
Age-friendly Built Environment Quick Guides

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28th May 2026

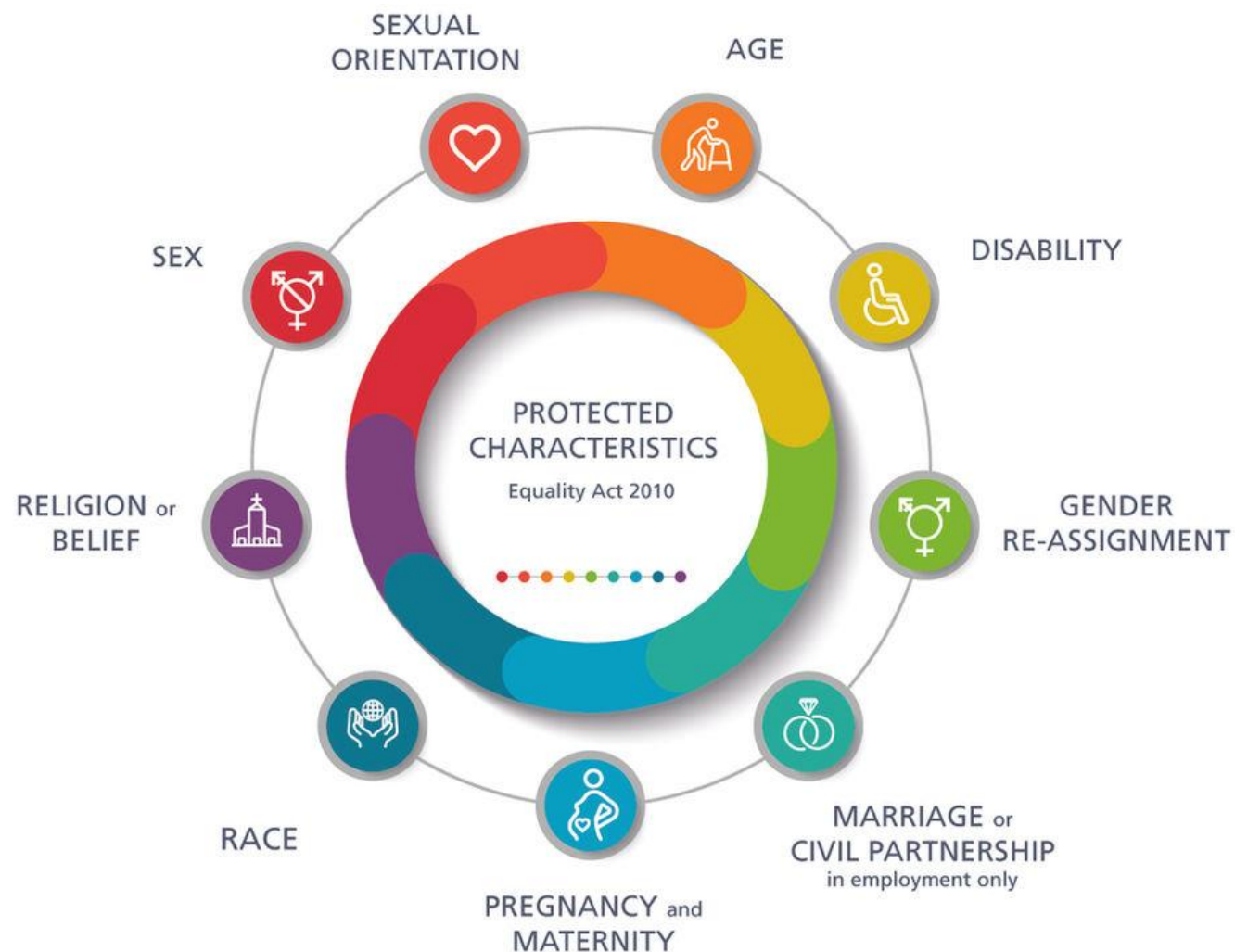


Centre for Ageing Better

- Centre for Ageing Better is an **independent centre of excellence** on ageing and demographic change. We work to tackle inequalities in later life
- We provide the secretariat for the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities, a growing movement of over 100 places. These places are all implementing the World Health Organisation's Age-friendly Communities Framework.
- We have developed a **series of tools and guides** to support communities to make changes to their local areas. These include:
 - Age-friendly Communities Handbook / Age-friendly Town and Parish Council guide / Understanding Ageing in your Area local data profile / Age-friendly practices case studies
- Age-friendly Built Environment Quick Guides, developed with Arup and Housing LIN are one of these guides

