

South Tyneside Partnership

Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 28 May 2026

Age Friendly Communities Annual Update

Report of Tom Hall – Director of Public Health

Why Has this Report Come to the Health and Wellbeing Board?

1. To provide members of the Health and Wellbeing Board with an annual update on Age Friendly Communities.
2. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to receive this update and provide their respective organisational support to embed the principles of an Age Friendly Community in South Tyneside.

Which Outcome is this Linked to Within the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and How?

3. Age Friendly Communities could be linked to all outcomes, but the focus is predominantly Safe and Healthy Places

How Does This Report Contribute to the Cross Cutting Theme(s)?

4. Age Friendly Communities aims to make things fairer for all, particularly looking through the inequalities lens and to have residents' voices at the heart of what we do.

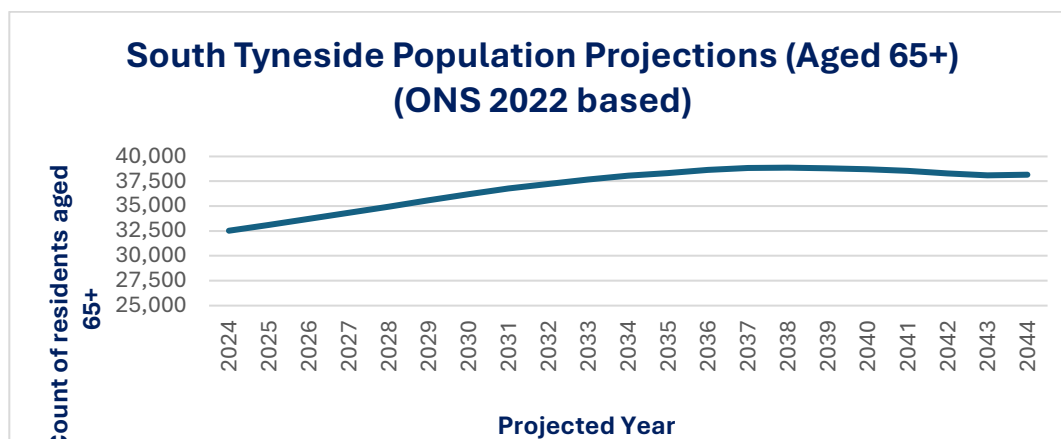
What is an Age Friendly Community?

5. The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines an age friendly community as 'a place where people of all ages are able to live healthy and active later lives. These places make it possible for 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.' [1]
6. Age-friendly Communities commit to following the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Communities framework.
7. The framework consists of four stages (over a rolling five-year period) and covers eight different themes.

8. The four stages are:
 - Engage and understand by undertaking the baseline survey.
 - Plan, by producing a strategy and action plan.
 - Act by implementing the plan.
 - Evaluate and repeat.
9. The eight domains include:
 - Open Spaces and Public Buildings
 - Housing
 - Transport
 - Social Participation
 - Inclusion and Respect
 - Civic Participation
 - Communication and Information
 - Communities and Health
10. This report provides the annual review against the South Tyneside Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan (2024-2028). [2] The action plan and annual updates are available in the appendix.
11. In 2045/25, it was reported that there was progress against some actions, an increasing awareness of the age friendly concept, with partners working together because of the age friendly approach, who may not otherwise have done so.
12. In 2025/26, progress against individual actions continues, but the biggest achievement is that the age friendly agenda is starting to influence decisions that will have a significant impact across the wider system. An example of this are the walkability audits influencing town center developments and transport infrastructure. This is discussed further in points 25 – 36.

Why is being Age Friendly Important?

13. The local population is ageing and the proportion of those aged 65 and over continues to increase. In South Tyneside, 21% of the 32,539 residents are aged 65+ as of 2024, rising from 19% in 2014. According to ONS population estimates this figure is projected to rise to over 24% by 2044, representing 38,142 residents [3]



14. Ageing well is important for the individual, their families, as well as society. Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer (2023) said in his Health in an Ageing Society report [4]
15. 'One of the triumphs of modern medicine is that the great majority of people live into older age. For many, this is a period of great happiness: freedom to do what they want, the joys of being a grandparent, a respected place in families and in society. At the other extreme, for some older age is a time of great difficulty, with dignity impaired, independence curtailed, and encroaching frailty, discomfort and loneliness.'
16. The report highlighted three key messages:
 - To the public, the chances of delaying disease and disability are substantially increased by straightforward measures individuals can take to prevent or significantly delay disease and maintain physical, mental and social activity.'
 - To policy makers, particularly in rural and coastal areas, 'providing services and environments suitable for older adults is an absolute priority if we wish to maximise the period all older citizens have in independence. The provision of health and social care also needs to be concentrated in these areas.'
 - To the medical profession, the importance of multiple long-term conditions in older age, often called multimorbidity. This is increasing and will continue to increase in the future.'

The South Tyneside Approach

17. In 2021, Public Health SMT supported South Tyneside being part of the age friendly programme.
18. From 2022 onwards, there has been:
 - Approval from the appropriate Council Boards and Committees, including the Living Well Alliance, the Safeguarding Partnership and the Health & Wellbeing Being Board.
 - Written commitment from older people living in South Tyneside, partner organisations and relevant leaders.
 - Approval from the Centre for Ageing Better (CfAB) for South Tyneside to start working towards becoming age friendly.
 - South Tyneside formally launched age friendly communities on the 1st October 2022, in line with International Older Persons Day (IDOP).
 - Implementation of the Age Friendly Steering Group.
 - Completion of a baseline survey in April 2023 with four validation events held in May 2023.
 - Two dedicated planning events for professionals in October 2023 and October 2024.
 - The production of the Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan which was approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board in January 2024, along with a refresh of the Older Peoples JSNAA.
 - Production of the local State of Ageing report during 2025.

