

Ageing Well in Doncaster

October 2024

How 'age
friendly' is
Doncaster?



Doncaster
Delivering Together

TD
Team Doncaster

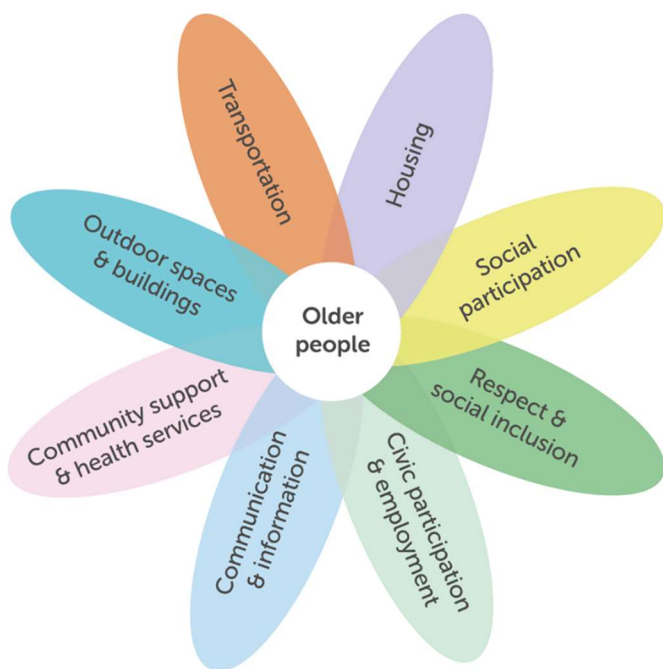
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Introduction

This baseline assessment has been brought together in partnership with the NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (SYICB), Doncaster's voluntary and community sector and the City of Doncaster Council.

We want Doncaster to be an age friendly community. An age friendly community is a place that actively works to make the environment and services more accessible and inclusive for people of all ages, particularly older adults. This concept was created by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in consultation with older adults across the world. Together, they identified 8 areas of the physical and social environment that could address barriers to ageing well. These are known as the '8 domains' and can be seen on the diagram below.



The WHO's Age-friendly Communities Framework: The Eight Domains

Our goal is to make Doncaster a place where individuals of all ages can thrive, fostering inclusivity and enhancing quality of life for everyone in our community. To achieve this, we first need to understand the current landscape and experiences of those ageing in Doncaster. An age friendly baseline assessment serves as a foundational tool in this endeavour, providing an overview of various aspects of community life relevant to the ageing population.

To understand the views and experiences of people ageing in Doncaster, we hosted an online survey that asked questions about the '8 domains'. The results of the survey will form the basis of this baseline assessment.

This assessment aims to establish a baseline understanding of the strengths, challenges and opportunities within our community that impact our ageing population. We will examine the key

THE 8 DOMAINS

1. HOUSING

Ensuring there is a range of affordable and adaptable housing options that meet the needs of older adults.



2. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Offering opportunities for older adults to engage in community activities and social networks.



3. RESPECT & SOCIAL INCLUSION

Promoting respect for older adults and encouraging their involvement in community decisions.



4. CIVIC PARTICIPATION & EMPLOYMENT

Supporting older adults to continue contributing to their communities through volunteering opportunities or paid work.



5. COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION

Making sure that information is shared in ways that are accessible to older adults.



6. COMMUNITY SUPPORT & HEALTH SERVICES

Providing access to health and support services that meet the needs of the ageing population.



7. OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS

Creating safe and enjoyable public spaces and buildings that are easy to access.



8. TRANSPORTATION

Ensuring reliable and accessible public transport options are available.



domains outlined above to identify areas where improvements are needed and build upon existing strengths.

It is hoped that this baseline assessment will offer valuable insights into the current state of age-friendliness within Doncaster. It will serve as a roadmap for future planning and action, guiding the development of targeted interventions and policies to enhance the quality of life for residents of all ages.

The findings in this report will also be used to inform other areas where the voice of older adults is missing or would be valuable. Already, these insights have been used to help inform the city centre engagement work, that will be used to develop the new City Centre Strategy.

It is important to note that this assessment is an ongoing process and information will be continually added in line with additional engagement with other community groups and individuals to ensure its accuracy and relevance. This report outlines the findings for Doncaster as a whole and there may be differences between localities.



"Acknowledgement that we are all different and require different things. That being independent sometimes means that you want to be self-reliant, feeling like you are a burden is demoralising, and whilst you may be able to access places with help, you would prefer that situations enabled you to do things on your own."

Doncaster Population

Doncaster has a population of 308,705, with 123,748 (40.1%) being aged 50 and over.

The 2021 Census data shows how the population has continued to age. Across England, more than one in six people (18.4%) were aged 65 years and over on Census Day in 2021. This is a higher percentage than ever before.

Currently 65,225 Doncaster residents are aged over 65. It is estimated that by 2036 this number will rise to 80,107.

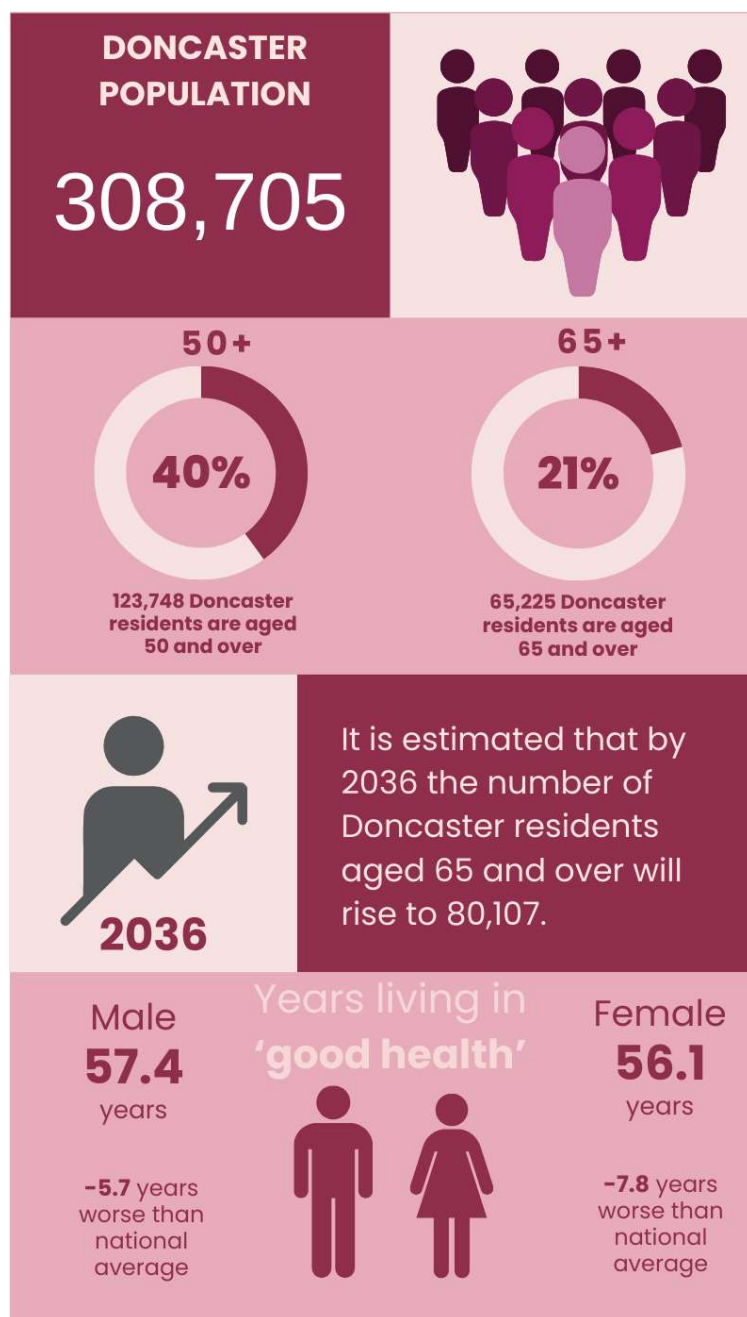
The population of Doncaster is ageing rapidly. In the year 2026 we are projected to have a greater number of people over the age of 65 than those 18 and under for the first time. This is going to affect the way services and organisations support the people of Doncaster and it is going to be more important than ever to meet the needs of older adults living here.

Data from the 2021 Census also shows that the older population in England is more diverse than ever.

Understanding this diversity is crucial because we know that inequality between different groups – whether those groups differ by ethnicity, sexual orientation or other characteristics – widens as people age. Recognising intersectionality in older age acknowledges the diverse and overlapping identities that shape the unique experiences and challenges faced by older adults.

We have seen life expectancy continue to increase since the first Public Health measures were introduced in the 19th century. However, when we look at healthy life expectancy, it seems we still have a long way to go in the way of improvement. Healthy life expectancy at birth is an estimate of the average number of years babies born this year would live in a state of 'good' general health and adds a quality of life dimension to life expectancy. The aim is to close the gap between healthy life expectancy and life expectancy as this difference is the number of years spent in poor health.

