



AGE FRIENDLY

Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough

ARMAGH CITY, BANBRIDGE & CRAIGAVON

Age-Friendly Strategy & Action Plan

2022-2025



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Why an age-friendly strategy and action plan?

An age-friendly community is one in which people of all ages can live healthy and active lives and where everyone is treated with respect, regardless of their age.

As we all live longer, there are huge opportunities to create vibrant communities, develop life-long interests and aspirations and support diversity. After all, streets that are good for walking aids are good for prams and buggies.

But we need to be prepared to manage the challenges and unlock the potential of our ageing population. We need to help people stay connected, healthy and independent and provide choice, dignity and support for those who in the future can no longer look after themselves.

Being age friendly is not a defined state, and it doesn't have an end point. Rather, it is a journey along which we will continue to adapt to support the health and wellbeing of older people.¹ However, there

is a process and structure to becoming age friendly. According to the World Health Organisation, an age-friendly place must:

- Establish mechanisms to involve older people throughout the age-friendly process
- Develop a baseline assessment of the age-friendliness of the area under eight domains or areas
- Develop a three-year action plan
- Identify measurements to monitor progress against the plan

The eight age-friendly themes are:

- Social participation
- Respect and social inclusion
- Civic participation and employment
- Communication and information
- Community support and health services
- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transportation
- Housing

The following strategy and action plan has been developed by the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Age-friendly Alliance, following extensive consultation with people aged 50 and over living in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon borough, and aims to benefit everyone living, working and visiting the area as they grow older.





Who we are: The Age-friendly Alliance

Creating age-friendly communities involves older residents, local groups, community and voluntary sector, health partners, councils, and businesses working together.

In the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon borough, there is an Age-friendly Alliance of partners from different sectors with different expertise including older people's representatives, charities and community groups and statutory

agencies. It is likely the Alliance will continue to grow as more organisations see the value of working together to make life better for older people.

The work of the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Age-friendly Alliance is funded through the Public Health Agency, which supports an Age-friendly Officer who is based with Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.

How we worked together to develop this strategy and action plan

During mid – late 2021 we carried out research into all eight age-friendly themes.

This included:

- a detailed survey of 593 people
- one-to-one guided conversations
- focus groups

People we spoke to included a good range of people living in the city, towns, villages and countryside; people living alone, with family or in residential care; and people of different ages, from their early fifties to their late nineties.

We also carried out desktop research into what has worked well in age-friendly communities and asked our Age-friendly Alliance partners to share good examples of their work and of work they have come across elsewhere.

The Age-friendly Alliance came together during four workshops to reflect on this evidence. As we learned what matters most to local people or where they would like to see greatest improvement, we drafted, tested and refined the vision, cross-cutting themes, outcomes and actions.



What it's like to grow older around here

More people are living longer. The average man living in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council area is now expected to live to 79 and a half years and the average women, 83.1 years.ⁱⁱ

Two in every 10 people here are aged 60 and over. Two in every 100 are aged 85 and over.ⁱⁱⁱ The number of people aged 50 and over in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council area is expected to increase from 75,073 in 2020 to 102,101 in 2043. This is an increase of 36% (27,028) from the 2020 mid-year estimates.^{iv}

Why it is a good place to grow older

We surveyed 593 people aged 50 and over living in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council area.^v People told us that the best thing about where they live is the support they

receive from their community. This strong sense of community spirit became even more important and even stronger during the pandemic as people pulled together to look after each other.

Older people also give back generously. Nearly half of the people we surveyed told us that they volunteered,^{vi} and 4 in 10 have cared for a loved one, friend or neighbour.

There are relatively few crimes against older people in the borough,^{vii} and more than three quarters of people we surveyed feel safe in their local area.

Nearly two-thirds of the people we surveyed agreed that they have good quality, affordable internet, and there has been a big increase in use of the internet among older people.^{viii}

What matters most to people here as they grow older

Social participation

Participation in culture, arts and sport tends to decrease with age: 73 per cent of people aged 65 and over took part in 2020/21 compared to 96 per cent of those aged 25 to 34.^{ix} But people we surveyed told us they wanted more and a greater variety of things to do. They also felt that activity that is already happening could be promoted better.