The Baseline Survey – Local Insight

19. In 2023, the South Tyneside baseline survey (which was adapted from the national age friendly survey) was distributed online, in hard copy and through facilitated groups to people over 50, along with their family or carer. Over 300 people completed the survey and a further 60 took part in the four borough wide validation events. Whilst the numbers completing the survey were relatively small, those who took part were considered representative of the wider population.

Residents Liked (Highlighted in the 2024/25 Report)	Residents Disliked (Highlighted in the 2024/25 Report)
'Sea front, beaches and parks are well looked, a pleasure to visit'	'If you are not internet savvy or don't have access to it, it is difficult to find out information.'
'Voluntary Services are a credit to South Tyneside, a great network'	'Kerbs and paths are terrible for zimmer frames and mobility scooters.'
'My wife and myself attend the gym and are made to feel very welcome'	'We need more warden patrols to curb anti-social conduct.'
'The event, parades and activities are excellent'	'Trying to get help for our elderly loved one's is extremely depressing and stressful.'
'I have had good service from my GP since I moved here two years ago'	'Too much dependence on online bookings for GP appointments, many old people are not IT literate and never will be.'

20. In previous reports this insight has been quite concise, promoting high level examples of what was or wasn't working well, to steer the narrative on overarching items such as digital inclusion, poverty and access to health & social care.
21. However, as the age friendly journey evolves, as working relationships develop and the ability to influence wider workstreams unfold, it is an ideal time to highlight more detail from the survey, ensuring the residents' views are kept the heart of the age friendly agenda.

Residents Liked	Disliked/wanted
The contributions made by volunteers Or being a volunteer	Lack of community spirit / not knowing their neighbours any more
Having an active social life	Better toilets, seating and lighting
The library's	More respect /more intergenerational opportunities
Practical support offered by named organisations	Better access for those with a disability / mobility issue
The businesses that make older people feel welcome	More dementia friendly places to visit

The Strategy and Action Plan

22. The information from the baseline survey, the four validation events and the first professional event in October 2023, shaped the Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan.
23. The Age Friendly Steering Group meets every six weeks. There is a small core membership from South Tyneside Council (STC) including Public Health and Libraries, and different organisations from the Community & Voluntary Sector, including Inspire. However, each meeting focuses on a different theme, leads for each action are asked to attend to discuss their specific theme. Therefore, throughout the year there is representation from across STC, including Community & Place, Public Protection, Housing, Transport, Adult Social Care, Organisational Development, Carers, Anti-Poverty, Welfare Support and Communications as well as Museums, the Integrated Care Board, STSFT and the Mental Health Foundation Trust.
24. Appendix 1 is an update of 38 actions across all eight age friendly themes. This information is provided by the lead for each action. Where possible, a comparison with previous years is provided.

Evaluation

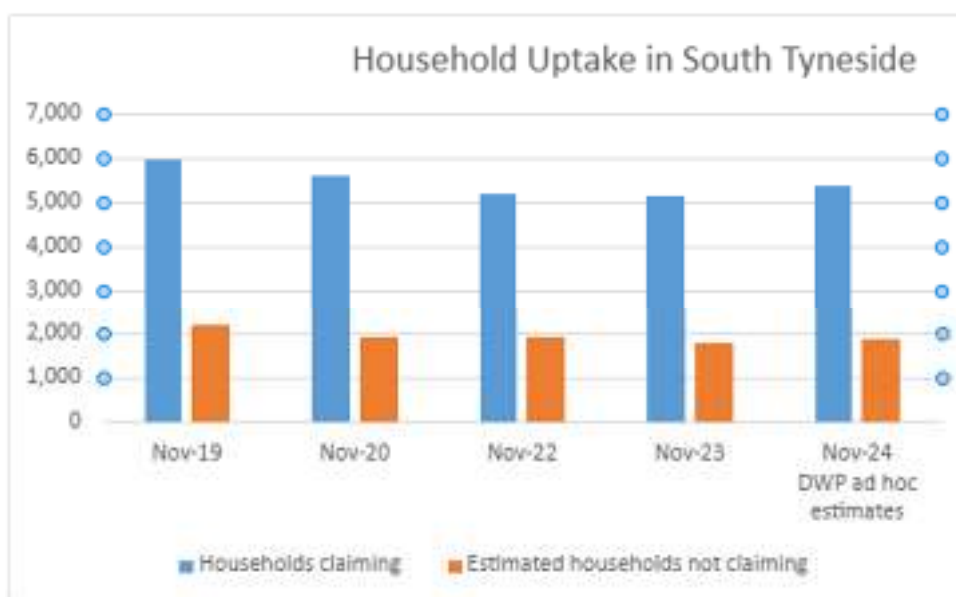
25. Full evaluation of the South Tyneside age friendly action plan is required in 2028.
26. We have had a master's in public health student from Newcastle University, to support early evaluation. This individual reviewed the age-friendly concept through a culture and diversity lens. This summary was received in February 2026.
27. A small-scale qualitative study was undertaken by an MSc student at Newcastle University to explore what "age-friendly" means to diverse older adults in South Tyneside. Two focus groups with older adults recruited via Apna Ghar (n=8 women) and Jarrow Big Local (n=11 men and women) were supplemented by key informant interviews with commissioners (n=3). Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns within the data. The study revealed a potential gap between the policy-level vision of age-friendly communities (AFCs) and the reality for older residents, none of whom were aware of the "AFC" term. Older migrant women defined an age-friendly space by a single organization, Apna Ghar, valued for its culturally affirming, safe environment. In contrast, older White British adults defined an age-friendly place by functional public services, expressing frustration over their deterioration. While distinct, the challenges faced by both groups were shaped by overlapping identities of age, ethnicity and geography. The findings suggest that, to succeed, South Tyneside's AFC strategy must adopt a targeted, intersectional lens that acknowledges the distinct needs of different community groups. This requires preserving essential public infrastructure, providing accessible offline alternatives to digital services, and fostering genuine co-design with marginalised communities.
28. The insight from this small study must be factored into the work of the Steering Group to ensure we reach the needs of different community groups.