In Doncaster, the average numbers of years that women are expected to live in 'good health' is 56.1 years, 8 years less than for all



women nationally (63.9 years) and below the regional average of 62.1 years. The number of years that Doncaster women are living in a good state of health has declined significantly since 2016. This means that women in Doncaster are increasingly less likely to be in good health than women across England.

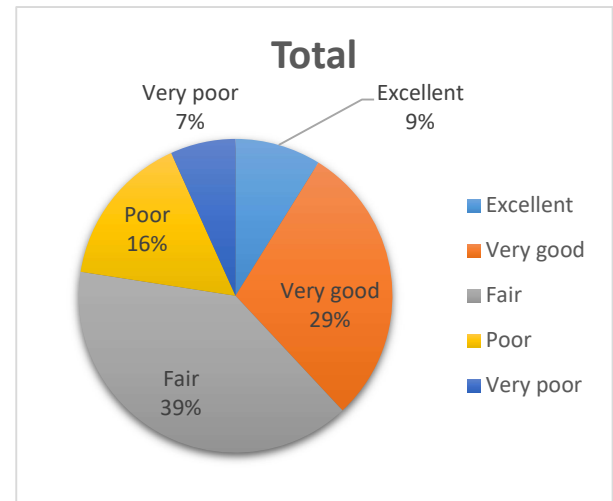
On average, men in Doncaster live 57.4 years in 'good health', below the national average of 63.1 years and regional average of 61.1 years. Since 2016, the average length of time that men in Doncaster live in good health has declined slightly (by just over half a year). This means that men in Doncaster are increasingly less likely to be in good health than those across England.

Age Friendly Survey

On the 1st of October 2023 we launched an online survey to understand the views and experiences of ageing adults living in Doncaster. This survey was open to all ages as we want to consider the impacts of ageing across the life course, understanding the views and aspirations for all when it comes to ageing. There were 1038 responses to this consultation which have identified key themes that residents consider important and would like to see improved.

- 955 respondents were aged over 45, with 624 being 65 or over.
- 56% of respondents were women, 39% men, 4% preferred not to say and 1% self-identified their gender.
- 902 (87%) people responding to the survey described themselves as white English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British, 35 identified as white – European, 59 people preferred not to say, 15 people provided another option that wasn't listed in the survey. Smaller numbers of Black and minority ethnic groups also took part.
- 263 of the respondents considered themselves to be disabled.
- When asked if they considered themselves to be a carer, 238 people said yes.
- The majority of people lived with an adult relative or friend over 18 years old (650), with 284 people living alone.
- 843 of the people surveyed owned their own home, 107 lived in rented social housing and 50 lived in privately rented accommodation.

When asked how they would rate their current community as a place for people to live as they age, 39% of people rated it fair. The below chart shows the split for Doncaster as a whole, but this varies slightly between localities.



The next few pages will outline the questions that we asked for each of the 8 domains and the top themes that came from the survey responses. Please note, for some questions other themes were identified, but we have focussed on the top 5 or 6 most common responses. The numbers in brackets show how many people provided a response relating to that theme. Some questions may show a different response rate as not everyone answered every question.

Housing

Age friendly housing includes homes that are suitable and accessible for older adults. It includes things such as affordable housing options, homes that can be adapted to people's needs as they get older (for example downstairs toilets, stairlifts, etc) and are designed with older people in mind (e.g., wider doorways, step-free entrances etc).

Question 1. We want everybody in Doncaster to live in a place that feels like home to them. What is important to you about your home? For example, do you like where you live now? What do you think will be important to you about your home in the future?

Top Themes:

1. I like where I live (259)

2. Safety/Security (253)

Feeling safe in the home and community

3. Home modifications (154)

Being able to 'future proof'/ adapt the home. Property being accessible to needs

4. Proximity/access to local amenities (143)

Shops, church, eating & drinking establishments, post office, community centres, banks, pharmacies

5. Good community environment (132)

Good/friendly neighbours, welcoming of all ages/being inclusive, valuing each other and the place they live

6. Importance and availability of accessible transport (104)

Good quality, regular public transport, easy bus access to shops/doctors/chemist/hospital /city centre, bus stops nearby

Safety/Security (253) – The survey responses underscore the importance of safety and security in and around the home. Respondents expressed concerns about a perceived lack of safety, increased crime rates, antisocial behaviour (ASB) and fears of burglaries or attacks. Respondents emphasised the importance of living in a safe area, feeling secure in their homes and communities and being free from harassment or intimidation. Many expressed a desire for increased police presence and measures to make streets safer, enabling them to walk or live without fear. An additional 89 responses referenced ASB/Crime specifically. This included, knife crime, fly tipping, vandalism, electric scooters and illegal bikes being driven on pavements, amongst other concerns. There were another 30 responses that made specific reference to drug related incidents.

Home modifications (154) - Of 1,038 responses, 154 cited a need for home adaptations, especially for accessibility. Key requests included stairlifts, downstairs toilets, and support for home improvements like double glazing and insulation. Respondents emphasised a need for council-supported adaptations, access to trusted tradespeople, and solutions for challenges in older properties, such as wait times for modifications and poor accessibility.

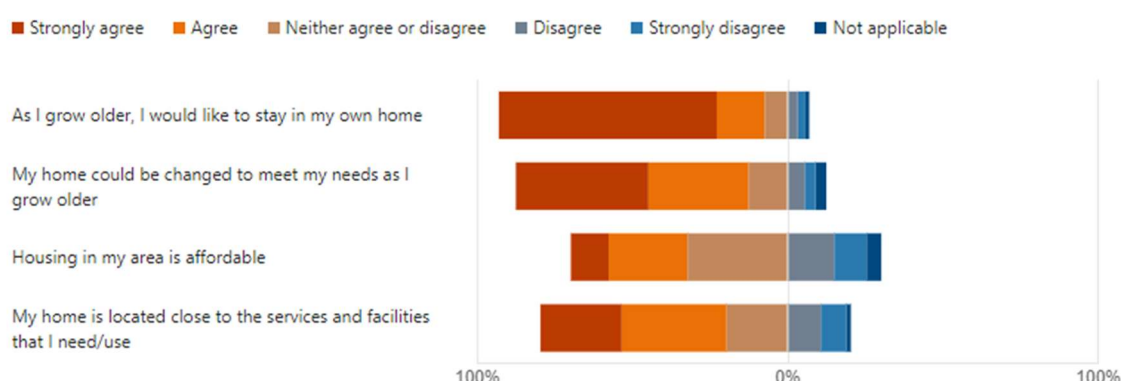
Proximity/access to local amenities (143) – The survey responses highlighted a desire for more diverse local business and amenities, such as shops, supermarkets, post offices and banks. Many stressed the importance of being close to such amenities, as well as, cafes, bus stops, restaurants, churches, and community centres, and those that had access to these locally voiced their appreciation. There seemed to be a preference for independent shops, as well as access to leisure facilities like pubs, restaurants, and leisure centres. There were concerns about the closure of shops and the lack of facilities in certain areas, with a need for better maintenance and tidiness. Other responses mentioned

accessibility issues, including difficulties in accessing shops, particularly for those who cannot drive, and the need for more streetlights in rural areas.

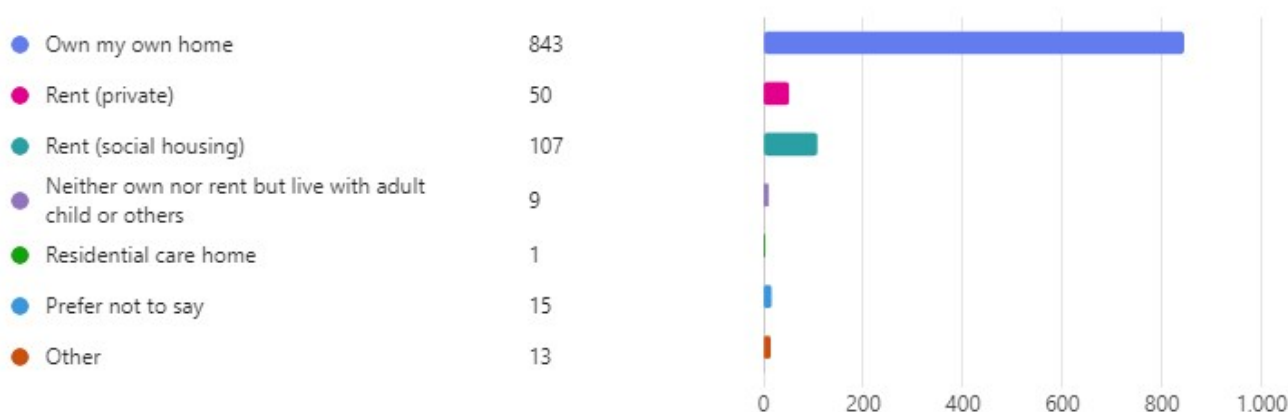
Good community environment (132) - The responses show that residents value a positive community environment characterised by friendly and respectful neighbours, peace, and a strong sense of community spirit. Some respondents said that they appreciate the quiet and rural nature of their neighbourhoods, as well as having friendly neighbours. There is an emphasis on valuing each other and the place they live, contributing to a sense of privacy and community-mindedness.

