



Age-friendly communities in practice

A portfolio of good practice in age-friendliness across Greater Manchester



ambition
for
ageing

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“An age-friendly community thinks about what keeps older people happy and social and looks at barriers to this.”

- Judie, 70

About the authors

Ambition for Ageing is a £10.2 million Greater Manchester level programme aimed at creating more age-friendly places and empowering people to live fulfilling lives as they age. It is funded by the Big Lottery Fund's Ageing Better programme, which aims to reduce social isolation of older people.

Led by Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation (GMCVO), the five year programme is delivered by a cross-sector partnership with Local Delivery Leads (LDLs) leading on the work in 25 neighbourhoods across eight local authorities in Greater Manchester.

GMCVO is the voluntary sector support organisation covering Greater Manchester.

The GM Ageing Hub wants to improve the lives of people in mid and later life and over living in Greater Manchester.

The Ageing Hub's vision is that older residents are able to contribute to and benefit from sustained prosperity and enjoy a good quality of life.

The GM Ageing Hub is based at Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and works with a number of partners to coordinate a strategic response to the opportunities and challenges of an ageing population.

An age-friendly Greater Manchester



Greater Manchester has been recognised by the World Health Organization as the UK's first age-friendly city region.

This tremendous accolade is testament to the great work and research on ageing that is taking place here. In Greater Manchester we're celebrating the fact that people are living longer, and within this portfolio you'll read about some of the projects large and small that are making a positive difference to people's lives across the city region.

We hope you'll learn from them, feel inspired by them, and be encouraged to take action of your own to respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by a rapidly-growing older population.

Let's work together to make Greater Manchester a truly great place to grow older.

Andy Burnham

Mayor of Greater Manchester

An inclusive and fair society to grow older



As Greater Manchester's Lead Chief Executive for Age-friendly Greater Manchester and Equalities, I am committed to ensuring that everybody in Greater Manchester has the opportunity and ability to be involved in their local community.

The older population of Greater Manchester is growing. We know that twenty years from now, people over 50 will represent more than one in three of Greater Manchester's population. Therefore, it is imperative that we continue to work together to support older people to play an active role in their communities.

There is so much we can all do to help people live their lives to the fullest as they grow older and this portfolio showcases only a small amount of the amazing things that are going on across the city-region. By working with individuals, organisations and leaders to make our neighbourhoods and places age-friendly, we can remove barriers to make them inclusive and accessible for all. Let's celebrate ageing and all the positive things that come with it.

Pam Smith

Chief Executive of Stockport Council

An community that benefits us all



As the lead partner for Ambition for Ageing, GMCVO is delighted to support the publication of this portfolio.

It is wonderful to see the variety of projects, partnerships, activities and services committed to creating age-friendly communities. This document is a testament to the passion and energy of our communities to achieve great things.