29. There are, however, some positive examples of successful targeted approaches.
30. Those with lived experience who undertook the walkability audit of the town centre said
 - "It actually feels as though we're being listened to"
 - "Maybe we can make a difference"
31. The Dementia Group (DEEP), who are part of a UK wide Dementia Network, wanted Public Health to help improve access to public toilets, they fed back:
32. 'Just wanted to thank you for coming to the DEEP group yesterday. The group wanted me to let you know they feel positive about progress made by you and the council. Looking forward to hearing about the developments'
33. The local State of Ageing Report is being finalised and will be hosted as a presentation and a blog on the South Tyneside data observatory. This was produced to add local context to the national state of ageing report. [5]
34. Early highlights from the age friendly action plan after the first two years include:
 - Roll out of walkability audits.
 - The findings from these audits, leading to improvements in accessibility and shaping future investments.
 - The discussions related to transport inequalities have led to a local Transport Needs Assessment (TNA) being produced. With some changes already being made
 - Improvements to the Highways and Infrastructure STC website, making it easier for people to report an issue.
 - Redesign of Hospital Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS)
 - Housing-related discussions across Health, Housing and Social Care, which has resulted in a number of 'community of practice' (COP) events, having taken place or being planned.
 - Building older people/age friendly into the digital inclusion strategy and action plan.
 - Building age friendly into the poverty/cost of living agenda – the graph below has been produced to show the take up of pension credit.
 - Building falls prevention into the Sport England Place Based Partnership programme and funding.
 - Six organisations signed up to the Age Friendly Employer Pledge and closer working with invest South Tyneside.
 - Development of a State of Ageing report, where all data is collated in one place and can be updated when appropriate.
 - Age friendly is a key component of Strand 1: Prevention in Care Closer to Home
35. Many of these actions have required strong partner collaboration, which adds value over and above the individual actions. For instance, the accessibility audit of the Town Hall was done in conjunction with the EDIB network members. The forthcoming audit of Hebburn Town Centre will include Nexus and the Investment Team.

36. However further work is still needed to drive:
- The refresh of several strategies including physical activity and several housing related ones, including homelessness and accommodation.
 - Continue to drive the take up of pension credit. The graphs below show the potential associated costs with non-claimants.
 - Continue to make closer links with the work of the Mental Health Alliance.
 - Find opportunities to roll out three neighbourhood watch areas.

Pension Credit (PC)

37. The three graphs below show the update by household pension credit in South Tyneside, the average weekly potential of those not claiming and the total amount not claimed across all households. This is all South Tyneside data.
38. The most recent ad hoc DWP data [7] shows that as of 2023/24, an estimated quarter (26%) of eligible households were not claiming their PC entitlement. In South Tyneside, the number of households claiming PC has fallen by an estimated 591 households since 2019. Similarly, the (non-adjusted) unclaimed amount has increased by an estimated £184,709, despite the claimed amount also increasing (£502,787). This means that, over that same period, the potential value to non-claiming households has increased by £7.32 a week, or £380.55 a year. [6]
39. Notably, local uptake fell during the year of the pandemic and the two years that followed. This is unlike England, which saw higher uptake during the pandemic (2020) that fell in 2022 before bouncing back in 2023. Without presuming too much, it may be that health and income inequalities (which have a higher prevalence in post-industrial, coastal, deprived areas) led to South Tyneside's older population, particularly pensioners, being disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and taking longer to recover.
40. The methodology used to produce local figures is based on national uptake and expenditure for each year and applied to our local figures. [7]





41. Recent data from the Centre for Ageing Better tells us that South Tyneside is:
 - One of the 106 members of the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities
 - One of the 579 organisations that have signed the Employer Pledge
 - One of the 65+ places engaging in the Good Home Network
42. However, South Tyneside is not yet one of the 51 UK members of Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. By signing up and providing an annual case study, we will have access to international resources and support. This global application was made in November 2025; we await the outcome.

Recommendations

43. For the Health and Wellbeing Board to:
 - a) Review this report. To acknowledge the progress that has been made as well as the actions which have not yet progressed. Equally to note the benefits arising from cross sector collaboration.

- b) In reviewing the report, advise where age-friendly priorities can continue to align with other programmes of work.
- c) Review where this work best fits strategically.
- d) Look for continued opportunities for funding streams to drive this work.