Health

In the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon area, people aged 50 and over may be less likely to rate their health as good or very good than the population in general.^x They also ranked their life satisfaction now as 7.1 out of 10 compared to 7.9 for the whole Northern Ireland population in 2019/20.^{xi} This is likely to be at least in part because of Covid-19.

Loneliness and isolation were already issues, but they were made worse by the pandemic. Nearly a third of people we surveyed told us that they often felt lonely, and half told us they sometimes felt lonely.

Housing

Most people we spoke to could afford to keep their home warm and pay their household bills.^{xii} But housing was a major concern, particularly among those planning for or recently retired. Homes may be too large, have stairs or not be easily adaptable for future needs. Others wanted to understand their long-term care options so they could plan for later life.

Outdoor spaces and buildings

Many people we spoke to felt that the public realm was not accessible as they grew older. They would like to see pavements better maintained to prevent slips, trips and falls; more road crossings; and more seating and public toilets.

Transport

Most older people still drive, and they worry that they will lose their independence if they have to stop. 43 per cent had never used public transport, although others recognised it as a lifeline to help them stay connected.^{xiii}

Information and inclusion

Just over half the people we surveyed don't know or aren't sure where to go to get advice about their rights. Just over a third don't find that information they get from the council and other government organisations is easy to understand. And only 16 per cent of respondents felt that their opinion is valued by government.

Older people have a wealth of experience and expertise to offer, and they want to be engaged more in decision making – by government, the health service and others – so that policies and services make a real difference in their lives.

Strategic context

The Age-friendly strategy and action plan needs to connect with other strategies and policies so that it is supported by a wide range of organisations and that they consider the needs and wants of older people in everything they do.

To develop this Age-friendly strategy and action plan, we reviewed key strategies which relate to the eight age-friendly domains. These are considered in more detail in appendix 2. Of particular importance are the Department for Communities' Active Ageing Strategy 2016-22 and Connected – A Community Plan for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon 2017-30.

ACTIVE AGEING STRATEGY 2016-22

“Our vision is one of Northern Ireland being an age friendly region in which people, as they grow older, are valued and supported to live actively to their fullest potential; with their rights respected and their dignity protected.”

This strategy aims to increase understanding of the issues affecting older people and promote and emphasise their rights, value and contribution.

The outcomes of the strategy are informed by the five themes of the United Nations Principles for Older Persons:

1. Independence
2. Participation
3. Care
4. Self-fulfilment
5. Dignity

Connected – A Community Plan for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon 2017-30

The community planning partnership is a strategic partnership of statutory organisations which also includes members of the Age-friendly Alliance. It sets the priorities for collaborative working in the

borough, one of which is development of an Age-friendly strategy and action plan. The themes and outcomes of the community plan aim to improve the quality of life of all residents.

THE VISION FOR 2030 IS:

“We have a happy, healthy and connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning.”

Relevant age-friendly priorities

- **Community** – we live in a caring and safe borough where people lead healthy, fulfilling lives and take pride in shaping, nurturing and enriching community life.
- **Confident community** – everyone has opportunities to engage in community life and shape decisions – we have a strong sense of community belonging and take pride in our area
- **Healthy community** – people are making positive lifestyle choices. They are more resilient and better equipped to cope with life's challenges.
- **Welcoming community** – our borough is a safe, respectful and peaceful environment.
- **Place** – the borough is a place of discovery, where unique cultural and natural assets are cherished and people are inspired to be creative, to grow and to flourish.
- **Creative place** – our borough is an inspirational and creative place offering quality, inclusive arts and cultural experiences.

Vision

People in the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon area are valued regardless of age and are supported to age well and with confidence

Cross-cutting themes

Everything that we do will be underpinned by four cross-cutting themes.

Inclusive and accessible

We are all growing older, but for some people, this will be more challenging. We will consider the different wants, needs and abilities of all our residents as they get older. And we will take practical steps to ensure that those most at risk of missing out can benefit as fully as possible.

Collaborative

Age-friendly is about partnership or working better together. We will pool the collective influence, resources and expertise of the Age-friendly Alliance so that our work has a bigger impact for the people we want to benefit.