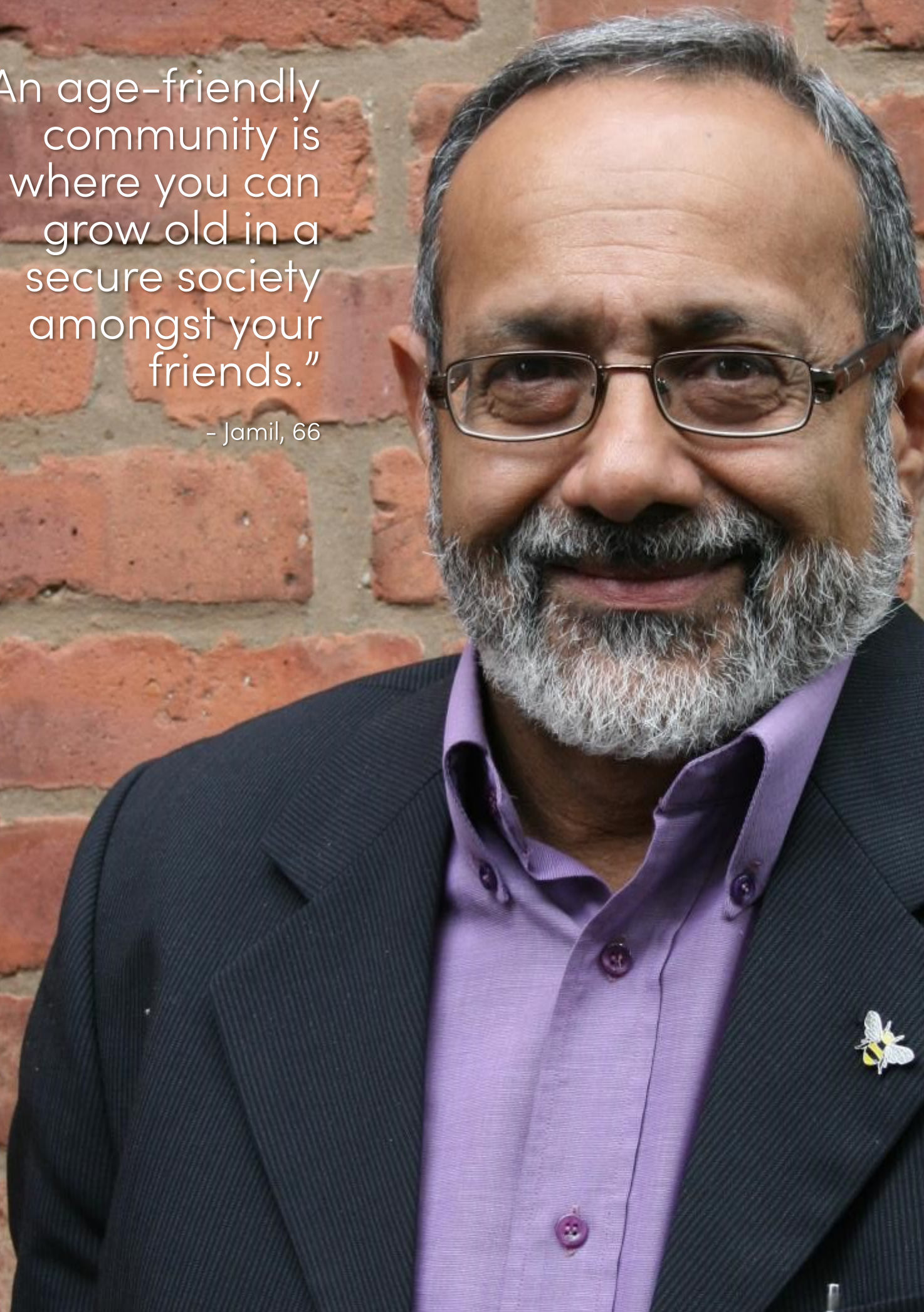
We will continue to work alongside local people, community organisations and decision makers to ensure that older people are able to actively make changes to the places they live in.

Patsy Hodson

Chair of Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation (GMCVO)

“An age-friendly community is where you can grow old in a secure society amongst your friends.”

- Jamil, 66



Care & Repair housing support

Bolton Council found that many older people were anxious or unaware of where to go or what to do regarding everything around housing.

To solve this, they commissioned a home improvement agency (Care & Repair) and housing options for older people commissioned.

This service offers:

- Cross tenure support
- Access to grants for adaptations and repairs and help to arrange
- Help with moving
- Benefit and fuel advice
- A handy person service
- Dedicated community and hospital based support for hospital transfers

Since the service has launched, there has been a huge demand which is still increasing. The service has found that although repairs and small jobs are important for older people in Bolton, adaptations alone not enough and there is a need for a holistic approach to the support.

Active Ageing in Bolton

Recognising a link between health and wellbeing and some of the challenges of ageing, the public sector in Bolton introduced a number of interventions focusing on Active Ageing.

As people age, they are at risk of loneliness, social isolation, inactivity and a lack of stimulation and engagement. All of which can have a negative impact on health and wellbeing. Older people in Bolton were also experiencing a high incidence of falls, which impacted on people's mobility, confidence and independence.

Working in partnership across Bolton, the public and community sector implemented a number of activities using an Active Ageing method, focusing on older people's continuing participation in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and civic affairs. The projects were co-designed alongside older people, listening to people with lived experience

Amongst the projects developed were a series of creative, learning and physical activity sessions in a wide variety of community venues, informed by insight and delivered by supported, trained and qualified volunteers. The partnership also launched a falls prevention programme that focussed on building core strength and balance, awareness raising to identify and minimise risk and using technology.

The work found that social interaction and fun were equally important for people's health & wellbeing as the activities themselves.

Increasing crossing times on Crompton Way

Pedestrian crossings are often set with the assumption of an average walking speed, however reductions in mobility can lower this.

