

**Manchester:
a city for life**





Circle Steele

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Elaine Unegbu

1. Foreword – Elaine Unegbu

This year, as we launch Manchester’s new ageing strategy, Manchester: a city for life 2023–2028, we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the city’s age-friendly programme. Age Friendly Manchester (AFM) started out as Valuing Older People in 2003 and took its present name in 2010, when Manchester became the first city in the UK to join the World Health Organization’s (WHO’s) network of age-friendly cities and communities.

Following a career in nursing, management and education, I became involved in the Manchester Older People’s Network; then, 18 years ago, I joined the Age Friendly Manchester Older People’s Board, where I am currently the elected Chair.

Over the course of this time, Board members have campaigned for people in middle to later life living in Manchester to have equality and a voice in the affairs and plans of the city. We have tried to influence the way services are designed and delivered, and continue to make sure our opinions and aspirations are taken seriously.

As a result, Manchester’s age-friendly work is seen as trailblazing and is recognised across the world for its innovative approaches and the way it includes people in its decision-making processes.

We have seen many successes over the years, and some of the highlights of the past five years appear in this strategy.

However, while we celebrate our anniversary and our achievements, we do this against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, which have had a lasting and ongoing impact on the lives of older people across the city, particularly the more vulnerable. This goes to highlight how the voice of older people is even more important in shaping how the city meets these challenges.

The Board and I believe that this strategy puts forward a vision and a clear set of priorities for the next five years, while crucially proposing what needs to be done over the next 18 months to address the impact of Covid-19 and the financial crisis. It builds on the programme’s existing work and strong partnerships to create a city for all ages – a city for life.



Elaine Unegbu

Chair, Age Friendly Manchester
Older People’s Board



Councillor Tom Robinson

2. Introduction – Tom Robinson

Older Mancunians are the backbone of this city. Manchester is defined by our communities, and what it is to be Mancunian is derived from the solidarity you get from being part of them. Our older residents are central to both our culture and resilience as a city. Manchester City Council is determined to celebrate and convey these values through this strategy. Together, I know we will accomplish this.

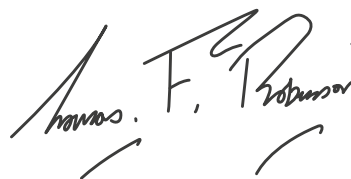
In five years' time, Manchester needs to be a city in which more people in middle to later life can age happily with equality, respect and independence. To achieve this, many more of their voices will need to be better heard and responded to in all the spaces and places across Manchester.

Practically, there will be more age-friendly neighbourhoods in place that have the key features required to enable us to age well. In these neighbourhoods, activity will be delivered in local spaces, which will help address some of the worst effects of deconditioning experienced by many because of the pandemic. There will also be a greater range of targeted support to help us age well, with strengthened financial security and a significant increase in the number of people claiming Pension Credit and other benefits they are entitled to.

For change to be real, it must be felt. That is the ultimate aim for this strategy refresh. More people will feel equal and fewer will feel marginalised as this strategy and its delivery plan become the mechanism through which Making Manchester Fairer's ambitions are realised for people aged over 50.

Together, let's ensure that by 2028 the contents of this strategy serve as the foundations we need to see, so we can go further and faster over the coming decades to make Manchester the most age-friendly city in the country.

I look forward to joining you all in making this vision a reality.



Councillor Thomas F. Robinson
Executive Member for Healthy
Manchester and Adult Social Care



Samantha Days

3. Executive summary

Manchester launched its previous ageing strategy, Manchester: A Great Place to Grow Older, in 2010 as a ten-year strategy. We chose to review and refresh the strategy in 2017 in response to political changes both nationally and regionally, as well as economic (particularly the impact of austerity on Council budgets and services) and demographic changes.

This new strategy builds on this foundation and continues to set out the vision and priorities for Manchester to become an age-friendly city: a city in which people in middle to later life can age happily with equality, respect and independence, and where they have a voice in the life of the city and are economically, physically and socially active.

