Age Friendly: Live Better

Strategy 2026-2029



Age Friendly Hertfordshire

Live Longer Better. in Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire age UK Let's change how we age

CVS North Herts & Stevenage

Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership

Funded by Hertfordshire County Council

Hertfordshire

Foreword

Sarah Perman
Director of Public Health at Hertfordshire County Council

Hertfordshire is a place where people of all ages should be able to live well, feel connected, and remain active members of their communities. As our population continues to age, we have both an opportunity and responsibility to create environments that enable everyone to thrive. This Age Friendly: Live Better in Hertfordshire Strategy sets out our shared vision for a county where growing older is not only supported but celebrated.

This strategy has been shaped by the voices and experiences of older residents, community organisations, health and social care partners, and local councils. Their insights have made clear that ageing well is about far more than services; it is about inclusion, purpose, independence, and belonging. Whether through accessible public spaces, opportunities for social connection, safe and sustainable housing, or support for good physical and mental health, we are committed to creating the conditions that allow older people to live the lives they choose.



Creating an age friendly county requires collective action. It means designing policies and places that work for people at every stage of life, recognising the immense contribution that older adults make as carers, volunteers, employees, neighbours, and community leaders. By working together, we can address inequalities, reduce loneliness, and strengthen the foundations that support healthy ageing.

This strategy marks an important step in our journey. It sets out clear priorities and practical actions we can take over the coming years. Most importantly, it reaffirms our belief that Hertfordshire should be a county where everyone can age with dignity, confidence, and opportunity.

Annie Stevenson

Lead Ambassador, Age Friendly Hertfordshire and Age Friendly St Albans District

I grew up in East Hertfordshire and am living my later years in West Herts. I'm proud to be the first Age Friendly Ambassador for our wonderful county, having worked with and listened to older people throughout my career.



I wish we were not defined by our age, it puts us in a box, so creating barriers. These can be attitudinal as well as material and as we grow older, we can be hit harder by both. Age discrimination is insidious and easy to overlook. Yet when the barriers are broken, everyone, of any age benefits.

This includes younger people as well, as age discrimination goes both ways and the antidote is to build relationships and understanding between the generations.

We know that we are living longer but not necessarily better. This carefully crafted Age Friendly: Live Better Strategy encompasses all that older people in Hertfordshire need to age well where they live, with the aim of increasing the quality of life during our later years as well as our longevity. It is ambitious as it challenges everyone to consider every area of our communities through the lens of later life living and building intergenerational relationships.

How will we embed Age Friendly: Live Better into our communities? By collaborating, partnering, building relationships, being creative, respectful and compassionate with each other! We are all ageing and it is down to all of us to embrace the challenges and bring this Strategy to life! As a 'younger older' person, I can't commend this work highly enough.

Age Friendly: Live Better
Background to the Partnership

Age Friendly: Live Better is a countywide programme working to make Hertfordshire the best county to age in; supporting residents to age well, stay connected, live independently for longer and remain active within their communities.

Funded by HCC Public Health and delivered by Age UK Hertfordshire, Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership and North Herts & Stevenage CVS, the programme builds on existing healthy ageing work to drive system-wide change and local community action.



Live Longer Better in Hertfordshire launched 2021, driven by Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership. Since it's launch, the Live Longer Better in Hertfordshire movement has amassed over 3,000 Revolutionists; individuals part of the network. Having supported hundreds of Hertfordshire-based community organisations, Live Longer Better in Hertfordshire is firm in it's belief that sport & physical activity changes lives.

Age Friendly Hertfordshire launched 2024, led by AgeUK Hertfordshire and North Herts & Stevenage CVS. Following a global framework, a baseline survey was undertaken, hearing from over 3,000 residents aged 55+. You will find the outcomes of this survey highlighted in the strategy on page 14; they have informed the Age Friendly: Live Better action plan, which launched April 2026.

Age Friendly: Live Better on a page

How we inform our practice



Why This Matters

A snapshot of how Hertfordshire's population is changing

People in Hertfordshire are living longer, but many face challenges as they age - like feeling lonely, struggling with transport or lack of rest spots, or finding services hard to access. These issues can often be avoided by making small changes to how we design our communities and treat one another.



By 2047 over 21% of Hertfordshire's population will be over the age of 65, compared to 18% today. This growing ageing population brings both challenges and opportunities.

Population and Ageing

Hertfordshire has a population of approximately **1.2** million residents.

7.9% of the population are men aged 65+

9.6% of the population are women aged 65+.

216,310 residents are aged 65+, representing around **17.5%** of the population.