Residents in Bolton noticed that many older people were struggling to cross Crompton Way to access the health centre and bus stops on the other side of the road.

They worked with Ambition for Ageing to invite Transport for Greater Manchester to walk across the road with them and see that the traffic lights changed before everyone got to the other side.

As a result, Transport for Greater Manchester added extra time to the three traffic crossings around the health centre so all local residents could cross the road in safety.

Generations working together to share skills

Redbank is a supported housing scheme for older people in Radcliffe North, Bury. Spring Lane is a nearby Pupil Referral Unit.

The residents of the Redbank wanted to enable those who feel 'young in mind' to interact with young people.

A project was developed to bring residents and pupils from Spring Lane together in weekly sessions where they could share experiences and skills.

The project was supported and facilitated by Six Town Housing and saw attendees take part in activities such as making items that were then offered for sale at a local market to fund further projects.

The project ran for a number of weeks and received positive feedback from residents as well as pupils.

As an intergenerational exercise, it helped to break down stigma and barriers to engaging with different ages.

It showed commitment from residents to stay 'young in mind' and to interact with the wider community, something they will build on by inviting people from the local community to a party celebrating the project.

Strategic partnership approaches

In response to the lack of an infrastructure to capture learning, workers in Bury developed a strategic partnership group.

This group is chaired by a cabinet member and aims to enable cross-sector working across Bury in a sustainable way.

The board includes residents from age-friendly wards in Bury and focuses on how money is being spent, what difference it is making and developing connections to influence strategy.

The approach has not been without its obstacles, with challenges in the form of influencing commissioners, demonstrating and selling social value and measuring the difference as well as storytelling.

However, the benefits from the approach far outweigh the challenges, ensuring that learning is not only captured but that it positively influences future commissioning.


One Community

The development of a new website for Bury will allow residents to share ideas, discuss important topics, provide feedback on council plans and contribute to the future of the Community.

The 'One Community' website aims to provide:

- A consultation and survey platform
- Information and advice
- Community information in a 'trip advisor' style
- Low level self-assessment for services tool
- A calendar of events

The website will be hosted by Bury Council and can be used by anybody in Bury.



“In an age-friendly
community,
everybody looks
after each other.
We all care.”

- Pauline, 69

“An age-friendly community encourages people who don’t normally take part in local activities and services to get involved.”

- Tommy, 86



Exploring the needs of hard of hearing older Chinese people

In an attempt to increase understanding of how marginalisation and inequality shape social isolation among older people, the Ambition for Ageing Equalities Board supported member organisations to carry out small research projects within their communities.

This project, ran by the Wai Yin Society, interviewed older Chinese people both with and without hearing loss to find out what their concept of hearing loss was and what support needs they have.

These interviews were broadcast on the All FM Sheung Lok Radio Show, showcasing the findings of the work. to raise awareness of hearing loss, and how to gain access to appropriate services and support.

A report was published with a number of recommendations around understanding the specific needs of older Chinese people and how service providers should work closely with Chinese specialist organisations to tackle social isolation and loneliness among older people due to hearing loss.

Take a Seat campaign

To help older people feel more confident about leaving their homes, housing providers in Old Moat worked with local businesses to provide a seat in their buildings.

The project, called Take a Seat was so successful that it has now been rolled out across Greater Manchester.

Inspired by a similar project in New York City, the scheme simply asks local businesses to make seats, toilets and a drink of water available to people who may need them.

Businesses that sign up to the scheme are also given a checklist of ways to make their premises more age and dementia-friendly.

They are encouraged to display clear signs, store items within easy reach, and keep floors clutter-free.

Culture Champions

Culture Champions is a large scale volunteer ambassador scheme for older people.

This project connects older people with cultural organisations allowing for wider diversity in the arts.

Passionate about how culture enriches lives, Culture Champions advocate, organise and lead activities for their peers as well as advising arts organisations.

Prior to the introduction of Culture Champions in Manchester, older people were not specifically addressed as an audience for arts and culture activities. As a result, many older people felt that these activities were not for them.

In addition to supporting cultural organisations to offer more relevant and accessible activities, the project also has a positive impact on the lives, health and wellbeing of participants.

Men in Sheds

Men in Sheds is project bringing together older men to help tackle social isolation and loneliness through a number of practical activities.

