ARUP

Age-friendly Town and Parish Guide

Planning and prioritising age-friendly activities

Carly Dickson

24th February 2026

Our team

- Access and Inclusive Environments
- Members of National Register of Access Consultants, RHFAC, IAAP
- Team experience and expertise:
  - Local authorities / Building Control
  - Charities / Third sector
  - Architecture
  - Fire
  - Human factors / ergonomics
  - Lived experience

London

Birmingham

Manchester

ARUP

Our work

Design	Buildings	Infrastructure	Public realm
Guide	Guidance and Standards	Audits and Access Statements	Health and wellbeing
Discover	Research	User engagement	Equality Impact Analysis (EIA / DIA)

ARUP

Human diversity

Disability
14.6 million disabled people in the UK.

Family Resources Survey 2020-2021 | DWP

Ageing
Almost 11 million aged 65 and over in the UK.

The State of Ageing 2022 | Centre for Ageing Better

Young people
2.3 billion of the global population are under the age of 18.

The State of the World's Children 2021 | Unicef

Neurodiversity
Around 1 in 7 people are neurodivergent in the UK.

Neurodiversity in the Workplace | Acas

Mental health
1 in 8 people across the globe experience mental health issues.

Mental disorders | World Health Organisation

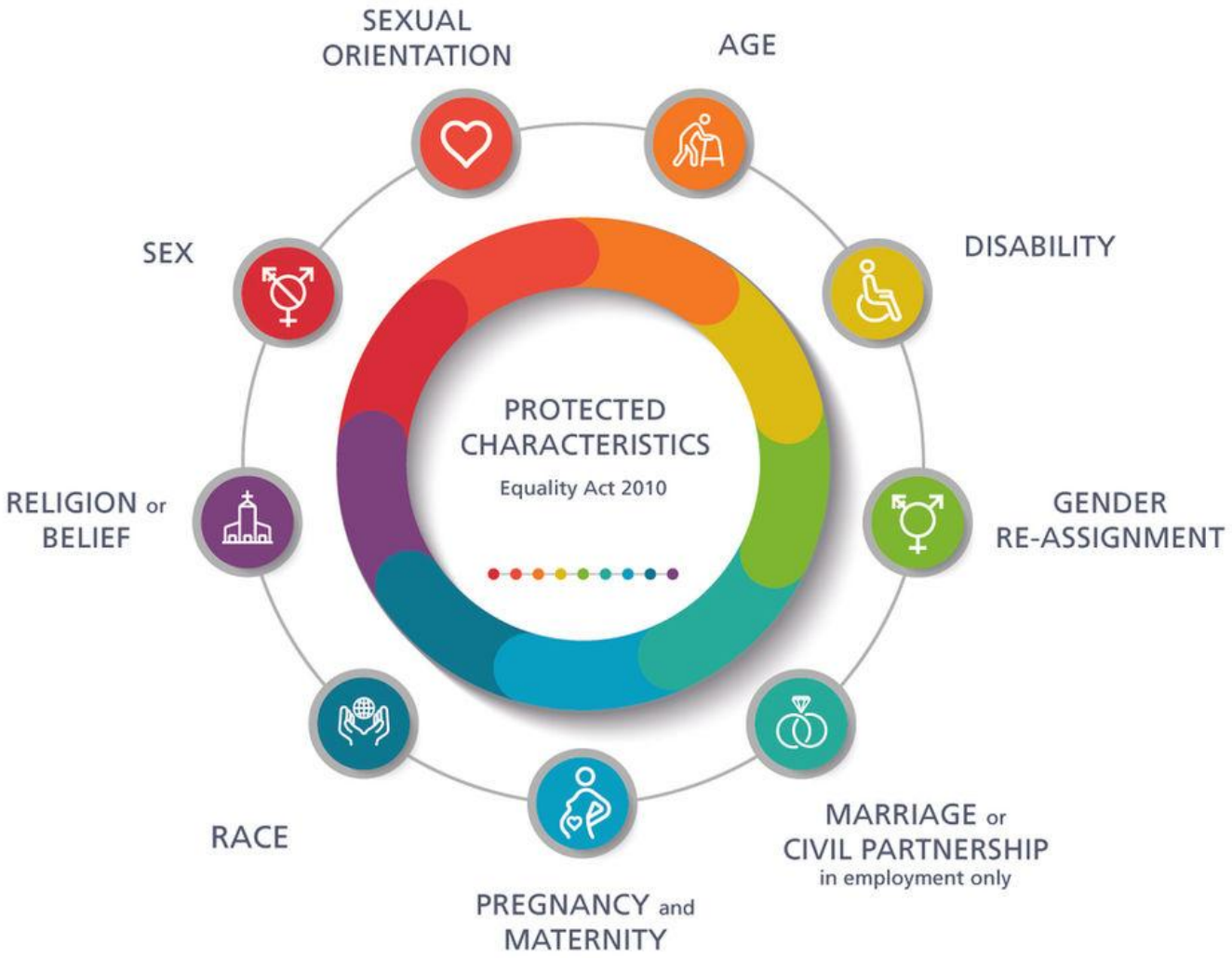
Wellbeing
Stress, depression or anxiety accounts for 50% of all work-related ill health in GB.

Work-related stress, anxiety or depression statistics | HSE

ARUP

Diverse experiences

- Vision
- Hearing
- Memory
- Attention
- Mobility
- Dexterity
- Religious faith
- Cultural context
- Gender identity and sexuality
- Socioeconomic background etc

