

Ten ways we've made ageing better

Impact report

ageing-better.org.uk

2016-2026:
A decade of change



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About the Centre for Ageing Better

The Centre for Ageing Better is an independent centre of excellence for 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.

Over ten years since our inception, we have helped shift ageing from a marginal issue to a mainstream policy, economic and cultural priority. In the years ahead, we will continue to develop policy and practice that responds to our ageing population while building the knowledge and networks required to secure and sustain long-term change.



Ten years of ageing better

A message from our Chair,
Professor Dame Carol
Black, and Chief Executive,
Dr Carole Easton



In 2012, a report from the House of Lords concluded that as a nation we were ‘woefully underprepared’ for our ageing population. It warned of huge consequences for individuals and communities, our health and care systems and for our workforce and economy, if society failed to address the shifting demographics of the nation. Action was needed.

In 2015 the Centre for Ageing Better was established as a What Works Centre, backed with National Lottery funding.

In ten years, we have responded to that report by creating an irrefutable case for action on ageing and initiating change. We have delved into almost every aspect of ageing, setting out the challenges as well as the opportunities for growth and enrichment from increasing longevity.

Our evidence has generated debates on ageing, influenced national and local government, shaped public attitudes and changed employment practices. We have attracted many supporters, partners and advocates who have helped us to ‘shift the dial’ on ageing across different parts of society. We set out some of the things we, with our partners, have achieved in this report.

But our work is far from finished. Today, we find ourselves in a more challenging fiscal and policy context than ever before. People are living longer overall but often spend a greater proportion of their lives in poor health. The experience of ageing in this country is becoming more financially precarious and desperate for increasing numbers of people.

This is not just a problem for today’s older people; millions across the younger generations are on course to have a difficult older age. At the Centre for Ageing Better, we will spend the years ahead continuing to make ageing, and the changing age profile of our nation, a priority for investment and action.

The ways our country is ageing

The country is getting older

In ten years time, **30 million people in England will be aged 50 and over** – up from 22 million today.

The number of older individuals is rising as a share of the population

It is projected that **26% of the population** will be aged 65 and over by 2065, up from 19% today.

There are significant inequalities in the health of our older population

There is a 20-year gap in healthy life expectancy between the **richest and poorest** areas.

People are spending an ever greater proportion of their lives in poor health

Healthy life expectancy – years spent in good health – is continuing to **decline** in England and for the poorest men has fallen below the age of 50 for the first time.

Pensioner poverty is increasing

In 2022/23, there were **2.8 million pensioners living below the Minimum Income Standard**. Almost one in ten pensioners in England are in material deprivation, which means they don’t have enough money or resources to afford the basic things they need to live comfortably.

Our country’s homes are not fit for our older population

2.3 million people aged 55 and over live in cold, damp, and unsafe homes, and only one in ten homes in England are suitable for older or disabled people to visit, never mind live in.

People are leaving the workforce prematurely

More than half of people have left employment by the year before they reach state pension age. And nearly **a million people in their 50s and 60s** want to work but are unable to due to poor health, ageism, lack of opportunity and lack of support.

Ageism limits lives and opportunities

One of the most pervasive and overlooked forms of discrimination, ageism affects workplaces, health, communities and livelihoods. At least **a third of people admit to holding ageist beliefs**, and **two-thirds of people have experienced negative treatment** due to their age since turning 50.

Our older population is becoming increasingly diverse.

As diverse cohorts of younger people age, our **older population will become increasingly diverse** in terms of ethnicity and sexual orientation

How we work to drive change

At the Centre for Ageing Better, we undertake a wide range of research – but we are much more than a think tank. We are focused on turning evidence into action – developing responses and solutions to address the opportunities and challenges of our ageing population.

We test our ideas out in real settings – with communities, professionals and with older people – so we can share with policy makers and practitioners the actions that will make a difference.

How we approach each issue and each project is unique – some of our work taps into an immediate need, policy inquiry or debate. Other projects build understanding and capabilities across networks or areas of society, to create a change in culture, practice and systems over time.

We develop targeted networks of professionals and experts so we can quickly gather feedback and share ‘what works’ as we go.

Throughout our work, the hallmarks of our approach are consistent: high-quality research and the involvement of older people with personal experience of the issues we are working on.

Areas we offer expertise on include:

- Longer working lives
 - Demographic trends
 - Age-friendly Communities
 - Age-friendly homes
- Inequalities in ageing
 - Healthy ageing
 - Digital inclusion
 - Ageism
 - Place-based approaches



1

Increasing support for older jobseekers

Almost one million people in their 50s and 60s want to work but can't. Our evidence-based training, toolkits, and guidance were developed with Department for Work and Pensions frontline staff and are used to help over 50s back into work. Our work with Disabled older workers and jobseekers shaped a major government review of support launched in 2025. And our Support to Succeed programme with Greater Manchester Combined Authority has helped more than 2,000 unemployed over-50s to build their skills, confidence and employability.

