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Healthy Ageing in a Changing Climate: Creating Inclusive, Age-Friendly, and Climate Resilient Cities and Communities in the UK

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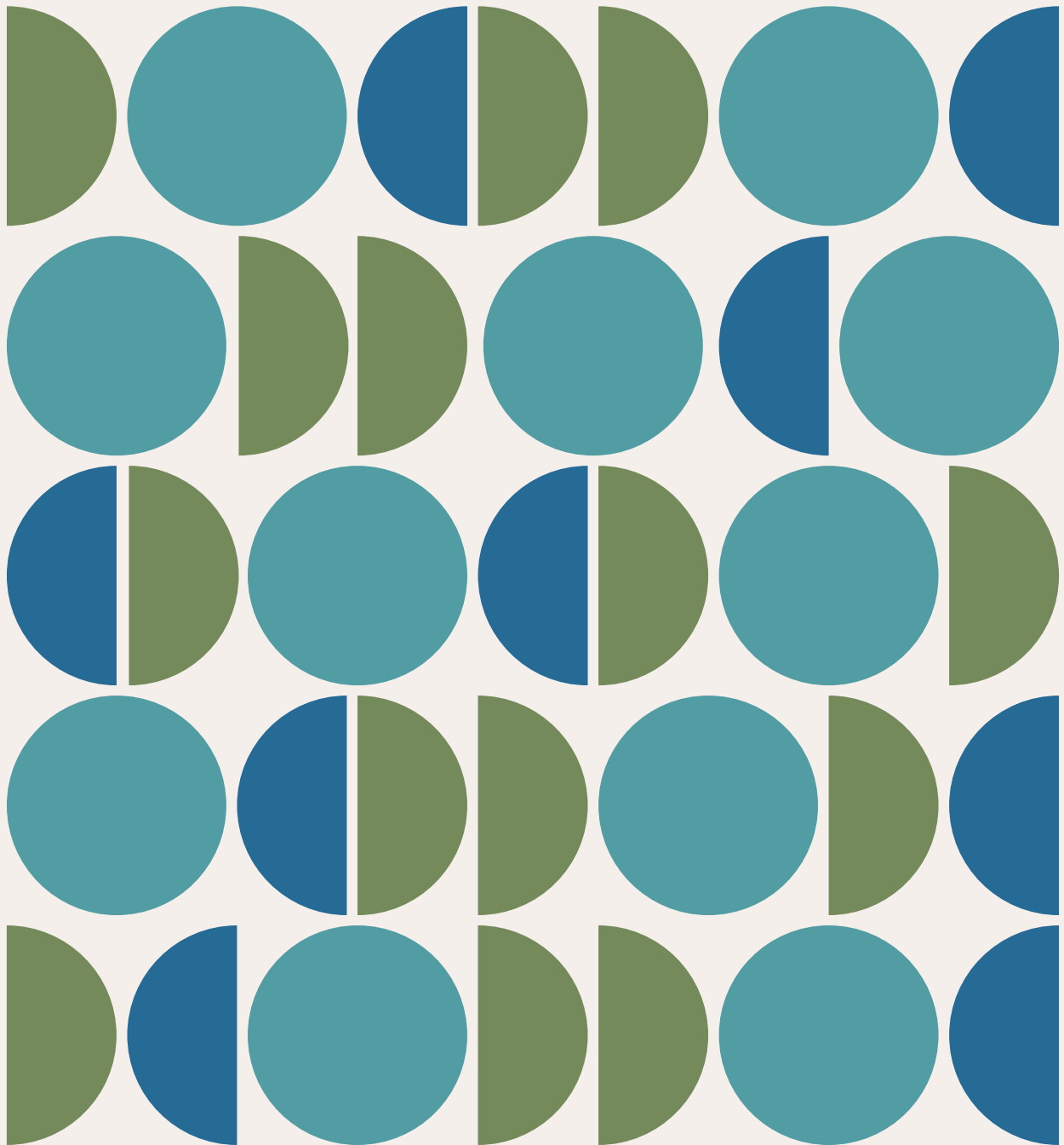
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Healthy Ageing *in a* **Changing Climate**

Creating Inclusive, Age-Friendly, and
Climate Resilient Cities and Communities in the UK



UKRI Healthy Ageing Challenge





Healthy Ageing *in a* Changing Climate

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Climate Resilient Cities and Communities in the UK

Ryan Woolrych, Gary Haq, Briony Latter



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Delivered by
Innovate UK
and ESRC

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Background

During 2022-23, the Urban Institute at Heriot-Watt University, together with the Stockholm Environment Institute at the University of York, undertook a research project across the United Kingdom (UK) which aimed to explore the challenges and opportunities of extreme weather and climate change on ageing populations.

Funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) through its Healthy Ageing Challenge, the project builds on the World Health Organization (WHO) Age-Friendly Cities and Communities (AFCC) framework. AFCC promotes active ageing by enhancing opportunities for health and community engagement, and overall quality of life as people grow older.

The research project consisted of five specific phases of work:

1. Policy and practice mapping event with key stakeholders to identify priorities for building climate resilient AFCC.
2. Online UK wide campaign to capture older adult's perceptions and experiences of climate change.
3. Community dialogue workshops with older people across the UK to explore the meaning of healthy ageing in the context of climate change and extreme weather.
4. Co-design events with policymakers, practitioners and older people exploring how we can build climate resilient AFCC.
5. Presentation of recommendations and dialogue with key organisations to explore next steps and future actions.

Over 140 older adults, policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders in England (Manchester and Rochdale), Northern Ireland (Belfast), Scotland (Leith) and Wales (Cardiff) came together to co-design potential solutions at the local, community, and city level. We also worked closely with AFCC teams, local government, and voluntary and community organisations within each locality.

We identified six key areas that require action to address the threat posed by climate change to the healthy ageing of older adults living in cities and communities throughout the UK:

- Empowering older people towards climate action
- Mobilising community and social infrastructure
- Enhancing mobility and transport for healthy ageing
- Climate resilient housing for ageing-in-place
- Healthcare and wellbeing for older adults in extreme weather
- Intergenerational communities and climate resilience

Here, we outline recommendations that local and national governments should take in partnership with community organisations and older people to address these key areas.

Healthy Ageing

Healthy ageing is a continuous process of optimising opportunities to maintain and improve physical and mental health, independence, and quality of life throughout the lifecourse.^[1] This includes a person's ability to meet their basic needs; learn, grow, and decide; be mobile; build and maintain relationships; and contribute to society.^[2]

Further information about the Healthy Ageing in a Changing Climate project:
www.ageandclimate.com



Healthy Ageing and Climate Change

The UK is home to over 11 million (2021) individuals aged 65 and above, constituting almost 19% of the overall population.^[3]

This demographic is expected to grow to 13 million people by 2030, accounting for 22% of the population.^[4] At the same time, climate change is increasing the severity and frequency of extreme weather events. This poses a significant challenge to the health and wellbeing of older people, particularly those who live in vulnerable locations or lack the physical, mental, social, and financial resources needed to avoid or minimise the effects of extreme weather.

Climate change can have direct and indirect effects on the health and wellbeing of older adults. Higher temperatures caused by heatwaves bring excess mortality, with older people having a reduced ability to regulate body temperature in old age.^[5] Chronic health conditions make this worse, such as cardiovascular and respiratory disease, diabetes, and susceptibility to dehydration, further affecting health and wellbeing outcomes. During the 2022 summer heatwaves, over 2,800 more people aged 65 and over died in England than would be typical. This marked the highest number of heat-related excess deaths in the last two decades.^[6]

Flooding, storms, and wildfires can cause immediate injury and death to older adults.

^[7] In addition, there are several indirect effects on the health and wellbeing of older people, such as storm damage to homes, loss of power, and disruption of transport infrastructure, which can reduce mobility, social interaction, and access to

essential services.^{[8][9]} Flooding events can cause direct displacement from home and community. Taken together, extreme weather can affect the ability for older people to age well in place, requiring support at an individual, social and community level to live with, respond to and recover from extreme weather events.^[10]

The United Nations (UN) has identified climate change as a significant threat to an ageing population ^[11] calling upon AFCC to address the following key priority areas:

- a. Build climate resilient and environmentally sustainable health systems and facilities, that support health adaptation and resilience across sectors.
- b. Position older people as agents of change, community leaders and influencers on climate action, beyond a narrative focused on their needs and vulnerability.
- c. Mainstream healthy ageing into national health and climate change plans and strategies, assessments and adaptation.
- d. Reimagine urban environments, transport, and mobility, with improved land-use, access to green and blue public space, and priority for walking, cycling and public transport.
- e. Build capacity and awareness about the links between climate change, older people, and healthy ageing, and strengthen cross-sectoral alliances.