While there have been a whole range of positive steps forward since 2017's strategy refresh, these have been in the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic, followed by the national cost-of-living crisis. This has meant some Manchester residents may have seen a stalling or reversal in the quality of their lives, while those who were already experiencing some of the biggest challenges may now be facing even greater ones.

This strategy has been developed with the voice and experience of older people at its heart and follows a wide-ranging consultation with services and voluntary sector colleagues. It builds upon the recovery priorities identified by the Age Friendly Manchester Older People's Board, which led to the city's age-friendly Covid-19 recovery plan, and connects with other city strategies,

such as Making Manchester Fairer, the Making Manchester Fairer Anti-Poverty Strategy, the Work and Skills Strategy, Manchester Digital Skills Strategy, Building Stronger Communities Together Strategy, and the Housing Strategy.

While looking ahead towards the sort of age-friendly city we want Manchester to be in five years' time, the strategy also proposes the immediate response required to address the impact of Covid-19 and the cost-of-living emergency in the here and now, which is something older people have told us is a priority. It outlines commitments to drive better outcomes so that more people can age well in place with increased financial security.

Building on the eight key features that go towards making an age-friendly city as identified by the World Health Organization, Manchester has identified four key themes:

- 1. Being heard and age equality**
- 2. Age-friendly neighbourhoods where we can all age in place**
- 3. Age-friendly services that support us to age well**
- 4. Age-friendly work, skills and money**

4. Some highlights from the past five years

Creation of **age-friendly specialist roles** within the Buzz healthy living service and support for 12 age-friendly local networks.

£1.06million of Older People's Neighbourhood Support (OPeNS) investment over two years to increase the health and wellbeing of older people across 12 Manchester neighbourhoods.

Ground-breaking consultations, campaigns, research and interventions developed around normalising intimate and sexual relationships in later life.

Strategic plans to build **15,000 new homes** over 20 years in Victoria North, adopting age-friendly design principles.

Creation of the **Pride in Ageing** programme, led by the LGBT Foundation.

The monthly AFM eBulletin (which went weekly at the outbreak of the pandemic) reaches over **12,000 subscribers**; plus, the creation of a physical AFM newspaper at the request of the Assembly.

Covid-19 recovery plan and responses successfully amplified the voice of older people, **challenging the 'invisible and vulnerable' characterisation** that had taken hold during lockdowns.

With age as a protected characteristic, developed **equalities impact assessment guidance** and **age-friendly communication standards**.

Libraries and Parks adopted age-friendly service standards.

The Neighbourhoods Service and the Buzz age-friendly team oversaw a significant **expansion of age-friendly community benches** across the city.

Unique partnership with the city's cultural organisations via the **AFM Culture Working Group**.

Delivered successive **Winterwise campaigns** supporting the city's most vulnerable older people with tens of thousands of physical advice booklets.

Delivered two **Pension Top Up** campaigns to increase take-up of Pension Credit entitlement.

Collaborations with the city's universities resulted in **multiple pieces of research**, eg. a longitudinal study into the impacts of Covid-19 on older people during lockdown, providing better evidence to support policy development.

Work and Skills Board approved **over-50s as a specific priority group** and is a key area of focus within the Work and Skills strategy delivery plan.

Over-50s Employment and Skills Support Group established to address the issues and barriers facing older workers and jobseekers.

Collaboration with Manchester Art Gallery on the **Uncertain Futures project** to highlight and analyse the intersectional inequalities facing women over 50 and work.

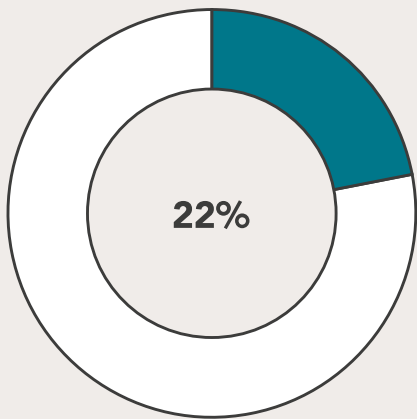
Promotion of age-friendly employment, primarily with the private sector.