References

1. [What's an Age-friendly Community? | Centre for Ageing Better](#)
2. [Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan - South Tyneside Council](#)
3. [Subnational population projections for England: 2022-based - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Mar...](#)
4. [Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2023: health in an ageing society - GOV.UK](#)
5. [The State of Ageing 2025 | Centre for Ageing Better](#)
6. [Stat-Xplore](#)
7. [Proportion claiming Pension Credit aged 65+ in South Tyneside | LG Inform](#)

Appendix 1 – AFC Action Plan

Open Space and Public Buildings

Indicator	2024/25	2025/26
Sense Ability Matters (SAM) to coproduce an age friendly audit checklist	Completed	
To utilise the check list to undertake accessibility audits of public spaces, public buildings, businesses, and the Community & Voluntary sector.	South Shields Town Centre was audited by Sense Ability Matters (SAM), in October 2024. Non recurrent funding secured for SAM to undertake further audits; different locations were being considered.	In July 2025, SAM conducted two audits of the Town Hall in conjunction with the EDIB networks. One from a visitor perspective and one from an employer perspective. Hebburn Town Centre is due to be audited on 23/03/26 With plans for: Middlefields, Jarrow Town Centre, The Foreshore and Public Toilets.
To help improve public realm, these audits will include, amongst other things, the provision of toilets, benches, and litter bins.	The Town Centre audit report was received from Sense Ability Matters (SAM). The findings were still to be discussed with Andrew Whittaker.	The results of the Town Centre audit are now being considered as part of the King Street redevelopment plans. The Town Hall audits have resulted in improved signage outside customer services, marking up of the bricks outside the new reception

		80s block, electronic floor plans, signage on the stairs and the white columns to show the floor level.
To ensure members of the public know they can report concerns with paving or street lighting through https://southtyneside.gov.uk/article/7729/Report-an-issue- Ensuring there is help for those who need support and a feedback mechanism	The Infrastructure and Transport team were working with ICT as to how to improve the Council's public-facing website.	'Report an issue' is now more visible on the council webpage. The topics on the Roads, Streets and Pavements webpage are now organised by popularity. There was an issue with finding 'report a problem with a path / public right of way' a link has been added and the search boosted. Guidance added on the 'report a pothole page':
Continue to make best use of antisocial behaviour (ASB) tools such as Public Space Protection Orders, Community Protection Warnings and Notices, and Community Trigger. In addition to encourage a minimum of three local neighbourhoods to become neighbourhood watch areas.	Ongoing use of ASB tools and data Plans to develop three new Neighbourhood Watch Areas. One off funding allocated for a camera.	Examples highlighted by Northumbria Police in relation to safer travel include: Use of information/intelligence Action involving wider partnerships Operations (trojan bus/interchange) Funding Future planning A significant amount of work undertaken around antisocial behaviour and community cohesion ASB Case Reviews (also formerly known as a Community Trigger) which is an important safety net for victims and communities experiencing ASB to request a review of their ASB case and to bring agencies together to find a solution

		The camera funded by Public Health is in use and the cameras have been successful deterrents ASB incidents in South Tyneside, in Jan 2026 have decreased by 22% when compared with Jan 2025. There are currently two Neighbourhood Watch areas in place
Public Health to advice on data sets that could support monitoring and evaluation of this/other themes	A local State of Ageing Report is being developed	Due to be posted on the South Tyneside Data Observatory imminently. To avoid duplication, the four data actions, to be brought together via the State of Ageing report (1.6, 2.5, 4.5, 8.7)

Transport

Indicator	2024/25	2025/26
Refresh the physical activity strategy, specifically looking for opportunities that enable older people to remain physically active, with a dedicated section on falls prevention.	A sector-led approach was being utilised. Workshops took place during 2024 to examine the different sections.	This programme of work has been aligned with the Place Based Partnership (Sport England funded, coordinated by RISE) Currently in the development phase, planning to go for the Full Award in September 2026. The Development Award began in September 2024. The three main aims are to: - Strengthen strategic partnerships. - Develop local relationships. - Deepen the shared understanding of local physical activity ecosystem.

		Key tasks undertaken include establishing a steering group, delivering leadership training, networking with local organisations, gathering local insight, evaluating system maturity and developing a theory of change. Prevention of falls is an emerging priority. (linked to theme 8)
Ensure that local people are aware of Transport North East's plan a journey website - https://travelinenortheast.info/ and ensure that organisations are aware of this information and can support people to use information	There was some promotion of this website. There was also some work with organisations who provide digital skills training, to encourage them to practice using this digital tool.	A transport needs assessment is being developed, highlighting many barriers to booking, planning and taking a journey. Non-recurrent funding is available to address some of these barriers and the scope is being agreed. Looking at the possibility of funding organisations to help people from different communities such as women, ethnic minority communities, those with a disability with their specific travel needs. Nexus/Travel Providers are willing to provide training and non-digital resources.
To work with Transport North East / Nexus to explore what training is available for transport workers that ensure they are aware of the needs of those with additional needs.	Started to explore what training already takes place	Conversations with Nexus and the Transport Providers tell us that training is provided at induction and on an ongoing basis, ensuring that drivers meet industry standards. There are also systems in place that monitor individual drivers, such as speed, acceleration, complaints etc. Replacement fleet also addresses a number of access issues – such as

		hydraulic steps, audio messages, next stop messages. Nexus also involved in transport and walkability audits.
To coproduce and test an improved process for travel reimbursement for those attending hospital appointments.	STSFT had undertaken observations and mapped process across three sites – consolidating cashier opening hours. Undertaken a health literacy/readability exercise Looked at other regional approaches to the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS)	STSFT have now reviewed current HTCS processes across the Trust. Implemented changes to improve efficiency and equity of access. Gained insight into communities understanding of the scheme including potential barriers. Produced recommendations to NHSE on how to maximise the potential benefits of the HTCS. Developed and shared best practice with regional and national colleague These changes are being shared across a number of forums including the Transport Workshop, the Poverty Group and the Age Friendly Steering Group.