73,634 residents aged 65+ living alone in Hertfordshire

By 2047, people aged 65+ are projected to represent **21.7%** (288,003) of Hertfordshire's population.

Ageing In Hertfordshire

A snapshot of how Hertfordshire's population is changing

LIFE EXPECTANCY AFTER AGE 65

Men
19.1 years
Average life expectancy after age 65

Women
21.6 years
Average life expectancy after age 65

HEALTHY LIFE EXPECTANCY AFTER AGE 65

Men
10.3 years
Disability-free life expectancy after age 65

Women
10.5 years
Disability-free life expectancy after age 65

1 in 4
residents aged 55+ live with a long-term health condition or disability.

This rises to **30%** at 65+

This rises to **39%** at 75+

People living in the most affluent areas of Hertfordshire can expect to live in good health for 18 years longer than those in more deprived areas.

	most affluent areas	most deprived areas
Males	76 years	58 years
Females	77 years	59 years

Source: Comparing Life Expectancy (LE) and Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) in the most deprived (decile 1) and the least deprived (decile 10) areas in Hertfordshire (IMD, 2019 and ONS LE and HLE at birth by MSOAs (2009 to 2013)).



DEMENTIA PROJECTIONS

Total people aged 65+ predicted to have dementia

2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
16,309	18,250 ▲ 11% increase from 2025	20,470 ▲ 21% increase from 2025	22,550 ▲ 28% increase from 2025	24,318 ▲ 33% increase from 2025

Source: POPPI

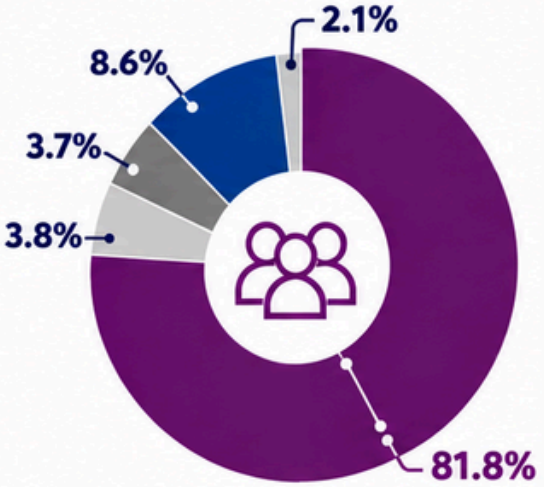
These projections and statistics highlight the importance of planning and designing communities, services and support that enable people to **live well** for longer; extending their healthy life expectancy, or health span.

Ageing In Hertfordshire

A snapshot of how Hertfordshire's population is changing

Diversity

Ethnicity – Percentage of Hertfordshire residents by high-level ethnic group (2021 Census)



- **2.1%** Other Ethnic Group
- **8.6%** Asian or Asian British
- **3.7%** Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
- **3.8%** Mixed or Multi Ethnic Group
- **81.8%** White

Source: Herts Insight



Orientation

Percentage of Hertfordshire residents by sexual orientation (2021 Census)

- **1.1%** (10,644 residents) identify as gay or lesbian
- **1.0%** (9,583 residents) identify as bisexual
- **6.9%** (66,389 residents) choose not to answer the sexual orientation question in the census
- **0.1%** (728 residents) are in a same-sex civil partnership
- **0.2%** (1,981 residents) are in a same-sex marriage

Source: Herts Insight

A diverse and inclusive Hertfordshire helps ensure that services work for everyone. We are committed to reducing inequalities and ensuring everyone has an equal opportunity to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

Ageing In Hertfordshire

A snapshot of how Hertfordshire's population is changing

While more than half of Hertfordshire residents aged 55+ are doing enough physical activity to benefit their health, **3 out of 10 are inactive** (less than 30 minutes of physical activity a week) – equating to approximately 100,000 people.

Inactive means doing less than 30 minutes of physical activity a week. This is referred to here as **reduced activity.**

Source: Sport England Active Lives Adults, Nov 2021-22 and Nov 2022-23 combined

As we age we become more inactive

Percentage of age group that are classed as inactive (reduced activity)

60–64 years	65–69 years	70–74 years	75–79 years	80–84 years	85+ years
30%	22%	29%	40%	43%	69%







Ageing In Hertfordshire

The Chief Medical Officer's guidelines for physical activity for older adults

Any level of activity is linked to health benefits

- Improves Sleep
- Manages Stress
- Maintains Healthy weight
- Improves Quality of life

Reduces your chance of

- 40% Type II Diabetes
- 35% Cardiovascular disease
- 30% Falls, depression etc.
- 25% Joint and back pain
- 20% Cancers (colon and breast)