Ageing-in-Place

Ageing-in-place supports the right of older people to live at home and in a community of choice, where they can remain active, engaged, socially connected, and independent. Ageing in the right place is key to building individual, social and community resilience and reflects the interdependency between people and their environment in old age and its impact on wellbeing.^[12]

Age-friendly Cities and Communities

The WHO AFCC agenda provides a place-based framework for supporting older people (aged 60 and over) to age in place.^[13] This global development has now expanded to over 1,400 communities and cities worldwide.

Over 60 members are part of the UK AFCC initiative, which is affiliated with the Global WHO AFCC Network. The Centre for Ageing Better, an independent charity, works with the UK network to provide guidance, connect places, and offer support to member organisations. The UK AFCC network has led to a range of cross-sectoral interventions and initiatives at a community, city and regional level aimed at improving the lives of older people and supporting their involvement in developing age-friendly environments.

To respond to the risks that climate change poses to healthy ageing, the AFCC provides a framework to align its efforts with the UN healthy ageing and climate change priority areas. This will enable the creation of more inclusive and climate resilient AFCC, thereby fostering the support needed for healthy ageing-in-place.

Climate change presents both significant challenges and opportunities in shaping places that can withstand the impacts of ageing and climate change. These factors have far-reaching implications across all aspects of an age-friendly community. The urgency of creating climate resilient AFCC cannot be overstated. It requires concerted effort to reduce vulnerability, build climate resilience, and mobilise older people's involvement in climate action through individual, social, and community-level interventions.

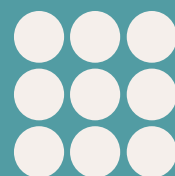
The recommendations outlined here have been developed in engagement with older adults and key stakeholders to address the challenge climate change poses to healthy ageing-in-place throughout the UK.

Age-Friendly Cities and Communities

AFCC encourage active ageing by optimising opportunities for health, participation, and security to enhance quality of life.^[14] They can provide the resources, amenities, and services to support healthy ageing-in-place, enabling people to continue to stay living in their homes, participate in the activities that they value, and contribute to their communities, for as long as possible. The AFCC movement has been a key catalyst for developing programmes and initiatives to enhance the wellbeing of older people, built around shaping services and structures across eight interconnected domains: (a) the built environment; (b) housing; (c) transport; (d) social participation; (e) respect and social inclusion; (f) civic participation and employment; (g) communication; and (h) community support and housing services.

Recommendations for Action

Our research identified the need to develop 'actionable' interventions across six interconnected healthy ageing challenge areas to support the delivery of inclusive, climate resilient age-friendly cities and communities.





Empowering Older People Towards Climate Action

Climate change messaging often disempowers older people and frames them as 'a cause' of the climate crisis, despite their active roles in climate action in local communities. Many older adults wish to be involved in setting the priorities and agenda for climate resilient AFCC, giving older people and communities more power to build on their resilience and participation in the climate planning process. Meaningful engagement with older people is a critical step to empowerment, including in co-producing interventions between communities and those responsible for delivering change.

Understanding older people's needs and supporting them locally is crucial. Our findings highlighted the importance of local community capacity building, including supporting older people to be climate change ambassadors and mentors, to assume positions where they can take ownership of climate resilient initiatives. Communication and trusted messengers are critical to building knowledge awareness, and empowering communities around healthy ageing in a changing climate. This should not be a one-off campaign but consistent engagement to promote long-term behavioural change and conversations, to influence knowledge, attitudes, practices and values around climate change and ageing.

Everyday practical information and resources are required, including individual actions that people can take to address extreme weather and these need to be disseminated through a variety of means such as printed press, social media, and noticeboards. Community facilities such as schools, places of worship, local businesses, and existing networks of people should be utilised to effectively spread information and resources and engage people in climate conversations. Emergency interventions like text alerts during extreme weather can be useful but also alarmist, as people may not know how or have the resources to respond to them.