Importance and availability of accessible transport (104) - Survey responses emphasised the need for accessible, reliable transportation to reach essential services like hospitals and shops. Many called for more frequent buses, accessible options (such as ramps), and affordable transport alternatives as they age. Concerns included reduced bus services post-COVID, unreliable schedules, and limited coverage, leading to isolation for some. Additional challenges noted were costly taxis, long walks to bus stops, and limited electronic timetables.

We asked respondents to read the statements below and rate their level of agreement (or select 'not applicable' if it wasn't relevant to them)



The chart below shows the current living arrangement for all respondents.



"I own my house and face the grave financial commitment in the future of having to try to sell and move to a property suitable for an older person and it feels like it will be an impossible task leaving me trapped in a house unsuitable for my needs in the future."

Transport

Age friendly transport includes readily available, affordable, and accessible transportation options. This could be public transport (such as buses and trains), clear and accessible walking and cycling routes, accessible vehicles, and community transport.

Question 2. Do you have access to the transport you need? What (if any) barriers do you experience or think you may experience with transport in the future?

Top Themes:

1. Has access to transport needed (667)

Own car, good transport links, close to bus stop, community transport, good bus service

2. Poor Public Transport (459)

Unreliable, infrequent, cost, not disability friendly

3. Parking issues (27)

Cost, parking on pavements, distance to shops, lack of disabled parking bays

4. Roads (26)

Maintenance, congestion, lack of crossings, fees (carbon reduction)

5. Health/Mobility (26)

Unable to use public transport due to health or mobility, accessibility issues, covid concerns, worries about future mobility and travelling to medical appointments

Of the 1,036 people who responded to the transport section of the survey, 64% reported they had the access to transport they needed. Positive comments from across the four localities highlighted ease of access, affordable fares, and the convenience of Doncaster as a transport hub, with responses like: "Easy access to buses/good bus service," "Buses at £2 are great," and "The train service is very good, and we use it for most long distances."

In the North, East, and South localities, 46% of respondents who reported having access to transport they needed also owned or had access to a car, whereas in the Central locality, this percentage was lower at 36%. Among car owners in the North, 48% were concerned about future reliance on public transport if they could no longer drive due to health or mobility issues, as reflected in comments like: "I have a car and blue badge at the moment, my worry is that if I can no longer drive, I will end up housebound due to poor transport links and mobility issues." In Central, this concern was lower, at 24%.

Public transport issues were common across localities, with 52% in the North, 49% in the East, and 43% in the South noting improvements were needed. Common issues included infrequent service, lack of disabled access, high costs, and poor reliability, with statements like: "Transport was not regular," "Lack of services in the area," and "Expensive train prices." In the Central locality, the issues were similar, but the percentage of complaints was lower at 35%.

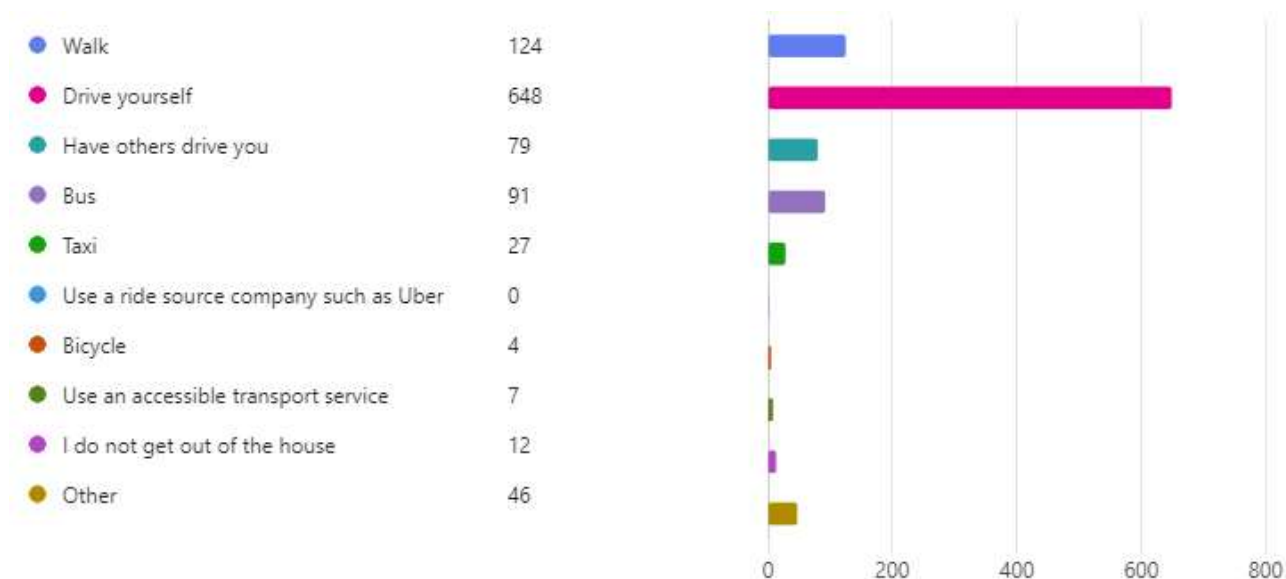
Parking was an issue for between 1% (North) and 4% (East) of respondents, with comments noting limited spaces (especially for blue badge holders near the rail station) and high fees. Between 1% and 2% (Central) mentioned road congestion and poorly maintained cycle lanes, with complaints such as: "Cycle lanes in the area are usually not worth using as they are not maintained and end in inconvenient places" and "Roads are way too congested in Armthorpe now with the more housing that gets thrown up and shops."

Regarding community transport, 1% of respondents noted they used it, though challenges like the need to book far in advance were cited. Additionally, 2% expressed concerns with maintaining personal vehicles, noting issues such as the affordability of electric vehicles and potential

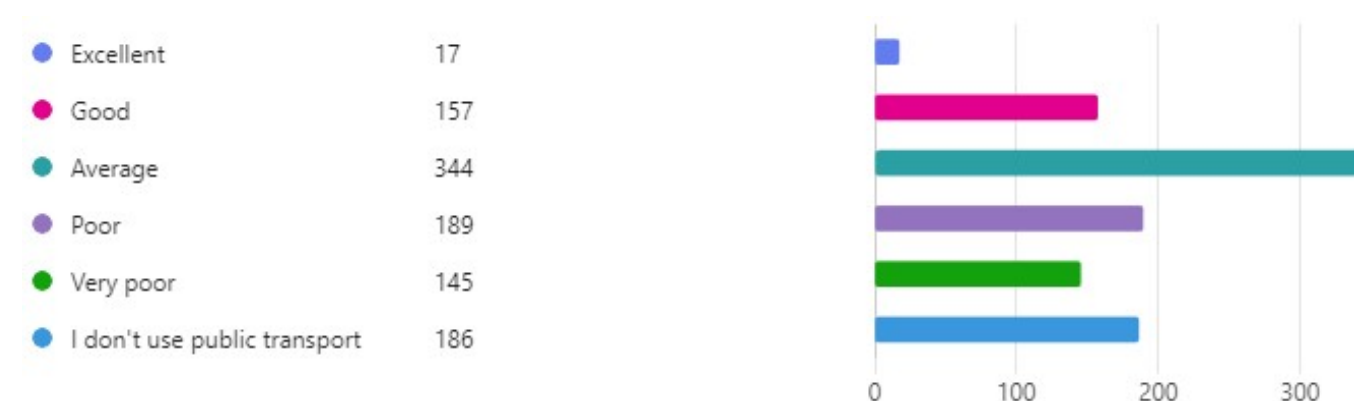
challenges if Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) standards expand. Comments included: "Can't afford a new car" and "Have access to own car but not sure how much longer will be able to afford to drive".

A small portion, 4%, reported a complete lack of transport access. Comments highlighted long distances to bus stops and the social isolation resulting from limited services. Finally, 1% said they felt unsafe using public transport, mentioning antisocial behaviour, particularly in the East and Central localities.

The chart below shows the responses to the question 'How do you usually travel for things like shopping, visiting the doctor, running errands, etc?'



The chart below shows the responses to the question 'How would you rate public transport in Doncaster?'



"A lack of reliable public transport will be the biggest problem as we age and have to give up driving etc."

Civic Participation & Employment

Age friendly communities support people of all ages to actively participate in their communities in a way that they feel valued for their skills and knowledge. This could include volunteering and paid or unpaid employment.

Question 3. What opportunities for community involvement, volunteering, paid or unpaid work would you like to have in the future?

Top themes:

1. Already volunteering or interested in volunteering (352)

2. Community involvement (151)

Litter picking, gardening, supporting the most vulnerable in their area, need for a community group

3. Accessibility of volunteering (127)

Transport, the need for more options locally, accessibility for those who live with a disability, communications and advertising of volunteering options

4. Barriers to volunteering or being involved

Ill health, being 'too old', ageism, cost of living crisis and the fear of not working for an income

One of the key themes identified across all localities was the overwhelming sense of willingness to 'give back' to communities and community involvement. 151 of the responses described activities such as litter picking, gardening, supporting the most vulnerable in their area and encouragement of the social benefits associated with this. Interestingly the need for a community group to discuss local challenges in the area and to support older people was also mentioned on numerous occasions.