Inclusive design

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



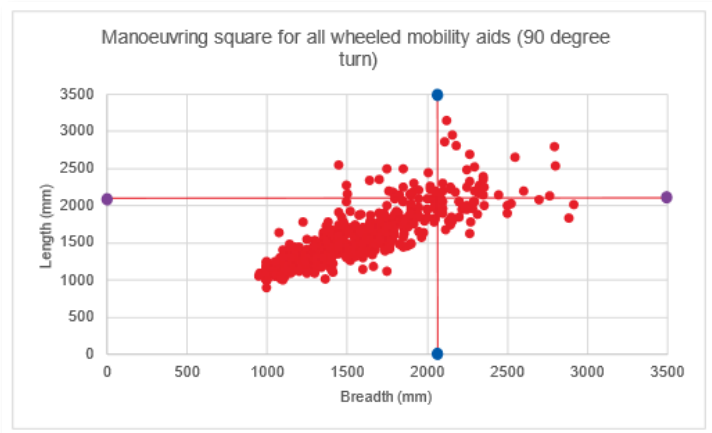
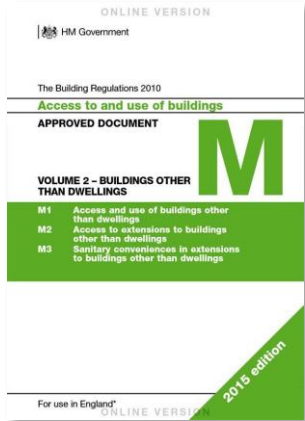
Many environments are not age-friendly

“I am partially sighted and I struggle with the pavement near my house. It’s uneven, it’s like potholes in the pavement and I keep tripping up. It’s making it totally inaccessible.”



“At my local bus stop the print for the timetable can be too small to read and the bus stop doesn’t tell you how long you have to wait for the next bus. I know younger people have that information on their phone, but I don’t.”

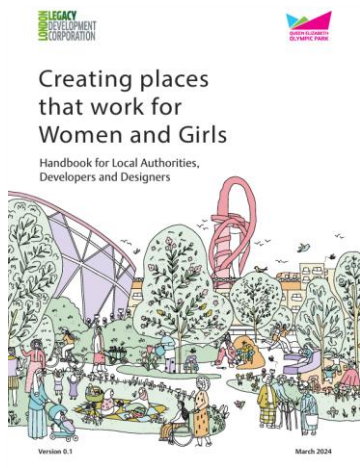
Building Regulations are not enough



Part M Building Regulations research

Acoustics

Queering Public Space



Perception of safety

Good lighting

Inclusive play

Inclusive cycling

Experience walks

That's why we made Quick Guides!

To provide an overview of key considerations to support age-friendly built environments