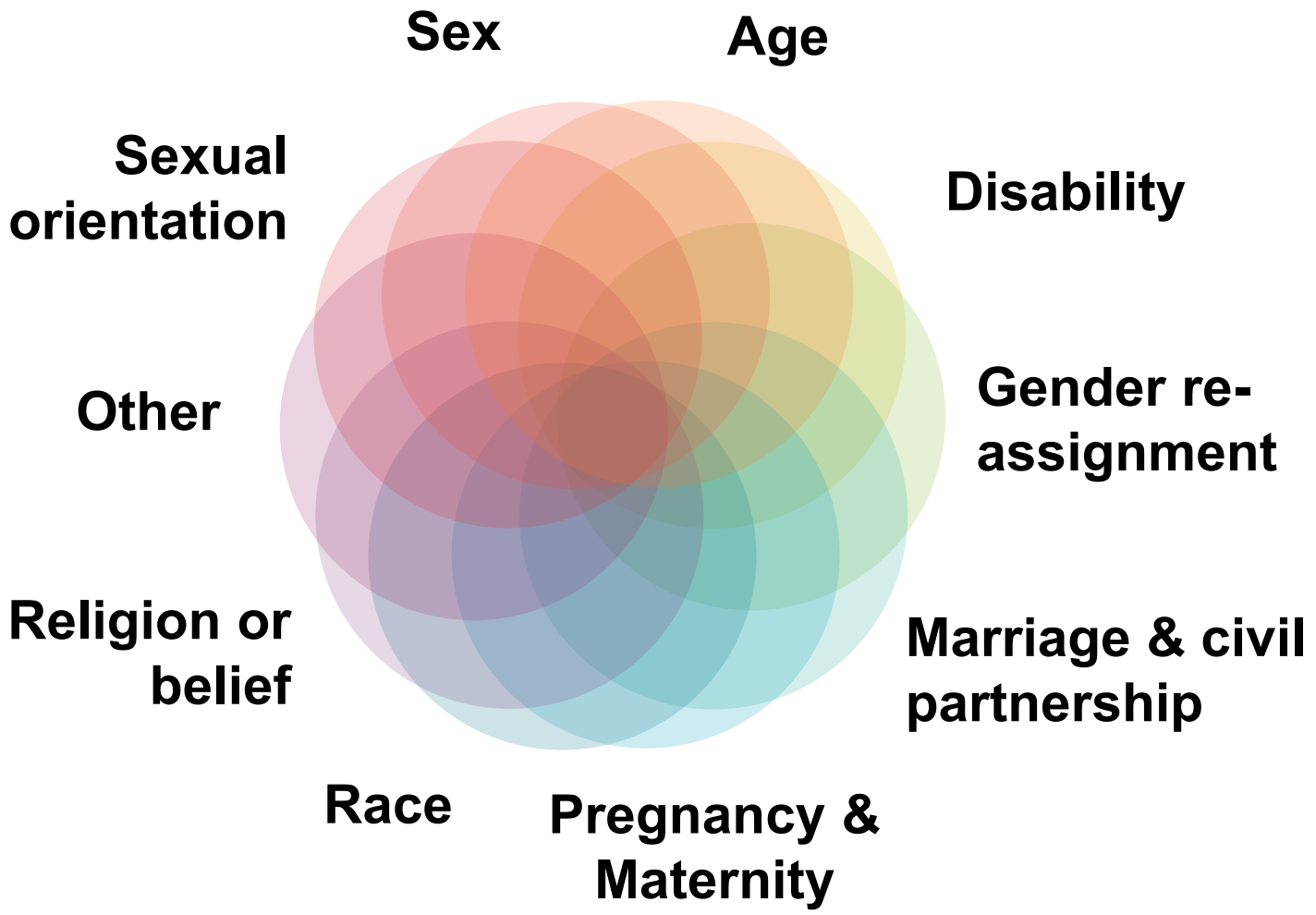


ARUP

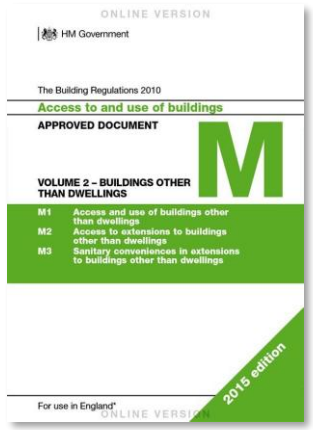
Intersectionality

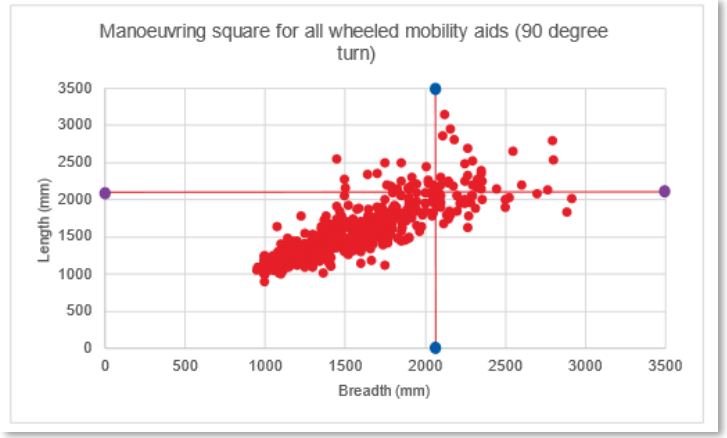
“Intersectionality is a concept for understanding how aspects of a person's identities combine to create different and multiple discrimination and privilege.”

NHS England



Part M is not enough

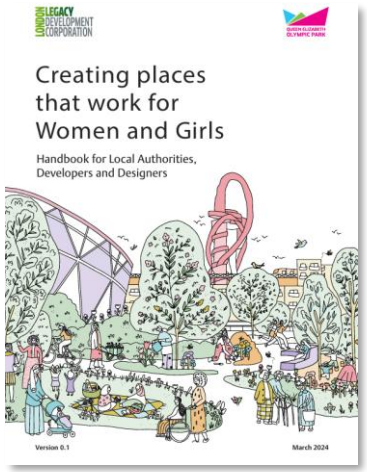




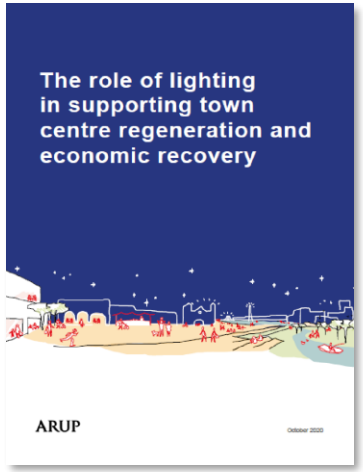
Part M Research

Acoustics

Queering Public Space

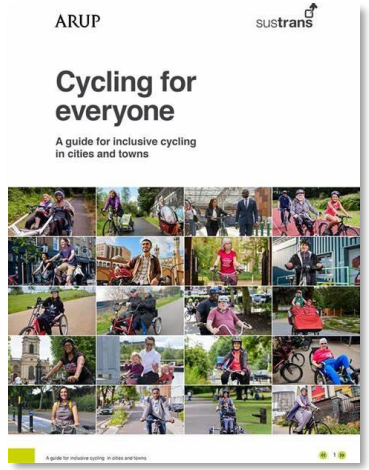


Perception of safety



Good lighting

Inclusive play



Inclusive cycling

Experience walks

Centre for Ageing Better

nalc

SLCC
For Local Council Professionals

Age-friendly Town and Parish Guide

December 2025

ARUP

Age-friendly Town and Parish Guide

Local Authorities

Centre for Ageing Better

Local Communities

Housing LIN & Arup

Why we need age-friendly towns and parishes

- 46% of population over age 50 by 2065
- 10,000 local councils
- 100,000 councillors
- £2 billion+ invested annually

