

Action today for all our tomorrows

Centre for Ageing
Better Strategy
2026-31



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The Centre for Ageing Better Strategy 2026 - 2031

Since we were set up in 2015, we have created an irrefutable case for action to help our society age better. Our evidence has led a debate on ageing that has influenced national and local government, shifted public attitudes and changed employment practices.

But our work is far from done. The age profile of our population is shifting rapidly, with falling birth rates and many more people living into their 70s, 80s and beyond. Despite stereotypes about privileged baby boomers, both poor health and poverty are increasing in later life. For millions of people, the experience of getting older is increasingly challenging and desperate.

We need to build on the significant momentum and evidence we have generated about what needs to change. We need to get louder, and to work with more partners to increase our reach and impact.

We must accelerate the scope, scale and impact of our age-friendly movement and communities. This means building partnerships with funders who share our vision and our desire for real progress.

Now's the time

As we face an unprecedented demographic shift, the whole country will gain from action that helps people age better. The individuals currently struggling in later life, future generations worrying about their own prospects for old age, our straining health and care systems, our communities, our employers and the economy will all benefit. We need action today across society to secure better futures for everyone. We know we are up against many competing priorities and distractions. We need to push harder to get this issue to the top of the list for investment and the commitment to act.

How we deliver change

We drive change in three ways:

- We change policy and practice, nationally and locally.
- We change the places we live and work in, working with and through local authorities and communities.
- We change attitudes, culture and behaviours – among the public, professionals, and across industries.

All our work is supported by a network of ‘experts by experience’, ensuring the voices and perspectives of older people are at the heart of what we do.

Why we exist

Our vision is:

A society in which everyone can live a good later life.

Our mission is:

To address the challenges and realise the opportunities of our ageing population.

To identify, develop and encourage the adoption of age-friendly policy and practice.



Somebody needs to raise the case for older people. To speak for older people. But base it on credible research, which is what Ageing Better does. You're not just saying what you'd like to happen, it's based on knowledge and understanding and the voice for older people. Who else does that?"

Val, Ageing Better Expert by Experience



Using robust evidence, we will take a preventative, forward-looking approach. We will focus our work on people who are currently approaching later life so that we can:

- Identify exactly what can be done to ensure people aged 50+ are able to age well.
- Advocate for those at risk of missing out on a good later life due to ageism, inequality and disadvantage experienced and accumulated throughout their life.
- Ensure that future generations will benefit from the change we bring about as they grow older.

Creating a new centre of excellence on ageing



It's such a relief to know there is a trustworthy organisation that takes an evidence-based approach to tackling ageism and campaigning to improve the lives of older people. The change can't come soon enough.

Helen, Ageing Better
Expert by Experience

We already provide strong national leadership on ageing. We are going to build on that expertise by establishing ourselves as a centre of excellence on ageing to drive change. The country has a falling birth rate and a rapidly shifting age profile. Life expectancy is stalling, and older people are spending more years in poor health. The country has a choice.

Will our growing older population be financially secure, in good health, living fulfilled lives and able to take

part in society? Or will we be increasingly living our later lives in poor health, struggling financially and excluded from society?

As a centre of excellence on ageing, we will be a go-to resource for evidence, data and expert analysis to help decision makers at a national and local level.

By 2031 we will:

- Extend the scope of our seminal State of Ageing report, which provides the basis for extensive research and development of practice around England, helping us and others to make a stronger case for action on ageing.
- Spearhead the UK's first comprehensive 'Ageing Well' strategy to ensure that the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population are being addressed by government and society.
- Offer Ageing Better as a host organisation for groups and networks conducting research and policy development.
- Help others working to make ageing better to evaluate their practice and enable them to share data that will help to influence national and local decision making.

How we deliver change

As well as being a centre of excellence on ageing, we have chosen to work more intensively in three areas where we have accrued deep expertise and knowledge and where we can make the biggest difference:

- 1. Ensuring fair access to decent work in our 50s and 60s.*
- 2. Developing age-friendly homes and communities.*
- 3. Tackling ageism and the impact of other forms of discrimination in later life.*



Fair access to decent work in our 50s and 60s

To support us all to build more financially secure lives

What's at stake?

Work and retirement are radically changing for older people. The State Pension age continues to rise and more and more of us are working into our 60s and beyond. But increasing numbers of older people are in poverty in the run up to state pension age and beyond. Many find it hard to work as they get older because of factors including ageism, ineffective employment support and/or a lack of flexible job options that would allow them to work alongside health, caring or other responsibilities.



I was going through ageism. People were being ageist. I wanted to be part of a movement. How can you make sure that there is dignity for older people, that we are not rubbish, you know? We don't want to be put in a little square box, or a round box, or whatever box it may be .

Stella, Ageing Better Expert by Experience

The State Pension age is rising. Individuals want and need to work as they get older to ensure they can be financially secure in retirement. The government wants to help more people secure good employment and increase prosperity. To make that possible, we must tackle the barriers shutting older workers out of the labour market and create fair access to decent jobs for over 50s.