Age-friendly Built Environment Quick Guides

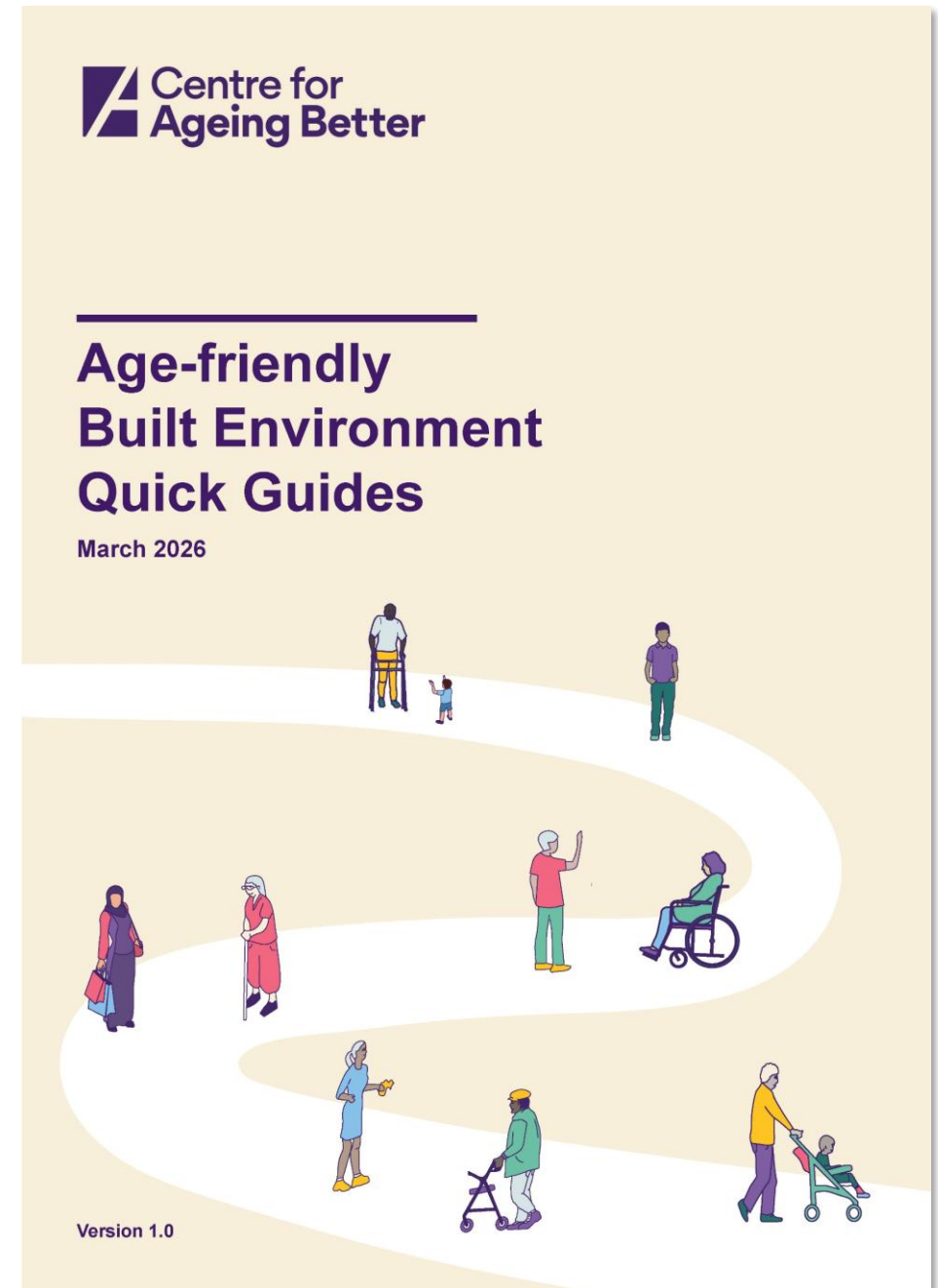
March 2026



Version 1.0

Age-friendly Built Environment Quick Guide Collection

- Seven Age-friendly Quick Guides
- Lived experience stories
- Further reading
- Implementation considerations
- Checklist for each guide
- Case Studies



Who are they for?

They are designed for:

- Built environment professionals and local council teams
- Council officers focused on ageing / older people
- Older people and community members