The project is run by an ex-engineer and is a partnership Between Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council & Age UK Oldham.

Clients can be involved in practical skills, such as bike repair, furniture repair and planning for future projects.

In addition to learning new skills through the project, the men involved have built up friendships and actively support other.

Out & About in Oldham

The LGBT Out & About group, an independent group supported by Age UK Oldham, ran an event to mark the fifty year anniversary of the decriminalisation of homosexuality.

The event included a walk in Dunwood Park, food and company for all people in the community to celebrate and encourage people to make contact with a supportive LGBT group for the 50+ age group.

As well as older LGBT people, the group encouraged people from other communities to join the event and to spend time getting to know LGBT people better.

Ageing well hubs

Ageing Well Oldham's Werneth hub supports over 50s with their career, business funding and health and wellbeing.

The hub was launched in response to a high unemployment rate amongst over 50s, higher mortality rates and early onset of life limiting illnesses.

Each Thursday sessions are held at Werneth Lifelong Learning Centre where people over 50 can get free access to things that can really make a difference to their lives.

These include employment advice and information from the Get Oldham Working team, Job Centre Plus and Learn Direct staff.


The hub was developed by consultation with local people and including multi-agency involvement.

The result is an accessible, physical space for older people to go to in their community.

“An age-friendly environment makes older people feel comfortable. Seating, toilets, ample road crossings and well kept parks.”

- Harold, 83



A photograph of two elderly women standing on a paved sidewalk next to a brick building. The woman on the left is wearing a light blue and white striped short-sleeved shirt and a light green skirt. She is holding a white folder or document. The woman on the right is wearing a white sleeveless top with a small pattern and white pants. She is holding a tablet computer. In the background, there are trees and a brick wall on the left. The scene is outdoors and appears to be a residential or community area.

“I’d like to see
lots of good
seating so we
can watch the
world go by.”

- Elizabeth, 76

“For an area to be
age-friendly,
those in charge of
planning need to
listen to older
people about
what they need.”

- Marie, 84

Volunteer drivers service

In response to issues raised by older people on access to transport, a volunteer drivers service was launched in Oldham.

Feedback from the community revealed that transport services were not reliable and older people were missing hospital appointments and missing out on accessing services, such as day care centres.

Adult Social Care and Public Health decided to launch a volunteer drivers service to tackle this issue.

The service provides a door to door service in a vehicle designed to allow walking aids using a fleet of approximately 40 volunteer drivers.

This means that older people are greeted by a friendly, familiar face who supports them into and out of the vehicle and walks them from the vehicle to their destination.

The design of the service continues to be influenced by the experiences of the people who use it.

Walking football

Rochdale has a thriving programme of walking football that helps men to connect socially through their love of the game.

Via agencies such as the Stroke Association and Link4Life, men aged over 50, some with limiting long term conditions, come together weekly to take part.

They play socially and competitively under the banner of Rochdale AFC Strollers against teams across Rochdale and beyond.

Thanks to walking football, many of the men have reported improvements in physical health and fitness, wellbeing and improved self-confidence.

In turn this has had a positive impact on their daily living and maintaining or increasing levels of independence.

Developing local leadership

Isolation is a large issue for older people in Rochdale, and with a lack of funding and support, fresh approaches were needed.

The sector turned to co-production and communities to continue to tackle social isolation and support active ageing in Rochdale.

Working in partnership, the public and community sector worked with older people to discover and design what they want to do.

Projects arising from the partnership have been hugely successful and continue to grow.

One such example is Heywood, Middleton & Rochdale (HMR) Circle's Breakfast for Blokes, an opportunity for older men to meet for breakfast and conversation.

Making Salford digitally connected

Tech & Tea is part of the Salford Together Integrated Care Programme for Older People and aims to improve access to information and IT skills for older people over 65.

Tech & Tea digital champion volunteers assist older people to learn digital skills at an informal community IT class under the supervision of a qualified adult learning tutor.

The project's basic IT courses are based in a variety of settings across Salford, for example, sheltered accommodation schemes, care homes, and community venues.

Putting older people's voices at the heart of decision making

Older people's voices are heard in Salford via the Salford Older People's Network.

The creation of the network was in response to the need for older people's voices to oversee, drive and focus investment in their immediate neighbourhoods.

The network aims to capture diverse points of view and continues to work with partners to ensure representation from marginalised groups.