127 responses related to the accessibility of volunteering activity. These responses included comments relating to transport and the need for more options locally and the accessibility for those who live with a disability. Accessibility also included communications and advertising of volunteering options with many respondents feeling they didn't know where to look to find such opportunities with digital exclusion being a common theme throughout.

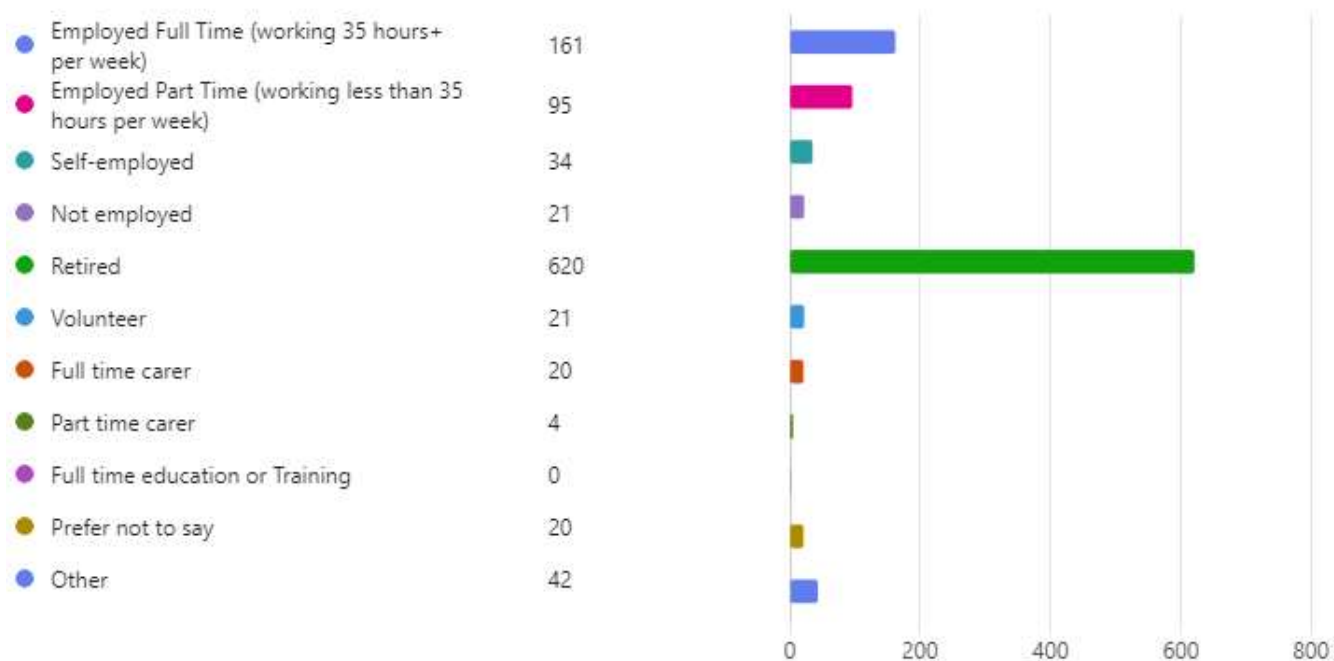
Many respondents felt there were barriers preventing them from volunteering or being involved, reasons given were mainly ill health and being 'too old' or even being perceived as being too old with ageism mentioned numerous times. Other factors were the current cost of living crisis and the fear of not working for an income.

A positive theme however is that 352 of the respondents are already volunteering, interested in volunteering in the

future or believe there are ample opportunities to be involved in community activity with many keen on utilising local buildings to do something different. Suggestions on future opportunities were volunteering in schools, to care leavers, a 'handy person' service, repair shops, transport pick up service, intergenerational work with older people sharing knowledge and insight to younger ones.

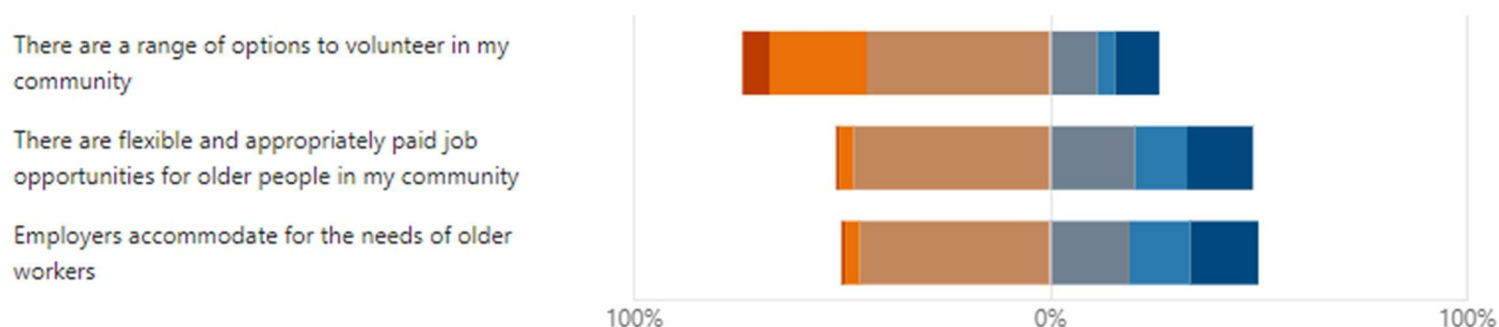
"Loneliness is a killer and increased opportunities to keep busy would be welcome."

The chart below shows the employment status of survey respondents.



We asked respondents to read the statements below and rate their level of agreement (or select 'not applicable' if it wasn't relevant to them)

Strongly Agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Not applicable



"Sometimes older people can feel invisible and that their opinion doesn't matter - more work needed to reinforce the positive contribution of older people in the work force and community. Because someone is older it doesn't mean they can't be a useful and intelligent member of the community and workplace. Be harder on ageism at work and in general and respect and acknowledge the contribution older people can make."

Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

This section is about how easy you find it to get to and around public spaces, parks and buildings in Doncaster, and about things like pavements, seating areas, public toilets, lighting, and signs.

Question 4. What, if any, changes would you like to see in relation to the outdoor spaces and places to visit in your area/across Doncaster i.e. libraries, leisure centres etc.

Top Themes:

1. Environment (481)

Cleanliness, parking, uneven pavements, parking on pavements, lighting, more bins, more trees/flowers, more inviting, more parks/green spaces, more equipment (all ages), separate dog areas, more community projects and greater accessibility

2. Leisure (200)

Easier access to gyms/leisure centres, better run, more of them, better opening times, more activities (Young people & older people), more affordable, access to education/skills

3. Facilities (195)

Toilets, benches/seating, shelters, café's, wider openings, and access to health

4. Safety (189)

A need to feel safer, increased security and see a reduction in crime & ASB

5. Libraries & Culture (105)

More libraries, better opening times, more events, access to a mobile library, more investment in libraries/community centres and accessibility

6. Transport (69)

Accessibility, affordability, timetables, and routes

Environment – The most important theme to many respondents was the environment and ensuring that our parks, green spaces, leisure centres, libraries and community venues were being well-maintained with 481 responses in total (46.6%). The environment theme encompassed factors such as cleanliness, general maintenance, reducing litter and weeds, a need for more bins, uneven/damaged pavements and dropped kerbs, improving lighting, places being more inviting with more trees, flowers, and nature. Respondents also wanted to see more parks and green spaces within the city centre and in local communities. Additional equipment for children, young people and older people to access was highlighted and the need for more community projects. Control of dogs and/or a separate area for dogs was also mentioned. Park keepers, security and increased police visibility was a recurring theme, as residents wanted to feel safe and enjoy their environment (see safety). 72 respondents (7%) also wanted improved accessibility to parks and green spaces.

Leisure – 200 respondents (19.5%) wanted to see improvements around leisure centres, namely easier access to gyms and leisure centres (including more of them), better opening times, more activities for young people, dedicated activities, and a broader range of activities for older people (swimming sessions were mentioned several times), more running/walking/cycling routes and access to education/skills activities (digital skills were specifically mentioned). 25 Respondents (2.4%) also felt that affordability was an issue, and this restricted people from using the facilities on offer (heightened by the cost-of-living crisis).