Be active everyday

Make a start today: it's never too late

Any activity is better than none, and more is better still

Every minute counts

Aim for

at least **150** minutes per week

Moderate intensity
increased breathing able to talk

OR

at least **75** minutes per week

Vigorous intensity
breathing fast difficulty talking

or a combination of both

To keep muscles, bones and joints strong

Build strength

on at least **2** days a week

For older adults

Improve balance

2 days a week to reduce the chance of frailty and falls

Minimise sedentary time

Break up periods of inactivity

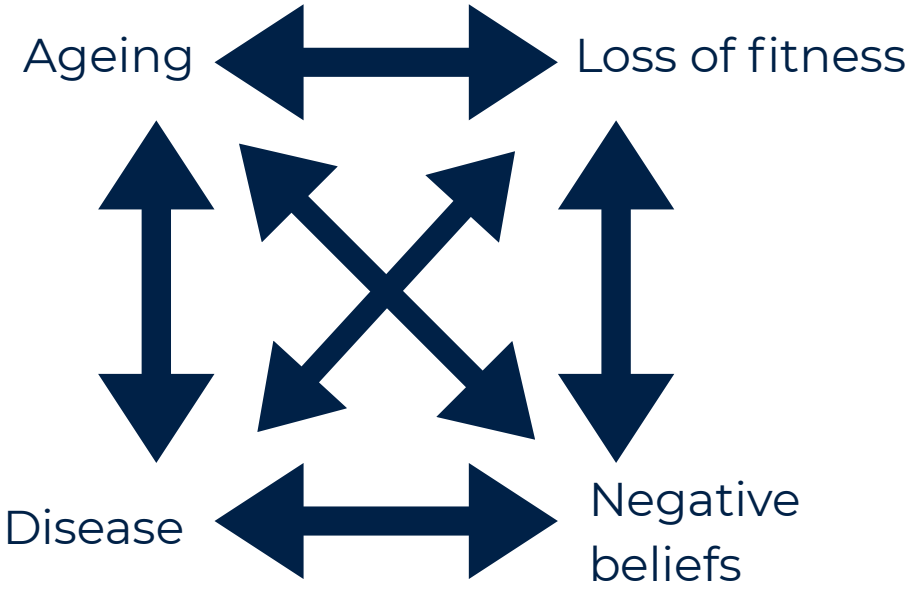


Our Approach

Live Longer Better in Hertfordshire - A national approach

Live Longer Better is a national revolution, designed by Professor Sir Muir Gray to change the culture around ageing, and replace the concept of care with the concept of enablement, no matter how old someone is or how many conditions they have.

The programme focuses on four key pillars affecting adults more frequently as they live longer:



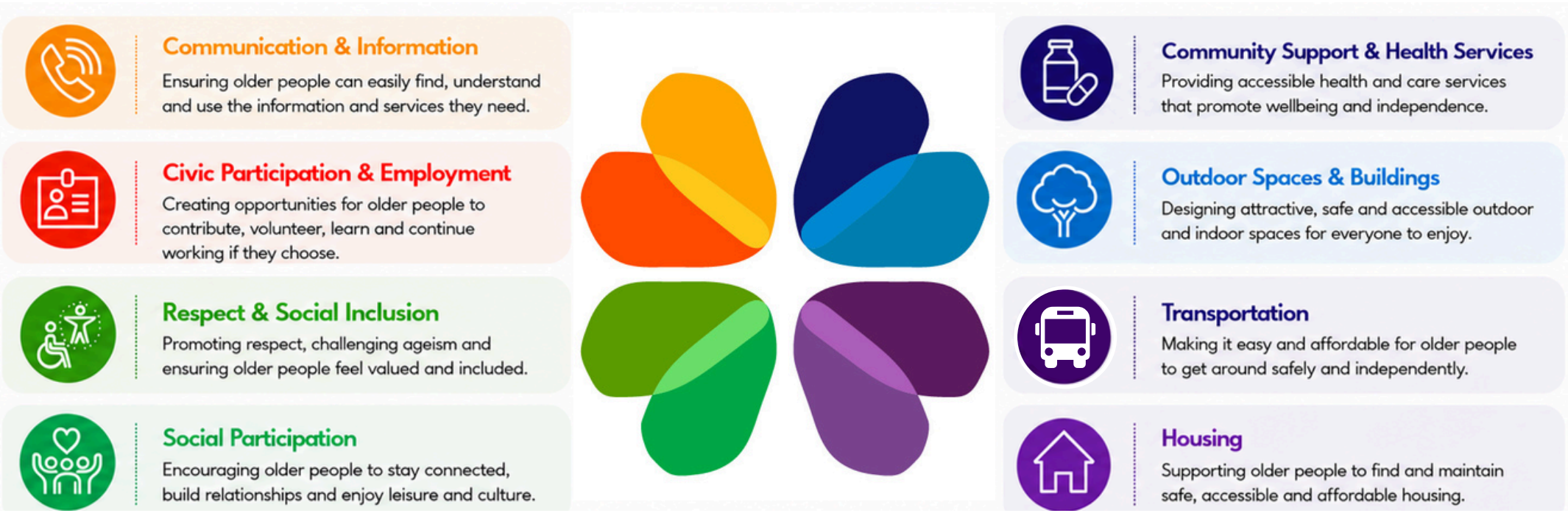


Our Approach

Age Friendly Communities - A worldwide approach

As an Age Friendly Community, we follow the **World Health Organisation's Age-Friendly Communities Framework**. The framework is built around two key elements: the **Eight Domains** and the **Four-Step Programme Cycle**.

The Eight Domains (below) cover the areas of our physical and social environment that can support people to age well. These domains are used as a lens to understand local needs, identify barriers and opportunities, gather evidence and agree actions that will help create a more age-friendly community.



Our Approach

How residents' priorities inform our programme

The Age Friendly: Live Better programme aims to:

Reduce loneliness and isolation

By increasing opportunities for connection, volunteering, and local engagement.

Improve access to inclusive infrastructure and services

Including transport, public toilets, and accessible resting places.

Strengthen cross-sector commitment to age-friendly practices

Across workplaces, planning, and service design.

Encourage active and engaged later lives

By making it easier, safer, and more rewarding for older adults to remain active and connected within their communities.

How we will deliver these aims

We will deliver our aims through a four-step programme cycle:

1. Engage and understand

- Set up working/ steering group
- Participatory assessment
- Create a baseline profile
- Disseminate findings
- Gain political commitment

2. Plan strategically

- Unite partners with vision
- Analyse strengths & weaknesses
- Develop strategy
- Get approval
- Define responsibilities

3. Act and implement

- Create action plan
- Consult existing plans
- Secure support and resources
- Implement plan
- Scale up successful action

4. Evaluate

- Create partnerships
- Monitor progress
- Outcome & impact evaluation
- Sustain and improve action
- Exchange (inter) nationally

Engage and Understand

What Hertfordshire residents aged 55+ told us

We asked Hertfordshire residents aged 55+ to feedback on the these eight domains of everyday life.

The following feedback is a summary of the responses received, informing our aims and actions outlined in the next section. The complete feedback can be found in the baseline report on the AFC Herts website.

Communication & Information

Digital access does not equal confidence. People need clear communication in different formats.

Social Participation

People want to feel safe, be welcomed and join in, but health, transport, confidence and time are barriers to many.

Civic Participation & Employment

There is a missed potential for people to work and volunteer, especially among younger older adults.

Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Lack of access to toilets, limited seating, and safety concerns are barriers to getting out and about.

Respect & Social Inclusion

Many people feel overlooked due to a lack of visibility, respect and representation.

Transportation

Transport services are unreliable and difficult to use. Poor information and inadequate waiting areas are areas of concern.

Community & Health Services

People are using services but are facing barriers like long waits, digital-only systems, unclear signposting and limited face to face support.

Housing

People's independence is being impacted by concerns about heating the home and not being able to find housing information.

Plan Strategically

From insight to action

The following four key pillars are focus areas, with **two 'golden threads'** underpinning all areas of work within the programme:

Home

Safe, accessible, and affordable housing, with information and support for adaptations that enable people to live independently for longer.



Transport

Reliable, affordable, and age-inclusive transport that connects people to services, activities, and communities.



Community, Health & Wellbeing

Joined-up community support and health services, alongside inclusive outdoor spaces and accessible public buildings that support active, independent, and connected lives.



Social Participation & Employment

Opportunities for older people to remain socially connected and continue learning, volunteering, or working if they choose.



Golden Threads

Two core principles underpin all aspects of the programme:

Respect & Social Inclusion

Challenging ageism and ensuring older people feel valued, empowered, included, and treated with respect.

Communication & Information

Ensuring people can access the information they need in ways that are clear, inclusive, and easy to understand.

Act and Implement

Our action plan outcomes and actions

Home

Safe, accessible and affordable housing, with innovation and support for adaptations that enable people to live independently for longer.

Expand Adaptation Services
Promote and streamline access to home adaptations that support independence, ensuring older people can age in places safely.

Location Matters
Ensure new housing developments and supported accommodation are located near shops, health services and community spaces to reduce reliance on transport and improve daily living.