Community Falls Service took an age-friendly approach to better connect to place-based activity and deliver prevention sooner.

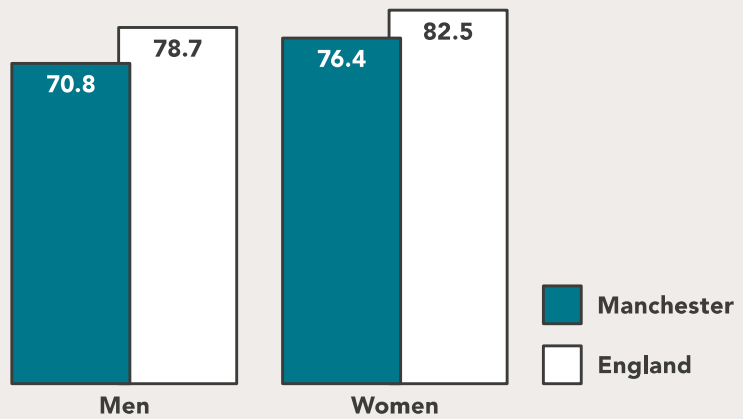
Community Nutrition and Hydration Service adopted a neighbourhood-based and community-development approach to prevention.

5. The realities of ageing in Manchester

How we experience ageing and older age is not the same for everyone. Our economic and social circumstances impact on our health, employment and social connection, with inequality meaning not all residents have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

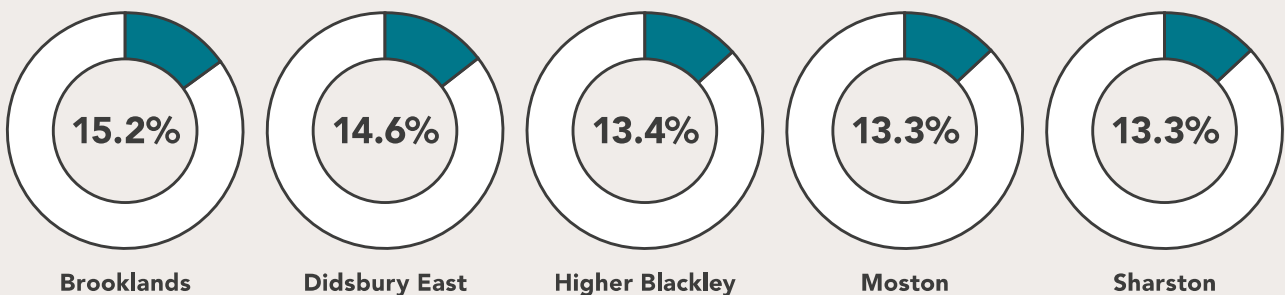


22% of Manchester's population is aged over 50.



Life expectancy in the most disadvantaged parts of Manchester is **70.8 years for men** and **76.4 for women**, which are among the lowest average life expectancies across England. England averages are 78.7 for men and 82.5 for women.

Brooklands ward has the largest number of residents aged over 65 (15.2%), followed by Didsbury East (14.6), Higher Blackley (13.4%), Moston (13.3%) and Sharston (13.3%).



Compared to England, **Manchester has significantly higher rates of mortality among the over-65s** (most commonly linked to dementia, cardiovascular diseases, cancers and respiratory diseases).

More than 20,400 people in the city aged over 50 are **unpaid carers**.

Only 3% of referrals for **talking therapies** were for the over-65s, and across all ages only half of referrals enter therapy.

In 2022, there were **2,769 people diagnosed with dementia** in Manchester, which is in line with the national picture.