By 2031 we will:

- Create change for older workers across the country's workplaces by growing our network of Age-Friendly Employers – forward-thinking businesses that value and support their older workforce.
- Increase awareness of the opportunities of our older workforce, getting business leaders to publicly champion the issue and sharing evidence of the benefits of over 50s for business and the economy.
- Help to reform employment support so that it works effectively for older age groups.
- Persuade the government to create specific targets to increase 50+ employment - and for increasing the performance of its services for this age group.
- Secure a commitment from government to carry out new activity that supports longer working lives - up to 67 and beyond - in the next review of the State Pension age.
- Drive action to reduce the number of people experiencing poverty in the years before State Pension age (60-67). We will work to ensure groups most at risk of poverty aren't overlooked by policy makers, and advise on ways to increase financial security, such as benefits changes.



Developing age-friendly homes and communities

Where we can live longer, healthier lives and keep doing the things that matter to us most

What's at stake?

Our homes and communities are crucial in helping us to live healthy, independent and sociable lives - which in turn reduces pressure on over-stretched health and care systems. But, despite our ageing population, nearly all of our homes and most of our communities have not been built or developed with ageing in mind.

Government action on clean energy, the building of 1.5 million new homes, and the devolving of more powers to local areas offer a real chance to radically change this.

By 2031 we will:

- Create more great places in which to grow older through expanding the network of Age-friendly Communities and supporting the uptake of age-friendly approaches nationwide.

- Influence government and housebuilders to provide more new homes that are suitable, affordable, and accessible to older people.
- Ensure there are national and local government strategies to improve the quality of existing homes so that they no longer pose a hazard to older people's health and safety.
- Help local authorities use evidence about how their residents are ageing to inform their services, strategies and decisions.
- Test out more effective ways of improving homes and communities for older people and share them widely, so that others across the country can benefit.





Tackling ageism and the impact of other forms of discrimination in later life

Which leave millions facing a more difficult future

What's at stake?

Ageism is everywhere, it's malignant and it affects all of us - it's in our workplaces, our healthcare systems, our culture, the design of our homes and communities. One in three people report experiencing age prejudice or age discrimination. It disproportionately impacts Disabled people, those struggling financially and people from racially marginalised backgrounds, all of whom are the most likely to be experiencing the poorest outcomes as they age.



Just because you are older, or you are a different colour, or you are blind, or you are in a wheelchair doesn't mean you are not a human being. You have the same needs as everybody else.

Asmina, Ageing Better Expert by Experience

There are huge divides in our experiences of ageing. The negative impacts of discrimination and structural inequity accumulate throughout people's lives, meaning that gaps in wealth and health are greatest in older age. Ageism can also magnify and create new forms of disadvantage for marginalised communities.

By 2031 we will:

- Convince the UK government to appoint a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing.
- Through our Age Without Limits anti-ageism campaign, tackle ageism in key sectors and services where it creates a barrier to access or perpetuates stereotypes, for example, healthcare and the creative industries.
- Build a strong movement to confront and address the discrimination and structural inequality that leaves older people from marginalised communities with worse prospects for later life.
- Increase the scale, scope and quality of national data collected about age and ageing so we – and others – can better understand people's experience of ageing across different characteristics.

Realising our ambitions

We can't realise these ambitions on our own, we need more partners and funders who share our vision for a country in which we can all age well.

Our National Lottery endowment will wind down completely from 2026, so we are working to replace it with new funding from commissioned work, matched partnership funding, grants and donations. This is essential to ensure our work can continue and generate long-term impact and change.

This strategy sets our ambitions to create change over the next five years. We will regularly assess our impact and progress and make changes to our plans accordingly. With an assured future we will be able to deliver everything in this strategy and extend our ambitions with crucial longer-term projects. This would include the implementation of an Ageing Well Strategy for England and further development of the Age-Friendly Employer Pledge. We want to be well placed to influence the manifestos in the next general election and to engage with new local and central governments on tackling the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population.

This is an opportunity to shape a better future for millions of people across all generations. We hope you will join us.



There isn't anything else out there that has got such a progressive, positive vibe about it... it's about how can we deal with everyone's going to age, so how would we want to age? There isn't anything else out there that asks these questions.

Claudette, Ageing Better
Expert By experience

About us

What is the Centre for Ageing Better?

The Centre for Ageing Better exists to tackle the growing inequalities in people's experiences of ageing.

We were set up as a charity using funding from the National Lottery in 2015 after a House of Lords report found the UK was “woefully unprepared” for an ageing population.

An independent centre of excellence on ageing, we generate high-quality research and evidence and test out solutions, so we know they work. Our work is supported by network of experts by experience, ensuring the voices and perspectives of older people are at the heart of what we do. We work independently, with partners and through networks and coalitions.

We change policy and practice, developing local services like Good Home Hubs to repair houses that are damaging older people's health, and shaping national employment programmes to more effectively help over 50s back into work.

We change the places we live and work in, working with and through local authorities and other influential organisations. This includes 100+ areas signed up to be Age-friendly Communities, working to help their residents to age well.

We change attitudes, culture and behaviours through our resources and campaigns such as our Age-friendly Employer Pledge and the Age Without Limits campaign to challenge ageism.



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

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The Centre for Ageing Better is an independent centre of excellence on ageing and demographic change. We work with national and local government, industries, businesses and community organisations to improve how people experience ageing.

Our work focuses on creating better workplaces, homes and communities, while tackling ageism and addressing inequality in later life