Proactive

We will work together to identify new issues – and opportunities – and seek to come up with solutions. We will also seek to influence regional strategy and decision makers.

Meaningful engagement

The Age-friendly strategy and action plan is based on what local people told us matters most in their lives. We are committed to continuing to engage with people in a meaningful way so that what they say helps shape how we deliver the actions in this action plan. The strategy and action plan was reviewed following community consultation in mid 2022; most notably adding in specific actions focussing on the role older people can play in volunteering within the community.



Outcomes - the high level changes which the programme aims to achieve

As people told us what mattered most in their lives or where they would like to see greater improvement, we developed five outcomes and supporting actions.

In the short term, these will support the age-friendly themes of

- Social participation
- Respect and social inclusion
- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Community support and health services
- Communications and information

In the long term, these will also build foundations to support changes in

- Transportation
- Housing
- Civic participation and employment

Outcomes

Outcome 1:

As we get older, we enjoy good physical and mental health

Outcome 2:

As we get older, we participate meaningfully in community life

How the Age-friendly Alliance might achieve this

Scope and collaborate to promote physical activity

Scope and collaborate to promote good mental health and wellbeing

Promote opportunities among Alliance members and allied organisations for accessing funds, training and support to deliver projects and activities which meet the needs of older people, some which will have a specific focus on men

Guided by PHA and partners, annually and ad hoc during the year, share information on health issues, relevant services, development opportunities and involvement potential within areas such as alcohol, tobacco, mental health

Scope and promote opportunities of volunteering for older people and in support of older people, including digital skills

Establish and promote a sustainable network of providers and community navigators, social prescribers and similar individuals to enable referrals and partnership working in the delivery of a range of services

Support and promote the work of the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Loneliness Network to encourage people to connect with each other

Support and promote the work of the ABC Intergenerational Network to help increase capacity and raise awareness of the benefits of intergenerational practice

Promote dementia-awareness training for all front-of-house staff in Alliance partners

Build understanding and commitment among local service providers such as banks, dentists and shops to define methods to assess the age-friendliness of their facilities and to provide age-friendly environments and services

Secure commitment of Alliance partners to define methods to assess the age-friendliness of their facilities, public spaces such as parks, town centres and community and leisure centres. Where appropriate, work in partnership to take action to address issues

Build understanding and commitment among care homes and their local communities to enable residents to continue to participate in community life



Outcomes

How the Age-friendly Alliance might achieve this

Outcome 3:

As we get older, we are heard, valued and respected and involved in decisions that affect us

Explore options for a process and guidelines to enable people over 50 to be engaged in dialogue and consulted on plans, policies and strategies that affect them and to ensure they are enabled to influence decision making and to receive feedback on their contributions

Connect older people to influencing structures they can join and the decisions they can influence, eg. Older Peoples Networks, Patient & Client Council, Pensioners Parliament

Consider use of Participatory Budgeting initiative to support engagement activities

Carry out an age-friendly survey every 3 years and share results widely including with targeted dissemination for older residents

Ensure that the needs and aspirations of older people are consistently considered by identifying (and training where appropriate) champions for older people

Support and build capacity of ABC Seniors Network to help the group represent the voice of older people in the Borough

Guided by PHA and partners, annually and ad hoc during the year, share information on 'Patient & Public Involvement' opportunities

Outcomes

How the Age-friendly Alliance might achieve this

Outcome 4:

As we get older, we are supported to retain independence

Develop a communications campaign which challenges the stereotypes of growing older and promotes positive ageing and well being

Connect older people to services that will enable them to live independently for longer in their own homes

Connect older people to NIHE, Housing Associations and providers to influence the development of appropriate housing options for different ages and needs

Explore partnership initiatives to expose and support older people to access public and community transport

Connect older people to training and support to help improve digital inclusion

Outcome 5:

As we get older, we are well informed about things that matter to us

Agree a communications plan for Age-friendly Alliance members and supporters to publicly demonstrate their commitment to age-friendly and a means to disseminate actions of the Plan

Map existing services and activities (by WHO age-friendly domains) and co-design a mechanism/s to publish and maintain the information.





How we will work together to deliver the action plan

Delivery

The Age-friendly Alliance will provide strategic direction and leadership in the delivery of the action plan.