The number of people in later life **living alone**, including those ageing without children, is steadily increasing. Alongside this, there is considerable growth in the number of men who live on their own.

Over a third (33.6%) of Manchester's over-60s are **income-deprived**.

Almost a quarter (24%) of 50 to 67-year-olds have **no, or low, qualifications**.

Over half of Manchester residents aged over 60 are **digitally excluded** (not having the access, skills and confidence to use the internet and benefit fully from digital technology in everyday life).

The number of **unemployed people** in Manchester aged over 50 is double that for England and considerably more than across Greater Manchester.

27.7% of Manchester's workers aged 50–64 are in receipt of out-of-work benefits. Across all ages, older workers are in receipt of 32% of all out-of-work benefits.

Over half of the city's residents aged over 66 **rent their home**.

Over 12,000 people receive the monthly AFM eBulletin.

There are over **100 organisations** taking part in Manchester's age-friendly locality networks.

Manchester was the first UK city to join the World Health Organization's network of age-friendly cities and communities, which now has over 1,300 members across the world.

Manchester's Age Friendly Culture Working Group includes **30 of the city's cultural organisations**.

6. The bigger picture

Manchester has nearly sixty citywide strategies and plans, and those that follow are some of the most important ones that will support and add value to the refreshed AFM Strategy. Further details on these and other relevant strategies are available on the Council's website.

The **Our Manchester Strategy (OMS)** highlights the importance of inclusion, diversity and sustainability in creating a world-class city, particularly in ensuring that the city's older population can live safe, happy and independent lives. OMS is due to be renewed over the course of 2024/25, offering a further opportunity to build on this strategy and the lived experience of the over-50s.

The **Making Manchester Fairer 2023–2028** action plan is aimed at reducing health inequalities in Manchester by addressing the social determinants of health. Its ambitious five-year plan aims to close the gap in healthy life expectancy and outcomes, and to pave the way for a fairer and more inclusive city that is representative of its communities.

The **Making Manchester Fairer Anti-Poverty Strategy** identifies four key themes: preventing poverty, mitigating poverty, creating pathways out of poverty, and inclusive and effective delivery. The strategy has a key role to play in ensuring that the city's over-50s are not adversely impacted by the cost-of-living crisis and can access support and advice as required.

The **Work and Skills Strategy 2022–2027** focuses on creating a more inclusive, sustainable and diverse economy that benefits everyone in Manchester. With high levels of unemployment persisting in the city's over-50s population, the strategy will ensure that older workers can access opportunities that match their skills and experience. It will also help them to retrain where needed and ensure that they are fairly recognised for their contributions.

The **Manchester Digital Strategy 2021–2026** supports business growth, employment, skills and training in the digital sector, and will specifically provide opportunities for older workers to upskill and retrain.

The **Housing Strategy 2022–2032** commits to building 36,000 new homes by 2032, one third of which will be affordable and will contribute to addressing inequalities across the city, creating neighbourhoods where people want to live and can live well.

The **Active Travel Strategy** aims to make walking, wheeling and cycling more accessible, safe and comfortable for everyone throughout the city, to work towards a healthier and stronger city.

The **Community Safety Strategy 2022–2025** identifies five key priorities to ensure safe and liveable communities where communities are protected. The strategy will contribute to ensuring that people in middle to later life can be happy, safe and independent within their communities.

The **Building Stronger Communities Together Strategy** is Manchester's first strategy focused on social cohesion. It sets out three key themes to support socially cohesive communities: Relationships, Participation, and Belonging.



Philip Bradley

7. Our principles

The AFM programme is underpinned by two principles, which inform all aspects of design and delivery of its work:

Over-50s' voice

We believe that people over 50 should be at the heart of the programme and help drive the design and delivery of the work.

