



# Executive Summary

## Middlesbrough: An Age-friendly Town?

Where We Are Now • March 2022

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# Acknowledgements

The survey and report framework were modelled on:

Livability for All: The 2014 AARP Livable Communities Survey of Honolulu, Hawaii Adults Age 45+ report<sup>1</sup>

Supporting information from the Centre for Ageing Better<sup>2</sup>

Ageing Better Middlesbrough staff team and partners

Members of Middlesbrough's Age-friendly Steering Group

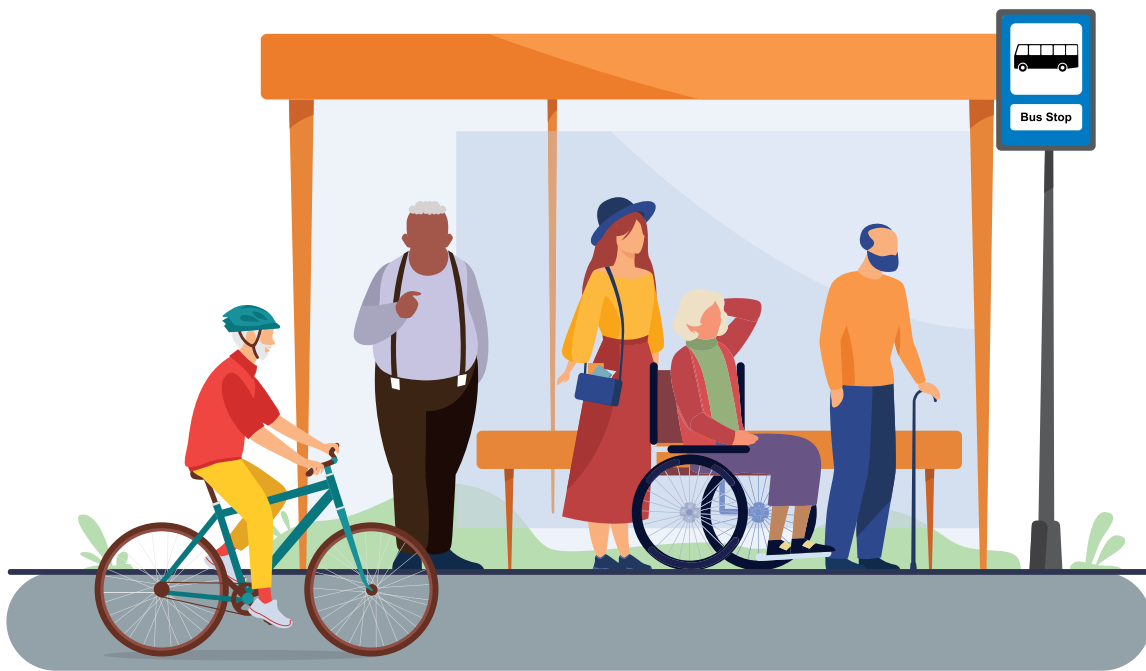
Members of the Ageing Better Middlesbrough Advisory Group (ABMAG)

National Lottery Community Fund

Public Health South Tees

Survey respondents

Teesside University



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# Foreword

**Our ambition is to develop Middlesbrough as an age-friendly town, where older people can live happy and healthy lives.**

I am delighted to see the publication of this baseline report, which will form a key part of a continuous development and improvement approach for age-friendly communities in Middlesbrough, and will guide our action planning, service delivery and partnership working over the coming years. We will work to ensure that a collaborative approach continues, at both an operational and strategic level, taking account of services, local communities, policies and systems.

I would like to thank Ageing Better Middlesbrough and anyone who has played their part in developing this baseline report and look forward to see the work continue, to ensure that Middlesbrough is a place that supports and enables people to live and age well, in a way that is right for them.

**Mark Adams**  
Joint Director of Public Health South Tees,  
Middlesbrough Borough Council

# Introduction: What is age-friendly?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities was established in 2010 to connect cities, communities and organisations worldwide with the common vision of making their community a great place to grow old in.

The WHO's Age-friendly Cities framework helps to consider all aspects of community lives when making plans for an age friendly town. It highlights 8 domains or community features that can be addressed to better adapt structures and services to the needs of older people:



With just over a third of Middlesbrough residents aged 50 years and older, we understand the importance of a proactive approach to meet the needs of an ageing population. We are passionate about making connections in our communities.

Our ambition is to make Middlesbrough a part of WHO's Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities and commit to creating healthy and vibrant communities for older people where they can live happy and healthy lives.