Facilities – 195 respondents (18.9%) felt there was a need to improve facilities in our outdoor spaces and places to visit. 72 respondents (7%) wanted to see more toilet facilities and 99 (9.6%) wanted to see more benches/seating to allow older people to rest and/or admire the view. Other facilities

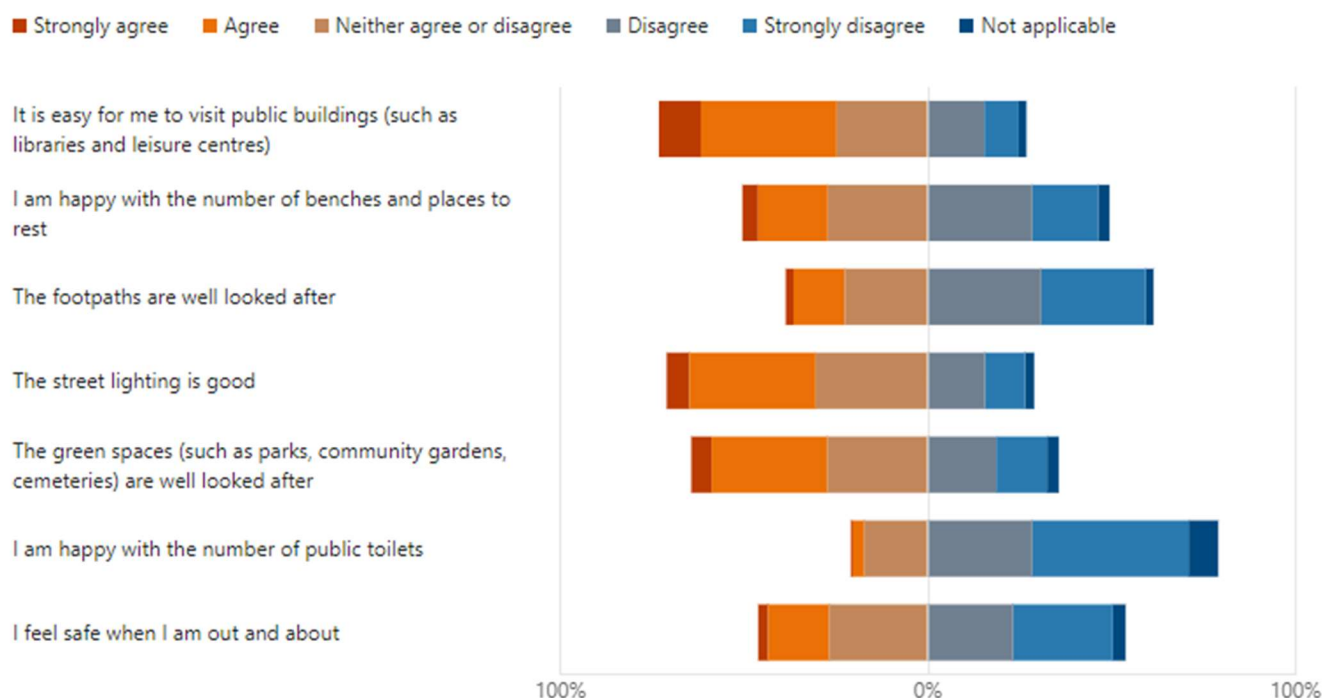
mentioned include more café's, shelters, wider doorways, and access to health.

Safety - A popular theme was that of safety, with 189 (19.3%) of the responses referring to needing to feel safer or they wanted to see a reduction in crime and ASB. A few of the different things mentioned about safety were concerns about crime, drugs, begging, homelessness, anti-social behaviour, damage, and off-road bikes/e-scooters. 19 of these respondents (2%) wanted to see increased security which included a higher police presence and park keepers/security.

Libraries & Culture – 105 respondents (10.2%) highlighted libraries, community venues and community centres as an area of importance, with the main feedback relating to a desire for more libraries, better opening hours and a calendar of events and activities for all ages (76 responses – 7.4%). Further comments related to access to a mobile library, investment in local libraries (improve the look/feel, provide more spaces for community groups and local people to get together, importance of supporting people who are lonely/isolated), and a better range of activities. A small number of respondents also wanted to see better opening hours and wheelchair access to Danum Gallery Library and Museum in the city centre (linked to transport comments).

Transport - 69 (6.8%) of the responses also mentioned areas related to transport, such as the accessibility of local transport, frequency and timetables, affordability and that bus services did not go near/past local parks, green spaces and/or community venues.

We asked respondents to read the statements below and rate their level of agreement (or select 'not applicable' if it wasn't relevant to them)



"Better and more frequent transport to get to these places in our large village.

In the winter, better bus shelters provided with seating to shelter in bad weather. More public toilets. It's a necessity as we get older and could prevent some people from leaving the house."

Social Participation

In age friendly communities, older people have opportunities to spend time with family and friends, meet new people and have an active social life.

Top Themes:

1. Unsure/no (335)

2. Enablers (119)

Need for social spaces, accessibility and inclusivity, community engagement, need for meeting points, community halls, youth and family-oriented spaces, support for community groups

3. Travel (96)

Better public transport (especially buses), better door to door services, cost of travel/parking

4. Activities (93)

More available activities, wider range of activities

5. Communication (68)

Better communication, better promotion/more information of activities available, more 'offline' promotion

Question 5. Is there anything you'd like to see offered or done differently to make sure you have opportunities to meet up with people who are important to you, or to make new friends?

119 responses expressed a need for better social infrastructure, with a strong emphasis on creating inclusive and accessible spaces for community interaction. Respondents expressed a desire for more community centres, social clubs, and meeting places where individuals of all backgrounds can come together. As well as having physical spaces in which to meet, respondents request that there are a variety of options available and that provision in afternoons and evenings are considered.

96 comments related to travel. The predominant barrier was around public transport. There was a consensus that public transport and the bus service in particular, needed to be improved. It is felt that social participation could be improved if the bus services were better linked, more reliable, more frequent, and cheaper. Some car users wanted to see better and cheaper parking facilities, and expressed concerns for how they would get around when they are no longer able to drive.

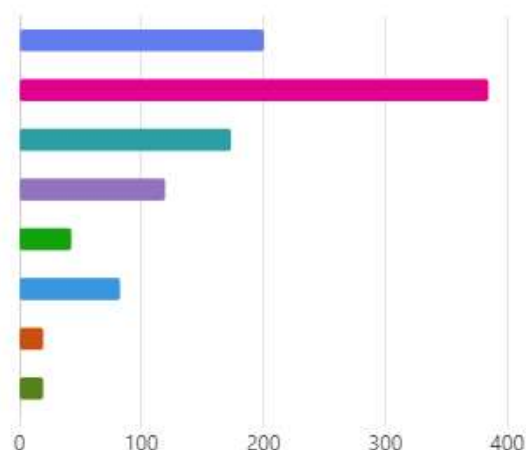
Respondents wanted to see more activities available, especially activities and clubs that cater to older adults. They wanted to experience a range of options that extended outside of stereotypical activities such as bingo and 'knit and knatter.' Suggestions included afternoon tea, dance, exercise classes, arts and crafts and opportunities to learn new skills, just to mention a few.

Of the responses, 68 referenced communication and a need for better sharing of information within communities. Many individuals said that they didn't know what was happening in their local area. It was felt that this could be improved by incorporating mixed methods of sharing information and not hosting it all online. Suggestions included leaflets, public notice boards, social media, email, and posters.

"I would like to have more safe spaces which provide shelter from the weather, offer refreshments and somewhere to sit and meet friends, particularly during the afternoons as many places close before 3.00pm"

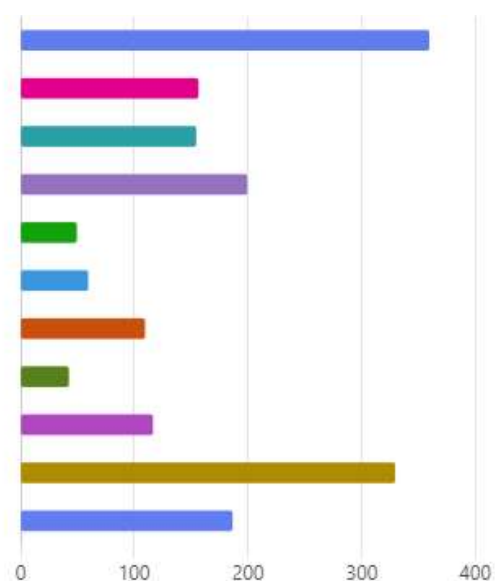
The chart below shows the results to the question 'How often do you have contact with family and friends who do not live with you?'

Everyday	200
Several times a week, but not everyday	384
Once a week	173
A few times a month	119
Once a month	42
Less than monthly	82
Never	19
Prefer not to say	19



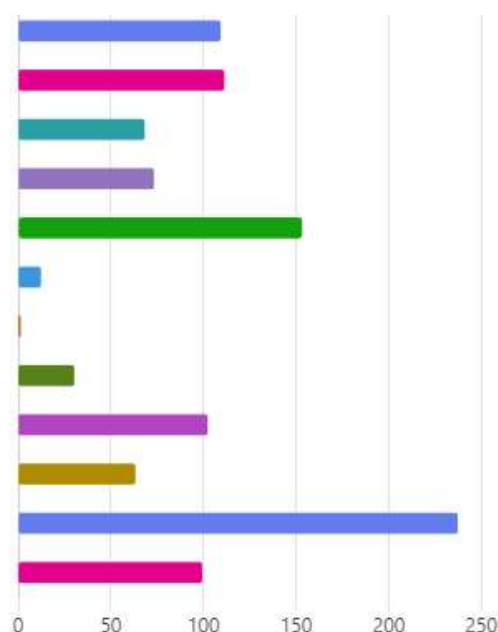
The chart below shows the results to the question 'Which of these activities do you regularly participate in?'