The importance of empowering people to be involved in climate change needs to be recognised across all groups, including ethnic minority communities, the digitally excluded and those with disabilities or living in areas of poverty

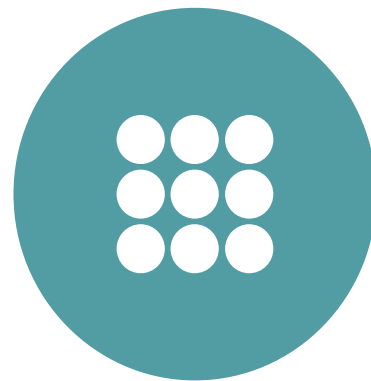
who are often excluded from the climate agenda. This requires co-ordinated communication and reaching older adults in the right ways. Use of climate literacy roadshows, pop-up exhibitions and mobile hubs can provide access to communities particularly those living in rural and more isolated areas. In addition, there is a strong desire for more climate literacy and education to empower older people that builds on existing networks of learning, such as the University of the Third Age, alongside inclusive community-based education within local facilities and schools.



Recommendations

- **Empower older individuals:** Shift the climate change narrative to empower older people, recognising their experiences and voice as ‘community assets’ rather than ‘causes’ of climate change.
- **Community-led climate action:** Foster community empowerment by acknowledging and supporting the active roles played by older individuals in local climate change initiatives.
- **Climate change ambassadorship:** Empower older individuals to serve as climate change ambassadors, facilitating their leadership in mitigation and adaptation efforts. To be co-ordinated and promoted through existing age-friendly networks and initiatives.
- **All agency communication:** Ensure an all-agency communication process on climate resilient age-friendly cities and communities to ensure people are reached at the right time, in the right place and in the right ways.
- **Reaching into communities:** Provide consistent, trusted information through various means, including roadshows, pop-up exhibitions, and mobile hubs, utilising existing community facilities and networks and indoor and outdoor spaces.
- **Empowering all:** Recognise the importance of empowering all groups, including those traditionally excluded from climate change discussions, through inclusive climate change initiatives and education.

Mobilising Community and Social Infrastructure



Supporting healthy ageing-in-place through climate resilient AFCC is dependent on harnessing the social and community resources to respond to climate change. Building social and community capital is critical to mobilising collective action in response to specific climate threats, and for establishing people–place connections which shape perceptions and actions in relation to extreme weather. This includes the ‘bonding capital’ which are the networks of support established between one another, such as social networks and ties and ‘bridging capital’ which are the vital links people have with communities, groups, or organisations in their locality.

In building resilience, it is important to mobilise the specific resources, skills, and capabilities within communities to address climate risk, identifying and building on current assets. This can be physical assets such as community hubs in establishing community networks and developing local resilience, and social assets including existing networks of knowledge and the capacity of individuals and organisations.

Delivering climate resilient places requires a joint response, involving local people, key service providers, the voluntary and community sector, and local businesses to co-ordinate resources. Multi-agency and cross sectoral age-friendly responses are important, as is a plan for medium- and long-term change, for example, in age-friendly dimensions informing climate action plans at a city and community level. It also covers the provision, accessibility,

and integration of services related to housing, health, outdoor spaces and other AFCC priorities.

Building climate resilient AFCC also requires establishing micro-level interventions that provide opportunities to come together within indoor and outdoor environments. The provision of warm and cool spaces in the community, for example, can provide refuge and safety from extreme weather, and act as a social space to mutually come together, yet must avoid being labelled as a place for ‘vulnerable’ or ‘needy’ older people. Not everyone is a member of a community group and there is a requirement for safe spaces which are non-judgemental and welcome to all. Interventions must extend beyond emergency response, by better mapping and connecting older people to the social and community infrastructure needed at critical stages before, during and after extreme weather events, providing holistic and wraparound climate resilient AFCC.