“I really want to be part of this campaign against ageism. I want to let everyone know that we're not past it. I'm over 60 and I go to the gym, I love dancing, I love clothes, I love make-up. But we have this stereotype that older people, over 60 or 50 even, they have no position in society. Better representation for us over-60s is needed. I want to feel that I'm a person and not stereotyped as an old person who is not capable of much.”

Colleen, an Age Without Limits supporter

2

Establishing a network of 100+ communities that help their residents to age well

More than 100 local authority-led partnerships are now working across the UK with our support to improve the quality of life of older people in their communities. Following a proven global model established by the World Health Organisation, the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities includes close to 5,000 partners and reaches more than ten million older people nationwide.



3

Making the country's homes more accessible

Currently, one in ten homes are accessible for older people with impairments. Following our campaign, the government announced plans to make at least 40% of new homes accessible. This means hundreds of thousands of homes now being built with a toilet at entrance level, wide doorways, wheelchair circulation space, level access to the front door and a flush threshold with no trip hazards. In 2018, we influenced a review of government funding to include an extra £55 million for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) each year – an essential source of funding for home aids and adaptations for older people – and secured a further 8% extra funding the following year. We continue to campaign to ensure the DFG is in line with the rising costs of home repairs and improvements.



4

Improving the quality of homes across the country

2.3 million people aged 55 and over live in cold, damp, and unsafe homes. In response we developed the idea of a Good Home Hub – a one-stop-shop for people to get simple advice and support in their communities on making their homes warm and safe. Following several years of development and piloting the concept in Lincolnshire (see case study on page 11), the government recently announced it would begin to accredit places and organisations delivering Good Home Hubs in local communities. This will improve the quality and range of help on offer from home improvement services across the country.

“We've been able to put in place different initiatives to strengthen our culture, offer excellent targeted health support and enhance our flexible working options. As a business, we're really passionate about helping people achieve a better later life, and this includes becoming a place where our older workers can thrive – the Age-friendly Employer Pledge is helping us to do that.”

A member of Ageing Better's Age-friendly Employer Pledge

5

Helping UK employers to retain and attract older workers

Keeping people in work as they get older is crucial to the country's economic growth, to employers' productivity and to individuals' financial security. **More than 600 employers**, including national brands and household names, have **pledged to support their older workforce under our programme**. The Age-friendly Employer Pledge brings together many years of research and offers practical tools on elements like interviews, training, flexible working guidance, and workplace culture. Some **60% of pledged employers** report tangible differences in the recruitment and retention of older workers because of their membership.

6

Delivering the country's first campaign to change public attitudes to ageing

At least a third of the public hold ageist beliefs and two thirds of over-50s report negative treatment because of their age. We launched the country's first anti-ageism campaign, and the first campaign of its kind to measure the impact of behaviour-change campaigns on both people's attitudes to ageing and experiences of ageism. A third of adults – around 12 million people – recognised the campaign in our follow up market research, and **87% of those said they had taken action to challenge ageism** as a result. Some **10,000 people took part in community events** across the country to celebrate our Age Without Limits action day in 2025, designed to support community action on ageism.

7

Creating the first ever image library for positive ageing

Photos from our age-friendly image library aim to counteract stereotypes by depicting older people and ageing in a positive, realistic way. They've been **viewed more than 115 million times** since the library launched and **downloaded more than 500,000 times**. The images are widely used by media, government, charities, universities and commercial organisations and our partnerships with global stock image libraries Pexels and Unsplash have helped us to take our images to a global audience.



“

Subscribing to the age-positive image library has been a gamechanger. An impressively wide range of high-quality images depicting people of all ages, gender and ethnicities in a variety of situations being at work, at home, exercising, etc. Older people are often depicted as frail, but this library challenges this notion.”

Image library user

8

Changing the representation of older people in the mass media

Our evidence and advocacy led the Advertising Standards Authority to conduct a widescale study with the public on the harmful representation of older people in advertising and to produce new guidance for advertisers promoting fair and respectful representation. **Ageing Better's best practice guidelines for reporting on 'age' were also added to the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) Editor's Codebook**, and we have begun to work with journalism training bodies including the University of Sheffield's journalism school which has added ageism to its ethics module.