Sport or physical activity	359
Visiting libraries	156
Visiting museums	154
Social groups (e.g coffee mornings)	199
Lunch clubs	49
Arts/Craft clubs	59
Going to a place of worship	109
Educational groups	42
Community groups	116
I don't participate in any activities	329
Other	186



The chart below shows the results to the question 'Does any of the following stop you from participating in social activities? (select all that apply)'

Cost	109
Lack of provision in my area	111
Lack of transport	68
Not interested in the activities available	73
Not aware of activities available	153
Not able to access social activities	12
No access to the internet	1
Lack of confidence	30
Mobility	102
Caring responsibilities	63
Nothing stops me from participating in social activities	237
Other	99



Respect & Social Inclusion

In order to make a place age friendly, it is important to promote an inclusive and age-diverse community that respects the rights and contributions of older adults. It is also necessary to address ageism, discrimination, and opportunities for older adults to participate in decision-making processes, especially those that directly impact on their life.

Question 6. What would help to promote respect and inclusion for the older generation in your community?

The survey responses highlight a wide range of options for promoting respect and inclusion for the older generation in communities, with a significant emphasis on education (140 responses) as a fundamental driver of change. Many respondents stressed the importance of instilling values of respect and understanding from a young age, suggesting that schools play a pivotal role in shaping attitudes towards older adults.

Furthermore, 43 people were in agreement regarding the role of parents in reinforcing these values at home. They emphasised the importance of parental guidance in teaching children manners, empathy and respect towards older adults.

110 people wanted more opportunities for interaction between younger and older generations. Suggestions included, encouraging mixed-age group activities, involving older adults in schools to share skills and stories, and have students visit older adults in community centres or care homes. Other ideas included creating volunteer opportunities for young people to help older adults with tasks like technology use and organising events that bring different generations together for mutual learning and socialising.

81 survey responses highlight a strong demand for increased police presence and stricter enforcement against anti-social behaviour. There were also concerns about electric scooters and bikes on pavements, beggars, drug users, and aggressive individuals dominating public spaces.

70 people suggested factors relating to the built environment for improving respect and social inclusion. These include more frequent and affordable transport options, safer infrastructure with better lighting and repaired pavements, and community facilities like hubs and seating to foster social interaction. Maintaining clean streets and parks, providing age-appropriate housing, and ensuring

Top Themes:

1. Young people (247)

Education of, attitudes, parenting, intergenerational work

2. Education (140)

Respect and manners taught in schools and the home, awareness of issues faced by older adults, older adults going into schools

3. Unsure/Don't know (130)

4. Intergenerational opportunities (110)

Mixed-age group activities, involving older adults in schools to share skills and stories, and have students visit older adults in community centres or care homes, organising events that bring different generations together

5. Policing/ASB (81)

Increased police presence, stricter enforcement against anti-social behaviour, electric scooters and bikes on pavements, beggars, drug users, and aggressive individuals dominating public spaces

6. Built Environment (70)

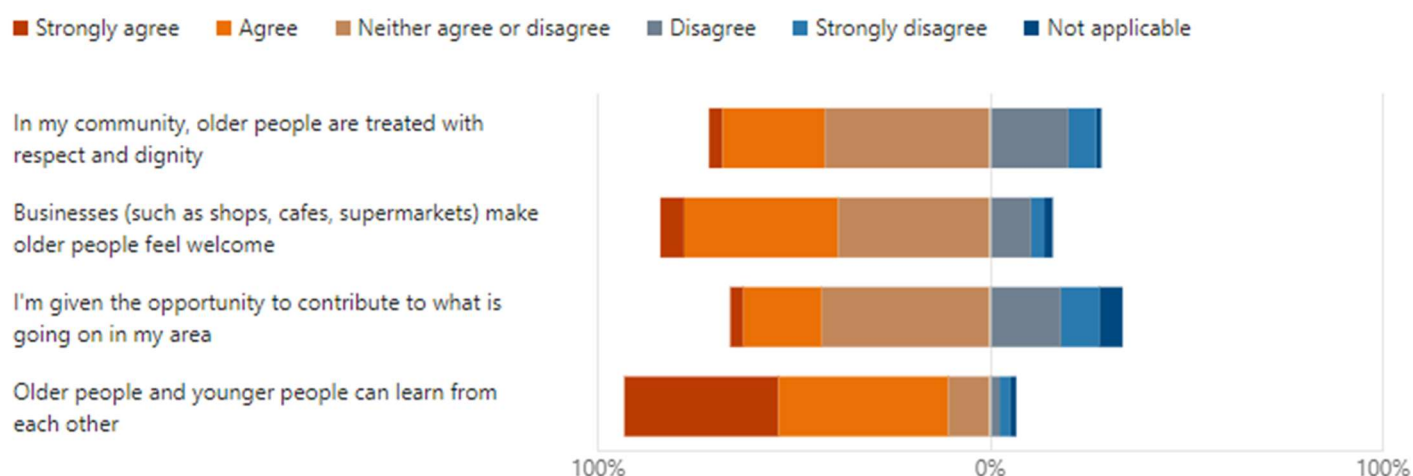
frequent and affordable transport options, safer infrastructure with better lighting and repaired pavements, community facilities like hubs and seating, clean streets and parks, age-appropriate housing, and ensuring accessibility for disabled individuals

accessibility for disabled individuals were also seen as essential. These measures would create a safer, more inclusive environment for older adults to engage confidently in community life.

130 people responded by saying that they were unsure or didn't know how respect and social inclusion could be improved for older adults.

247 of the responses specifically mentioned young people. Whether that be to highlight the importance of educating the younger generation, suggesting intergenerational activities or the parenting of and general attitudes and manners of young people. It would appear that there is agreement that young people play a key role in promoting respect and inclusion for older adults.

We asked respondents to read the statements below and rate their level of agreement (or select 'not applicable' if it wasn't relevant to them).



Community Support & Health Services

This area relates to the availability and accessibility of health and social care services, support systems, and healthcare. It includes access to primary care, long-term care, home care services, rehabilitation, and community-based support.

Question 7. What do you consider most important to you about your health?

Top Themes:

1. Access (352)

Access to local health services (GP, dentist, hospital, pharmacy and community services), health screening and vaccinations, activities and groups – physically and by availability

2. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle and keeping mobile (276)

Eating healthily and exercising regularly

3. Independence (65)

Continue looking after themselves and others, stay active, doing activities they enjoy and living in their homes

4. Mental Wellbeing (55)

Positive mental health and opportunities to reduce social isolation

5. NHS in General (34)

Good quality healthcare available to all with trusted, qualified professionals that deliver suitable, individualised care

The predominant theme within this question was related to access, majority of which were regarding the availability of appointments with a healthcare professional in both primary and secondary care. Others however also related to access to information regarding their health and community groups to support them to live as mobile and independently as possible. Many comments related to digital exclusion and challenges with transport to attend appointments. Not being able to attend a medical appointment was a concern for the future for many respondents.

Other key themes included the wish to remain physically and mentally healthy, mobile, and independent. Respondents commented on how eating healthy and staying active is important to help them remain within their own home, looking after themselves and their loved ones for as long as possible.

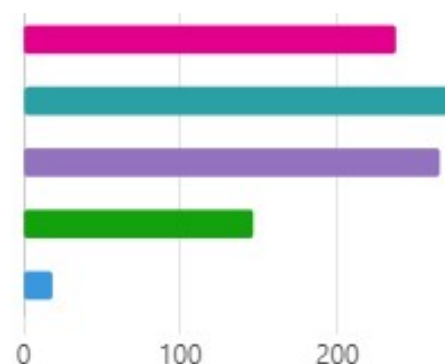
In addition to access to information on what is available in the community, respondents also commented on the importance of a safe, accessible, and affordable community offer. Being able to walk in the fresh air, meet for social gatherings, continue with activities that make them feel happy whilst feeling safe on the streets without vandalism and anti-social behaviour were all examples of what is important in relation to health.

It is important to note that some respondents feel a disconnect with the NHS with many commenting that they didn't feel they were being listened to and that there is a fear of becoming seriously ill with the breakdown of communication within the NHS.

“Eating healthy diet, regular exercise, keeping myself surrounded with positive people, engaging in activities that help keep my mind engaged and active is key.”

The graph below shows how respondents rate their health.

