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Learning Snapshot: Age Friendly Communities

Ageing Better is a test and learn programme funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.

We collect information and insights from across 14 partnerships and use this learning to support service deliverers, funders and policy makers working to reduce social isolation in people aged over 50.

This learning snapshot details key findings and insights around creating Age Friendly Communities.

You can use it as a summary of the full learning report, to share practical tools with colleagues and in teams, or include in your own presentations and briefings.

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1. What is an Age Friendly Community?

Developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO), an Age Friendly Community is somewhere people can:

- live healthy and active later lives
- continue to stay in their homes
- participate in the activities they value
- contribute to their communities.

It provides a common goal for the voluntary, public and private sectors. By working together, these new partnerships create long-term changes to the physical and social environment. Any area can work towards gaining Age Friendly status.

2. What are the challenges?

- Local Authorities have shifting priorities, so it requires a dedicated champion to manage timescales/expectations, maintain focus and evidence success in order to keep 'Age Friendly' high on the local agenda.
- WHO identify eight Age Friendly 'domains'. They may feel overwhelming for some so it is important that responsibility is split (realistically) between stakeholders. For example, the Local Authority could lead on 'housing' and 'transport' whilst communities focus on the areas they can best influence or are interested in.

4. So what can we do with this learning?

All Age Friendly areas will require:

- Strategic leadership (Local Authority or a lead organisation).
- Voluntary sector champions (existing and trusted brand).
- Community Engagement (mobilise communities to make their own changes).
- Age Friendly training - tailored for businesses to raise awareness and increase understanding around ageing.

Age Friendly toolkits and resources are available to support any area currently working to become Age Friendly.

3. How can we create more Age Friendly Communities?

Utilise existing resources, tools and techniques to help evidence its worth:

- share stories and celebrate successes
- make it as practical as possible
- monitor and evaluate events
- measure customer satisfaction.

Embed the Age Friendly Communities agenda into a wider network of strategies and initiatives locally to increase 'buy-in' as well as partnering with existing 'Friendly' networks (e.g. dementia networks). Both the physical and psychological aspects of ageing should be considered in the offer.