.3	Is it provided in multiple formats (visual, tactile, audio, large print)?		
2.4	Is information about what is going on and opening hours available and easy to find?		
3 Entrances and doors			
3.1	Are door thresholds level and step-free?		
3.2	Are entrance doors at least 1000mm wide and easily openable with limited force or an automatic door opening device?		
4 Circulation			
4.1	Do routes to and within the building have at least 1800mm clear width to allow people to pass and at least 1200mm clear width for one-way movement?		
4.2	Do stairs have handrails and contrasting edges?		
4.3	Are lifts or ramps provided next to stairs?		
4.4	Are rooms with step-free access used for community events/activities?		
5 Social use			
5.1	Are staff trained to offer a warm welcome and support user needs?		
5.2	Do the building's activities appeal to all ages and enable social connection? Does the building promote what is going on in the community?		

No.	Design considerations	Y/N	Issues and actions notes
6 Facility use			
6.1	Are a range of seats including arm rests, back rests, and higher seats available?		
6.2	Are tables provided at appropriate heights for the activities?		
6.3	Is space provided around tables/chairs to navigate with a mobility device?		
6.4	Is the temperature inside comfortable to spend time there?		
6.5	Is drinking water publicly available?		
7 Toilets			
7.1	Are a range of toilet types available, (wheelchair accessible, ambulant accessible, gendered, gender neutral)?		
7.2	Is a Changing Places facility available?		
7.3	If only one toilet is available, is it a unisex accessible toilet with step-free access?		
8 Acoustics			
8.1	Do the acoustics allow people to hear each other without strain?		
8.2	Are soft materials such as curtains used to improve the acoustics where possible?		
8.3	Are hearing enhancement systems (e.g. hearing loops) available in the building, or are alternatives supported?		
9 Lighting and finishes			
9.1	Is the lighting even and consistent so people can see the space and task?		
9.2	Are reflective finishes and highly-repetitive patterns avoided?		
10 Maintenance and care			
10.1	Are management / maintenance plans in place to ensure the building is kept clean, lighting is working, trip hazards removed, and toilets/bins/facilities maintained so they are trusted and reliable?		