Source: NALC

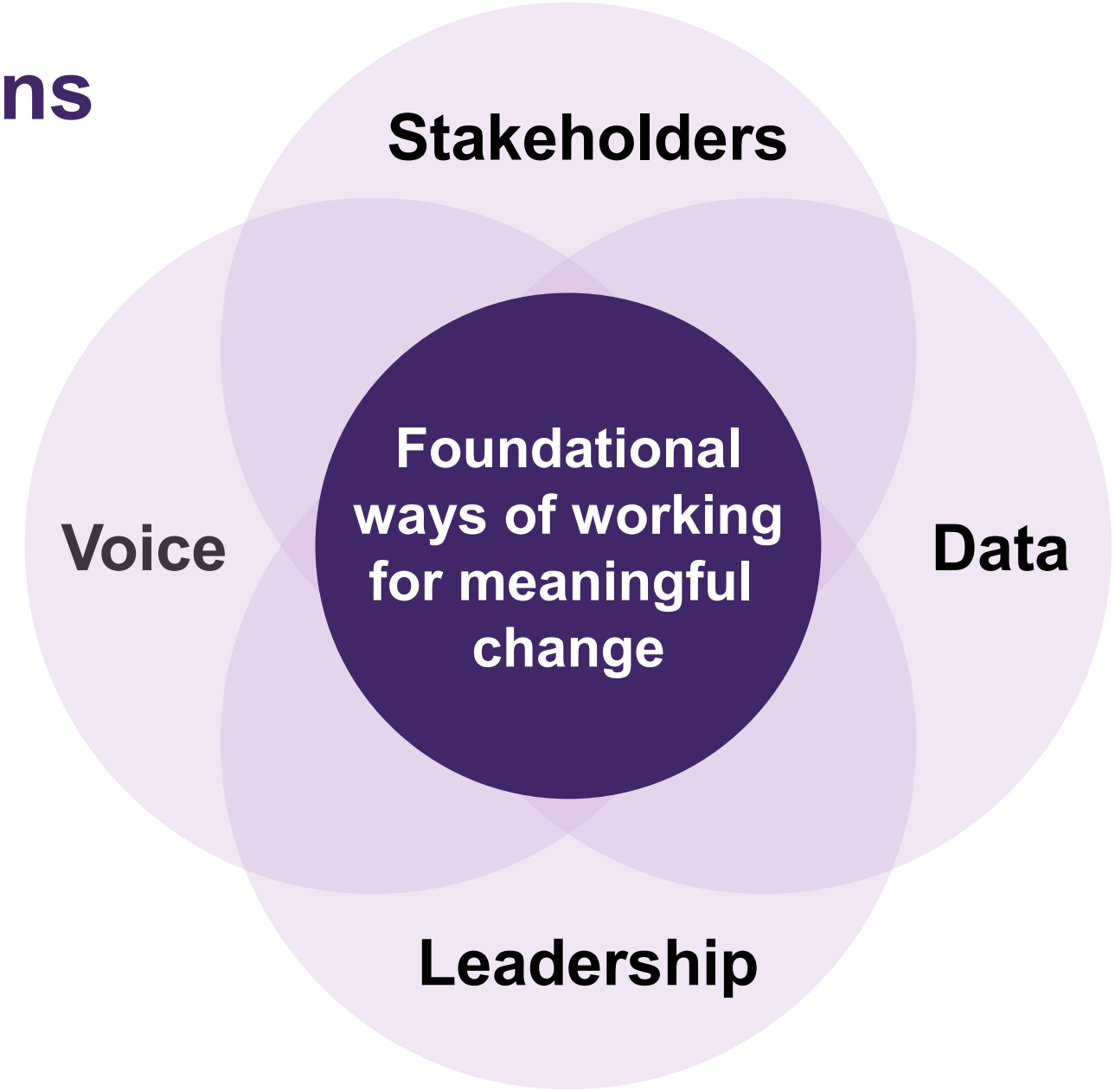
Why we need a guide

To improve Communication

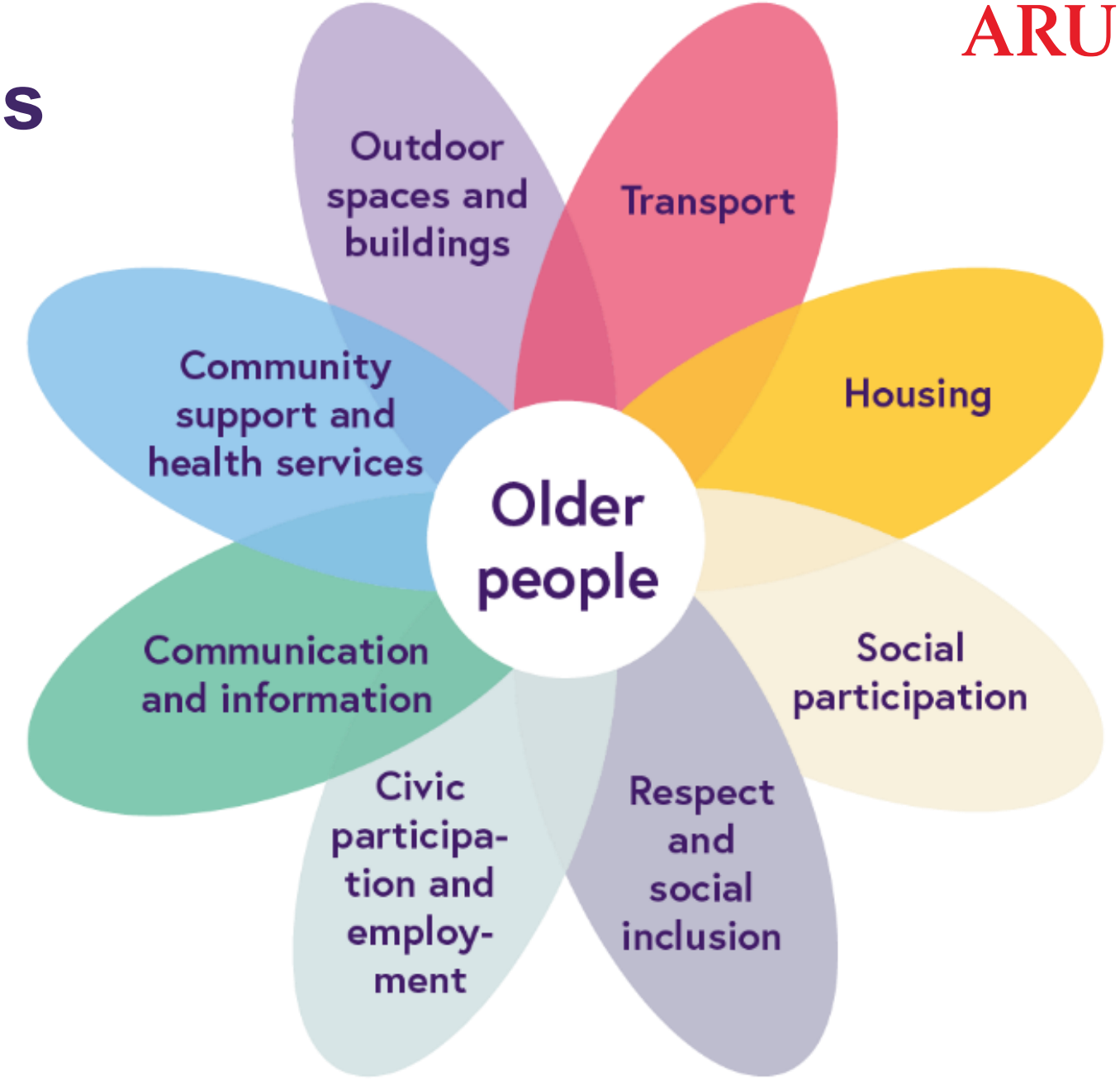
A tool that shines on the strengths of Town and Parish councils and how they can be utilised effectively and tapped into as a resource