Foster Social Connection in Housing
In supported housing and retirement settings, introduce structured programmes and staff roles that actively promote interaction, helping combat isolation.

Join Up Support
Recognise that digital exclusion, low income and health needs often overlap, and design housing support that addresses these challenges holistically.

Transport

Reliable, affordable and age friendly transport that connects people to services, activities and communities.

Service Reliability is a Core Priority
Improve the frequency and reliability of local bus services, particularly routes linked to essential services and town centres, addressing the top concern across all datasets.

Bus Stop Infrastructure Matters
Install or upgrade appropriate and inclusive seating and/or shelter at all bus stops.

Expand and Promote Community Transport
Increase availability and awareness of accessible community transport schemes for those unable to use public buses.



Act and Implement

Our action plan outcomes and actions



Community, health & wellbeing

Joined-up community support and health services, alongside inclusive outdoor spaces and accessible public buildings that support active, independent and connected lives.



Social participation & employment

Opportunities for older people to remain socially connected, continue learning, volunteering or working if they choose.

Improve GP and NHS Access
Expand options for non-digital booking of appointments and invest in face-to-face provision to ensure services are inclusive.

Embed Holistic Support in Community Settings
Co-locate clinical, social prescribing and support services to create trusted, easy-to-find local hubs.

Invest in Preventative Care and Relationships
Offer routine health checks, mental health support, and early intervention programmes to reduce crisis need and promote independence.

Toilet Access is a Core Barrier
Prioritise increased public toilet provision, run community toilet schemes, and improve signage to existing facilities, addressing one of the most widespread issues across all age groups.

Improve Pavement and Path Safety
Allocate funding to repair uneven pavements and eliminate trip hazards to support safe, independent movement.

Enhance Lighting Infrastructure
Upgrade street lighting and footpath visibility to improve safety and confidence, particularly for evening travel or winter months.

Make Volunteering Inclusive and Visible
Strengthen promotion of volunteer roles, ensuring opportunities reflect diverse interests, life stages and access needs.

Challenge Ageism in Workplaces
Promote age-inclusive employment through the Age Friendly Employer pledge, offering guidance on flexible roles, retaining and tackling age bias in recruitment practices.

Recognise and Publicise Informal Contributions
Value the wide range of civic roles older people play ensuring these are acknowledged and celebrated.

Diversify Representation and Participation
Involve underrepresented groups in volunteering and decision making, ensuring all are included in shaping their communities.

Tackle Loneliness Through Intergenerational Connections
Embed opportunities for social connection into wider strategies for healthy ageing, recognising that loneliness is a key issue and can be prevented through inclusive community-building.

Strengthen Targeted Outreach
Develop earlier interventions for age groups and demographics most at risk of future isolation, including carers, working age older adults and non-digital residents.

How To Get Involved

Creating an Age Friendly Hertfordshire relies on residents, communities and organisations working together. Older people are at the heart of Age Friendly: Live Better, telling us what matters locally, shaping our priorities and turning ideas into action.

There are lots of ways to get involved and help make Hertfordshire a great place to grow older.

Tell us what matters

Older People's Forums
Join local forums and help ensure older residents have a voice in local decisions.

Surveys
Share your views through surveys and help shape our priorities.

Walking Audits
Help us assess the age-friendliness of streets, public spaces and transport.



Volunteer within your community

Live Longer Better Champion
Inspire and support people to live healthier, happier lives by promoting positive ageing and encouraging people to remain active, connected and engaged.

Age Friendly Ambassador
Help share information, support local activity, provide feedback and ensure the voices and experiences of older people are heard.

Chatty Bus Volunteer
Make local bus journeys more welcoming and sociable by chatting with passengers to help them feel more connected to local activities.

How To Get Involved

Take action in your community

Take part in **walking audits** and identify improvements for seating, accessibility, transport and information.

Support **local activities** and events that bring people together.

Help promote positive ageing by **sharing AF:LB opportunities** within your own networks.

Get your organisation involved

Sign the **Age Friendly Employer Pledge** - showing commitment to valuing older workers and inclusive workplaces.

Make services, premises and communications **more accessible** and age friendly.

Support or **co-host community activites** and initiatives.

Join the **Community Toilet Scheme** - making it easier for people to get out and about with confidence.

Stay Connected

Sign up to our newsletters

You'll receive monthly updates on the Age Friendly: Live Better work taking place across Hertfordshire via our Age Friendly Hertfordshire newsletter and our Live Longer Better in Hertfordshire newsletter.

Follow us on socials

@AgeFriendlyLiveBetter

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