

What are they?

Age-friendly streets and pavements are barrier free, easy to navigate, and offer active travel, such as walking and cycling, for all ages. Age-friendly streets and pavements enable older people to participate meaningfully in society, have greater confidence in their journey, and a greater sense of belonging to a community that considers their requirements.

Why do they matter?

An inaccessible and unwelcoming environment puts people at greater risk of injury or feeling unsafe or isolated. Under the Highways Act 1980, local authorities have a duty to ensure streets and pavements are safe and usable. Age-friendly streets and pavements help to fulfill this duty while promoting health and social connection along the way.

Age-friendly implementation considerations

- Listen to lived experiences** to learn what a diverse range of local residents, including older people, want and need from streets and pavements. 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 Ground surfaces:** Surfaces should be free from trip hazards. Are ground surfaces firm, even, step-free and slip-resistant for safe and comfortable wheeling and walking?
- 2 Width of pavement:** Pavements should be wide enough for people to pass with mobility devices, shopping, luggage, prams, etc. Is the walking width at least 1.8m? Can people comfortably pass each other?
- 3 Clear pavement:** The pavement walking width should be clear from obstructions such as signs, A boards, bins, trees, planters, bus stops, leaves, overhanging vegetation, tree roots, cracks, etc. Permanent or temporary objects on the pavement should not obstruct people walking/wheeling. Is the pavement clear from obstructions and hazards?
- 4 Crossings:** Step-free crossings should be provided at key crossing points, and busy roads should have controlled crossings. Is a zebra crossing located where most people cross the street? Is there a dropped kerb with a gentle slope or raised table crossing to provide a step-free route? Is there tactile paving to inform blind or partially sighted people of the crossing?
- 5 Lighting:** Lighting should allow visibility and make people feel safer. Lighting that creates high contrast should be avoided, as it can make it harder to perceive the space and people. Is there consistent, even lighting illuminating the street and people without pooling and/or creating glare?

- 6 Safety/perceptions of safety:** Safety features should be in place to reduce risk to pedestrians from other road users. Is there clearly marked separation between cars/cyclists, and pedestrians? Is there a kerb or tactile paving to communicate to blind or partially sighted people where the road is?
- 7 Wayfinding and signage:** Wayfinding and signage should be intuitive and point people to key destinations such as toilets, bus stops / transport hubs, parks, hospitals, and community centres. Is clear and adequate wayfinding and signage provided along the street and pavement?
- 8 Rest areas:** Seating should be provided regularly along people's journey and be enriched by handrails or features people can safely lean on for support. Are benches, spaces to perch, dwell, rest and/or socialise provided every 50m where practicable?
- 9 Weather protection:** Weather protection should be provided at regular intervals throughout the street so people can be protected from the elements. Is there adequate shading and rain cover to be able to enjoy areas of the street rain or shine?
- 10 Maintenance:** This is key to ensuring streets and pavements remain age-friendly. Are management and maintenance plans in place to ensure the pavement is kept even and clear, lighting is working and not flickering, and call points / phone booths are working so they are trusted and reliable?

Age-friendly streets and pavements: top 10 design considerations



Further reading

- [Age UK Isle of Wight Pavements for People](#)
- [Care and Repair Age-friendly Street Design](#)
- [Centre for Ageing Better Walking Audit Case Study](#)
- [Healthy Streets](#)
- [l'DGO Design of Streets](#)
- [PAS 6463 Design for the Mind](#)
- [BS8300 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment](#)

Streets and Pavements

No.	Design considerations	Y/N	Issues and actions notes
1 Ground surfaces			
1.1	Are ground surfaces free of trip hazards?		
1.2	Are ground surfaces firm?		
1.3	Are ground surfaces even?		
1.4	Are ground surfaces step-free?		
1.5	Are ground surfaces slip-resistant?		
1.6	Does anything else impede safe and comfortable wheeling/walking?		
2 Width of pavement			
2.1	Is the walking clear width at least 1.8m?		
2.2	Can people with mobility devices, shopping, luggage, prams, etc. comfortably pass each other?		
3 Clear pavement			
3.1	Is the pavement clear from permanent and temporary obstructions and hazards such as signs, A boards, bins, trees, planters, bus stops, leaves, overhanging vegetation, tree roots, cracks, etc.?		
4 Crossings			
4.1	Is a step-free zebra crossing located where most people cross the street?		
4.2	Is there a dropped kerb with a gentle slope or raised table crossing?		
4.3	Is there tactile paving to inform blind or partially sighted people of the crossing?		
4.4	Are crossings at busy roads controlled crossings?		
5 Lighting			
5.1	Is there consistent, even lighting illuminating the street and people without pooling and/or creating glare?		
5.2	Is lighting that creates high contrast avoided, as it can make it harder to perceive the space and people?		

No.	Design considerations	Y/N	Issues and actions notes
6 Safety/perceptions of safety			
6.1	Is there clearly marked separation between cars/cyclists and pedestrians to reduce risk to pedestrians from other road users?		
6.2	Is there a kerb or tactile paving to communicate to blind or partially sighted people where the road is?		
6.3	Does anything else related to streets and pavements reduce different people's perception of safety?		
7 Wayfinding and signage (see specific Quick Guide for more info)			
7.1	Is clear and adequate wayfinding and signage provided along the street and pavement to point people to key destinations such as toilets, bus stops / transport hubs, parks, hospitals, and community centres?		
8 Rest areas (see specific Quick Guide for more info)			
8.1	Are benches and/or spaces to perch, dwell, rest and/or socialise provided every 50m where practicable?		
8.2	Are there handrails and/or other support features along common routes?		
9 Weather protection			
9.1	Is there adequate shading and rain cover to be able to enjoy areas of the street rain or shine?		
10 Maintenance			
10.1	Are management and maintenance plans in place to ensure the pavement is kept even and clear, lighting is working and not flickering, and call points / phone booths are working so they are trusted and reliable?		
10.2	Is there anything else related to streets and pavements that needs to be added to the management and maintenance plan?		