To support partnerships

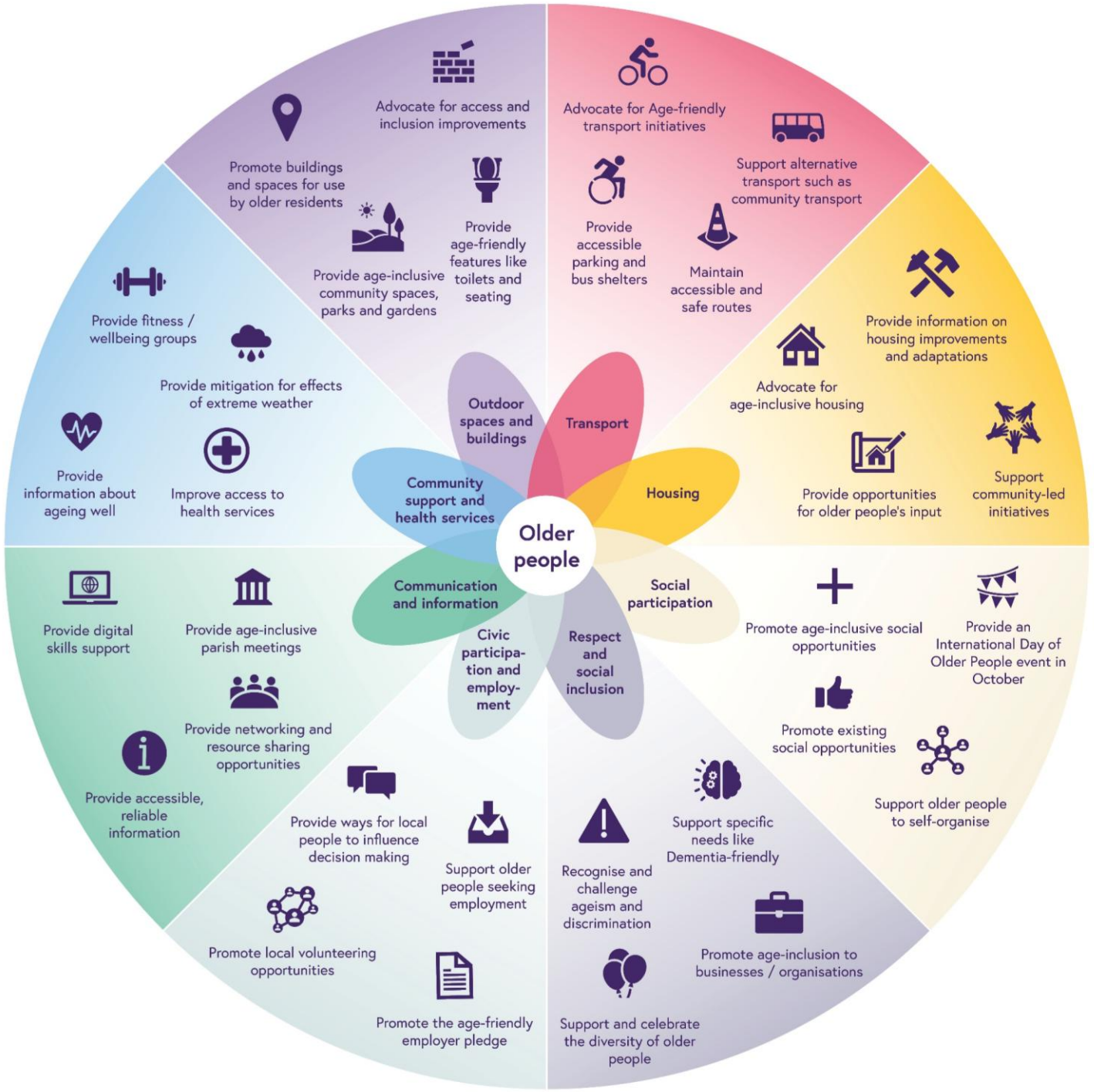
Foundations



WHO Eight Domains of Age-friendly Communities



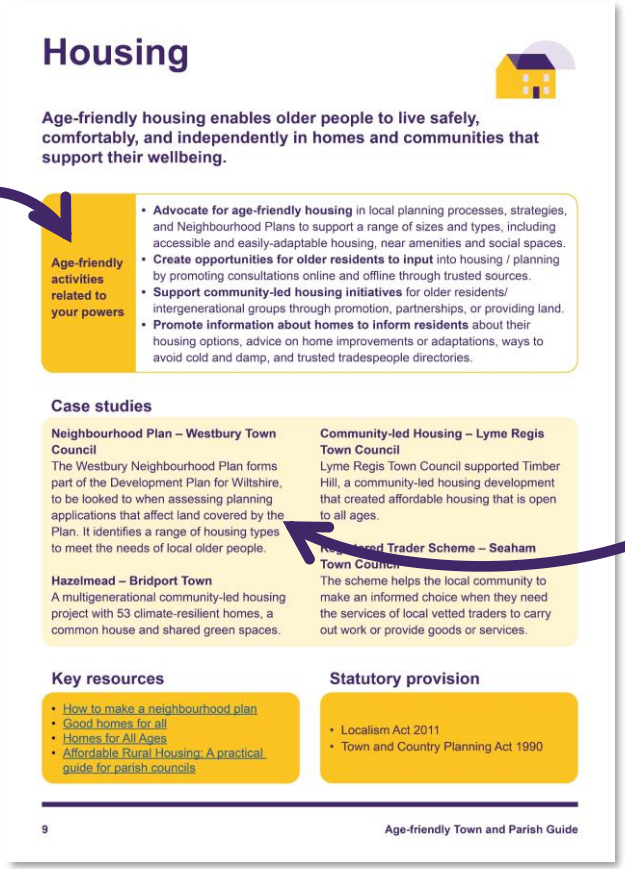
Age-friendly activities wheel



Civic participation and employment

Age-friendly activity related to power(s)

Advocate for age-friendly housing in local planning processes, strategies, and Neighbourhood Plans



Housing

Age-friendly housing enables older people to live safely, comfortably, and independently in homes and communities that support their wellbeing.

Age-friendly activities related to your powers

- **Advocate for age-friendly housing** in local planning processes, strategies, and Neighbourhood Plans to support a range of sizes and types, including accessible and easily-adaptable housing, near amenities and social spaces.
- **Create opportunities for older residents to input** into housing / planning by promoting consultations online and offline through trusted sources.
- **Support community-led housing initiatives** for older residents/ intergenerational groups through promotion, partnerships, or providing land.
- **Promote information about homes to inform residents** about their housing options, advice on home improvements or adaptations, ways to avoid cold and damp, and trusted tradespeople directories.