# Middlesbrough's age-friendly survey

In September 2021 Ageing Better Middlesbrough (ABM) in partnership with Public Health South Tees launched a Middlesbrough-wide age-friendly survey based on WHO's 8 domains. Launched during ABM's Festival of Ageing Better, the survey aimed to gather as many views of older people as possible to help build a picture of what is happening within the local community and find out what residents think can be done to make Middlesbrough a better place to live and age. The findings of the survey have informed development of this baseline report 'Middlesbrough: An Age-friendly Town? Where We Are Now: March 2022'. The report identifies the current state of play according to residents and puts forward some key recommendations for the future of an age-friendly Middlesbrough.

2,480 copies of the survey were posted to Middlesbrough residents homes and approximately 2,500 copies were distributed within the community at various venues and events. Surveys were available in paper form, online, in Braille and various languages. We completed some targeted work to engage with diverse communities and wards in some of the more deprived areas of Middlesbrough.

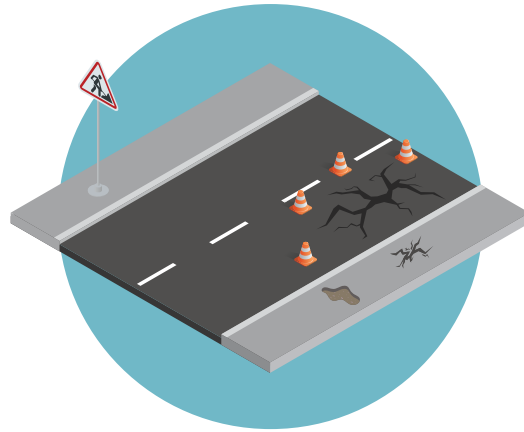
## Highlights of survey analysis



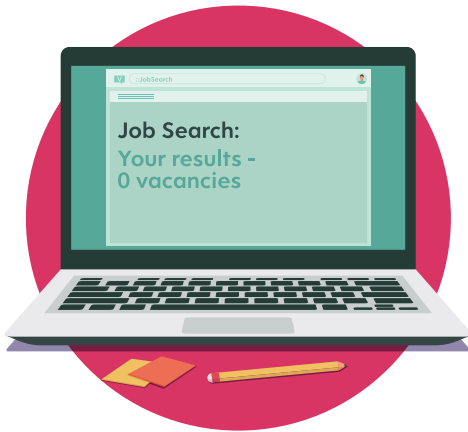
# Key findings



A lack of **resting places** in public spaces and a lack of **clean and accessible toilets**



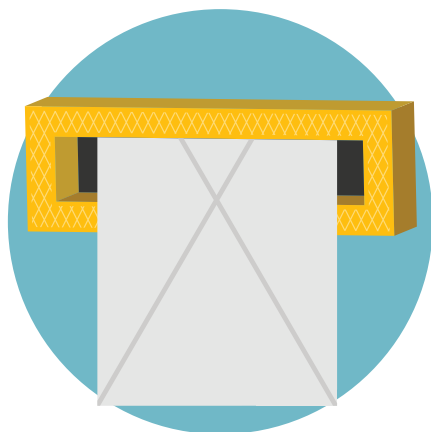
Concerns around the poor **maintenance of streets and roads** where they live



Perceived absence of **training and employment opportunities** for people aged 50 and over



Lack of reliable publicised **information about activities**



For this information to be available or **delivered** to people who have **difficulty or are unable to leave their home**



Need for more **activities** to be **affordable and accessible** to all residents

# Top 3 most important aspects of our community for older people

## Age-friendly domain

## Top 3 most important aspects of a community (% of respondees identifying aspect as 'important')

### Community support and health services



- Reliable ambulances (99.2%)
- Well maintained hospitals (98.5%)
- Respectful and helpful hospital staff (98.1%)

### Transport



- Conveniently located bus stops (96.9%)
- Easily accessible public transport (96.2%)
- Well-maintained streets and roads (95.9%) in relation to Transport

### Outdoor spaces and buildings



- Well-maintained streets (96.6%) in relation to Outdoor Spaces
- Pavements that are in a good condition (95.2%)
- Well-lit accessible, safe, streets and intersections (94.6%)

### Social participation



- Widely publicised reliable information about activities (94.4%)
- Activities that are affordable to all (93%) in relation to Social Participation
- Activities that are easily accessible by public transport (91.6%)

### Civic participation and employment



- Workplaces that are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities (92.1%)
- Policies against age discrimination (87.3%)
- Opportunities for people aged 50 or over to participate in decision making bodies (83.5%)

### Housing



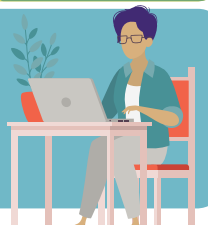
- Affordable home repair contractors (91.8%)
- Range of housing options with access options (88.4%)
- Choice of home repair contractors (88.4%)

### Respect and social inclusion



- Activities that are affordable to all (88.4%) in relation to Respect and Social Inclusion
- Activities for older people with language or mobility challenges (81.7%)
- Activities that offer older person discounts (75.8%)

