

Live Longer Better Hampshire Age Friendly Housing and Environments: Resource Summary

This advice note has been prepared by Hampshire County Council to better inform local authorities and stakeholders about available guidance and information on age friendly environments, but does not intend to be exhaustive. Planning and designing for ageing communities identifies the specific needs of older people and proposes strategies and actions that areas can take to become more age friendly. This document is not a formal guidance note from Hampshire County Council but aims to show how communities around Hampshire can explore these opportunities and empower their older members to *Live Longer Better*.

‘ONS [Office of National Statistics] figures from 2018 predict that the number of people aged over 65 is forecast to rise over the next decade, from the current 10.8 million people, to 13.8 million by 2035, a 27 per cent rise. This means that approximately one in five of the total population being over 65 in 10 years’ time, which will become one in four by 2050.’

[Local Government Association, Housing our Ageing population](#)

‘Action in the fields of housing and planning can align with some of the most important policy areas currently challenging national and local government – how to reform and integrate the NHS, social care, and public health in the context of population ageing, and how to increase housing supply delivery and build more resilient and healthy neighbourhoods.’

[Local Government Association, Housing our Ageing population](#)

Our society is ageing; the [Office of National Statistics](#) report that the number of people aged 85 years and over is projected to nearly double between 2020 and 2045 from 1.7 million (2.5% of the UK population) to 3.1 million by 2045 (4.3% of the UK population). The number of older people that have some form of care need or multiple long-term conditions is predicted to rise significantly ([The King’s Fund](#)).

The value of physical activity to older adults cannot be overstated. It has been shown to be effective in older people at reducing the incidence or symptoms of many of the common conditions which are associated with reducing independence and quality of life in older people. **The environment, housing and communities are key to keeping older people physically active.**

Within this document we have aimed to summarise some of the available resources and frameworks related to planning and older populations to support local communities of practice. Below are the following sections:

1. Age Friendly Communities and Neighbourhoods
2. Age Friendly Housing

1. Age Friendly Communities and Neighbourhoods

Environments play an important role in determining physical and mental capacity across a person’s life course, into older age and in how well we adjust to loss of function and other forms of adversity that we may experience at different stages of life, and in later years. Both older people and the environments in which they live are diverse, dynamic and changing. In interaction with each other they hold incredible potential for enabling or constraining healthy ageing. [World Health Organization, Age-friendly Environments.](#)

Below are a selection of resources on how to support age friendly environments for over-65s.

The [World Health Organisation's Age-friendly Communities framework](#) guide encourages using eight domains that when acted upon can help to address barriers to ageing well.

Adapted from: [Centre for Ageing Better's Age Friendly Community Guidance](#) and WHO's Age-friendly Cities

Outdoor spaces and buildings – the outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on our mobility, independence, and quality of life as we age. Outdoor spaces and buildings will strive to be safe, accessible, and comfortable for people of all ages. Considers a range of aspects including green spaces, pavements, outdoor seating, building accessibility and safety, and roads.

An Age-friendly Community might:

- Create a map of benches or toilets in a local area
- Work with local businesses to offer places to rest when people are out and about
- Conduct walking audits with older people to identify local needs on pavements, curbs, and crossings

Transport – affordable, reliable, and convenient transport options enable older people to get out and about and continue to do things that matter to them. Whether it's going shopping, meeting friends, or attending an appointment, good transport is essential to everyone.

An Age-friendly Community might:

- Promote local schemes for passengers to discreetly let the driver know of additional support needed
- Work with transport providers to ensure they consider the needs of older people i.e., seating provision on buses and trains, fares, and ticketing approaches for those who prefer not to use contactless
- Create community transport options that take older people to where it is important for them to go
- Offer specialist classes for older cyclists

Housing – the right housing and support can allow people to age comfortably and safely, in their community. Poor housing can have a huge impact on health, but when housing is considered as part of the age-friendly approach, it can help to maintain or improve physical and mental wellbeing, as well as social connections.

An Age-friendly Community might:

- Create a directory of qualified and reliable maintenance workers
- Offer drop-in sessions to get free advice on housing options

Social participation – participating in leisure, cultural and spiritual activities in the community is important for health and wellbeing, a sense of belonging and good relationships. Without social participation, people can experience loneliness and isolation. Communities can work to make sure activities available in their place are as financially, culturally, and physically accessible as possible.