It will be the role of key partners to lead on and take responsibility for the delivery of specific allocated actions. A number of partners have signed up to help deliver particular actions. They will work together with other Alliance partners to further develop joined-up delivery plans. These will be built on:

- what older people told us are their wants and needs
- their own experience of what works as experts in their field
- knowledge and awareness of what else is happening to avoid duplication
- learning from good practice from elsewhere

The Alliance will meet four times a year to feedback on actions and activities, to discuss progress and review action plans as needs evolve.

It is not in the power of the Alliance to deliver on everything that older people need. For example, during the consultation, we heard access to primary care services, such as GPs, is a big issue. However, the Alliance can share its findings and work together to and lobby other organisations and decision makers.

In many cases within the action plan, implementation will be dependent on the availability of resources. Whilst these are scarce, it is acknowledged that partnership working and pooling resources can bring greater value to existing budgets.



Monitoring, evaluation and review

An Outcomes-based approach is increasingly being used through Community Planning Partnerships as a method to monitor and evaluate the results of actions and activities.

We will work as Age-friendly Alliance partners to develop this approach for each outcome using the key statistics as population indicators. All actions in the action plans should contribute to improving these statistics.

While project performance measures will be further developed with delivery partners, some consideration has been given to this and suggested draft performance metrics have been included in the Age-friendly Action Plan under the “How we will measure success” column.

The Alliance will provide progress reports to the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Community Planning Strategic Partnership within their reporting cycle.

The strategy, action plan and anticipated timescales for the delivery of actions and outcomes will be reviewed and revised annually to consider what has worked well and less well over the previous year and to consider new challenges and opportunities.

The strategy and action plan form part of the Borough’s Community Planning framework and will link with reporting to the Strategic Partnership.

Appendix: Summary of relevant strategies and policies



NI Programme for Government

Relevant age-friendly priorities

We have an equal and inclusive society where everyone is valued and treated with respect

Key priority areas include:

- Inclusion and tackling disadvantage – tackling the issues that lead to inequality and disadvantage in terms of welfare and poverty and providing support where it is needed in both urban and rural communities
- Rights and equality – promoting and protecting the rights of individuals to ensure we are recognising and respecting diversity, ensuring everyone feels included

We all enjoy long, healthy, active lives

Key priority areas include:

- Access to health – tackling health and social care reform to ensure we can deliver safe, high-quality care services to meet the challenges of the future and provide the right services where they are needed.
- Mental health and wellbeing – promoting positive attitudes towards mental health and wellbeing and ensuring access to comprehensive early intervention and healthcare services to address mental health issues
- Older people – considering the health and social care needs of an ageing population, promoting positive attitudes to older people and tailoring support to enable them to enjoy better health and active lifestyles
- Physical health and wellbeing – promoting positive public health measures, increasing awareness and supporting safe, active and healthy lives

Everyone can reach their potential

Key priority areas include:

- Capability and resilience – supporting personal development opportunities for everyone and building confidence and capability

Everyone feels safe – we all respect the law and each other

Key priority areas include:

- Address harm and vulnerability – supporting and putting protection in place for those who are vulnerable, including the complex needs of children, and meeting the needs of those who have experienced serious crime, including delivering for victims and survivors

We have a caring society that supports people throughout their lives

Key priority areas include:

- Disability – improving the quality of life for those of us with disabilities, empowering people to have more influence over their own lives and providing opportunities for people to participate in decisions that affect them
- Housing – tackling homelessness, facilitating and supporting housing associations, providing and maintaining appropriate social housing and investing in new social and affordable homes
- Inclusion and tackling disadvantage – supporting people to build a route out of poverty, administering an effective social security system to those who need it and tackling the issues that lead to inequality.
- Mental health and wellbeing – promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, addressing social issues, risk factors and environmental impacts such as isolation and loneliness and providing access to supportive services and promoting early intervention
- Older people – considering the health and social care needs of an ageing population, promoting positive attitudes to older people and tailoring support to enable them to participate fully in society

Why does this matter for an age-friendly Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon borough?