Housing

Indicator	2024/25	2025/26
Ensure that South Tyneside residents can access timely support and information to enable them to make an informed choice about where they want to live. Utilising touch points, such as a change in health, retirement, or loss of a partner, to generate conversations that enable people to future proof their older age.	At the second age friendly professional event in October 2024 , it was agreed to produce a summary of all the age friendly strategy services/links in one place - both digital and hard copy	An Age Friendly summary is now available online and in hard copy. https://southtyneside.gov.uk/article/26548/Age-Friendly-Communities This will be kept under review to ensure content remains up to date.
To implement and evaluate AskSARA, an online self-help guide that provides expert advice and information on	In 2024, there was an average of 49 visitors per month to this online support, with 12 self-help reports generated per month	In 2025, there was a slight increase, AskSara averaged 56 visitors per month, with 15

products and equipment for people of all ages who want to stay independent in and outside of their home.	(24%) for themselves, someone they care for or someone they work with.	self-help reports generated (27%). However, we are advised that when assistive technologies are recommended, it does not signpost to STC services and suggests people need to self-fund which is not always the case. Therefore, we are exploring if changes could direct the person to STC independence and assisted technology services, where the need for payment and what is available can be discussed. Where practicable, this action will be expanded to incorporate an overview of AskSara, the Let's Talk Team and the Independence and Assisted Technology Team.
To refresh the accommodation strategy, to ensure that affordable, quality housing will be available. Utilising opportunities like the Stirling Gold Standards for dementia or lifetime home standards where possible	The draft refresh of the accommodation strategy was developed and sent out for comments. However, the Accommodation Board had agreed that the strategy would no longer be an all-age strategy, just adults.	There is a refresh of the Housing Strategy taking place. The three priorities are: Supply quality homes that meet everyone's needs Improvements to existing stock in safe and secure neighbourhoods Support people to live happy, healthy and fulfilled lives. The needs of older people will be considered across all three areas. The Accommodation Strategy will be an umbrella policy to the Housing Strategy, along with others such as Homelessness.

		The Accommodation Strategy will be completely refreshed and will cover accommodation for adults who have care act eligible care and support needs, and young people transitioning into Adult Social Services. ASC are currently identifying relevant data sources to inform the strategy. Anticipating the strategy will be agreed and launched by the end of the current financial year.
Complete the healthy homes, fuel poverty pilot, and based on the evaluation from Northumbria University look to embed a sustainable model that reduces fuel poverty, increases energy efficiency, and promotes safe, warm homes.	The Healthy Homes evaluation was presented to STAC and Strategic Housing Group in March 2024. Short, medium (up to March 27) and long (beyond 2027) term actions identified to take work forward. Phase 2 has commenced, with additional SPLW added to team. Currently expanding to additional postcode areas and working with partners to establish referral pathways i.e. A&E, ARAS, hospital discharge, South Tyneside Homes. Exploring options for funding post-March 25. Exploring opportunities for additional evaluation input, particularly in regard to economic impact.	FCC are funded to deliver this programme up to March 2027. They have undertaken 301 home assessments in total (135 in 2025/26 YTD) During 2026 /27 the healthy homes programme needs to transition to a more sustainable position. A paper to be written pulling together the different 'health and home' work streams. A damp, mould and indoor air quality community of practice (COP) is being planned for 17th March 2026. Two further health and housing COPs to be organised for 2026/27 – one on falls in the Autumn and one on Hoarding in Spring 2027.

Social Participation

Indicator	2024/25	2025/26
To utilise 'Plinth' to increase the visibility of local opportunities, including those	The plinth activities page is a live directory and therefore offers a snapshot in time.	As of 17/02/26 there are now 59 activities/groups accessible to older people.

led and coproduced with older people.	As of 1/10/24 there were 40 groups/activities accessible to older people including carers, health-based support/activities, support for those experiencing loss through suicide, specific groups for men and for women.	Examples include lunch club at Perth Green, Ageless Fitness at Bilton Hall, Peer Talk Mental Health Support Group at Ocean Road, South Shields Men's Group at ACTS.
To continue to promote external funding opportunities through FundingNet and disseminate local microgrant funding.	In 2024/25 £60,000 of grants were awarded to organisations / projects that specifically mention older people. However, this excluded grants that probably still had older people as beneficiaries such as Coronation Celebrations Further age friendly microgrants to be awarded, exploring the potential to implement a residents panel to support this process.	Funding 01/25 - 01/26 £21,000 of funding showing on 360Giving, directly referencing older people. However, many other funds will support older people as part of wider cohort. In addition, there has been £25,000 of microgrants from Public Health supporting older people and /or loneliness. These utilised a Residents Panel to approve the grants and a follow up workshop is being planned. During this time, the Lottery was introducing a new strategy, this essentially meant there was a reduction/hiatus in lottery funding as organisations were advised to hold off with applications until the new strategy was launched. 360Giving – ST Funding Report Time Period: 1/1/24 to 31/12/25 Grants Given: 224 grants Number of Beneficiaries: 98 ST VCSFE organisations Funders: 31 funders Total: £5.6million Time Period: 01/01/2023 to end of 12/12/2025 Grants Given: 396 grants

		Number of Beneficiaries: 141 ST VCSFE organisations Funders: 38 Total: £8.57million Note: The figures for 2025 are lower, coming in at £1.3million however, some of this will be due to the delay in the Lottery's new strategy. which created a 'pause' effect on some funding applications. We expect this to revert to normal patterns of income generation 2026 moving forward.
Seek additional funding, to expand the way in which we use national campaigns (such as IDOP) to celebrate older people.	In the previous two years IDOP was run over a week. In 2024 ACTS extended this offer to cover the full month of October. This included: Activities (with partners) across the Borough during the first week, culminating in the annual event at Cleadon Park Library which is opened by the mayor. Specific weeks dedicated to health & wellbeing, digital inclusion and winter readiness. Four dedicated bus trips A total of 1250 people participated throughout the month.	In 2025 we collectively we celebrated Ageism Action Day - 20th March Global Intergenerational Week - 24th-30th April Age without Limits - 10th June Carers Week 10-16th June World Elder Abuse Day 15th June ACTS Fest (IDOP) - 1st October In 2025 349 people attended the annual event at Cleadon Park Library, supported by partners promoting the range of services that are available for older people IDOP also includes the promotion of specific topics at specific venues across the borough such as wellbeing and digital inclusion, as well as 4 dedicated bus trips