Very good	237
Good	309
Fair	265
Poor	146
Prefer not to say	18



We asked respondents to read the statements below and rate their level of agreement (or select 'not applicable' if it wasn't relevant to them)

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree or disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Not applicable

There are a range of health services available to me in my community

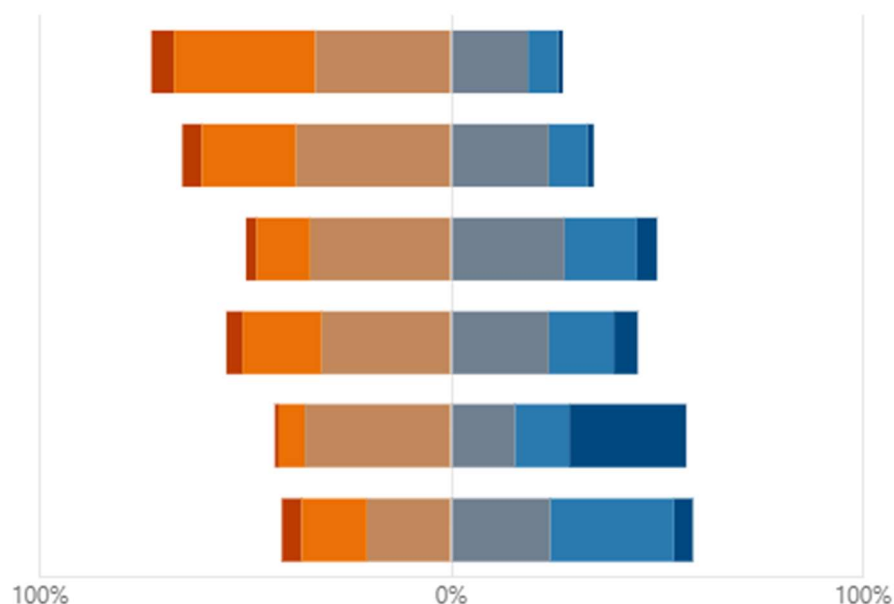
Information about health and support services is clear and accessible to me

Delivery of health and support services is coordinated and simple

Health and social services are conveniently located and accessible by all means of transport

Home care services including health, personal care, and housekeeping are available and accessible to me

GP and hospital appointments are available and easily accessible



"I worry that as I am not technically brilliant, if I am ever ill, I won't be able to access a doctor."

Communication & Information

In order to become more age friendly, it is important to consider how we can improve communication and provide accessible information for older adults.

Question 8. How can we improve how information is shared with you and the people living in your community?

Top themes:

1. Letters/Posted (144)
2. Leaflets/Posters (141)
3. Email (137)
4. Don't know (137)
5. Information not only online (134)
6. Online/Social Media (124)

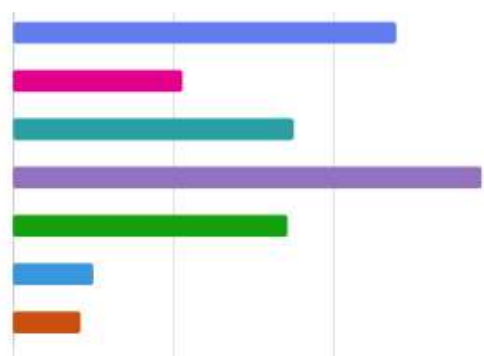
Overall, 54 respondents said they were satisfied with the information shared with them and the people living in their community, with some responses mentioning the Council weekly email newsletters as a good way of finding out information. Digital methods of communication were a common request, with 137 respondents wanting information via email and 124 expressing a preference for information online or on social media. However, 134 respondents wanted information to not only be online and a request for the Council to consider that not all residents will have or want access to the internet was a common theme. 22 people indicated that they wanted information to be provided in a printed format, 144 said they would like it via letter or a format delivered by post and 141

requested leaflets or posters. Other non-digital methods mentioned were telephone, newspapers or magazines and radio or television programmes. 20 people also suggested that information be provided in multiple formats.

The suggestion of displaying information in public locations was also a popular one. For example, 40 respondents would like bulletin boards to be used while 37 people wanted information to be displayed in supermarkets or shops. Many respondents would like more information to be shared in-person, an example being at public meetings or events which was requested by 18 people. The responses indicated a general theme of a desire for communication to be improved in ways such as improving transparency, simplifying information and delivering information about events, for example, more in advance. 27 responses expressed a preference for targeted information such as specific communication to older people and locality-specific information. The importance of information being accessible to all residents was also raised with suggestions such as leaflets in multiple languages, information being Easy Read and large print being used for those with a sight impairment.

Responses to the question 'Where do you usually find information about services or groups in your area (select all that apply)?'

Family and friends	478
Local Press	211
Social media	350
Internet	584
Council Web pages	342
Library	100
Other	84



Strengths of ageing in Doncaster

We wanted to give people the opportunity to tell us in their own words what helps them to live well in their community.

The top ten contributing factors to living well across Doncaster included:

1. **Family, Friends and Neighbours (291)** - with family being the biggest factor followed by neighbours and friends.
2. **Community living (96)** - reporting that feeling part of the community supports people to live well, taking advantage of activities close to where they live and feeling part of the community due to the positive community spirit and feel.
3. **Health (85)** - Responses recognised that having control over their own health and making healthy choices is essential to live well. Many recognised that easy access to health care would help to improve this further.
4. **Safety (83)** - Many responses talked about feeling safe, it is unclear from the responses if they currently feel safe or would like to feel safer. Many responses talk about wanting to be away from the city centre due to the people using it, other responses recognised the importance of the police and them being visible in communities.
5. **Amenities/facilities (77)** - The responses here were happy with the availability of services, amenities and services available close to where they live.
6. **'Me' (70)** - responses concluded that they are responsible for living well, due to them looking after themselves or having the positive attitude to keep a healthy mindset.
7. **Green spaces/environment (67)** - comments came back recognising that the close proximity to open green spaces were important to them living well. The responses also included areas such as allotments and their own garden spaces.
8. **Independence (56)** - responses came back linked to the importance of owning their own independence but recognised that the way they live may change as they age, due to changes in their mobility and freedom to get out and about.
9. **Finance (48)** - responses across Doncaster recognised that being financially stable helps them to live well, to afford the home basics of fuel and food and having money to enjoy other luxuries that enhance the way that they live.
10. **Travel/transport (47)** - responses with a divide between the ability to travel across the city due to the availability of their own transport and the option of public transport with an equal split between needing better services and feeling that the current services are sufficient.

However, it is important to note that there were responses to this question where people felt there were no positives. It was concerning to see that several comments came back with residents feeling very isolated and how this has a negative impact on the way that they live and their mental health.

Challenges of ageing in Doncaster

We wanted to give people the opportunity to tell us in their own words what could be improved to support them to live well in their community.

1. **224 respondents didn't provide an answer**, responded with 'nothing' or said they were unsure.

2. Safety/ASB/Policing (191)

Many respondents mentioned the need for more visible and active policing, particularly on foot, to deter crime and antisocial behaviour. Antisocial behaviour was a significant concern, especially by youths, gangs, off-road bikers, drug users, and noise disturbances. Respondents emphasised the need for stricter enforcement and action to curb these behaviours.

Many people reported feeling unsafe in public spaces and their communities. Respondents expressed the need for measures to improve safety, such as reducing burglaries, addressing drug-related crime, and ensuring streets and parks are secure and accessible for all, particularly for older residents.

Respondents also mentioned the need for better enforcement of laws related to littering, dog fouling, speeding, and illegal parking, which were seen as contributing to a general sense of disorder and reduced safety.

3. Outdoor Spaces (153)

Many respondents mentioned the need for better maintenance of pavements and roads, including fixing potholes, uneven surfaces, and addressing overgrown hedges and blocked pathways, which is especially important for the safety of older adults, those with mobility issues, and wheelchair users. Numerous responses called for cleaner streets, including more frequent street cleaning, litter removal, and addressing dog fouling, along with requests for better street lighting to improve visibility and safety. A common concern was speeding traffic and large vehicles using local roads as shortcuts, leading respondents to suggest traffic calming measures like speed bumps, better enforcement of speed limits, and more pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, such as safe crossings. Many people expressed the need for better-maintained parks and green spaces, as well as more benches, public toilets, and outdoor exercise equipment to encourage outdoor activity. Additionally, issues with parking, particularly illegal parking on footpaths and grass verges, were noted, alongside the need for more accessible parking spaces, especially for disabled residents.

4. Transport (127)

Many respondents stressed the need for more reliable, frequent, and accessible bus services. There were multiple calls for better public transport connections, both for buses and trains, to improve access to essential services and social activities. Affordability and accessibility were key concerns, with requests for cheaper transport options and services that better accommodate older individuals and those with mobility issues. Several people expressed frustration with unreliable or poorly timed bus services, asking for more consistent and regular bus schedules to better meet community needs. Additionally, there were concerns about the lack of transport options to maintain independent travel, especially for those who may no longer be able to drive, which includes both regular bus services and community-based transport solutions.

5. Community support & health services (116)

Many respondents stressed the need for improved access to general practitioners (GPs), with concerns about long wait times for appointments, difficulty getting same-day appointments, and a

preference for face-to-face consultations. Several called for a more efficient appointment system, particularly for working individuals who need out-of-hours options.

There were multiple requests for overall improvements to health services, including quicker access to both primary, secondary and specialised care, and better mental health services.

Another recurring theme was the lack of access to NHS dentists, with respondents calling for more availability in their local areas.

Respondents mentioned the need for increased support for older people and those with specific health conditions, such as home care visits, social care, and better communication regarding ongoing medical issues.

6. Information/Communication (60)

Respondents called for more effective and consistent communication from local services and government, ensuring they are kept informed about what's happening in their community, what support is available to them and how they can access it.