It is important that local plans demonstrate alignment with the outcomes of the Programme for Government. The people living in the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon area identified many of the same priorities as those included in the Programme for Government. This strategic link can focus attention to their needs and aspirations and potentially attract resources.

Active Ageing Strategy 2016–22

“Our vision is one of Northern Ireland being an age friendly region in which people, as they grow older, are valued and supported to live actively to their fullest potential; with their rights respected and their dignity protected.”

The Department for Communities’ regional Active Ageing Strategy aims to increase understanding of the issues affecting older people and promote and emphasise their rights, value and contribution.

The outcomes of the strategy are informed by the five themes of the United Nations Principles for Older Persons. The themes are:

- Independence
- Participation
- Care
- Self-fulfilment
- Dignity

Outcomes

1. Older people live independently for as long as they can, free from poverty and in suitable, safe homes.
2. Older people are involved in their family and community and in civic life.
3. Older people are healthier for longer.
4. Older workers remain in employment for as long as they wish or need to.
5. Older people participate in cultural, education and physical activity.
6. Older people’s dignity and human rights are effectively safeguarded.

Why does this matter for an age-friendly Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon borough?

The current Active Ageing Strategy was extended by 12 months to May 2022 due to Covid. It is a reasonable assumption that it will continue to be aligned with the UN Principles for Older Persons. People living in the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon area told us how they valued their independence and their involvement in community and civic life. They also told us about how important participation in a variety of activities is to both their mental and physical health. The policy framework provided by the Active Ageing Strategy, and the impetus it puts on central government departments and related bodies, aligns with the needs and aspirations of the people of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon.

Connected – A Community Plan for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon 2017–30

The vision for 2030 is:

“We have a happy, healthy and connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning.”

Relevant age-friendly priorities

- Community – we live in a caring and safe borough where people lead healthy, fulfilling lives and take pride in shaping, nurturing and enriching community life.
- Confident community – everyone has opportunities to engage in community life and shape decisions – we have a strong sense of community belonging and take pride in our area
- Healthy community – people are making positive lifestyle choices. They are more resilient and better equipped to cope with life’s challenges.
- Welcoming community – our borough is a safe, respectful and peaceful environment.
- Place – the borough is a place of discovery, where unique cultural and natural assets are cherished and people are inspired to be creative, to grow and to flourish.
- Creative place – our borough is an inspirational and creative place offering quality, inclusive arts and cultural experiences.

Why does this matter for an age-friendly Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon borough?

The community planning partnership is a strategic partnership of statutory organisations which also includes members of the Age-friendly Alliance. It sets the priorities for collaborative working in the borough, one of which is the development of an Age-friendly strategy and action plan. The themes and outcomes of the community plan aim to improve the quality of life of all residents. As the demography of the area continues to change, with an increasing proportion of older people, the community plan has an important role to play in meeting the needs of those residents.

Mental Health Strategy 2021–31

“Our vision for Northern Ireland is a society which promotes emotional wellbeing and positive mental health for everyone with a lifespan approach, which supports recovery, and seeks to reduce stigma and mental health inequalities.”

Relevant age-friendly priorities

Theme 2, “Providing the right support at the right time” includes a particular focus on mental health and older adults:

- All older adults who need mental health services will receive the care and treatment they need
- Old age psychiatry services are no longer based on an age threshold but on the needs of the person

Why does this matter for an age-friendly Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon borough?

A lifespan and person-centred approach acknowledges that there is no universal template for growing older, meaning services can be more responsive to needs throughout the ageing process. Mental health is identified as just as important as physical health as we grow older, and isolation and loneliness have the potential to have a negative impact on mental health, potentially increasing the need for services.

Transforming your Care, A Review of Health and Social Care, 2011

Relevant age-friendly priorities

Transforming your Care made 99 proposals for change across the range of health and social care services. It also identified 12 major principles for change which would underpin the future model of health and social care in Northern Ireland. Of particular relevance to an age-friendly strategy are:

- Placing the individual at the centre of the model by promoting a better outcome for the service user, carer and their family
- Providing the right care in the right place at the right time
- A focus on prevention and tackling inequalities
- Integrated care – working together
- Promoting independence and personalisation of care
- Safeguarding the most vulnerable

Key outcomes for Transforming your Care include:

- more services will be provided locally with opportunities to access specialist hospitals where needed
- more people will be cared for at home where it's safe and appropriate to do so

- doctors, nurses, social workers and everyone providing care will work together in partnership to help keep people healthy
- people will get support to stay healthy, make good health decisions or manage their own conditions
- investment in new technology will help people stay at home or receive care locally rather than in hospitals

Why does this matter for an age-friendly Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon borough?