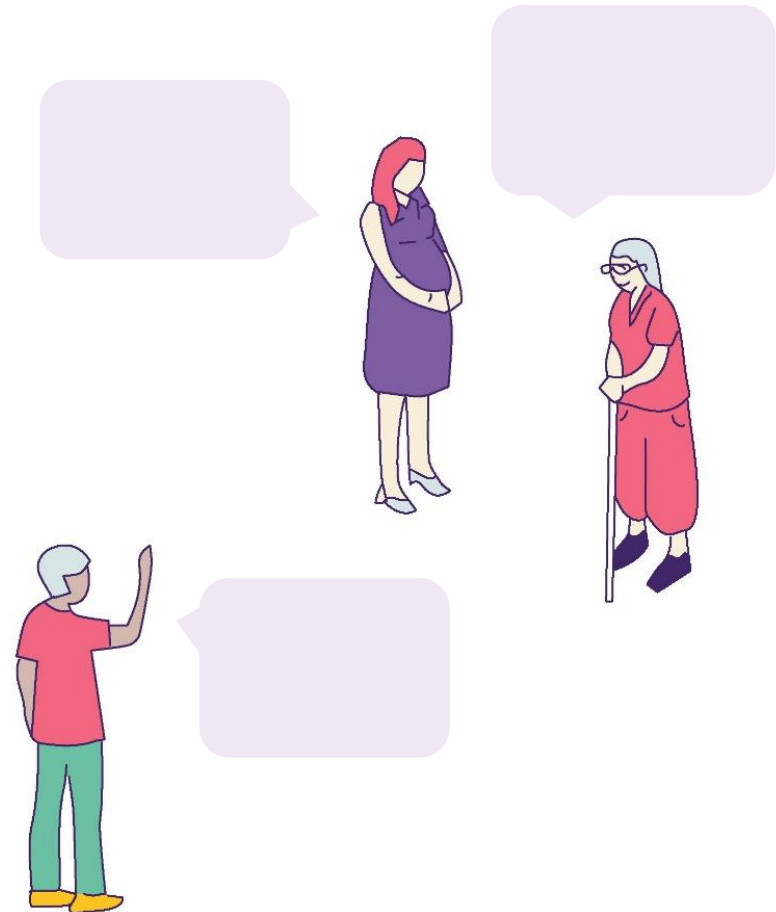
7 topics

- Bus Stops
- Parks and Green Spaces
- Public / Community Buildings
- Seating and Rest Areas
- Streets and Pavements
- Toilets
- Wayfinding and Signage



How will they be used?

- Inform planning, regeneration and preapplication discussions
- Support internal cross departmental conversations and buy-in
- Use as practical tools for training and capacity building
- Support audits and engagement with local communities
- Share good practice with external partners and stakeholder



Example guide

Age-friendly Quick Guide Bus Stops

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info@ageing-better.org.uk
(+44) 020 3829 0113



What are age-friendly bus stops?

Age-friendly bus stops enable people of all ages to reach services, activities, workplaces, and social spaces. In England, concessionary journeys accounted for 28% (1.0 billion) of all local bus passenger journeys in 2025. Locations with design limitations, such as some rural communities, can still provide accessible locations, information and seating.

Why do they matter?

The Equality Act (2010) places a duty on both public transport operators and highway authorities to ensure no protected group is disadvantaged by inaccessible bus stop design. The design of the bus stop and the information provided are essential to help people navigate confidently throughout their journey.

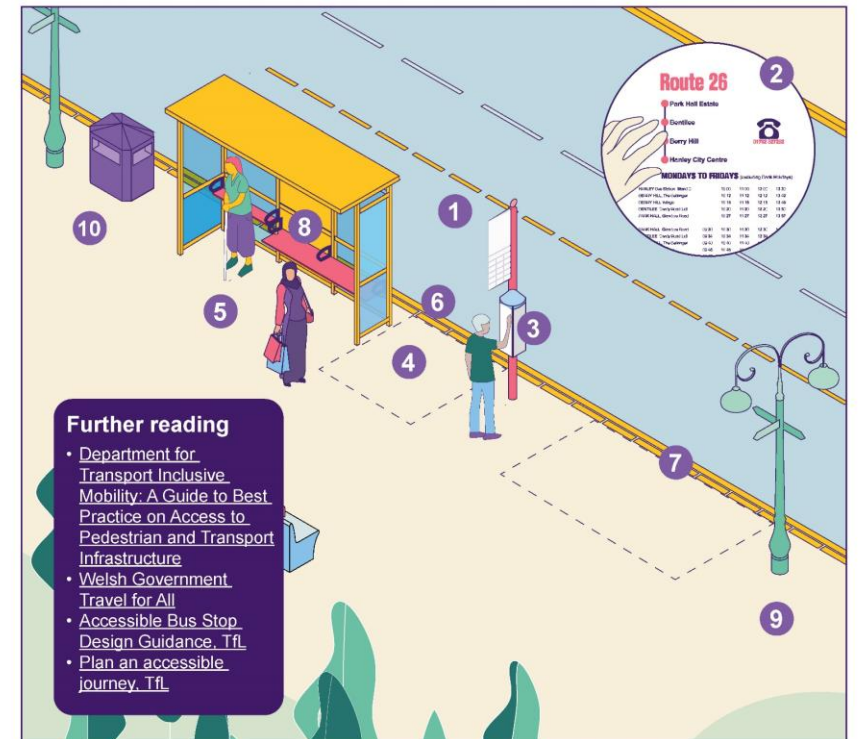
Age-friendly implementation considerations

- ❑ **Listen to lived experiences** to learn what a diverse range of local residents, including older people, want and need from their bus stops. Undertake an access audit with older people / intergenerational groups.
- ❑ **Identify stakeholders** such as relevant council departments (e.g. planning, transport, community services), and relevant authorities (e.g. the Highway Authority, public transport operators).
- ❑ **Develop solutions** with residents, stakeholders, road users, pedestrians, and cyclists to ensure the bus stop is safe and usable for all. Discuss priorities and agree improvements for implementation.