During extreme weather, many individuals can be shut off from essential services. This raises questions about how organisations can effectively reach older people during extreme weather, to deliver food, vital supplies and support. Community led initiatives such as ‘Good Morning’ services, that provide free confidential telephone calls and support to older people, can improve mental health and day-to-day interactions. Community leaders, climate change champions and befriending services can ensure that

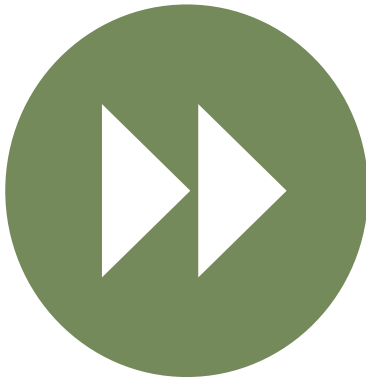
older people living alone receive regular check-ins during extreme weather. Existing programmes, such as social eating and local food growing initiatives, should be utilised to bring people together to form part of a more sustainable climate resilient response in communities. Digital skills and online communities are part of building resilience, and whilst there are concerns around digital equity and exclusion which need to be addressed, they were seen as having an important role in keeping people

connected to health, social and community supports.

Resilience may take many forms among individuals and communities, varying by place and context, with climate change impacting on people in different ways. Communities have experienced adverse events including flooding, storms, wildfires and including the pandemic, through which models of resilience and 'best practice' have emerged which we can build on.

Recommendations

- **Promote age-friendly community hubs:** Establish and strengthen community hubs as focal points for building familiarity, identity, and resilience within neighbourhoods. These hubs should serve as centres for social interaction, knowledge sharing, and emergency response coordination.
- **Foster inclusive and safe spaces:** Recognise that not all individuals are comfortable joining formal groups. Create inclusive and welcoming safe spaces that cater to diverse community members, ensuring that nobody feels excluded or vulnerable, especially during extreme weather events.
- **Build on existing community assets:** Build on existing community programmes and successful initiatives, to enhance social and community infrastructure. They can provide critical support systems which are valuable during extreme weather events.
- **Multi-agency collaboration:** Promote multi-agency and cross sectoral collaboration to develop age-friendly responses to climate change. Engage residents, service providers, voluntary organisations, and businesses to ensure the provision, accessibility, and reliability of essential services during extreme weather events.
- **Comprehensive resilience planning:** Develop comprehensive, long term resilience plans at the community and city levels. Ensure that these plans encompass what is needed to support healthy ageing-in-place before, during, and after extreme weather events, going beyond just emergency response.
- **Digital skills for resilience:** Recognise the importance of digital skills and online communities in enhancing resilience. Address digital equity and exclusion concerns by providing access to technology and digital literacy training, enabling individuals to stay connected to health, social, and community resources.



Enhancing Mobility and Transport for Healthy Ageing

Extreme weather affects mobility and independence. Older people, particularly those with mobility needs and sensory impairment, can find it problematic getting around during extreme weather which may lead to challenges in staying active. Extreme weather can exacerbate existing issues, for example, with the walkability of existing outdoor environments making it difficult to access services and amenities. Many older adults reported a heightened risk of falls during extreme weather, for example, because of slipping due to flooding and fatigue from extreme heat. Existing forms of transport were seen as poorly adapted for extreme weather, for example, in supporting access to key services and daily journey planning. There are practical steps that transport providers can do to consider the impact of extreme weather, for example, basic climate literacy training for frontline transport providers.

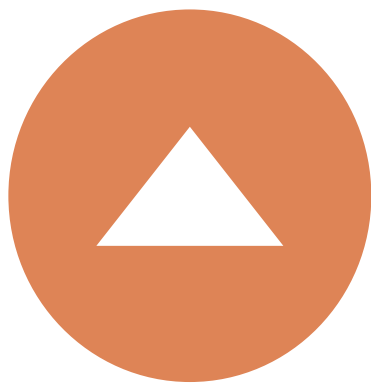


Outdoor spaces need to be designed and planned to support people to get around such as shaded bus stops, streets with trees and resting points which also provide a social value. Those with sensory needs are at risk during extreme weather and when navigating the built environment. Street lighting can also be a problem, affecting vision and the ability to respond in the aftermath of extreme weather. There is a need for more wayfinding cues and visible signs for transport to enable people to move around. Extreme weather worsens existing barriers, for example, the absence of toilets and poorly maintained pavements. Place maintenance needs attention during seasonal weather events, for example, rainfall and leaves, snow and ice, to support mobility.