9

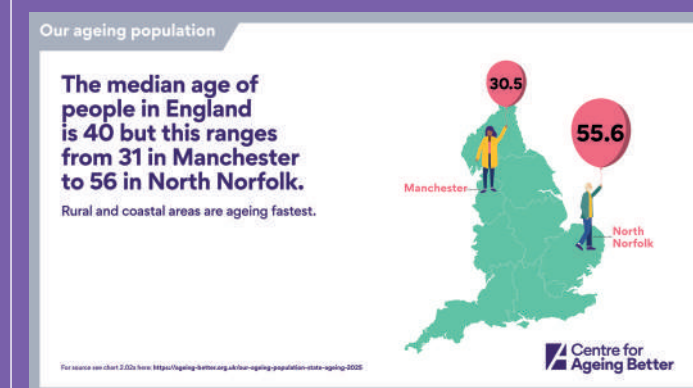
Developing Mid-life MOTs

We made significant contributions to John Cridland's 2017 independent review of the State Pension age, which led to the recommendation of a Mid-life MOT – a holistic check-up covering health, skills and finances to help people in their 40s and 50s plan for longer lives. We then led a group of government representatives, policy makers, practitioners, researchers, employers and service providers to begin to develop the Mid-life MOT concept and supported a pilot of the scheme by four organisations – Aviva, Legal & General, the Pensions Advisory Service and Mercer. **Our report, Developing the Mid-life MOT, was the first resource to offer recommendations and guidance on content to help organisations implement their own Mid-life MOTs**. We are now working with a group of nine employers to develop an employer Mid-life review toolkit.

10

Making detailed ageing data accessible to all

Our seminal State of Ageing report, the first report of its kind to give an in-depth, high-quality summary of how people in the country are ageing. It covers everything from demographic and health data to finance, housing and employment trends. Launched first in 2018, the five editions have been **downloaded over 14,000 times** and are **regularly cited by government, parliamentarians, media, academics, businesses and community organisations**. The report has also helped us to improve the use of data at a local level, with local authorities across the country using our approach to better understand ageing in their communities, and prioritise their work.



Developing Good Home Hubs

The problem:

2.3 million older people are living in damp, cold and hazardous conditions and thousands of people die because of cold homes in England and Wales every year. Everyone wants and deserves to live in a good-quality home but for many older people, especially those in poor health, the combination of poverty, rising energy prices and unsafe and unsuitable homes has a significant impact on health and wellbeing.

2.3 million

older people are living in poor conditions

The solution:

We developed an evidence-based model for a ‘Good Home Hub’ – a one-stop shop that can be created in every community to help older people make improvements to their home and reduce potentially fatal hazards that commonly lead to trips, falls, illness and injury.

To date, more than 85 places are using insights from our Good Home Hub model to improve unsafe homes and reduce NHS costs, and seven local authorities are currently setting up Good Home Hubs in their communities.

85 places

are using insights from our Good Home Hub model

2016-2018

We published a series of research reports exploring the importance of home adaptations to support wellbeing in later life.



2018

Our research influenced a review of government capital grants and revenue funding, with an extra £55m for Disabled Facilities Grants announced in 2018.



£55m

for Disabled Facilities Grants announced in 2018

2020

We set up our Good Home Inquiry, a major evidence-based examination of the causes of poor-quality homes and how they affect older people.

The leading recommendation was for the establishment of Good Home Agencies across the UK – to make better use and extend the reach of the Disabled Facilities Grant and other sources of support and funding for home adaptations and improvements.



2021

Through our strategic partnership with Lincolnshire, we turned this policy recommendation into practice by co-designing with residents a blueprint for how a ‘Good Home Hub’ could work in practice.

“We feel there is now light where there was dark with all the things happening to us here, yes, a bit of a cliché saying but heartfelt sentiment. Thank you.”

A Lincolnshire resident who had gone without heating and hot water for eight years and who was helped through the Lincolnshire Good Home Hub.

2024

Lincolnshire began a pilot of the Good Home Hub model showing it offered good value for money in supporting older homeowners to make repairs and reduce hazards in their homes.

Demand for the service led to the recruitment of extra staff.



Today

We are working to scale the Good Home Hub model nationally through our Good Home Network of 85 Local Authorities and continue to build the economic case for the model locally and nationally.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has signalled that it will begin to accredit places and organisations delivering Good Home Hubs in local communities. This will support more comprehensive and holistic approaches to improving homes across the country.

Our networks

Over the decade, we've attracted hundreds of partners and collaborators who are now taking action on ageing. Here are some of the networks and coalitions we've developed.

Safe Homes Now

A total of **13 national organisations**, including Barnardo's, Mind and St Johns Ambulance, campaigning to highlight the devastating impact of the nation's unsafe homes.

Good Home Network

85 areas – one fifth of local authorities – with whom we share best practice and evidence to help them to improve the quality of homes for their residents and reduce the demand on the NHS and social care services.