The network has brought an array of fresh ideas to Salford, bringing time and energy to their input.

An age-friendly Salford

The journey to become an age-friendly city began in 2015 when Salford applied to the World Health Organization (WHO) for age-friendly city status.

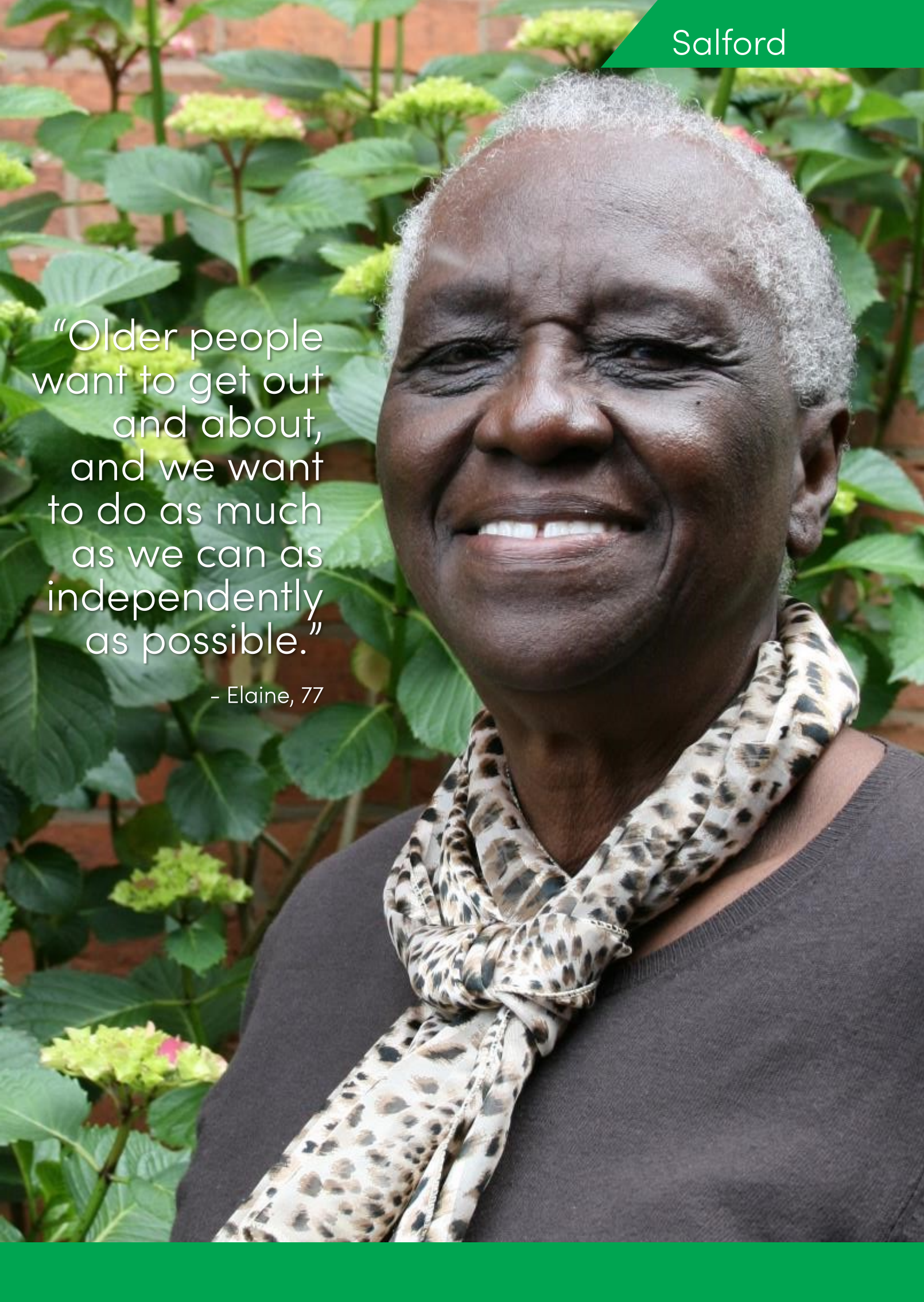
Using the WHO model for age-friendly cities, older people in Salford created four visions for an age-friendly Salford:

- Older people are able to feel safe when outside their own home, and can travel to places which help keep them healthy and engaged in social activity
- Older people feel respected and included in neighbourhood activity
- Older people are able to access information and services
- Older people are able to access opportunities for paid and unpaid work as well as ensure their voice is heard

Salford City Council know that co-production is key to bring everyone together and making sure that older people are at the centre of the work going forward. A three to five year development plan is underway to meet the WHO criteria.