Case studies

Neighbourhood Plan – Westbury Town Council
The Westbury Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the Development Plan for Wiltshire, to be looked to when assessing planning applications that affect land covered by the Plan. It identifies a range of housing types to meet the needs of local older people.

Hazelmead – Bridport Town
A multigenerational community-led housing project with 53 climate-resilient homes, a common house and shared green spaces.

Community-led Housing – Lyme Regis Town Council
Lyme Regis Town Council supported Timber Hill, a community-led housing development that created affordable housing that is open to all ages.

Registered Trader Scheme – Seaham Town Council
The scheme helps the local community to make an informed choice when they need the services of local vetted traders to carry out work or provide goods or services.

Key resources

- How to make a neighbourhood plan
- Good homes for all
- Homes for All Ages
- Affordable Rural Housing: A practical guide for parish councils

Statutory provision

- Localism Act 2011
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990

9 Age-friendly Town and Parish Guide

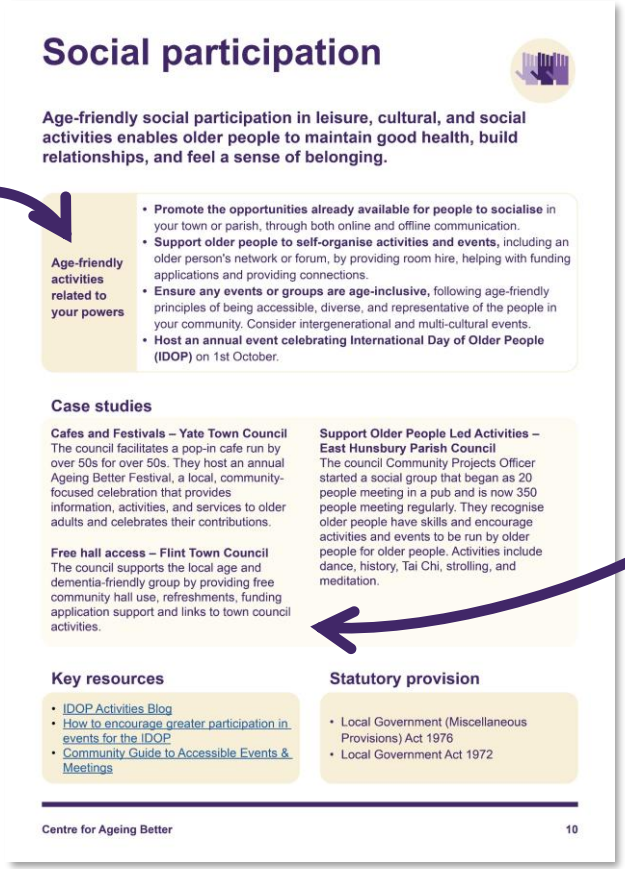
Case study example

The Westbury Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the Development Plan for Wiltshire, to be looked to when assessing planning applications that affect land covered by the Plan. It identifies a range of housing types to meet the needs of local older people.

Civic participation and employment

Age-friendly activity related to power(s)

Support older people to self-organise activities and events



Social participation

Age-friendly social participation in leisure, cultural, and social activities enables older people to maintain good health, build relationships, and feel a sense of belonging.

Age-friendly activities related to your powers

- **Promote the opportunities already available for people to socialise** in your town or parish, through both online and offline communication.
- **Support older people to self-organise activities and events,** including an older person's network or forum, by providing room hire, helping with funding applications and providing connections.
- **Ensure any events or groups are age-inclusive,** following age-friendly principles of being accessible, diverse, and representative of the people in your community. Consider intergenerational and multi-cultural events.
- **Host an annual event celebrating International Day of Older People (IDOP)** on 1st October.

Case studies

Cafes and Festivals – Yate Town Council
The council facilitates a pop-in cafe run by over 50s for over 50s. They host an annual Ageing Better Festival, a local, community-focused celebration that provides information, activities, and services to older adults and celebrates their contributions.

Free hall access – Flint Town Council
The council supports the local age and dementia-friendly group by providing free community hall use, refreshments, funding application support and links to town council activities.

Support Older People Led Activities – East Hunsbury Parish Council
The council Community Projects Officer started a social group that began as 20 people meeting in a pub and is now 350 people meeting regularly. They recognise older people have skills and encourage activities and events to be run by older people for older people. Activities include dance, history, Tai Chi, strolling, and meditation.

Key resources

- IDOP Activities Blog
- How to encourage greater participation in events for the IDOP
- Community Guide to Accessible Events & Meetings

Statutory provision

- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
- Local Government Act 1972

Centre for Ageing Better 10

Case study example

Flint Town Council supports the local age and dementia-friendly group by providing free community hall use, refreshments, funding application support and links to town council activities.

Civic participation and employment

Age-friendly activity related to power(s)

Support alternatives to public transport in areas with limited coverage

Transport

Age-friendly transport enables older people to get where they need and want to go, promoting health and independence and preventing social isolation.

Age-friendly activities related to your powers

- **Provide accessible public car/cycle parking and bus stops close to key amenities.** Ensure payment options are affordable and do not exclude people who rely on cash or without smartphones. Ensure bus/tram shelters are weather-protected, with seating adhering to age-friendly principles.
- **Maintain routes** to ensure they are accessible and safe, signposting ways for residents to report issues where possible.
- **Support alternatives to public transport** in areas with limited coverage, such as community transport, 'ring and ride' services, or car sharing schemes - with non-digital booking and payment options.
- **Promote active travel** by funding or advocating for new cycling and walking routes and inclusive cycle parking.

Case studies

Active Travel – Yate Town Council
Yate Town Council influenced South Gloucestershire's Travel and Highway Repair Strategy to include walking, wheeling, and cycling, which has informed the plans for a £3.5 million investment in active travel in the area. They are seeking to make their area more mobility scooter and bus friendly, and more accessible for people to stay active longer, without the need for a car.

Social Car Scheme – Wimblington and Stonea Parish Council
The council developed a social car scheme to improve transport and access for disabled people and people aged 60 and over. The service can be used for health appointments as well as social engagements and activities of daily life such as shopping. The service can be booked by phone.

Key resources

- Age UK and ILC transport report
- Accessible bus stop guidance

Statutory provision

- Local Government and Rating Act 1997
- Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
- Highways Act 1980
- Parish Councils Act 1957

Case study example

Wimblington and Stonea Parish Council developed a social car scheme to improve transport and access for disabled people and people aged 60 and over. The service can be booked by phone and used for health appointments, social engagements and activities of daily life.

Civic participation and employment

Age-friendly activity related to power(s)

Support age-friendly local volunteering opportunities

Civic participation and employment

Age-friendly civic participation and employment enables older people to stay socially connected, financially secure, and feel a sense of purpose as they age.

Age-friendly activities related to your powers

- **Provide ways for people of all ages to influence local decision-making and policy**, such as accessible consultations, residents' forums, and clear ways for residents to ask questions or raise concerns or ideas.
- **Provide community support to older people who are not in employment,** such as supporting job fairs or community-led job clubs.
- Encourage your council and local employers to **sign the Age-friendly Employer Pledge**, a nationwide programme for UK employers who recognise the importance and value of older workers.
- **Support age-friendly local volunteering opportunities,** ensuring they reflect the capacity and varied skills of your residents, providing flexible as well as formal options that are promoted on and offline.

