Ageing Well in Doncaster

October 2024

How 'age friendly' is Doncaster?

Executive Summary

Doncaster
Delivering Together

TD
Team.Doncaster

What Is This About?

Doncaster's population is ageing quickly - by 2026, people over 65 will outnumber those under 18. This brings new challenges, and opportunities, for how we build communities, services, and spaces that work for everyone as they age.

The 'Ageing Well in Doncaster' baseline assessment was developed by City of Doncaster Council, NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board and local partners. It gives us a snapshot of how 'age friendly' Doncaster is today.

The report is based on a survey of over 1,000 people and face-to-face conversations with older adults.

The questions asked in the survey were based on the World Health Organisation's 'eight domains' for age-friendly communities.

The report reflects the experiences and views of Doncaster's ageing population. The following information provides a summary of the baseline assessment.

Doncaster Population

- Doncaster has a population of 308,705, and 40.1% are aged 50 or older.
- Over 65,000 people are aged 65 or older, and this number will rise to over 80,000 by 2036.
- By 2026, there will be more older people than children under 18.
- Healthy life expectancy (the years people live in good health) in Doncaster is much lower than the national average:

  o Women live in good health for **56.1 years** (8 years below the national average).

  o Men live in good health for **57.4 years** (5.7 years below the national average).

What Older People Like About Doncaster

- **Family and Friends:** Staying close to loved ones is very important for living well.
- **Community Spirit:** Many people enjoy being part of a friendly and welcoming neighbourhood.
- **Green Spaces:** Parks, gardens, and natural areas help people feel happy and healthy.
- **Amenities/facilities:** The availability of local services, facilities and amenities.

What People Told Us Matters Most

- **Independence**
  Older people want to stay in their homes, manage their own lives, and access the services they need locally. Transport, health care, and home adaptations are key.

- **Safety and Security**
  Safety was one of the most common concerns. People want better street lighting, a visible police presence, and action against anti-social behaviour. People want to feel secure at home and in public spaces.

- **Transport**
Many said they rely on their cars now but worry about the future when they may not be able to drive. Buses are often unreliable, infrequent, or not accessible.

- **Housing**
People value feeling safe in their homes and communities. There's a need for more accessible housing and help with 'future proofing' the home (adaptations like stairlifts and downstairs bathrooms).

- **Health and Support Services**
People want easier access to GPs, dentists, and community support. Long wait times, poor communication, and digital-only systems are barriers for many.

- **Communication and Information**
Many struggle to find out what services or activities are available. People want information in multiple formats, not just online. This included printed newsletters, posters, and local noticeboards.

- **Outdoor Spaces and Public Facilities**
Poor maintenance of roads, pavements, and green spaces was a major issue. There's a need for more public toilets, benches and bins. People want outdoor spaces that are clean, safe, and easy for everyone to use.

- **Social Participation**
Many people feel isolated and don't know what's happening in their area. More accessible venues, affordable activities, and varied social opportunities are needed - especially those that go beyond stereotypical older adult activities (like bingo and 'knit and knatter').

- **Respect and Inclusion**
Respondents want older people to be seen, heard, and respected. Intergenerational activities and education (e.g. in schools) are seen as key to tackling ageism. Young people were frequently mentioned - both positively and as a source of concern.

Next Steps

- **Ongoing Engagement**: Continue collecting feedback, especially from groups not well represented so far.

- **Older People's Forum**: Set up a group where older residents help shape future services.

- **Co-production:** Work together with older adults to check, prioritise and design solutions.

- **Action Plan**: Use what we've learned to create a clear, shared plan for making Doncaster more age-friendly.

- **Monitor Progress**: Track changes and make adjustments based on feedback.

By following these steps, we aim to improve our understanding of what it is like to age well in Doncaster and take meaningful action to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for older adults.