		There continues to be successful intergenerational debates There are also successful intergenerational opportunities – such as Links made with 6th forms resulting in intergenerational learning, Christmas activities and the development of a Duke of Edinburgh pathway.
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Inclusion and Respect

Indicator	2024/25	2025/26
To utilise the checklist developed in the open space section, to ensure that South Tyneside is a friendly and welcoming place for everyone, including age friendly, dementia friendly, disability friendly etc. That is approved by the Health & Wellbeing Board and is refreshed every 4 years in line with this age friendly community strategy. The checklist to be utilised by those providing services across the borough.	It was acknowledged that this needed more thought.	There is a commitment from partner organisations to explore how we can link age friendly, dementia friends and disability compliant workplaces. Partners include Sense Ability Matters, Alzheimer's Society, Northern Rights (currently the only disability compliant accreditors in the borough) as well as Invest South Tyneside, the South Tyneside Pledge Support Officer and BHAWA Officers The first meeting is planned for 17th March 2026 and some funding is available to test how this may work.
To monitor the impact of the age friendly cultural standards used in the T&W Museums and use those finding to influence other venues. (Age-Friendly Standards - Family Arts)	TWAM undertaken a self-assessment of two sites - South Shields Museum & Art Gallery and Arebia Roman Fort. This assessment looks at five areas, building relationships, programming, facilities, communication and a warm welcome.	No further update received.

	• TWAM have offered to support other organisations to do something similar.	
To increase the number of people attending awareness raising sessions, provided by dementia ambassadors to become dementia friends. https://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/WEBArticle?page=become-dementia-friend	At baseline (2023) there were 10,348 people trained. As of October 2024, this increased to 10,493. We need to continue to promote the importance of this training and the various formats that are available (online, through a webinar, in person)	Total Dementia Friends Sessions delivered up to 31 July 2025 is 10,612. Therefore, an increase of 264 from the initial baseline
Explore the need for Challenging Ageism Workshops for people working with older people and in sectors including health, care, housing, and recruitment, as well as bespoke workshops for individual organisations.	This hadn't been developed any further yet. There was potentially an opportunity to run a self-assessment as described by TWAM above, then develop a training programme to run alongside the findings.	The individual actions in this theme are being more closely aligned – bringing together a system wide approach for inclusion and respect, covering agreed checklists, training and any accreditation schemes

Civic Participation

Indicator	2024/25	2025/26
To utilise the Plinth platform, to promote and increase the volunteering opportunities for older people.	Plinth volunteering as of 1/10/24 there were 17 volunteering opportunities to specifically support older people.	As of 17/02/26 there were two specific volunteering opportunities that directly support older people (happy at home/haway and weigh Foundation of Light) but there are 25 opportunities that could also appeal to older people.
South Tyneside Council to sign up the Age Friendly Employer Pledge, then encourage other employers to also sign up through the BHAWA and the South Tyneside Pledge	South Tyneside Council signed up to the age friendly employer pledge on the 14 th October 2024. The next steps are to promote this to businesses and other organisations through the BHAWA/South Tyneside Pledge.	Another five organisations joined during 2025 Northern Rights, ACTS, Groundworks, Port of Tyne and Nexus With further promotion taking place through Invest South Tyneside, the South Tyneside Pledge and the Better Health at Work Award .

To consider the best forum and/ or process, to ensure that older peoples voices are heard, when decisions are being made	ACTS are hosting an older people's forum. (alternating with a carers forum) At the older people's forum the following topics were raised: Potholes, high curbs and pavements. Sheltered accommodation / communal areas / garden areas - not maintained or accessible. Winter Fuel Payments. Bereavement support. Dog owners not cleaning up after their pets. Delivery couriers on bikes, too fast and lack of care for people crossing roads.	More recently the older people's forum at ACTS has raised: Hospital transport to and from Hebburn/Jarrow area to Sunderland– difficulty with timings and distance. As well as issues related to their concessionary pass and the letter for be shown to the driver, to travel to a hospital appointment before 09.30 (with some concerns over data protection) Fly tipping and litter – bins not being emptied Increasing cost of activities.
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Communication and Information

Indicator	2024/25	2025/26
To undertake a piece of work, including the development of a JSNAA, to ensure that information and advice is produced in a meaningful way, that then runs through this strategy as a consistent theme.	Timely and accurate information and advice needs to be a golden thread running through the age friendly strategy. A JSNAA was completed but not published. However, the information gathered was useful. Consistently we hear there is support available but those who need it most, are least able to access it. Healthy literacy and digital exclusion are cited as barriers.	2025/26 has seen the maturing of age friendly relationships and cross partner working. With each piece of work, information is considered. Examples include the walkability audits, the transport needs assessment, the housing strategy refresh, the age friendly employer pledge etc.
Continue to provide opportunities for older people to improve their digital skills and to support those who don't have or want digital access.	Diginet has been relaunched, this is a group that focuses on digital inclusion. Building on the work of the Good Things Foundation A number of organisations are providing support / access to data/equipment and training.	DigiNet continues to meet every two months. This is a wide range of representatives including Council Officers, Public Health and the VCS. The purpose of the group is to focus on digital inclusion across the borough. The Good Thing Foundation