Case studies

Farnham Job Club – Farnham Town Council
The Job Club offers free employment help and advice to people seeking employment.

Age-friendly Employer Pledge – Peacehaven Town Council
The council have signed the age-friendly employer pledge to improve the recruitment, retention and development of older workers.

Volunteering Support – Calne Town Council
Calne Town Council has an active volunteering sector, supported by their free online platform, Wiltshire Together, that is used across Wiltshire, which helps voluntary groups and charities connect, collaborate and promote themselves.

Key resources

- Helping out: Taking an inclusive approach to engaging older volunteers
- Supporting the 50+ workforce back into employment

Statutory provision

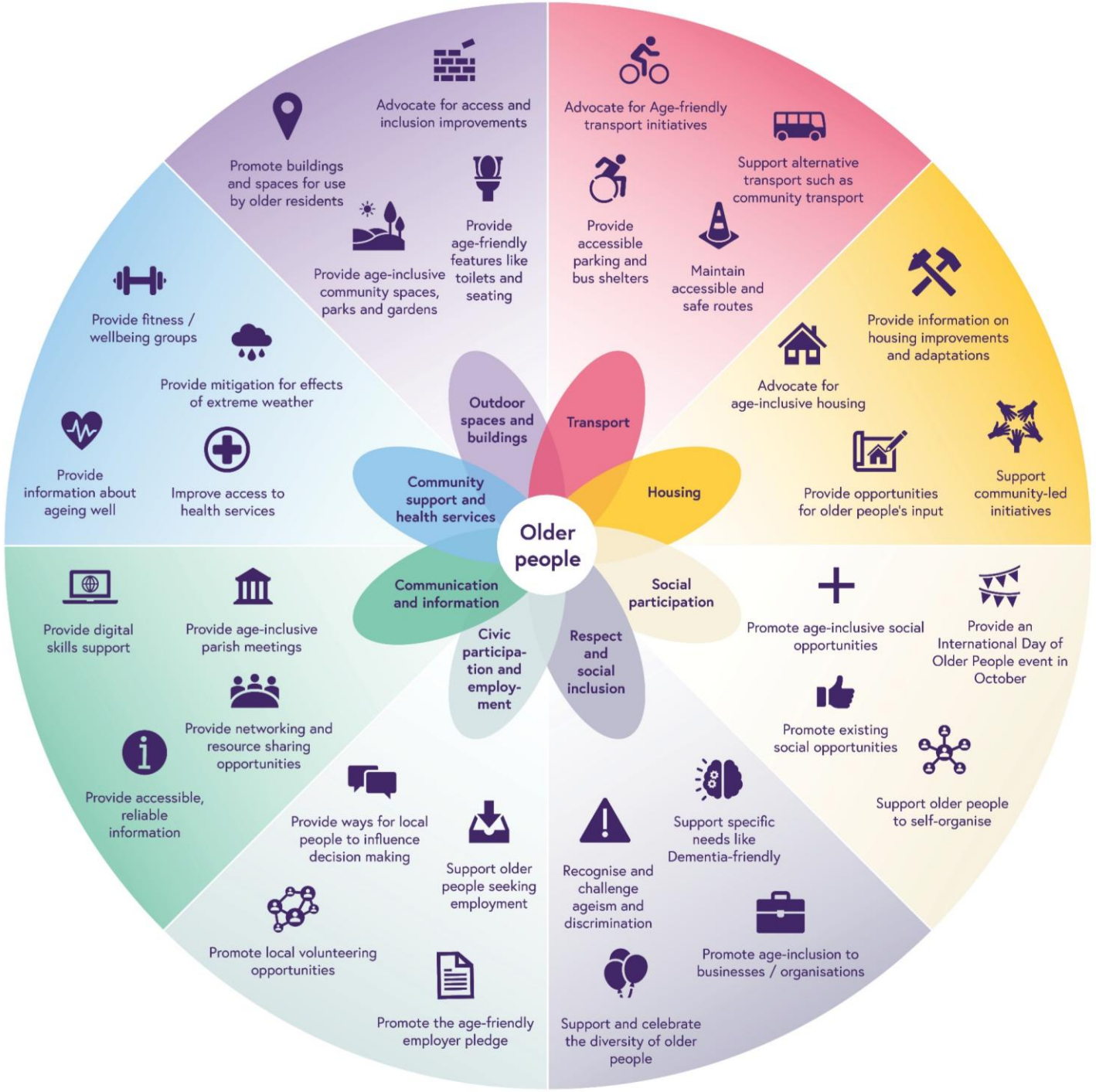
- Local Government and Rating Act 1997
- Local Government Act 1972
- Localism Act 2011