The UK Network of Age-friendly Communities

A growing movement with **more than 100 places across the country committed to making their community a better place to age in.**

We provide guidance, connect places and offer support to member communities as they work towards making their services and infrastructure more age-friendly, reaching more than **31 million people** across the country, including **10.2 million over-50s.**

“

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

Kirklees, Age-friendly Communities network member

Age Without Limits supporters

More than 7,000 subscribers and 20 champions across the country who support our campaign and take action to tackle ageism in their communities.

50+ Employment Taskforce

A small group of experts including the Institute of Employment Studies, Age UK and the Learning and Work Institute working together to **influence government policy and support for older workers.**

Age-friendly Employers

More than 600 employers, including national brands and household names, **have pledged to support their older workforce** as part of our nationwide scheme.

Ageng Better Voices

Over 50 'experts by experience' – individuals from different backgrounds and circumstances who share with us their experiences of ageing. Their involvement across our work ensures that our evidence is not only robust but grounded in the reality of people's everyday lives.

This means we can give policy makers and the industries we work with access to research and recommendations that have been developed with the kinds of people they will ultimately help.

Housing Made for Everyone (HoME) coalition

A coalition of 11 charities and housing organisations calling for urgent action to tackle the UK's acute and growing shortage of accessible and adaptable homes.

Campaign for a Commissioner for Older People & Ageing

More than 80 organisations have joined us to call for an independent commissioner to champion the rights of older people and ensure policymaking considers the needs of England's ageing population.

Building a centre of excellence on ageing

As a leading expert voice on ageing, our research is shaping conversations, influencing policy, and strengthening understanding of ageing issues – locally, nationally and beyond.

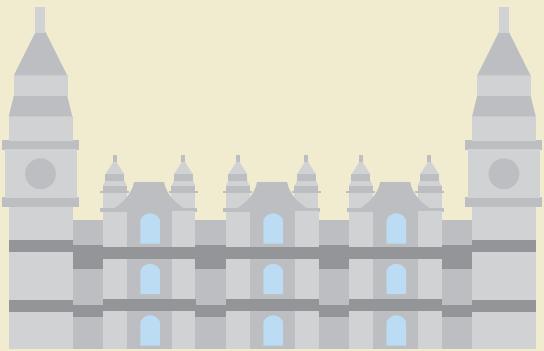
In 2015 we established a clear and powerful vision for our work, which remains the same today – to create a society where everyone can live a good later life.

Over the last decade, we have built an unrivalled reputation as a source of evidence and expertise on ageing and demographic change. We have pioneered issues such as longer working lives, making our housing fit for the future, tackling ageism and designing communities to be age-friendly.

We are regularly quoted in the media, parliament, within local government, business and academia. The longer we exist, the greater the momentum and interest in our work, with our media coverage and engagement with parliament increasing every year.

- In 2025 alone, we shared evidence with 12 national government consultations and seven Select Committees, with five select committees inviting us to give oral evidence to the panel as part of their inquiries.
- Our newsletters reach more than 21,000 subscribers each month.
- Our reports and evidence were cited in more than 60 published policy reports and government submissions over the last year.
- We have generated almost 2,000 pieces of media coverage on our work over the last year, and around 12,000 pieces of coverage over the last decade. Our work is featured in the national media each week from broadsheets to broadcast media.

Ageing better’s reach in 2025/6



Shaping policy

In 2025 alone, we shared evidence with **12 national government consultations and 7 Select Committees**, with **five select committees inviting us to give oral evidence to the panel** as part of their inquiries.



Cited and trusted

Our reports and evidence were cited in more than **60 published policy reports and government submissions** over the last year.



Staying connected

Our newsletters reach more than **21,000 subscribers each month**.



Telling our story

We have generated almost **2,000 pieces of coverage on our work over the last year**, and around **12,000 pieces of coverage over the last decade**.

Where next?

We need more partners and funders who share our vision for a country in which we can all age well.



As well as continuing to provide insights, data and analysis about ageing and demographic change over the coming years as a Centre of Excellence on Ageing, we will be working intensively in three areas where we have built deep expertise and knowledge and where we know we can make the biggest difference:

1. Ensuring fair access to decent work in our 50s and 60s.
2. Developing homes and communities that help us to live longer, healthier lives.
3. Tackling ageism and the impact of other forms of discrimination in later life.



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 be fully utilised by 2029, so we are working to replace it with new funding from commissioned work, matched partnership funding, grants and donations. This support is essential to ensure our work can continue and generate long-term impact and change.

An assured future will give us all the opportunity to shape a better future for millions of people across all generations.

Join us in the challenge to ensure that this country can age well.

“

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, a member of our Experts by Experience Network

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

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