- 1 Location of bus stops:** Are bus stops in safe, easy to access locations near key local facilities and residential areas (including where high concentrations of older people live)? Are stops close to main junctions? Do stop locations minimise walking distance between destinations? Are sufficient stops provided within a community (not just into/out of the centre)? Does the pick-up location allow wheelchair users to board?
- 2 Information (pre-journey):** Is information about routes, timing, ticketing, accessibility features and assisted transport services available online and by post/phone so people can plan their journey in advance?
- 3 Information (at stop):** Is clear and up to date information about bus routes, timing, and fares provided at the bus stop? Is live bus arrivals information provided where possible? Is information available in large print format and tactile/audio formats? Is local information (e.g. social and volunteering activities) shared at the stop?
- 4 Free from obstructions:** Are driver and waiting passengers clearly visible to each other? Are bus stops located where there is adequate footway width? Is access to the bus free of trip hazards and barriers?
- 5 Waiting area:** Are stops located where there is space for a weather protected shelter? Is seating offered at different heights with arm rests / back rests? Is a wheelchair space and a transfer seat provided?

- 6 Drainage:** Is good drainage provided so water does not pool on footways or the carriageway kerbside? Are people protected from being splashed while they wait?
- 7 Kerb features:** Is the kerb height at least 100mm to allow buses to deploy a ramp safely? Is appropriate tactile paving used to indicate the kerb edge at the boarding point? Are 'Kassel' kerbs used where needed to allow level boarding?
- 8 Contrast:** Is information/signage provided with enough contrast to be read easily? Are features such as seats and bus shelters contrasting from their surrounding environment so people can easily identify them? Is the kerb contrasting from the carriageway so people can discern where the pavement ends?
- 9 Lighting / perceptions of safety:** Inadequate street lighting can contribute to poor perceptions of safety. Are good levels of illumination provided at the bus stop (and journey to the bus stop)? Is the bus stop lighting uniform and even? Does the design of the bus stop allow people to be seen and offer clear exit routes?
- 10 Maintenance:** Local highway authorities are responsible for maintenance of bus stop areas. Is a management plan in place to ensure street cleaning, maintenance of the footway / carriageway, vegetation clearing, and winter maintenance is performed? Can people easily report issues on and offline?

Age-friendly bus stops: top 10 design considerations



Example checklist

Age-friendly Quick Guide Checklist

Bus Stops

No.	Design considerations	Y/N	Issues and actions notes
1 Location of bus stops			
1.1	Are bus stops in safe, easy to access locations near key local facilities and residential areas (including where high concentrations of older people live) and close to main junctions?		
1.2	Do stop locations minimise walking distance between destinations?		
1.3	Are sufficient bus stops provided?		
1.4	Does the pick-up location allow wheelchair users to board?		
2 Information (pre-journey)			
2.1	Is information about routes, timing, ticketing, accessibility features and assisted transport services available online and by post/phone?		
3 Information (at stop)			
3.1	Is clear, up to date information about bus routes/timing/fares provided at the stop?		
3.2	Is live bus arrivals information provided?		
3.3	Is information available in large print format and tactile/audio formats?		
3.4	Is local information (e.g. social and volunteering activities) shared at the stop?		
4 Free from obstructions			
4.1	Are driver and waiting passengers clearly visible to each other?		
4.2	Are bus stops located where there is adequate footway width?		
4.3	Is bus access free of hazards/barriers?		
5 Waiting area			
5.1	Are stops located where there is space for a weather protected shelter?		
5.2	Is seating offered at different heights with arm rests / back rests? Is a wheelchair space and a transfer seat provided?		

No.	Design considerations	Y/N	Issues and actions notes
6 Drainage			
6.1	Is good drainage provided so water does not pool on footways or the carriageway kerbside?		
6.2	Are people protected from being splashed while they wait?		
7 Kerb features			
7.1	Is the kerb height at least 100mm to allow buses to deploy a ramp safely?		
7.2	Is appropriate tactile paving used to indicate the kerb edge at boarding points?		
7.3	Are 'Kassel' kerbs used where needed to allow level boarding?		
8 Contrast			
8.1	Is information/signage provided with enough contrast to be read easily?		
8.2	Are features such as seats and bus shelters contrasting from their surrounding environment so people can easily identify them?		
8.3	Is the kerb contrasting from the carriageway so people can discern where the pavement ends?		
9 Lighting / perceptions of safety			
9.1	Are good levels of illumination provided at the bus stop (and journey to the stop)?		
9.2	Is the bus stop lighting uniform and even?		
9.3	Does the design of the stop allow people to be seen and offer clear exit routes?		
10 Maintenance and care			
10.1	Is a management plan in place to ensure street cleaning, maintenance of the footway / carriageway, vegetation clearing, and winter maintenance is performed?		
10.2	Can people easily report issues on and offline?		