There is a need to push a 'live local agenda', where services and support are located near to the home and therefore promote better travel choices. Active travel interventions often shape outdoor spaces yet they do not always meet the needs of older people. Assumptions are made about travel modes that often exclude older adults, for example, in the provision of cycling infrastructure. There should be more creativity in how we use outdoor spaces to make them climate resilient, such as 'shelter domes' to protect older people from extreme weather in climate hotspots and facilitate social engagement. Other outdoor interventions such as dementia gardens, need to be given consideration in planning for climate resilient AFCC.

Recommendations

- **Climate resilient transportation services:** Develop and implement climate resilient transportation that facilitates access to essential services during extreme weather.
- **Wayfinding and navigating outdoors:** Support those with mobility challenges and cognitive and sensory impairments to move around outdoors during extreme weather, including attention to wayfinding, signage, and walkability.
- **Climate resilient outdoor spaces:** Design climate resilience into outdoor spaces through shaded bus stops, tree lined streets, and resting points.
- **Building innovative outdoor environments:** Build innovative interventions in climate 'hot spots' vulnerable to extreme weather such as shelter domes which facilitate social engagement and protection during extreme weather.
- **Ageing and active travel:** Re-evaluate the planning of outdoor spaces to be more inclusive of older people's needs and preferences including supporting cycling and other forms of active travel.
- **Local initiatives to support older people:** Deliver local interventions such as buddying systems to support people to get outdoors and access services during extreme weather.



Climate Resilient Housing for Ageing-in-place

Housing and home are critical to healthy ageing in supporting independence, autonomy, and security and safety in old age. Extreme weather events can compromise this, such as floods, which can displace individuals from their homes and communities. This displacement often has long-term effects on physical health and psycho-social wellbeing. There is a lack of housing resources and guidance in place to assist older adults to respond to extreme weather events. Challenges were identified across the housing spectrum in adapting housing to climate change, including financial constraints, the need for appropriate incentivisation and a lack of information and awareness around how to make informed climate-related housing choices in later life. Prioritising energy efficient housing should be a central focus in both new housing developments and the refurbishment of existing housing stock, with particular attention to ensuring thermal comfort.

More broadly, climate change needs embedding in the housing sector through both policy frameworks and existing instruments, for example, lifetime neighbourhoods, dementia friendly homes and housing needs assessments. There is a need to address housing options, including affordability, availability, and location, as they relate to both the ageing process, changing circumstances and evolving climate change impacts. Education and awareness are needed on how climate and extreme weather impact on ageing at home, which can inform individual decisions about housing and home as people age.

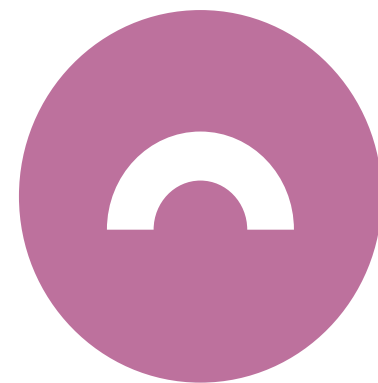
In a planning context, the focus should shift towards housing that not only withstands climatic challenges but also promotes low carbon behaviours. This requires attention to adapting the built environment, for example, using climate resilient materials and sustainable energy efficiency systems for indoor home environments while adopting a holistic, place-based approach to housing and 'local sustainable living' which considers the connection of home to local services and amenities. New housing initiatives should integrate green and nature-based interventions and embrace innovative practices such as green roofs, community gardens, and rainfall capture systems. It is imperative that climate-based space standards and a regulatory framework are in place to achieve these objectives and that housing developers have a long-term responsibility for delivering climate resilience in new housing developments.