People told us how important it was to them to be able to access health services locally and how much they valued being able to remain in their own homes and part of their own communities. They also told us of the need for more easily understood and readily accessible information about healthcare.

Southern Local Commissioning Group – Local Population Plan 2012-15

Relevant age-friendly priorities

In recognition of the growing ageing population in the Southern Local Commissioning Group area, future provision of services will increasingly be modelled with a preventative focus to promote independence and improve wellbeing. An independent living ethos will be created where services are delivered within a person's own home or as close to it as possible.

Strategic goals for delivering service outcomes:
Older people

- Improve the ability to intervene earlier in the patient journey through integrated multi-agency response
- Increase diversity of service provision
- Implementation of a comprehensive reablement service
- Person-centred approach where home is the hub of care
- Personalised care budgets

- Move to mobile working enabled by e-health technology
- Strengthening adult safeguarding as part of the regional drive
- Increase support to carers in the community
- Ensuring the needs of people with dementia and their carers are addressed across all care settings
- Optimising provision of non-acute hospital care

Why does this matter for an age-friendly Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon borough?

People told us how important it was to them to be able to access health services locally and how much they valued being able to remain in their own homes and part of their own communities. They also told us of the need for more easily understood and readily accessible information about healthcare.

Making Life Better 2013–23

Making Life Better's vision is:

“All people are enabled and supported in achieving their full health and wellbeing potential.”

Its aims are to achieve better health and wellbeing for everyone and reduce inequalities in health.

Relevant age-friendly priorities

Making Life Better is structured around six themes:

1. Giving every child the best start
2. Equipped throughout life (takes account of particular needs at different stages of life)
3. Empowering healthy living (addresses support for individual behaviours and choices and embeds prevention in health and social care)
4. Creating the conditions (acknowledges that there are many factors which contribute to poor and good health – the social determinants of health)
5. Empowering communities
6. Developing collaboration

Outcomes which are relevant to age-friendly and older people include:

- Outcome 6: Active, healthy ageing
- Outcome 12: Making the most of our physical environment
- Outcome 13: Safe and healthy homes
- Outcome 16: Safe and healthy workplaces
- Outcome 18: Strengthened collaboration for health and wellbeing

Why does this matter for an age-friendly Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon borough?

Many of the people who informed this plan referred to their health and wellbeing and their desire to retain a full and active life as far as is possible.

Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation 2016

“Our vision is of a fair and inclusive rural society where rural dwellers enjoy the same quality of life as all others in the region. We envisage vibrant, strong rural communities, resilient and receptive to global trends through strong inter-linkages with urban areas and market towns.”

Relevant age-friendly priorities

The aim of the strategy is to improve the quality of life for vulnerable people in rural areas by providing flexible mechanisms to work in partnership to develop and implement measures which help tackle rural poverty and social isolation.

Relevant outcomes include:

- An increase in the availability of new and innovative models or approaches designed to address rural poverty and social isolation
- An increase in levels of knowledge and understanding of the causes of poverty and social isolation in rural areas and increased sharing of information, best practice and expertise
- The successful implementation of interventions which help alleviate the effects of access poverty, financial poverty and social isolation in rural areas among specific vulnerable groups
- Positive and effective engagement by rural communities in seeking to address poverty and social isolation issues within their areas

Relevant actions include:

- Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing
- Increasing opportunities for social engagement (e.g., social activities, sport and leisure activities, cultural activities, etc.)
- Providing support to groups at risk of social isolation (e.g., farmers, older people, people with disabilities, disengaged youth, etc.)

Why does this matter for an age-friendly Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon borough?

Looking at 2011 Census results just over half of the Borough's population (51%) lived in urban areas based on the NISRA default urban / rural classification, while just under half (49%) lived in rural areas. The research undertaken to develop this plan found that isolation and loneliness were issues for around half of survey respondents. Feedback also identified the value placed on social and other activities to address isolation but being able to access such activities was a concern for some, in particular those who did not drive.

Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (draft for consultation 2021)

The vision is:

“Lifelong involvement in sport and physical activity leads to an active, healthy, resilient and inclusive society which recognises and values both participation and excellence.”

Relevant age-friendly priorities

- Promoting participation, inclusion and community engagement
- Improved physical literacy and increased lifelong participation in sport and physical activity for all
- Addressing the barriers to participation in sport and physical activity through co-designing programmes and initiatives
- Improved physical and mental health and well being
- Sport and physical activity are inclusive, safe, diverse, shared and offer equality of opportunity to participate for all

The strategy acknowledges that older women and men (and other underrepresented groups) are prevented from participation in sport and physical activity for a number of reasons, not just physical ability, and commits to a co-design approach to reducing these barriers.

Why does this matter for an age-friendly Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon borough?

The benefits of physical activity are widely acknowledged. Nearly three quarters of respondents to the Age-friendly Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon area 2021 survey regularly walk or take part in exercise, and there are many fit and active people over 50 who appreciate the opportunity to participate in a range of physical activity. Barriers to remaining active include the availability and awareness of appropriate activities.

Get Moving ABC Framework (2020 – 2030)

“The Get Moving ABC Partnership’s target is to get more of our population moving and become the most physically active Borough in Northern Ireland.”

Get Moving ABC is a Borough wide targeted initiative, with a collective effort by a range of local organisations and groups, to motivate and support as many people as possible, to work towards and achieve the recommended physical activity levels and positively impact the health and wellbeing of all people living in the Borough.

The long term aim is get more of our population moving and become the most physically active Borough in Northern Ireland. The focus is on increasing sport and physical activity within homes, communities, workplaces and schools and to develop more positive attitudes towards being active.

Strategic themes:

- Get Communities Moving - aims to create a mass, integrated Get Moving ABC campaign across the Borough to positively inform people, engage and change their attitudes and behaviour towards being active.
- Get Places Moving - aims to promote and maximise the use of the Borough’s natural built infrastructure leading to better assets and a more active population

- Get People Moving – aims to increase the variety and number of activities on offer, and support people to be active everyday within communities, workplaces, schools and homes throughout the Borough.
- Get Systems Moving - aims to create and strengthen interagency partnership working to Get Moving ABC.

Why does this matter for an age-friendly Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon borough?

Physical activity or exercise can improve health and reduce the risk of developing several diseases like type 2 diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease. It can have immediate and long-term health benefits. Small changes can make a big difference if they are sustained over time and can improve quality of life. The Get Moving ABC challenge aims to reduce inactivity and develop more positive attitudes towards being physically active to support health and wellbeing across communities in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council area.

NI Housing Executive Older Peoples Housing Strategy 2021/22 to 2026/27

“Our vision is to enable older people to live as independently as possible with dignity; with opportunities and options to meet their housing needs; and to be supported to engage and participate in community life to create vibrant sustainable communities”

The themes of the strategy are:

- Planning for the future – looking at different housing options and housing models for older people and supporting independent living
- Promoting and maintaining dignity – looking at ways to develop new and existing services to promote and maintain the dignity of tenants and customers
- Providing housing advice for older people
- Promoting participation – recognising how engaging, enabling and empowering older people to participate actively in community life can have positive impacts on their health, wellbeing and happiness. Working in partnership with others to support opportunities for older people to become involved in shaping, informing and enjoying services delivered on their behalf.

Why does this matter for an age-friendly Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon borough?

The Social Housing sector share of the housing market in the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon area was at 11 per cent in 2016,^{xiv} and older people made up approximately 16 per cent of waiting list applicants in 2020.^{xv} The availability of affordable, appropriate housing was identified as an issue for many people as they grow older. People identified the need to think about new and different housing models which can enable people to remain in their own home or community for as long as possible.

Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Local Transport Study 2021

The purpose of the local transport plan is to set out an evidence-based assessment in relation to current and future transport issues.