Equalities

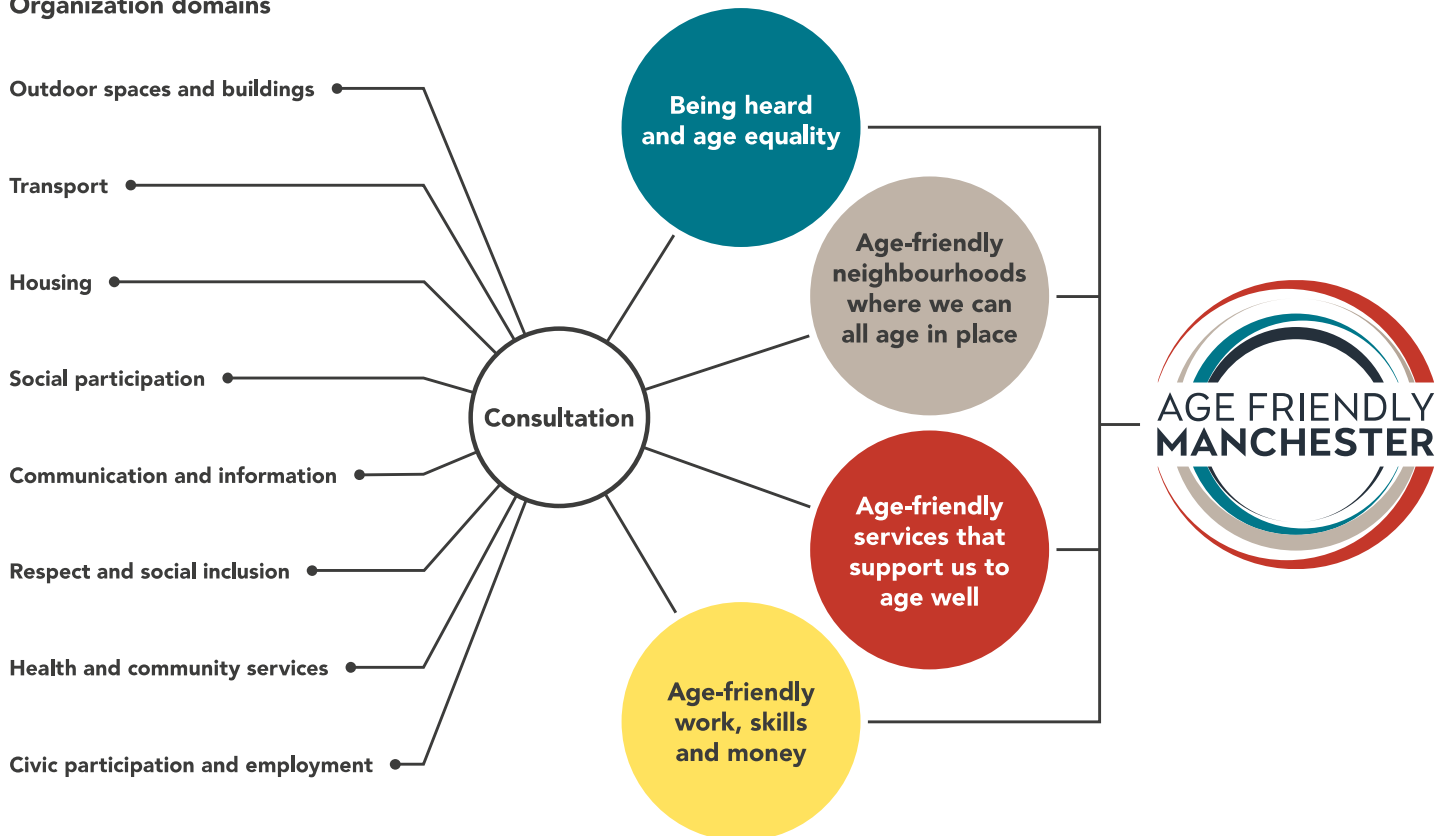
We take a social approach to ageing with equalities at its core. We want to promote a positive narrative about ageing that challenges ageism and leads to a better understanding of ageing and age-friendly ways of working. Through this we want to help change the way people think, talk about and respond to getting older.