Recommendations

- > **Climate resilient housing strategy:** Prioritise age-friendly climate resilient housing in the design and delivery of National Housing Strategies and embed it as part of housing needs assessments.
- > **Housing and place:** Position sustainable housing within a wider place-based agenda which links older people with the social and community assets needed to support climate resilience.
- > **Housing transitions and displacement:** Ensure health and wellbeing interventions are in place to support older people displaced by extreme weather and to support the transition back into housing.
- > **Future proof lifetime homes:** Deliver lifetime homes which are future proofed against climate change scenarios and extreme weather, and which reflect changing requirements as people age.
- > **Informed housing options:** Provide housing options in later life which support the desire to age in the right place and information and awareness to enable informed decision making on climate change.
- > **Housing standards:** Integrate climate-resilient materials and energy-efficiency interventions into new and existing housing stock for older people. Enforce place standards for green and open spaces in new housing developments which deliver on long-term sustainability outcomes.

Healthcare and Wellbeing for Older Adults in Extreme Weather



Climate change is affecting the physical, social, and mental wellbeing of older individuals, and is a pressing public health issue. Many participants felt that there was a lack of climate change preparedness across the health and social care sector. Climate hazards, including extreme heat and air pollution, have the potential to exacerbate existing healthcare needs, for example those living with chronic conditions, and impact social determinants of wellbeing including isolation and exclusion. Our research noted a lack of targeted support, in terms of providing health information related to climate change, including how extreme weather affects those living with diverse health conditions.

Extreme weather events can lead to isolation and mobility, further affecting healthy lifestyles and active ageing. Urgent attention is required to prioritise the health and wellbeing of local communities and to embed these principles in creating age-friendly and climate resilient environments, for example, through the provisioning and programming of community resources to support the health and wellbeing of older people. Extreme weather can disrupt the access of older adults to essential healthcare services, including formal and informal caregiving support systems. These services may include home care and assistance provided by caregivers, as well as care provided by older individuals themselves.

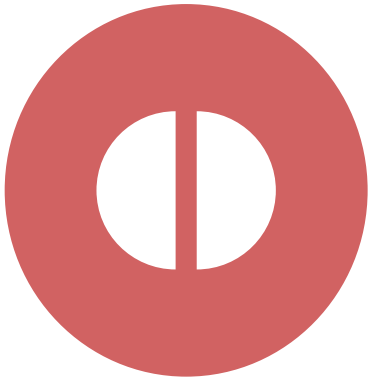
There is a demand for bringing health and social care services closer to the homes of older individuals, ensuring that they can access support during periods of extreme weather. It is challenging for older adults to identify the channels for seeking healthcare assistance during such events, with many dependent on neighbours or family who may be unable to reach them.

Localised health and wellbeing service delivery and implementing sustainable measures are needed through providing healthcare supports and in places where people can access them as part of integrated place-based healthcare delivery. This underscores the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration, active community engagement, and greater understanding of the implications of climate change for ageing and public health.

Recommendations

- **Climate change as a public health priority:** Recognise climate change as an immediate public health issue. Use existing structures and pathways to raise awareness and address these concerns, including, for example through NHS decision-making and community engagement structures.
- **Community integrated health services:** Health and wellbeing outreach services should be integrated within existing community hubs to support those affected by extreme weather. This approach should ensure that individuals have easy access to these services when and where they need them, promoting a sense of local support and connection.
- **Climate change champions:** Appoint older people's climate change champions within health and wellbeing partnerships and broader AFCC networks. These champions can play a pivotal role in shaping climate conscious changes and initiatives and connect to often excluded groups.
- **Cross sectoral interventions:** Foster joined up thinking across sectors, making health, wellbeing, and climate change central to the dimensions of the age-friendly agenda. Encourage cross sectoral interventions that complement and build on existing efforts to support the wellbeing of individuals and communities.
- **Practical resources and health toolkits:** A range of practical resources are needed including information on how extreme weather affects health conditions, accessible 'how to' guidance for older people to access the health and wellbeing services they need during extreme weather events, and education and awareness amongst healthcare practitioners for how to manage and respond to climate resilience.
- **Leverage community assets:** Use community resources and assets including community centres and hubs to support healthy ageing during climate change events. Encourage informal wellbeing providers and the third sector to deliver place-based interventions.