Relevant age-friendly objectives include:

- Ensure viable and sustainable public transport accessibility to essential services for people living in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council area
- Ensure there are attractive and safe active travel networks (walking and cycling) connecting all residential, employment, retail and leisure uses in the urban areas of the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon borough
- Deliver high-quality public realm in the centres of Armagh, Banbridge and the Craigavon urban area with reduced vehicle dominance to make the towns safe and attractive places to live and work and to improve safety for active travel
- Enhance safety for all modes of transport and reduce the number and severity of casualties

Why does this matter for an age-friendly Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon borough?

People told us that the wide range of activities available in the area is only part of the equation. Being able to access them is the other. They told us how important it is to have other transport options as they would not always be able to drive themselves. People also told us about the importance of feeling that spaces such as town centres and parks were “for them”. This includes considering accessibility as well as kerbs, lighting and the availability of seating and public toilets.

Public Realm/Environmental Improvement (Department for Communities)

The Department for Communities plays an important role in investing in the improvement and appearance of neighbourhoods, towns and city centres. Improving the appearance of an area is not just to make people feel good when they visit, shop, work or live there, although that is very important. If an area has been upgraded and is attractive it will be healthier, safer and cleaner and more people will want to go there.

The aim is to create high quality public spaces and footpaths to encourage better access for all people including those with mobility or sensory issues. This will create spaces where people from all communities can meet, relax and enjoy the surroundings.

The type of work undertaken includes:

- improving street lighting
- widening footpaths for pedestrians
- adding street furniture such as seating, bins and hanging basket stands

- replacing paved walkways with new long-lasting surfaces
- improving how the traffic flows
- providing public art which reflects the history and personality of the area
- planting trees, shrubs and flowers
- creating or improving facilities such as multi-use games areas or play parks

Why does this matter for an age-friendly Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon borough?

People told us about the importance of feeling that spaces such as town centres and parks were “for them”. This includes taking mobility, lighting and access to seating and toilets into account in the design of public realm.

Endnotes

- i** Creating age-friendly environments in Europe, a tool for local policy makers and planners, WHO Europe 2016
- ii** From the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's (NISRA) Life expectancy at birth (administrative geographies), <https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/PivotGrid.aspx?ds=10325&lh=73&yn=2008-2019&sk=134&sn=Health%20and%20Social%20Care&yearfilter=>
- iii** NISRA, -friendly profiles (administrative geographies) for 2019 and 2043, www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/PivotGrid.aspx?ds=10315&lh=73&yn=2017,2019,2043&sk=10&sn=People%20and%20Places&yearfilter=
- iv** 2018 Based Population Projections
- v** Based on a sample size of 593, we can be sure that 95 per cent of the whole population would have responded to the survey question in the same way with a margin of error of plus or minus 4 per cent.
- vi** 48 per cent prior to the Covid-19 pandemic
- vii** 649 in 2018/19 according to NISRA, Police recorded crime (administrative geographies), <https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/AreaProfileReportViewer.aspx?FromAPAddressMultipleRecords=Armagh%20City,%20Banbridge%20And%20Craigavon@Partial%20match%20of%20location%20name:%20@Partial%20Match%20Of%20Location%20Name:%20%20Armagh%20City,%20Banbridge%20And%20Craigavon@22?#545>
- viii** In 2019, 58 per cent of people aged 65 and older in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council had never accessed the internet (<https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/PivotGrid.aspx?ds=10295&lh=73&yn=2013-2019&sk=10&sn=People%20and%20Places&yearfilter=>); in 2021, according to our survey, that figure is now 21 per cent
- ix** From the Continuous Household Survey (CHS) 2020/21, <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/engagement-culture-arts-and-sport-by-adults-northern-ireland-202021>
- x** Based on Health survey Northern Ireland 2019/20, <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/health-survey-northern-ireland-first-results-201920>
- xi** 62 per cent of people we surveyed aged 50 and over rated their health as good or very good compared to 71 per cent of people of all ages across NI in 2019/20 (<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/self-efficacy-locus-control-life-satisfaction-northern-ireland-201920>)
- xii** 88 per cent and 92 per cent respectively
- xiii** From the 2021 Age-friendly Alliance survey
- xiv** NI Housing Conditions survey 2016
- xv** NI Housing Executive Housing Investment Plan Annual Update 2020





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