8. Our themes

The WHO's eight domains set out the key features that go towards making an age-friendly city. Over the course of widespread consultations we identified four key themes for an age-friendly Manchester; the AFM team and its programme sit at the centre of these themes, acting as a strategic catalyst and connector.

The Making Manchester Fairer (MMF) action plan focuses on reducing the health inequalities in Manchester that are experienced across different communities, from before birth to older age.

World Health Organization domains



This strategy's focus on tackling inequalities experienced by the over-50s provides the ideal platform to deliver MMF's ambitions for this group. Specific activity will be included in the delivery plan, which accompanies this strategy. This will seek to address inequality in health outcomes and work towards ensuring that people aged over 50 in the city can live economically secure lives free from the structural discrimination that impacts on healthy life outcomes.





Theme 1 – Being heard and age equality

Evidence shows that ageism is widespread in society. It can be found in the workplace impacting on the career and recruitment prospects of older workers. It is common across all forms of media, which repeat negative stereotypes about age, frailty and decline, and often pit younger and older generations against each other.

One in three people in the UK reports experiencing age-based prejudice or discrimination. For some people this can be coupled with experiences of prejudice based on race, gender and sexuality – called intersectionality.

Theme 1 outlines an equalities approach that needs to be at the heart of everything we do. It stresses the centrality of the voices of residents in middle to later life, informing and shaping the life of the city.

Aims

1. Ensure age-friendly assessments and equalities impact assessments with a focus on age are at the heart of all strategic planning, design and delivery processes.
2. Continue to challenge ageism in all its forms, recognising that people over 50 come from a range of social, cultural and economic backgrounds, as well as a range of age groups. They may have experienced or still be experiencing inequalities such as racism, sexism, ablism and homophobia, which will affect how they experience ageing and later life.
3. Use an equalities approach to understand the needs of older people in communities that face the most barriers, to inform decision-making and how we work and engage with them.
4. Ensure the voices and experiences of the over-50s are heard and have influence across the city's partnerships and engagement structures.
5. Continue to develop age-positive and realistic communications, using physical media where needed or requested, while working to increase levels of digital inclusion among the over-50s.
6. Continue to support the AFM Older People's Board and Assembly and their vital role in shaping the work of the city.
7. Use Manchester's State of Ageing – which paints a picture of the current realities of ageing in the city – to identify opportunities, influence change and measure progress.

Over the first 18 months we will:

- » Adopt a policy that will support increased use across the Council of equality impact assessments that have a focus on age (EIAs)
- » Launch a recruitment and development campaign for the Board and Assembly that will boost numbers and increase broader representation across Manchester's different communities and neighbourhoods
- » Relaunch the AFM newspaper, which will be made available for free in supermarkets, community centres, libraries and other public buildings
- » Develop a better focus on digital inclusion for the over-50s.



Marie Greenhalgh

Theme 2 – Age-friendly neighbourhoods where we can all age in place

Where we live strongly influences how we experience ageing, and as we get older increasing amounts of our time are spent in our immediate home and neighbourhood, rising to 80% for the over-70s. Therefore, our neighbourhoods need to support our changing needs and enable us to age positively in the place we live – to be age-friendly.

Evidence shows that if we have a positive experience and attitude to ageing, we can live an average of seven and a half years longer. Theme 2 sets out how people can age well in the neighbourhoods of their choice with access to the right services, housing, information and opportunities – social, cultural or economic.