“Older people
want to get out
and about,
and we want
to do as much
as we can as
independently
as possible.”

- Elaine, 77



“In an age-friendly society, I don't feel 'old', just me!”

- Kevin, 57



Doing dementia differently intergenerational choir

The Stockport Doing Dementia Differently Intergenerational choir was established around 18 months ago, and comprises people living with dementia and pupils from Stockport School.

The choir developed from an intergenerational project in which EDUCATE members spoke at school assemblies across Stockport about living with dementia.

EDUCATE (Early Dementia Users Co-operative Aiming To Educate), are a group of Stockport residents who live with dementia and use their lived experience to teach others about living with dementia.

The choir is a truly inspiring initiative which brings together young people and people living with dementia. In the words of one choir member with dementia, the choir has given her a voice.

This exceptional collaboration is helping to dispel the fear and stigma of dementia, and ensure Stockport's next generation is dementia and age-friendly.

Age-friendly Heatons

The Stockport Together ambition is to explore a way of engaging with communities, building trust and relationships in a place to enable co-production.

A number of community conversations were held with local people who are involved in delivering services, activities and support such as church leaders, community groups, GPs, councillors, teachers, businesses.

A collective story developed from this which set the context for co-production. This led to a cross sector network with a focus on reduction of social isolation and loneliness called Heatons Together.

One theme of focus is Age-friendly Heatons and a number of projects are underway building on local knowledge, contacts and relationships including:

- Take A Seat campaign
- Developing Dementia Support
- Intergenerational projects including increasing digital skills

Local place and service design involving local knowledge including decisions on the placing of new benches with older people's needs in mind.

SMILE in Stockport

Standing for 'small improvements improve life everyday', SMILE is a low cost, low impact and gentle exercise concept developed by Life Leisure, one of Stockport's leading leisure and fitness providers.

The programme provides fun, engaging and adaptable physical activity sessions for older adults, and those with long term health conditions or disabilities, to help improve physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Currently, there are over 15 SMILE sessions being delivered across a range of different settings in Stockport every week. The activities are continuously being reviewed and improved, and new approaches are constantly being tested.

Whether an individual takes part sitting on a chair or whether they feel comfortable enough to stand up and exercise, the SMILE programme is flexible enough to benefit for everyone. There is no doubt that joining in at any level significantly improves participants' lives.



“I like it when there are a mixture of ages around you. I lived in an area where this was the case, and it made for a very friendly neighbourhood.”

- Fiona*, 89

Active Tameside delivers a wide range of leisure facility and community-based services that generate participation in physical activity and sport, to improve health and wellbeing.

Active Tameside are working in collaboration with Jigsaw Homes Group to deliver bespoke community interventions with a focus on engaging older adults into activities that could improve their health and wellbeing and reduce their risk of falls. Within each locality a consultation was held to ensure intelligence was gathered to identify what each community would like to see delivered. The partnership aims to tackle the real deprivation and social isolation at the heart of these communities.

Using a community asset-based approach and working with Jigsaw Homes Group community development teams who know these areas well, we was able to engage those that may be disengaged from the traditional healthcare setting although they are living in poor health.

The activities are delivered from within community hubs and are free for all local residents to take part in. For long term sustainability these sessions will be volunteer-led, this will allow for a wide range of initiatives, from curling, gentle health walks to low-level exercises initiatives to be sustainable long term. The program also links in with local GPs and utilises knowledge from risk registers to also identify people who may be suitable for the program, this allows for a holistic approach to health and wellbeing.

Singles night

Being single is a key risk factor for social isolation amongst older people.

Ambition for Ageing in Tameside received feedback from a number of older people in the area that they wanted spaces for single people to meet up, make new friends and widen their social circles.

With the help of staff, volunteers set about organising the first 'Mingle and Meet Singles Event'.

The event was hugely successful, attracting over 55 attendees who chatted, bonded, danced together and formed some lasting, meaningful relationships.

The event succeeded in bringing people together and helped the Ambition for Ageing Tameside team reach a younger age group of 50-60 year olds.