	An online and paper-based 'Digital Directory' that will signpost to support is being developed.	Databank provides free sim cards, devices and online training. Organisations have been signposted to this and there is an online map that signposts residents/services to venues distributing sims and devices. A Digital Online Directory has been developed as well as a paper-based version – both launched on the 20th October in line with the National 'Get Online Week'. VCS organisations report that the more successful digital training sessions targeted towards older residents focus on a more personalised approach e.g. support access to online banking, order a prescription.
Ensure that older People and their carers have access to the information, support and connections they need to make decision on future care.	The Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE) stated that 42% of those who received Adult Social Care services in South Tyneside in the last 12 months (23/24) found it fairly easy to find information, advice and support - this is an improvement from 22% in 21/22 11% said it was very difficult to find in 22/23 compared to 5% in 2023-2024. A South Tyneside survey to reach all carers and not just those receiving Adult Social Care support was carried out in 2024 to gather some baseline data. • 49% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that they know what support is available to them in their area to look after their own health and wellbeing. • 35% agree or strongly agree that they can find information	Early Help & Prevention for Carers Connected Caring – Adult Carers Support Service: Increased engagement and Health and Wellbeing support. As Qtr 3 (Oct-Dec 25) there were 2,221 carers registered since the contract started (in Apr 2024 -baseline of 197), They had 1268 carers actively using the service (in project at any point during the quarter). From April to Dec 2025 the service has secured £368,600 in Benefit Gains for carers. The service is available 6 days per week with drop-in's borough wide. Carers Digital Offer 'Mobilise'

	in a way that is suitable for their needs, so that they can make good decisions about their life now and in the future. The new adult carers support service 'Connected Caring' was launched in April 2024, they have had over 2000 contacts with carers since the contract started and 531 new carer registrations, ensuring that carers are receiving the vital information and advice that they need. Mobilise Online Carers Support service is also available for residents in South Tyneside. Mobilise helps to identify 'hidden carers' (those that haven't accessed support before or are new to caring) and targets appropriate information and advice relevant to their circumstances.	Contract performing strongly - 2,166 light-touch interactions (+38% over target) and 1,128 personalised supports (+16% over target). 82% of engaged carers were new to formal services, with strong representation across all wards. Showing the digital reach is even and far reaching. Highlights Review of Carers Assessments We have co-produced a new Carers Assessment and guidance, improving the assessment experience and ensuring parity when jointly assessed with service users. This was launched in July 2025 with a new audit tool, video resources, and guidance materials Enhance voice, choice, and strength-based practice for carers. Workforce Training Training on the new Carers Assessment and Care Act duties rolled out to 150+ professionals during Carers Week (June 2025). To ensure carers receive a fair and equitable assessment. Ongoing refresher programme improving practitioner confidence, carers' visibility, and workforce consistency. Impact & Outcomes: Carers Assessments completed: 163 (2023–24) → 299 (2024–25) → (as at Nov 25)198 since Apr 2025.
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		Digital Reach: (as at Nov 2025) 3,294 online interactions with Mobilise, identifying £268,796 potential benefit gains for carers.
To ensure that the people who need to be targeted about their entitlements (including pension credit) know what services and organisations there are to support them. To have a better understanding of why those who need this support don't access the help provided.	A key aspect of the anti-poverty strategy is around increasing uptake of entitlements and signposting to support available There is a poverty group that meets monthly and a separate pension credit group. A number of dedicated roadshows have been held to encourage people to claim their pension credit before the 21st December deadline, so they will be entitled to their winter fuel payment Letters have been sent to households where people who haven't claimed can be identified and also signposted to services to access face-to-face support and advice. Ongoing campaigns to increase uptake of entitlements include information about Pension Credit and Carers Allowance. This has included social media posts, leaflets, news articles and articles in the resident's newsletter A one-page simplified 'cost-of-living' leaflet has been produced to signpost quickly to support available. Organisations, services and volunteers/staff of Welcoming Places are provided with regular emails and newsletters to increase the knowledge of support available within the borough to enable effective signposting to residents.	The Council Cost-of-living site/guide signposts to support that is available. Campaigns have taken place to increase uptake of entitlements including Pension Credit and Carers Allowance. A previous Pension Credit campaign (Winter 24 and Spring 25) used a combination of social media posts, leaflets and letters targeted at residents who are eligible and not currently claiming. Another aspect of this campaign appealed to family members to support their relatives with the process. This campaign was repeated during autumn/winter 25. In 2023 we estimated there were around 2672 eligible households not claiming Pension Credit in South Tyneside- that's a third of those who are eligible. The average value to households is estimated at £32 per week This equates to £4,343,403 per year across the South Tyneside In-person events have taken place to signpost residents to support available including through energy roadshows, drop-in sessions, utilising Welcoming Places and other community spaces. Through the Household

		Support Fund a Low Income Pensioner Fund (LIPF) was provided through Welfare Support, ACTS and Citizen's Advice. This had a surprisingly low uptake despite being widely promoted. This is an area to explore further. In 2024-2025 Welfare Support assisted customers to claim £681,250.82 in pension credit. As of February for 2025-2026 we've assisted customers to claim £620,962.14 in pension credit.
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Communities and Health

Indicator	2024/25	2025/26
Through the Living Well Alliance to review the range of programmes that are available to support older people to remain independent for longer, ensuring there is value for money and opportunities to expand the offer as funding allows – for example escape pain.	This work has not yet commenced. Still need to identify a project lead.	No further specific progress, due in part to the restructuring of the ICB during 2025. However, LWA has driven Care Closer Home and has undertaken work in relation to the emerging NHS 10 Year plan and the focus on neighbourhoods
Through the Living Well Alliance, to improve outcomes for those at risk of or experiencing falls and frailty, potentially using the joining the dots blueprint.	A mapping exercise has commenced to better understand the current state with regards to falls and frailty services and pathways in South Tyneside. This will be linked into the newly established Care Closer to Home group, which will report into the Living Well Alliance.	There has been some progress with the falls prevention agenda. Initial mapping has taken place. The JSNAA is being refreshed (Spring 2026) Further insight is gathered through Placed