Centre for Ageing Better 12

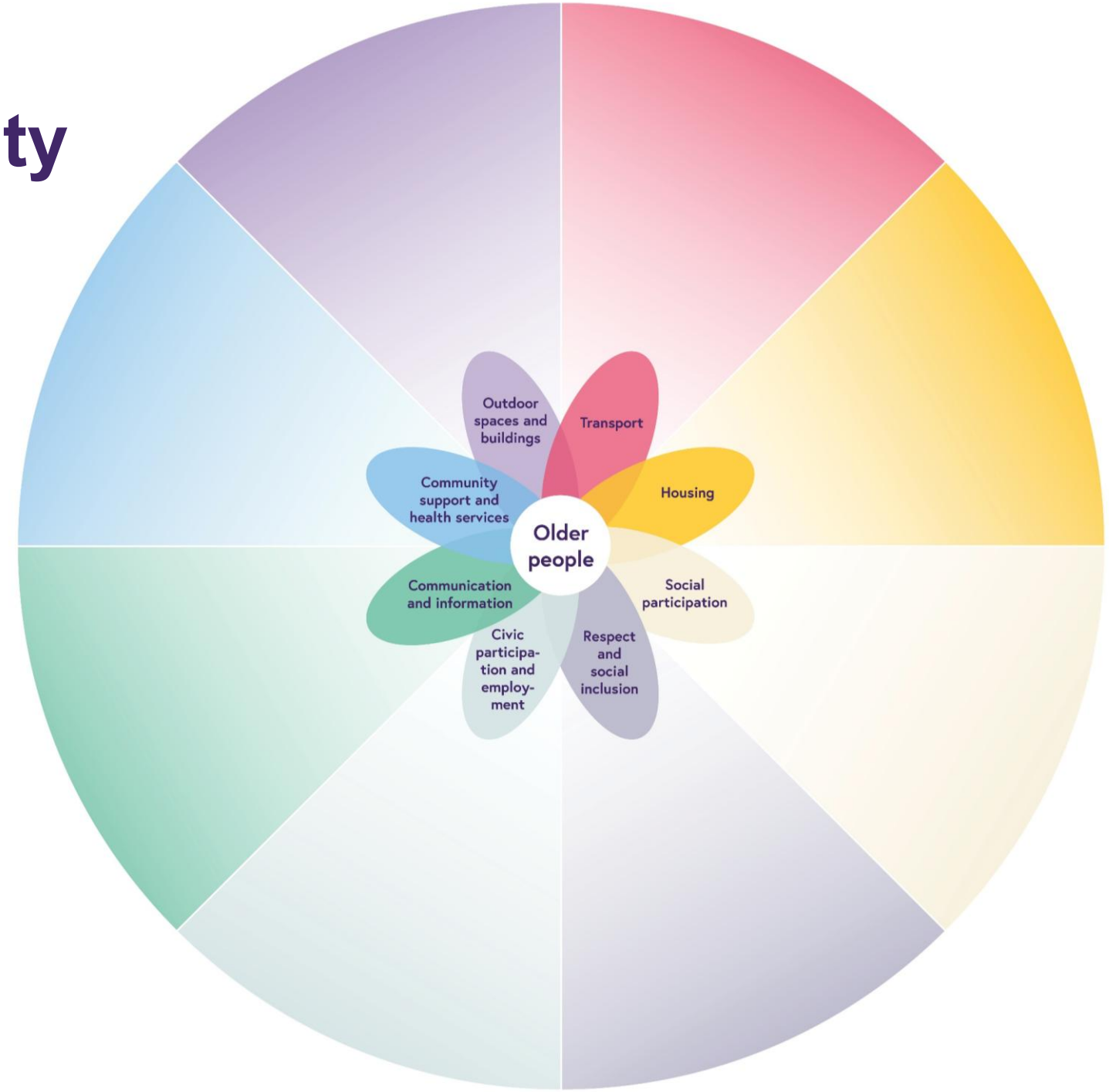
Case study example

Calne Town Council has an active volunteering sector, supported by their free online platform, Wiltshire Together, that is used across Wiltshire, which helps voluntary groups and charities connect, collaborate and promote themselves.

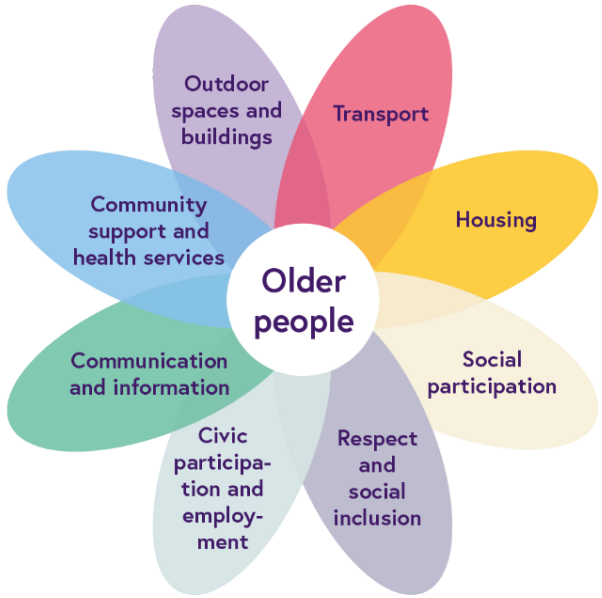
Your age-friendly activities?



Age-friendly activity planning

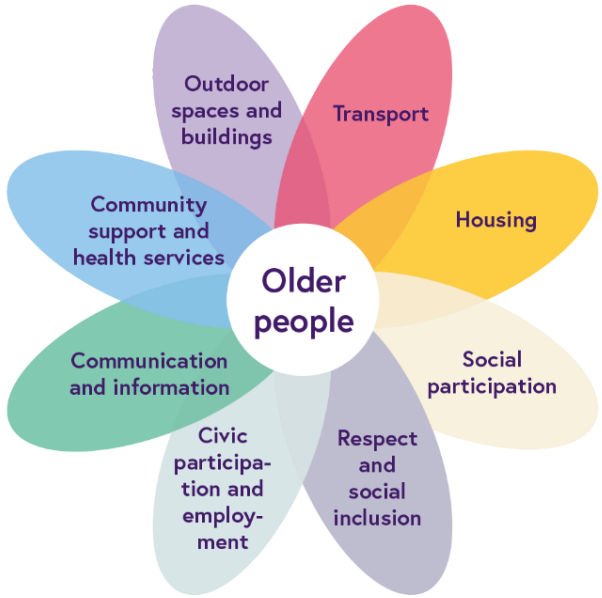


Age-friendly activity priority actions



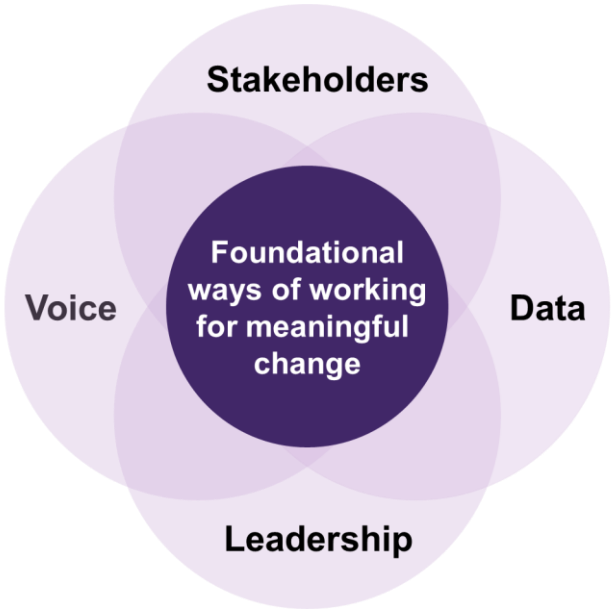
- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transport
- Housing
- Social Participation
- Respect and social Inclusion
- Civic participation and employment
- Communication and information
- Community support and health services

Age-friendly activity priority actions



Outdoor spaces and buildings	Ensure all public realm spaces your town/parish council manages (community halls, town or village squares, parks, etc) are accessible to all. Involve older residents in decisions to make improvements to, or take ownership of, new spaces. Prioritise opportunities to create new toilets and seating, and/or improve existing ones.
Transport	Create opportunities for older residents to feed in their views and experiences to new strategies, plans and consultations related to the age-friendly domains, conducted by your principal authority and other agencies. In particular, engage on transport route changes, bus stops, bus shelters, bus times, and other transport related proposals.
Housing	Advocate as a town council for an age-friendly approach to be taken to new strategies, plans and consultations from your principal authority and other agencies, in particular for a mix of housing options and for housing to be built to an accessible standard.
Social Participation	Support older residents to self-organise groups and events they want to see in their local area. In particular, support an older people's group by providing free community space, applying for funding, and connecting people to other activities / projects in the area. Hold an annual event for International Day of Older People on 1st October.
Respect and social Inclusion	Use the preferred term of "older people", not "the elderly", and ensure language and images in council and community communications are positive and realistic.
Civic participation and employment	Promote employers to become age-friendly. Ensure volunteering opportunities in your town/parish are age-friendly – this means varied, flexible, and easy for people who are not online to find out about and sign up for them.
Communication and information	Audit your communications to ensure it is accessible for older people, particularly those who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing, blind or partially sighted and those whose first language is not English.
Community support and health services	Promote and share information that will support older residents to age well including understanding housing options, health information, key local services, and social participation opportunities. Ensure information is widely available, not just online.