Aims

1. Embed age-friendly working and an equalities approach into place-based partnership groups, such as the Team Around the Neighbourhood and Ward Co-ordination, to support a better understanding of older people's needs and what makes an age-friendly place for them, particularly among diverse communities with differing experiences.
2. Develop age-friendly spaces and places where we can all thrive as we grow older, building on existing age-friendly work, testing new approaches, and working alongside the over-50s, place-based services and voluntary and community groups.
3. Improve social connection, recognising the key role of the voluntary sector and building on existing good practice across communities.
4. Work with older people to build resilience in their communities, recognising many already have experiences and skills they can share with others. Specifically address the lasting impacts of Covid-19, such as reduced mobility, strength and balance, and a decline in mental health and confidence. Additionally, build resilience to face the impacts of climate change, extreme weather events, and hardship caused by economic instability.
5. Diversify, promote and celebrate age-friendly volunteering opportunities for people over 50.
6. Using equality impact assessments (EIAs), ensure future regeneration schemes and commercial plans (including streets and public spaces) are designed to be age-friendly and benefit people at all stages of life.
7. Contribute to the development of the North Manchester Healthy Neighbourhood and support proposals for the International Centre for Action on Healthy Ageing.

8. Deliver the Greater Manchester Ageing in Place programme in Abbey Hey with the intention of increasing good practice across Manchester's neighbourhoods.
9. Widen Manchester's age-friendly housing choices, including building new housing that supports people throughout their lives, especially as their needs change; adapting existing homes to enable people to age in the place of their choice (and addressing the impacts of climate change); and developing a range of specialist housing choices, such as extra care schemes and the LGBTQ+ majority extra care scheme.

Over the first 18 months we will:

- » Co-produce an updated age-friendly neighbourhood model that describes the key features required to support people to better age in place
- » Pilot age-friendly working and an equalities approach into place-based partnership groups and neighbourhood delivery plans in Gorton and Crumpsall
- » In conjunction with volunteering support agencies, develop a campaign that promotes volunteering among the over-50s while diversifying volunteering opportunities
- » Test an EIA approach to the development plans in place around North Manchester General Hospital Healthy Neighbourhood and Gorton District Centre.



Dave Thorley

Theme 3 – Age-friendly services that support us to age well

While there are many good examples, not all services are universally age-friendly. Services need to better adopt an equalities approach that understands the lived experience of people in middle to later life, and can respond to and meet their needs as they age. Theme 3 is not about creating a range of specialist services. Rather, it is about ensuring that commissioning processes have age-friendliness built into their specification; it is also concerned with strategic plans and services that are designed and delivered in an age-friendly way, ie. they are age-aware and adopt an age-friendly lens and equalities approach to what they do. Theme 3 also addresses the approaches needed over the next 18 months to counter the impact of Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis on older people.

Aims

1. Develop a prevention approach that provides immediate support and targeted interventions to address the ongoing and long-term impacts of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis on the lives of people over 50.
2. Develop a prevention and reconditioning focus on a range of measures for the over-50s, which will:
 - » Increase options and levels of physical activity, encouraging people to move more
 - » Deliver a range of falls-prevention activities
 - » Create a range of social-eating events
 - » Improve access to community-health services, GPs and other health services
 - » Enable better access to mental-health support.
3. Supported by EIAs with a focus on age, work with commissioners and planners to make sure a stronger age-friendly perspective is included in service design that both understands and meets the needs of different groups of older people.
4. Introduce a further set of age-friendly equalities standards across key services via co-production with people over 50, beginning with the city's leisure centres and physical-activity programmes and a range of cultural organisations.
5. Continue to develop the age-friendly culture offer to make culture more accessible and relevant to people in middle to later life (both as consumers and performers), especially those who participate least in culture.
6. Incorporate Manchester's dementia vision and action plan into the development of age-friendly neighbourhoods where we can all age in place.
7. Mobilise Greater Manchester's resources to better meet the needs of Manchester's over-50s, eg. via Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to develop sustainable transport solutions that boost confidence and increase the use of public transport by older people.

