

# Making our communities more Age freindly

10<sup>th</sup> Jun 2022

Prof Dr Ramin Keivani

School of the Built Environment  
Faculty of Technology, Design and  
Environment

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## Challenges: ageing population, etc

- The traditional family structure comes under pressure → Changing demographic profile negatively impacts public finances and standards of living (Leeson 2015; 2016).
- Implications of the fundamental changes in aged population
  - changes in
    - the way older people live;
    - the house and community they live in;
    - care for older people;
    - and the way older and younger generations integrate.

“It is not just about housing,  
it is about creating a community”

- **The concept of Active Ageing:** ‘helping people stay in charge of their own lives for as long as possible as they age, and, where possible, to contribute to the economy and society’ (Barrio et al, 2018).
- Reconceptualising traditional life course stages of learning youth, working adult and retiring older populations
- More than employment and/or physical activity with four basic pillars of **participation**, health, security and life learning
- Embracing the Healthy Ageing concept but overcoming its limitations

“It is not just about housing,  
it is about creating a community”

- **Age-Friendly City** : promoting an intergenerational perspective as ‘a place that is ideally age inclusive and offers opportunities for all people living in the city, not just older adults’ (van hoof et al, 2018).
- Putting into practice the paradigm of active ageing by promoting active citizenship and the key here is on inclusivity (based on participation)
- In other words not to be just active but also to be the protagonist of one’s life and its aging process

# Recognising limitations

- Active Ageing can lead to a form of social exclusion if emphasis is on employment and being productive and if measures are not taken to address differential access (ability to pay and disabilities); it becomes coercive if there is an expectation to be active
- The Age-Friendly concept can become hollow unless linked to wider debates on rights and citizenship and combating the paradox of neighbourhood participation (Buffel et al, 2014). This relates to concepts such as Lefebvr's right to the city particularly in relation to the immediate neighbourhood:
  - The right to appropriate urban space; i.e., "full and complete usage" of the city
  - The right to participate centrally in decision making surrounding the production of urban space

# The core features of Age-Friendly Cities (WHO 2007)

Eight domains of urban life:

- outdoor spaces and buildings;
- housing;
- transportation;
- social participation;
- civic participation and employment;
- communication and information;
- community support and health services;
- and respect and social inclusion

# Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

- WHO Guidelines: Environment, Green spaces and walkways, Outdoor seating, Pavements and Roads
- Manchester Lifetime Neighbourhoods Initiative
  - “place where a person’s age doesn’t affect their chances of having a good quality of life” with “services, infrastructure, housing, and public spaces that are designed to meet everyone’s needs, regardless of how old they are”
- Kilburn Older Voices Exchange
  - For Your Convenience, Road Safety, Increased Access to Shops, Improved Street Seating
- Richmond Community Toilet Scheme and Westminster SatLav
  - Enabling access to facilities of approved businesses and organisations
  - Text message to find nearest facility



# Housing

- WHO Guidelines: Affordable, Essential Services, Quality and Standards, Appropriate Design, Local Amenities, Adaptable and Finance
  
- Age Friendly Extra Care Housing
  - Includes reconfiguring existing sheltered housing and new build to Lifetime Homes standards, which have been incorporated into the Local Development Framework
  - Aim is to provide a high quality of life and vibrant communities
  - Outward looking with extra care residents included in the neighbourhood and other local residents participating in their activities and using their additional amenities

# Transportation

- WHO Guidelines: Consistent pricing and affordable, Reliable and frequent including weekend, Access to all parts of the city, Complemented by Voluntary services and Accessible and Affordable Taxis
- Key Age-Friendly Attributes: Available, Accessible, Affordable, Acceptable, Adaptable to special needs
- Age-Friendly Transport Strategies
  - Greater Manchester – Priority Recommendations: Training staff, Concessionary bus-pass in peak hours, Transport Action Group, Community toilet scheme, Audio-Visual bus stops, Longer pedestrian crossing times,

# Social participation

- WHO Guidelines: Accessible and Affordable Events, Variety of Activities and Settings, Easy to Attend, Engaging Isolated Older People
- Using Creative Arts to engage older people including in Extra Care Homes
- Free Swimming since 2008 leading to large increases in over 60s use of pools
- Lifelong learning – Expansion of adult education services and vocational learning in universities and colleges of further education

# Civic participation and employment

- WHO Guidelines: Voluntary Retirement and Protection Against Age Discrimination, Range of Volunteering Opportunities, Training, Support including Travel Costs, Older Worker Agencies, Flexible Work Options, Post Retirement Training
- Range of policy and legal measures in place including voluntary retirement and flexible working
- Network of voluntary organisations including the Retired Senior Voluntary Programme
- The Age and Employment Network (TAEN) lobbying for older age workers and helping them find employment

# Communication and information

- WHO Guidelines: Use of Basic and Universal Communication Systems, Regular and Reliable Distribution, Plain Language, Targeted Media, Oral where Possible, Large Lettering, Public Computers and Training and Support
- Adoption of many the above in most information campaigns
- Projects on use of computers to enhance life, e.g, BusinessLab Active Age Project

# Community support and health services

- WHO Guidelines: Wide Availability of Health and Social Services, Close Proximity of Residential Care Facilities to H&S services, Easy Access, Accessible Information, Training to Meet Older People Needs, In-house Facilities in Care Homes
- Toolkit resource to assist health care workers
- Mid-life checks
- Falls Prevention Services
- Depression support including on-line resources

# Respect and social inclusion

- WHO Guidelines: Consultation and participation in decision making, training staff to be respondent and courteous, intergenerational and family interactions, neighbourhood ties and social capital, Learning about Older People in Schools, Opportunity to share knowledge
- Supporting intergenerational practice
  - Beth Johnson Foundation and Centre for Intergenerational Practice
- Engaging socially Isolated Older people
  - Upstream Project - Devon
- Membership organisations for older people and local community to provide mutual support and social connections
  - Southwark Circle

# Future Potential Barriers

- Overcoming ageist attitudes and stereotypes
  - Particularly important for giving older people a voice and facilitating participation in decision making and policy development beyond care related issues in respect of broader housing and community/city planning
  
- Political and economic factors
  - Age Friendly cities/communities require major infrastructure and care support investment. However many cities and local authorities are facing austerity measures in light of the economic costs of the pandemic leading to cuts in community and preventive services particularly. Politically, age friendliness also has to compete with other demands on resources in the city!
  
- Therefore going forward critical evaluation is required to see if application of these principles has actually made a difference in light of the challenges facing cities



# Age Friendly communities in UK - 50 members

<https://ageing-better.org.uk/uk-network-age-friendly-communities>



## For discussion

### South Korea and UK : comparisons and contrasts !!

- Demographics : aged society → “super-aged”
- Different understanding/approaches to Active Ageing
- Building / Rebuilding Age-friendly communities
- Method and scale of application of WHO Guidelines
- Provision of medical and social care services at different scales
- Challenges of budget constraints and austerity
- Prognosis for the future

**Thanks for your attention**

**Q & A**

**Discussion**