Your selected ways of working for meaningful change



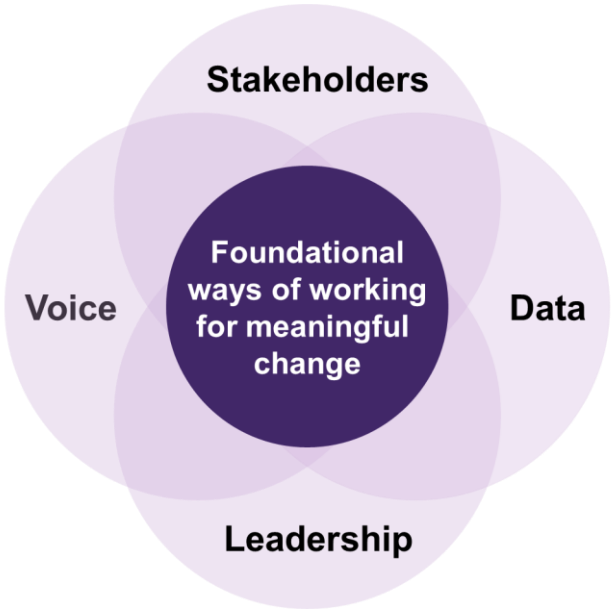
Data

Leadership

Voice

Stakeholders

Your selected ways of working for meaningful change



Data

- **Better understand your demographics** – analyse the current age breakdown and other demographic factors of your local area, and future projections.

Voice

- **Enable older people to influence and inform age-friendly activities** – specific to local people's needs and wants across all domains.
- **Conduct an age-friendly survey** – understand the experiences and priorities of your older residents and use this to inform plans and strategies within your council and community. Consider a survey seeking to understand intergenerational experiences.
- **Hold an age-friendly town/parish meeting** – get residents together to discuss your age-friendly vision, understand what's already working well, and what more can be done.
- **Create an age-friendly ambassador scheme** – support older volunteers to get involved in initiatives to improve age-friendliness and spread messages of ageing well.

Leadership

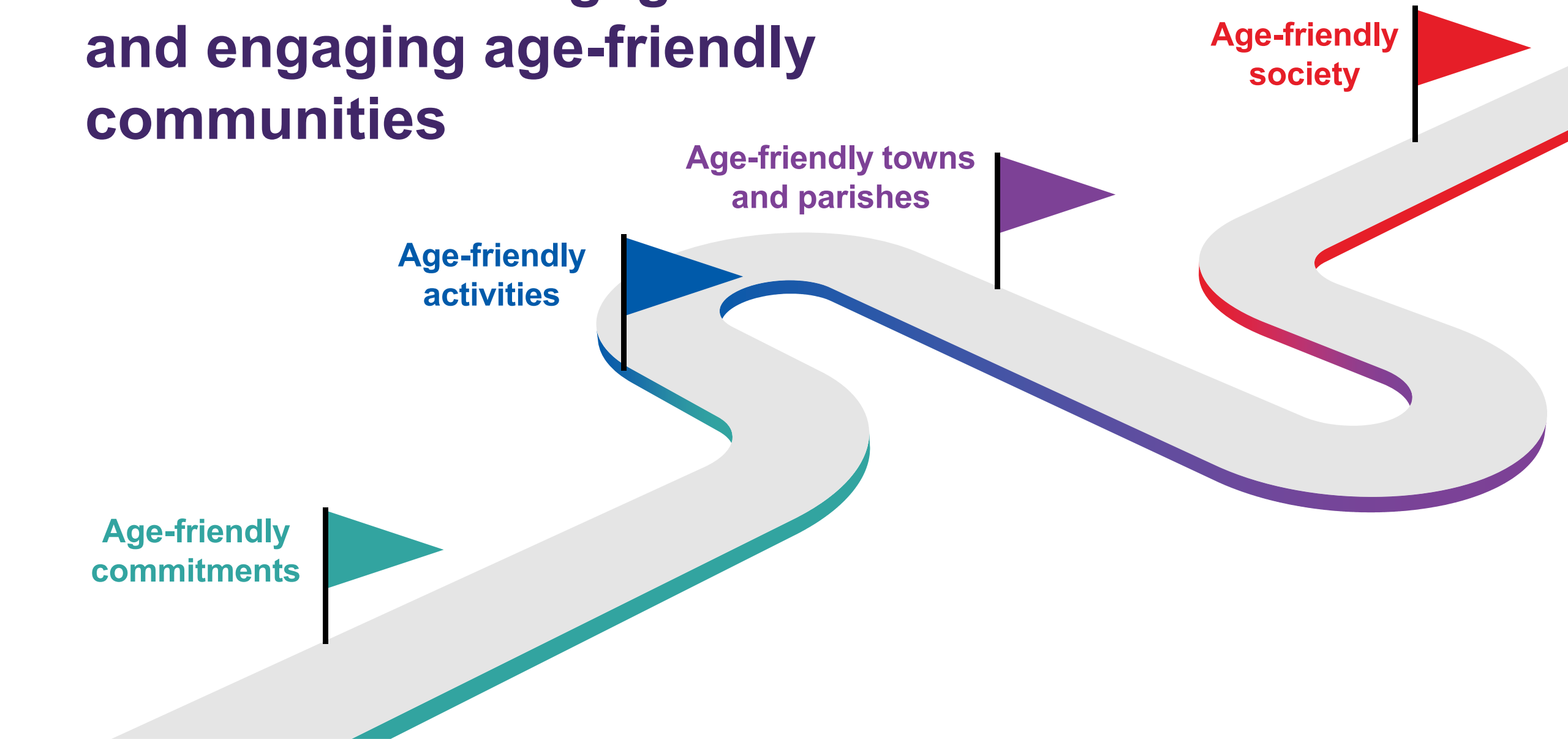
- **Nominate a local councillor to be an older people's champion** – their role is to identify opportunities to make life better for older residents in your town or parish.
- **Name age-friendly as a priority in your town's overall strategy or community plan** – publicly commit to making your town more age-friendly, raising awareness of the agenda locally.
- **Join the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities** – and advocate for your principal authority to join as well.

Stakeholders

- **Facilitate a local network of organisations and groups** – support those groups interested in making your place more age-friendly to share plans, knowledge and resources.
- **Create a local age-friendly charter for businesses and organisations** – commit to actions that make them accessible and inclusive to all ages.
- **Create an age-friendly coordinator role** – add the responsibility to coordinate / advocate for the actions in this guide to an existing officer role.

ARUP

Towards more engaged and engaging age-friendly communities



Thank you!

ARUP

Questions? Contact us:

Carly Dickson | carly.dickson@arup.com

ARUP