Over the first 18 months we will:

- » Co-produce a new place-based prevention approach that puts the lived experience of people over 50 at its heart
- » In collaboration with anchor organisations across four neighbourhoods, deliver a programme of activity to increase social-eating events (with an additional focus on better information on good nutrition and hydration)
- » Increase investment in hyper-localised activity that supports people to get out and about and move more
- » Incorporate an integrated falls-prevention programme across all these activities
- » Co-produce an age-friendly service quality standard for leisure centres and their community-activity providers
- » Develop age-friendly culture standards and commitments with a range of the city's cultural organisations
- » Work with the Dementia Alliance to build on Libraries' age-friendly service standards so that those living with dementia, and those supporting them, can better access facilities and services.

Theme 4 – Age-friendly work, skills and money

With already high levels of unemployment in the city's over-50s population, the pandemic has reversed much of the progress on the employment of older workers. There has been an increase in the number of people between the ages of 50 and 64 not engaged in the labour market, and those aged over 50 who are in work are working longer and retiring later. Coupled with this has been a sharp rise in pensioner poverty, made worse by the cost-of-living crisis.

Theme 4 sets out what needs to be done to support older workers to remain economically active and in good work, to support planning for retirement, and to ensure pensioners receive the financial support they are entitled to.

Aims

1. Challenge ageism in recruitment and in the workplace, breaking down barriers to finding work and career progression.
2. Continue to deliver a strong work and skills service targeted at older workers aged over 50 who are in work, falling out of work, or looking for new work.
3. Increase the number of age-friendly employers.
4. Develop the over-50s' business support and entrepreneurship offer.
5. Support development of later-life planning initiatives, particularly around pensions and retirement.
6. Develop campaigns and targeted support to maximise older people's incomes, including a wider take-up of entitled benefits such as Pension Credit, using a range of accessible digital and non-digital information.
7. Raise awareness of poverty and its particular impact on older people to better create and deliver targeted responses.

Over the first 18 months we will:

- » Encourage age-friendly employment practices via Manchester's business networks
- » See Manchester City Council become an age-friendly employer, informed by a pilot across Manchester Libraries
- » Support the uptake and maximisation of benefit entitlements supported by a new information and awareness-raising campaign
- » Co-produce a later-life planning programme with employee groups and employers.



Freddi Greenmantle



9. Measuring impact

The State of Ageing report provides a snapshot of the realities of ageing in Manchester. It will be refreshed in five years' time along with the next ageing strategy as part of capturing change.

Progress will be captured by a range of qualitative and quantitative evaluation approaches that mirror those set out in the Making Manchester Fairer action plan.

Progress will be reported to the AFM Older People's Board via the partnership structures already in place. These include the Age Friendly Manchester Assembly, Neighbourhood Co-ordination Group, Steering Group, and Executive.

The rolling 18-month delivery plan that will accompany the strategy will be reviewed and updated every 12 months. It will provide the focus and the opportunity to accelerate progress and address challenges when they arise.

The Age Friendly Manchester Older People's Board

The Board was established in 2004 and has met every two months since, continuing online during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is the main consultative group of older people in the city bringing the voices and lived experiences of people aged over 50 into Manchester's decision-making processes. The Board works closely with the AFM programme as a critical friend and plays a major role in developing the city's plans around ageing and older people.

Board members come from a range of backgrounds and are elected from Manchester's Older People's Assembly, with representation from groups who work with or for older people.

We'd like to thank current and former Board members who contributed to the making of this strategy. Your voices run through this document.

Current Board members:

Elaine Unegbu (Chair), Marie Greenhalgh (Vice-Chair), Councillor Joan Davies (Lead Member for AFM), Councillor Sue Cooley, Samantha Days, Freddi Greenmantle, June Hagan, Elaine Horne, Circle Steele, Val Stevens, Mary Watson, Dave Williams

Retired Board members:

Eddy Newman, Kath Fitzgibbon.



Elaine Horne

Contact

**If you have any specific questions or comments
about this strategy, you can contact:**

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**MAKING
MANCHESTER
FAIRER**