Intergenerational Communities and Climate Resilience

Climate change is an intergenerational issue affecting individuals of all age groups. We must foster different forms of meaningful engagement, ensure we hear all voices, and build bridges across generations. Delivering inclusive and climate resilient cities and communities requires a collaborative effort in pursuit of a shared climate justice agenda. Achieving this goal depends on fostering intergenerational solidarity through learning and co-design, thus addressing climate change and strengthening communities through knowledge exchange and cooperation. Creative intergenerational collaboration within communities is key to mobilising collective action. This must be an integral part of design and planning across all dimensions of the AFCC agenda, incorporating intergenerational and climate resilient indoor and outdoor spaces which link generations and bring younger and older people together.

Facilitating intergenerational programmes and activities, along with the mutual transfer of knowledge and skills, should be central to building adaptation and enhancing climate resilience. To embrace the concept of 'people helping people' during extreme weather events, intergenerational interventions play a pivotal role. Intergenerational interventions should be meaningful and emphasise a two-way exchange of expertise. Climate resilient AFCC can provide an opportunity for people to

come together during extreme weather events, fostering connections between generations. Decision making structures including developing climate mitigation measures should offer opportunities for all generations to voice their concerns and address climate change issues affecting them.

Opportunities for intergenerational involvement in climate change efforts are currently limited, with little attempt to unite generations for change. Sharing intergenerational stories and experiences is crucial to advancing the climate change agenda, promoting shared learning and local-level interventions, for example, intergenerational workshops to build 'resilience skills' in response to extreme weather, incorporating local knowledge and expertise. Interventions need to be inclusive and should encompass all age groups, not just the very young and very old. Local, existing groups and platforms can be harnessed to support smaller communities.



Recommendations

- **Foster intergenerational collaboration:** Encourage creative collaboration between generations within communities to mobilise collective climate action, embedding it in design and planning for climate mitigation and adaptation.
- **Promote knowledge exchange:** Facilitate intergenerational programmes and activities, emphasising the mutual transfer of knowledge and skills to enhance climate adaptation and resilience efforts.
- **Embrace 'people helping people' concept:** Implement meaningful intergenerational interventions that promote two-way communication and exchange of expertise, encouraging communities to work together during extreme weather events and build connections between generations.
- **Inclusive decision making:** Ensure decision making structures provide opportunities for all generations to voice their concerns and address climate change issues that affect them, promoting inclusivity and collaboration.
- **Share intergenerational stories:** Share intergenerational stories and experiences to advance the climate change agenda, encouraging mutual learning and designing of local level interventions.
- **Leverage local media platforms:** Utilise local media platforms to support intergenerational communities, project a positive message, and unite smaller communities for change.

These recommendations provide an opportunity to build AFCC that are climate resilient and support older people to age in place. In delivering on these recommendations, we have identified three key enablers to support the development of climate resilient AFCC:

Engaging Diverse Voices

Ageing in response to climate change is not a homogeneous experience. Building inclusive climate resilient places requires engagement with a diversity of voices including across age cohorts, ethnicities and places. Climate responses will fail if they do not engage older people in a meaningful way to bring about change. Climate adaptation and interventions need to maximise the knowledge and capabilities of older people in coordinating wider intergenerational responses to climate change.

An All Agency AFCC Approach

There needs to be a cross-sectoral and all-agency approach which brings people together to deliver holistic place-based interventions for climate resilient AFCC. Coherent climate change policies need to link the key determinants of healthy ageing-in-place (e.g., housing, transport, outdoor spaces). Climate ready interventions (e.g., training for providers), were identified as critical across all sectors. Political leadership and consensus is vital to developing co-ordinated climate responses to ageing and extreme weather.

Strengthen the Evidence Base

A clearer mapping is required of where vulnerability to climate change risk is in order to better target Healthy Ageing AFCC interventions. We need to learn from best practice including international interventions aimed at extreme weather. Engagement with rural and urban communities is needed to better understand how climate change resilient AFCC can respond across different contexts.

Conclusion

This report and associated recommendations focus on six key areas where further action is needed to ensure inclusive and climate resilient AFCC to support healthy ageing. There is an urgent need to provide place-based local supports to empower communities to harnesses the contribution older people can make to climate action while reducing vulnerability, and building climate resilience through individual, social and community level interventions. The adoption and implementation of these key areas require meaningful engagement of older people, an all-agency approach that can provide place-based interventions and a greater understanding of the climate risk posed to older adults.

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