An Age-friendly Community might:

- Support for targeted groups to come together and learn new skills
- Offer reduced rates for older people
- Review the venues of activities to ensure accessibility
- Arrange opportunities for residents of different ages to connect through skills exchange workshops

Respect and social inclusion – an age-friendly community enables people of all backgrounds to actively participate, and it treats everyone with respect, regardless of age. Despite age being a protected characteristic, ageism is still prevalent nationally, and communities should seek to challenge this.

An Age-friendly Community might:

- Use imagery in their communications with positive and realistic images of a diverse range of older people
- Celebrate the contributions of older people to their community through hosting events or campaigns for International Day of Older Persons
- Challenge ageist language used across forms of media and communication, both externally and internally to the organisation
- Consider how to ensure that older people are included in community activities for ‘families’

Civic participation and employment – communities look to provide good-quality options for people in later life to continue to contribute to their communities. Those options can include paid employment or voluntary work as well as being engaged in democracy. Good-quality volunteering has a measurable positive impact on mental health. Paid work can benefit wellbeing as well as finances, yet often, the opportunities for these diminish with age.

An Age-friendly Community might:

- Offer targeted employment support to older jobseekers - with an in-person offer not just online
- Ensure volunteers are remunerated for their expenses
- Advertise a range of accessible volunteering opportunities - particularly those suitable for people with a disability, caring responsibilities, or long-term health conditions

Communication and information – staying connected with events and people, and getting timely, practical information is important for all of us, especially as we get older. Age-friendly Communities seek to ensure information is accessible for those with varying resources and abilities – for example people who don't have English as a first language, are digitally excluded, or have a sensory impairment.

An Age-friendly Community might:

- Offer digital skills training for older people who aren't online but would like to be
- Produce regular newsletters sharing what's on – available in print or easy to print for others to share in hard copy
- Run targeted campaigns around benefits, entitlements, and opportunities to be involved in local events and groups

Community support and health services – as the older population grows, the need for community support and health services grows too. Alongside accessible and affordable health care services, community support and physical activity opportunities are strongly connected to good health and wellbeing throughout life. Some communities incorporate their financial inclusion work in this domain, acknowledging the huge impact that financial instability has on quality of life and health.

An Age-friendly Community might:

- Launch local walking clubs or groups.
- Distribute information to support people to stay warm, stay safe and stay well, particularly over winter periods
- Ensure staff and volunteers are trained in skills required to effectively serve older people
- Ensure initiatives are accessible and desirable for older people, for example by using positive language rather than talking about ‘frailty’

[UK Network of Age-friendly Communities](#) is a network of over 80 places across the country, which have a commitment to implementing the World Health Organisation's Age-friendly Communities framework. There are a number of useful case studies and resources included on the [website](#).

The Centre for Ageing Better identified example action plans:

- [Age-friendly Bristol Strategy and Action Plan 2022](#)
- [Age-friendly York Evolving Action Plan 2022](#)
- [Age-friendly Ards and North Down's Age-friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2022](#)

Membership of the network of Age-friendly Communities is free and for local authorities interested in finding out more about joining please contact afc.network@ageing-better.org.uk

[Creating age-friendly environments in Europe: A tool for local policymakers and planners](#): this publication summarises key factors for showing and sustaining successful initiatives within four phases of the policy process: engaging, planning, implementing, and evaluating.

[Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide](#): this Canadian publication looks particularly at how to implement age-friendly communities in rural and remote areas.

Other resources:

Greater Manchester has produced a practical guide for [creating age friendly developments](#).

[Making our community ready for ageing](#) is a report published by International Longevity Centre (ILC-UK) with the support of charity Age UK and includes a list of ideas from their work on the project.

[Healthy Ageing in a Changing Climate](#) outlines recommendations for local and national governments in partnership with community organisations and older people to address key areas, including empowering older people towards climate action and mobilising community and social infrastructure

The [Royal Town Planning Institute](#) has a broad range of practice advice including: [Dementia And Town Planning](#) and [RTPI | Housing for older people](#).

2. Age Friendly Housing

'Councils are key to delivery of housing for older people and planning for an ageing population and there are several councils planning, developing, and delivering a range of housing opportunities and options to meet the needs of an ageing population.'

[Local Government Association, Housing our Ageing population](#)

'Whilst the design of individual homes is vitally important to how people can live well as they age, it is only one aspect of the issue. Quality housing needs to be built in the right location, integrated into accessible neighbourhoods, with good, safe access to local shops and health care services, public transport and the natural environment.'

[Royal Town Planning Institute, Housing for Older People](#)

The following principles have been developed by the **Housing for Older People Panel for Innovation (HAPPI)**:

Space and flexibility - generous internal space standards, with potential for three habitable rooms and designed to accommodate flexible layouts.