Many people wanted increased awareness and easier access to information on local events, activities, and groups, with several suggesting centralised sources for this information, such as local information hubs, a monthly magazine, or a telephone number they can ring. Many stressed that they either didn't want to, or didn't know how to, access this information online.

7. Local Amenities (56)

Many respondents mentioned the need for a wider variety of shops in their community, including independent shops, greengrocers, and supermarkets. There were also calls to prevent local shops from closing or being replaced by non-essential services like nail salons.

Several people wanted more community hubs, cafes, pubs, or clubs where people could gather, meet new people, and foster a sense of community.

There was demand for more local leisure options, including swimming pools, gyms, libraries, and cinemas.

Respondents mentioned the need for public toilets and seating areas, particularly in parks and community areas, to make these spaces more accessible for everyone.

Some respondents suggested revitalising the town centre by reducing rents to encourage more shops, introducing pop-up shops, and making better use of empty premises and brownfield sites.



Other important areas of ageing well

Question 11. Please use this space to tell us about anything else that is important to you.

Of the 1038 responses, 485 people either provided no response to the question or answered by saying they didn't know or there was nothing else they wanted to say. A popular theme was that of safety, with 149 of the responses mentioning this. In line with responses relating to safety in the other questions, concerns raised included crime, drugs, anti-social behaviour and a desire for a higher police presence. 67 of the responses also mentioned areas related to transport, such as the frequency and reliability of bus services, wanting increased parking facilities in the city centre and a desire for Doncaster Sheffield Airport to be reopened.

Another area that was important to many respondents was that of Doncaster being well-maintained (100 responses). Factors such as a reduction in litter, roads and pavements being maintained and there being an increased number of green spaces and wildlife in the city were mentioned. Community support was highlighted as an area important to 34 respondents. Comments on this area mentioned things such as community groups, the importance of supporting people who are housebound or lonely and a desire for increased support in smaller villages within the city. 22 of the responses indicated communication as an area important to them. For example, people expressed a desire for increased collaboration with the Council on decision-making, more advanced notice about Council projects and events and increased information about services available for older people.



Access to facilities and services, for example, healthcare, public toilets, exercise and walking opportunities and shops, was also a common theme. Other areas mentioned in the responses included money, housing, education and personal health and independence.

Summary

Ageing adults in Doncaster have highlighted a number of key priorities for each age friendly 'domain' through their responses to this survey. The themes set out in this document will be used to develop an action plan that aims to address these issues.

From the survey responses, there have also been several cross-cutting themes that emerged consistently across all survey questions, highlighting their importance to Doncaster's ageing residents. These themes are as follows:

Independence: Many respondents expressed a desire to maintain their independence, with a particular focus on improved transport options and access to healthcare services. A more reliable public transport system and community-based solutions are seen as essential for supporting independent living, especially for older residents and those who no longer drive. Access to local shops and amenities also plays a significant role in enabling independent lifestyles. Many of the respondents were clear that they want to stay living in their homes, access local services and take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

Safety: Safety concerns were raised frequently, with calls for increased police presence, better street lighting, and measures to tackle antisocial behaviour such as drug use, gang activity, and speeding. Respondents stressed the need for safer streets, parks, and public spaces, particularly for older residents and vulnerable groups, to enhance their sense of security in the community.

Information: Many people highlighted a lack of accessible information about local events, services, and resources. Respondents emphasised the need for better communication and more centralised sources of information, with suggestions for community hubs, newsletters, and non-digital options to ensure all residents, including those without internet access, can stay informed.

Transport: Reliable, frequent, and affordable public transport is a major concern, particularly in terms of bus services. Respondents cited the need for better connections to essential services, social activities, and healthcare, as well as more frequent and accessible transport options to maintain independence. Cost-effective and accessible transport solutions were also seen as critical for those with mobility issues and older residents.

Accessibility: Accessibility challenges were a recurrent theme, with respondents noting issues related to poorly maintained pavements, lack of accessible public spaces, and limited transport options. There were also calls for more facilities such as accessible toilets, benches, and improved community infrastructure to ensure all residents, including those with disabilities, can fully participate in community life.

Access to Healthcare: Access to healthcare services, particularly GP appointments, dentists, and specialist care, was a prominent concern. Many respondents reported long waiting times and difficulties securing face-to-face appointments. There were also calls for more accessible

healthcare options, such as extended hours for working people, community care, and better support for older adults and those with chronic health conditions.

Face to face consultations

This baseline assessment of Doncaster's age-friendliness was informed by results collected through an online survey. To compliment these findings and add depth to the data, we also visited several community groups attended by older adults in Doncaster, to hear about their experiences with ageing and understand what matters most to them. The themes raised in these conversations echoed those from our online survey, with the most common topics focusing on access to healthcare, particularly the difficulty of securing GP appointments. Other concerns included limited transportation options, such as infrequent bus services and changes to schedules and routes.

Many participants voiced frustrations about not feeling heard and perceived inaction by the local council on issues important to them.

This work is ongoing, and as noted at the beginning of this report, all insights gathered will continue to shape future action plans that support the broader agenda for ageing well.

Limitations of the baseline assessment

While this baseline assessment provides valuable insights into the age-friendliness of our community, it's important to acknowledge it's limitations. One significant limitation is the reliance of online surveys, which may inadvertently exclude older adults who are not digitally literate or have limited access to technology. This could result in underrepresentation of certain demographic groups, potentially skewing the findings. Additionally, the predominance of white British responses in the survey may not fully capture the experiences and perspectives of minority ethnic and cultural groups within our community. As a result, there may be gaps in understanding the unique needs and challenges faced by these populations. Recognising these limitations, efforts will be made to enhance the assessment with targeted engagement strategies and alternative data collection methods to ensure a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the age-friendliness of Doncaster.



Next Steps

- **Additional data collection:** As mentioned at the beginning of this document, this assessment will be ongoing, and all insights and recommendations will be updated in line with our continuous engagement. We will implement targeted efforts to engage underrepresented demographic groups, including older adults with limited digital access and minority ethnic communities.
- **Establish an Ageing Well Forum:** When asked if they wanted to further assist the age friendly work 530 respondents said they would like to contribute further, through additional questionnaires, becoming a member of an 'Older Person's Forum' or helping to design, deliver or evaluate projects or services. 185 said they'd like to join an 'older person's forum' specifically. Working with other Team Doncaster partners we want to create a forum that provides opportunities for older adults to share their experiences and perspectives of ageing. Establishing a forum for older adults provides a valuable opportunity for co-production, as it creates a platform for older adults to actively participate in decision making processes that directly impact their lives.
- **Co-production:** Utilising the Ageing Well Forum, focus groups and conversations with older adults, we will create opportunities for older adults to 'sense check' and agree the insights, actions and priorities found within our engagement, ensuring that we are accurately representing their challenges and concerns.
- **Consult with stakeholders to develop an action plan:** We will seek input from relevant partners and stakeholders on the results of this baseline assessment and develop an action plan based on key findings and priorities. This will be co-produced with adults ageing in Doncaster.
- **Implement recommendations:** Implement the action plan in collaboration with key stakeholders, monitoring progress and making adjustments as necessary (based on additional engagement and potential new insights).
- **Monitor and evaluate:** Establish mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation to track progress towards achieving age friendly goals and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

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.

"Make older people feel that they are being listened to & not ignored, these people have a wealth of knowledge & experience!"

Compassionate approach to ageing

In line with the City of Doncaster Council's 'Compassionate Approach' to health and wellbeing, our vision is for everybody in Doncaster to be able to pursue their own health goals, being fully supported to do so by society, without judgement or assumptions. We want people to feel valued as an individual, just the way they are.

Ageing is an inevitable part of life. It is a process filled with experiences, opportunities, and challenges. However, society often portrays ageing in a negative light, and people as they age can be neglected or stereotyped. This increases ageism and discrimination against older adults.

A compassionate approach to ageing encourages us to reframe our perspectives on ageing, recognising the worth and contributions of all individuals irrespective of age. We want to implement a compassionate approach to ageing that fosters dignity, respect and inclusivity for older adults while creating a more compassionate and age friendly community. A community where our age does not define how we see ourselves or how other people should see us.

Age related inequalities are wide ranging and can have a profound impact on older adults. Below are just a few examples:

- Economic inequality
- Age discrimination
- Social isolation (and loneliness)
- Digital exclusion
- Transport barriers
- Housing insecurity
- Intersections with other inequalities

What we want to reject	What we want to adopt
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interventions that create or increase inequalities• Ageist stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination• Focussing on external appearances and instead emphasise overall health and happiness• Societal biases and attitudes that negatively impact how a person sees themselves, or the ageing process• Ideas of 'successful ageing' being down to an individual's actions. How we age is often more a product of our environments than personal choices.• The notion that ageing is something for us to defy!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An approach that advocates for social justice and reducing inequalities• Protect our citizens, where possible, from the unfair environmental, social and economic factors that constrict their lives• Older people to be seen as assets in their community, not burdens• Treating individuals with dignity and respect regardless of their age• Positive messaging that uplifts and encourages individuals and rejects negative self talk and criticism