### Communication and information



- Information delivered in person to people who have difficulty/are unable to leave their home (86.4%)
- Free access to computers and internet in public places (76.9%)
- Access to information in one central location (76.8%)



# Top 10 needs for older people in Middlesbrough

**Top 10 identified needs in Middlesbrough**  
(% gaps between what is important and what is available)

1



Enough benches for **resting places** in public areas

2



**Accessible clean toilets** that are available for public use

3



**Conveniently located recreational facilities** for older people or people with disabilities

4



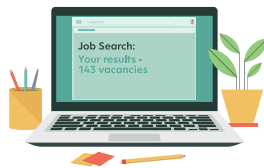
**Pavements** that are in a **good condition**, safe for pedestrians and accessible for wheelchair and other assistive mobility devices



5

Widely publicised, reliable **information about activities**

6



A range of **flexible job opportunities**

7



**Training** for people aged 50 or over

8



**Activities** that offer older person **discounts**

9



**Activities** that are **affordable** to all

10



**Activities** for older people with **language or mobility challenges**

## Priority age-friendly domains



**A Outdoor spaces and buildings**



**B Social participation**



**C Civic participation and employment**



**D Respect and social inclusion**

# Conclusions and recommendations

This baseline assessment has provided the foundation on which to build the changes needed to improve the age-friendliness of our town. This will help us to make an informed and evidence-based application to the World Health Organisation and to move on to the next stage of our age-friendly journey, to continue to work with local communities and partner organisations and to improve the social and built environment for older people.

The publication of this report is a crucial step in continuing to understand the experiences of older people in Middlesbrough. It also provides the outline for the next steps to ensure that Middlesbrough can continue with its age-friendly journey and be a place where people thrive as they grow older.

## Overall recommendations

1. To ensure all transport services are age-friendly
2. Explore insight work with MBC highways and maintenance to improve maintenance of streets and roads
3. Work with Housing partners to review housing options for older people and include age-friendly housing features
4. Ensure older people's involvement in the design and delivery of services that are provided to support them
5. Working with employment providers to review recruitment policies that meet older people's needs
6. Improve offer of accessible and affordable activities for all
7. Improved provision of public toilets and introduction of public toilet map
8. Improve resting places through please have a seat campaign
9. Identify central location points for accessing available information on community activities

Building an age-friendly community requires immense physical and social planning. The Age-friendly Middlesbrough Steering Group will be laying the groundwork for many of these actions and have developed an initial Age-friendly Middlesbrough Action Plan.

The action plan will help us to guide the implementation of the key recommendations. Some of these actions are well underway and the Steering Group partners involved in implementing those actions have already been making a difference in our older people's lives. Other actions are still in the planning stage.

Middlesbrough Council will be promoting and sharing the values and principles of age-friendly Communities which are intrinsically aligned to the WHO age-friendly domains and we will be asking businesses and organisations to pledge their support to an Age-friendly Charter for Middlesbrough.

**To pledge your support as an individual or organisation or to view the action plan, please go to [www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/AgeFriendlyMiddlesbrough](http://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/AgeFriendlyMiddlesbrough)**

With an ever-growing older population, Middlesbrough will need cross-sector collaboration to improve the lives of older people, their families and the communities in which they live. We will need to engage with key stakeholders in each Age-friendly domain to consult, research and develop further over the next few years.

Key stakeholders include; Benefits and Council Tax; Births, Deaths and Marriages; Business; Careers and Job Opportunities; Children, Families and Safeguarding; Community Support and Safety; Elections; Environment and Public Protection; Leisure, Events, Libraries and Hubs; Mayor, Council and Councillors; Open Data, FOI and Have Your Say; Parking, Roads and Footpaths; Planning and Housing; Recycling and Rubbish; Schools and Education; and Social Care and Wellbeing.

**“Let's take action today for all our tomorrows. Let's make ageing better.”<sup>3</sup>**









# Communication and information



## References

- 1 Nelson, B. M. and Harrison, E. Y. (2014) 'Liveability for All: The 2014 AARP Livable Communities Survey of Honolulu, Hawaii Adults Age 45+' Available at: <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/info-2014/livability-for-all--the-2014-livable-communities-survey-of-honol.html>
- 2 Centre for Ageing Better (2022) 'Publications' Available at: [https://ageing-better.org.uk/publications?gclid=EAlalQobChMI\\_d\\_AjNOQ9gIVIDY4Ch2J4ABsEAAYASAAEgKe8vD\\_BwE](https://ageing-better.org.uk/publications?gclid=EAlalQobChMI_d_AjNOQ9gIVIDY4Ch2J4ABsEAAYASAAEgKe8vD_BwE)
- 3 Centre for Ageing Better (2021) 'Age Positive Images'. Available at: <https://ageing-better.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-05/Age-positive-image-library-May-21.pdf>