Dementia friendly communities campaign

Tameside is proud to call itself dementia friendly following a campaign by local people working alongside Action Together.

The campaign came about after feedback from people with dementia and their carers that there was a lack of support and stigma around the condition.

Working together with local people and other organisations, businesses and the local authority to raise awareness, Action Together launched the campaign.

An integral part of the campaign was the recruitment of dementia champions, who were able to broker new relationships and spread the word.

Using community engagement and partnership working, the campaign identified and promoted a number of dementia friendly cafes within Tameside.

Limelight

Limelight is a community hub in Old Trafford bringing together fantastic facilities and vital community services all under one roof.

Designed in partnership with the local community, the hub aims to make a real difference to the lives of local people providing a space for the community to socialise, learn, grow and more.

Services available in the Limelight include:

- Extra Care apartments available for rent and shared ownership.
- Primary care
- A community café offering a range of hot and cold food and refreshments
- A library with purpose built children's facilities, public computers and printing facilities
- Multi-use event spaces for meetings, classes, weddings and events
- A hair and beauty hub
- An under 5's nursery
- An opticians and pharmacy

By bringing people and services to the same community hub, service providers aim to reduce social isolation for older people. Due to the model of the hub, services are available for people of all levels of independence.

Investing in technology to help people stay safe at home for longer

In response to an upcoming move from analogue to digital in 2025, Trafford council decided to inject a £300K capital investment into improving the IT infrastructure in the homes of local older people.

Under the guidance of a steering group, a Technology Enabled Care (TEC) strategy was developed with a view to providing people with a broader range of technologically based products and services to help them stay safe and independent for longer.

These include innovations such as telehealth, telecare and self-care apps – all of which have the potential to transform the way people engage in and control their own healthcare.

There are even devices that can monitor the usage of household appliances and alert relatives remotely to any cause for concern.

Road safety initiatives

Trafford Council is upgrading many zebra crossings to signal-controlled crossings (puffin and toucan) as part of a wider traffic management scheme linked to Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM)'s Urban Traffic Control System.

Zebra crossings are no longer viable in locations where there are significant numbers of vulnerable road users such as unaccompanied children, older people and people with disabilities.

Trafford Council is investing in pedestrian friendly crossings, that have 'intelligent' detectors that monitor people waiting to cross.

The on-crossing pedestrian detectors 'watch' the crossing and delay the traffic signals allowing older people and those with more limited mobility enough time to cross the road safely.

“I am proud to live in an age-friendly Greater Manchester because I feel we are listened to as older people .”

- Colin, 71



“Older people
want to live a
good, steady and
relaxing life in a
safe community.”

- Chung, 67



Making connections across communities

The purchasing of a new PA system has enabled a number of groups to share skills and knowledge.

The Jigsaw group in Leigh West received an investment from Ambition for Ageing for a new PA system.

As they had never bought one before, Ambition for Ageing put them in touch with a group in Pemberton who had previously purchased a PA system and were pleased with it.

A representative from Jigsaw arranged to view the system and applied for the same model however when it arrived, they were unsure how to set it up.

Two representatives from the Pemberton group offered to set it up for them at their venue in Leigh West and show them all the features.

This is a pleasing illustration of how by providing new networking opportunities and encouraging cross-ward communications, communities can work together to share skills that benefit all.

Place based integration in Wigan

Staff from different public services are working more closely together to support residents to live the lives they want to and to support communities to help each other.

The integration, which started at an early adopter site in Platt Bridge brings together a core multi-agency team together in one place.

This means they can share knowledge and skills, get to know the community and work in the best interests of the place and the people - not individual organisations.

By working closely together, the team are able to take a common sense approach to supporting people to help themselves and involving the community to make decisions about the things that they care about the most.

Community Link Workers

The Community Link Worker scheme aims to improve the health and wellbeing of older people in Wigan by connecting them to community based activities which support their independence.

Older people can access the services via health and social care routes by making an appointment to see a Community Link Worker.

As a result of this initial appointment, the client may be referred to additional services, receive information over email about community activities or book an advisory appointment, such as with a debt advice service.

If a service user is confident and happy to access services unassisted, the worker will often only then follow up with a telephone call or visit where necessary.

But if someone needs additional support to access identified services or activities the worker is able accompany the them or arrange to link with other support services for a joined up experience.

Photography credits:

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