		Based Partnership micro commissions Non recurrent funding has allowed a dedicated falls nurse and physiotherapist to be appointed, both to work with care homes initially.
To work with the age friendly community theme leads, to raise awareness of mental health in older people, leading to an increase in the number of people who are referred to talking therapies or other organisations that can offer appropriate support.	The North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) asked Healthwatch through its work on the Living Well Alliance framework to gather insights into the mental health care experiences of older people. Physical health was the main focus of health care professionals within GP surgeries. Lack of face-to-face appointments were a barrier to opening up about mental health. Ten-minute appointments did not lend themselves to fuller discussions needed to talk about more than one concern. Technology including e-consult was a barrier for many. Stigma remains an obstacle in asking for support. Confidentiality, mental health signage and public reception areas were some of the barriers identified to ask for support. Continuity of care was raised as a concern in terms of having the right relationships to open up about mental health. Younger doctors were seen to be more in tune with mental health needs.	No further update received – this will be updated before this report progresses

	Some older people were very open to self-help and the greater promotion of this would be welcomed.	
To implement a sexual health charter for older people	The sexual health alliance is in the process of finalising the older people's sexual health charter and will be launching this with their new sexual health website as a download via the New Sexual Health and Older Persons Section	The new sexual health website has been launched. Older people and sexual health :: South Tyneside Sexual Health There is a dedicated, downloadable section for older people covering topics such as: Separation and Divorce New Relationships Coming Out Sexually Transmitted Diseases over 50s Menopause and after menopause
Support service providers to deliver practical help to those experiencing poverty – food, fuel, and income.	The anti-poverty strategy has been developed and signed off by Cabinet This is made up of 5 sections (aligned to South Tyneside Council priorities) and includes financially secure, healthy & well, connected to jobs, part of strong communities and targeted support to make things fairer There is a specific reference to the age friendly strategy and the age friendly employer pledge	The Council Cost-of-living site signposts to support available. Alongside this a one-page quick reference paper to signpost residents who are digitally excluded. The cost-of-living council web page (both internal and external) is in the process of re-development to streamline information and make it easier to navigate. In-person events continue to take place to signpost residents to support available including through energy roadshows, drop-in sessions, utilising

		Welcoming Places and other community spaces. Monthly Welcoming Places newsletters are produced to enable staff and volunteers to signpost residents to the support available. This includes information around the Green Dr, eligibility to discounts in utility bills, safe and well fire checks, foodbanks and community shops. The Household Support Fund (HSF) has been extended for a further year (up to end of March 2026). Part of the allocation of this funding goes to Foodbanks and Community Shops to support with food provision. This has enabled the Horsley Hill H&H Community Shop to extend it's opening hours to Saturdays (from July 2025) and plans are to extend opening times with other Community Shops. The Household Support Fund also supports with provision of Warm Packs (over 1000 distributed last winter with this to be repeated again) and expansion of both the ECO4 project and resources distributed through the Green Dr e.g. slow cookers and air fryers. Winter Readiness Programme is scheduled to take place within Welcoming Places and
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		wider community organisations.
To continue to make health care accessible, by offering both face-to-face and on-line appointments, whilst helping older people navigate and book their appointments.	Continue to ensure practice support those who cannot or do not want to use digital methods of booking appointments. Using feedback from GPPS results and PCARP data (with caveats that this data may not be 100% accurate) In October 2024 nationally: • There were 40.3 million GP appointments • 37.9% were same day appointments • 88.2% were attended • 40.1% by GPs and 23.2 by nurses • 69.9% were face to face Using this data specifically for NENC ICB it suggests there are more face-to-face appointments than England as a whole, but with slightly less being from a GP. This would match with local investment in roles such as social prescribers, pharmacists, urgent care nurses, physios etc.	The latest Friends & Family data (Sept 25) shows an average positive response rate of 94% based on 3734 responses from 16 of 20 practices reporting. The GPPS published in July 2025 asks "Overall, how would you describe your experience of your GP practice". South Tyneside practices range from 60% to 95% Good. 7 practices in South Tyneside have completed the General Practice Improvement Programme, ran by NHS England over the past few years. The programme provides tailored support to general practice to make changes and improvements. Some of the areas practices have focused on are improving uptake of the NHS app, implementation of e-consult, website updates, use of telephony data to better manage capacity and demand. The practices are also able to access the Primary Care digital support hub that provides support with NHS app, prospective records access, e-consult and alternative triage tools and models. All practices in South Tyneside have accessed care navigation training and further training dates

		are available for new and experienced staff to attend over the next few months. Telephony data In September 2025 155,376 calls were answered. 14,784 call backs were requested. 56,586 calls ended during the interactive voice response (IVR) and 34,704 calls were missed. 63,438 calls were answered within less than 1 minute. Appointments data In October 2025 90,852 appointments were carried out an increase from September 2025 when 67,656 were carried out. This could be due to vaccination clinics. 72,254 of the appointments delivered in October 2025 were face to face, 896 were home visits and 15,508 were telephone appointments 28,761 appointments were carried out by a GP, 58,398 were carried out by other practice staff. 32,083 were same day appointments, 7968 were booked and seen in 1 day, 18,330 were between 2 and 7 days, 13,383 were between 8 and 14 days and 11,103 were booked more than 14 days ahead.
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