Daylight - care is taken with the placement, size and detail of windows to ensure plenty of natural light, and to allow daylight into circulation spaces.

Outdoor space - building layouts maximise natural light and ventilation by avoiding internal corridors and single-aspect flats. Apartments have balconies, patios, or terraces with enough space for tables and chairs as well as plants.

Adaptability – homes are adaptable and designed to be ‘care ready’ so that new and emerging technologies, such as telecare and community equipment, can be readily installed.

Circulation space – building layouts promote circulation areas as shared spaces, encouraging interaction, supporting interdependence, and avoiding an ‘institutional feel’, including the imaginative use of shared balcony access to front doors and thresholds, promoting natural surveillance, and providing for defensible space.

Shared facilities – in all but the smallest developments (or those very close to existing community facilities), multi-purpose space is available for residents to meet, with facilities designed to support an appropriate range of activities – perhaps serving the wider neighbourhood as a community ‘hub’, as well as guest rooms for visiting friends and families,

Natural environment – public realm design measures ensure that homes engage positively with the street. New trees and hedges are planted, and mature planting is preserved to provide wildlife habitats, as well as colour, shade, and shelter.

Sustainable design – homes are energy-efficient and well insulated, but also well-ventilated and able to avoid overheating by, for example, passive solar design, the use of native deciduous planting supplemented by external blinds or shutters, easily operated awnings over balconies, green roofs and cooling chimneys.

Storage – adequate storage is available outside the home together with provision for cycles and mobility aids, and storage inside the home meets the needs of the occupier.

External shared surfaces and ‘home zones’ - shared external surfaces, such as ‘home zones’ give priority to pedestrians rather than cars, with due regard to the kinds of navigation difficulties that some visually impaired people may experience.

Source: [HAPPI](#)

[Housing For Older People](#) The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), Chartered Institute for Housing (CIH), Centre for Ageing Better, the Older People’s Housing Champions Network and Associated Retirement Community Operators (ARCO) have joined together to publish this practice advice.

[The Housing Learning and Improvement Network](#) (LIN) is a network bringing together housing, health and social care professionals in England, Wales, and Scotland to exemplify innovative housing solutions for an ageing population. They have produced guidance and examples, working in partnership with local councils, on how to approach age friendly housing for over-65s. These include:

- [How to develop a community-led approach to age friendly housing in Central Bedfordshire](#) sets out action that will assist communities in Central Bedfordshire to take the next steps in implementing plans to increase the number of homes suitable for an ageing population.

- [Building accommodation to meet the needs of people in Leicestershire](#) describes Leicestershire County Council's ambition to develop different housing options, including considerations around ensuring mainstream housing is suitable for older people.
- The network has highlighted a number of reports on tackling social isolation through housing among older people including in [extra care facilities](#) and through [co-living](#).

The [Housing Innovation Programme](#) have also summarised a number of challenges and identified opportunities/innovative solutions in housing for an ageing population.

An additional set of helpful guidance is also [The Lifetime Homes Standard](#).

The Lifetime Homes standard was developed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Lifetime Homes Group in 1991. The standard is now promoted by the Foundation for Lifetime Homes and Neighbourhoods, established in 2010, which comprises Age UK, the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), and Habinteg, a housing association originally set up by Scope. The administration and technical support for Lifetime Homes is provided by Habinteg, who took on this responsibility for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

'Lifetime Homes make life as easy as possible for as long as possible because they are thoughtfully designed. They provide accessible and adaptable accommodation for everyone, from young families to older people and individuals with a temporary or permanent physical impairment... Bringing Lifetime Homes design into the general housing stock should, over time, allow older people to stay in their own homes for longer, reduce the need for home adaptations and give greater choice to disabled people who cannot achieve independent living due to lack of suitable housing.'

[The Foundation for Lifetime Homes and Neighbourhoods](#)

The Lifetime Homes concept is based on five overarching principles:

- Inclusivity
- Accessibility
- Adaptability
- Sustainability
- Good value

It then sets out 16 criteria for accessibility and inclusive design to provide for the needs of occupants and the community:

- Car parking width
- Moving from the parking space to the home
- Approach to the home
- Entrances
- Communal stairs and lifts
- Doorways and hallways
- Space to turn and move around
- Living room
- Convenient bedspace
- Accessible WC and potential shower
- Bathroom walls
- Getting upstairs - possibility for stair lift and future through floor lift
- Getting between bedroom and bathroom - potential hoist
- Bathroom layout
- Windows
- Sockets and controls

Source: [Lifetime homes - Designing Buildings](#)