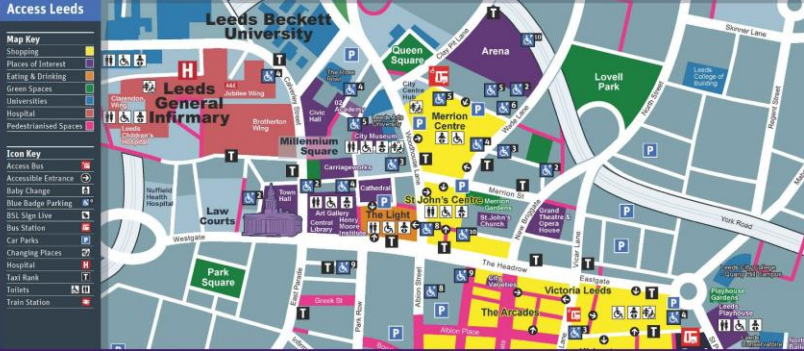
Example case studies

Age-friendly Quick Guide Case Studies

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Leeds City Centre Access Map

Relevant Quick Guides: Age-friendly Wayfinding and Signage
Location: Leeds



What they did

Leeds City Council's City Centre Management Team co-produced a redesigned Leeds City Centre Access Map, creating an accessible, easy-to-read version of the complex master map. The new map highlights pedestrianised spaces in pink, uses stronger colour contrast and introduces clearer symbols and a simplified, bold map key. Dementia-friendly landmarks were added, alongside accessible entrances and numbered Blue Badge parking spaces. Multiple QR codes link to online information about bus routes and booking community transport, as well as additional maps for toilets, indoor rest spots, safe space, and shopping centre accessibility, improving access to additional information.

The result was a wayfinding tool available in both print and digital formats, expanding the city's inclusive wayfinding offer. It has also led to the team considering other improvements such as how to increase the accessibility of the wayfinding plinths.

How they did it

The project was driven by the council's Age Friendly Strategy which commits to embedding lived experience into design. Through a structured co-production process with the Leeds Older People's Forum and the intergenerational All Age Activists group, the team engaged with people of different ages and with a range of disabilities.

The team met with stakeholders at a series of in-person events to gather their views on what would be most useful to see on the map and how the design of the map can meet the need of a broad range of people. Feedback was gathered first on print formats, then digitally, recognising that there is no 'one size fits all' in accessibility. This collaborative process ensured the final product reflected real user needs and increased confidence in its usability.

Age-friendly Quick Guide Case Studies

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Improving neighbourhood spaces and walking routes

Relevant Quick Guides: Age-friendly Seating and Rest Areas, Streets and Pavements
Location: Rochdale Boroughwide Housing




What they did

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing's (RBH) Age-Friendly Advisor worked with residents in the Smallbridge and Kirkholt neighbourhoods to improve outdoor spaces and walking routes, making them safer, more accessible and more welcoming for older people.

Through local engagement residents highlighted barriers to moving around their neighbourhoods such as uneven paving, steep routes without handrails, limited seating and areas that felt unsafe or unwelcoming.

RBH introduced a series of practical improvements which included installing benches to provide rest points along walking routes, adding handrails on steep hills, and formalising an informal footpath that residents were already using by creating a safer paved walkway.

The project also enhanced community spaces including improvements around Stevenson Square and the creation and maintenance of community gardens. Together, these changes made outdoor areas easier to navigate and encouraged residents to spend more time outside and connect with neighbours.

How they did it

This project was delivered through the Greater Manchester Ageing in Place Pathfinder programme which was grant funded by the Worwin UK Foundation and worked across nine neighbourhoods in Greater Manchester. The programme was led by RBH in Rochdale.

In these partnerships local organisations work together with residents to agree and prioritise ways to improve the quality of life for residents as they grow older.

The project maximised existing resources by drawing on social value commitments of RBH suppliers. For example, the materials were provided by Groundworks Landscapes Limited. They were also able to utilise RBH's corporate volunteer days to make the changes.

Learn more: <https://www.rbh.org.uk/news/rbh-news/new-benches-on-smallbridge-as-part-of-rochdale-age-friendly-project/>

Bus Stops

- Location of stops
- Information (pre-journey)
- Information (at stop)
- Free from obstructions
- Waiting area
- Drainage
- Kerb features
- Contrast
- Lighting / perceptions of safety
- Maintenance



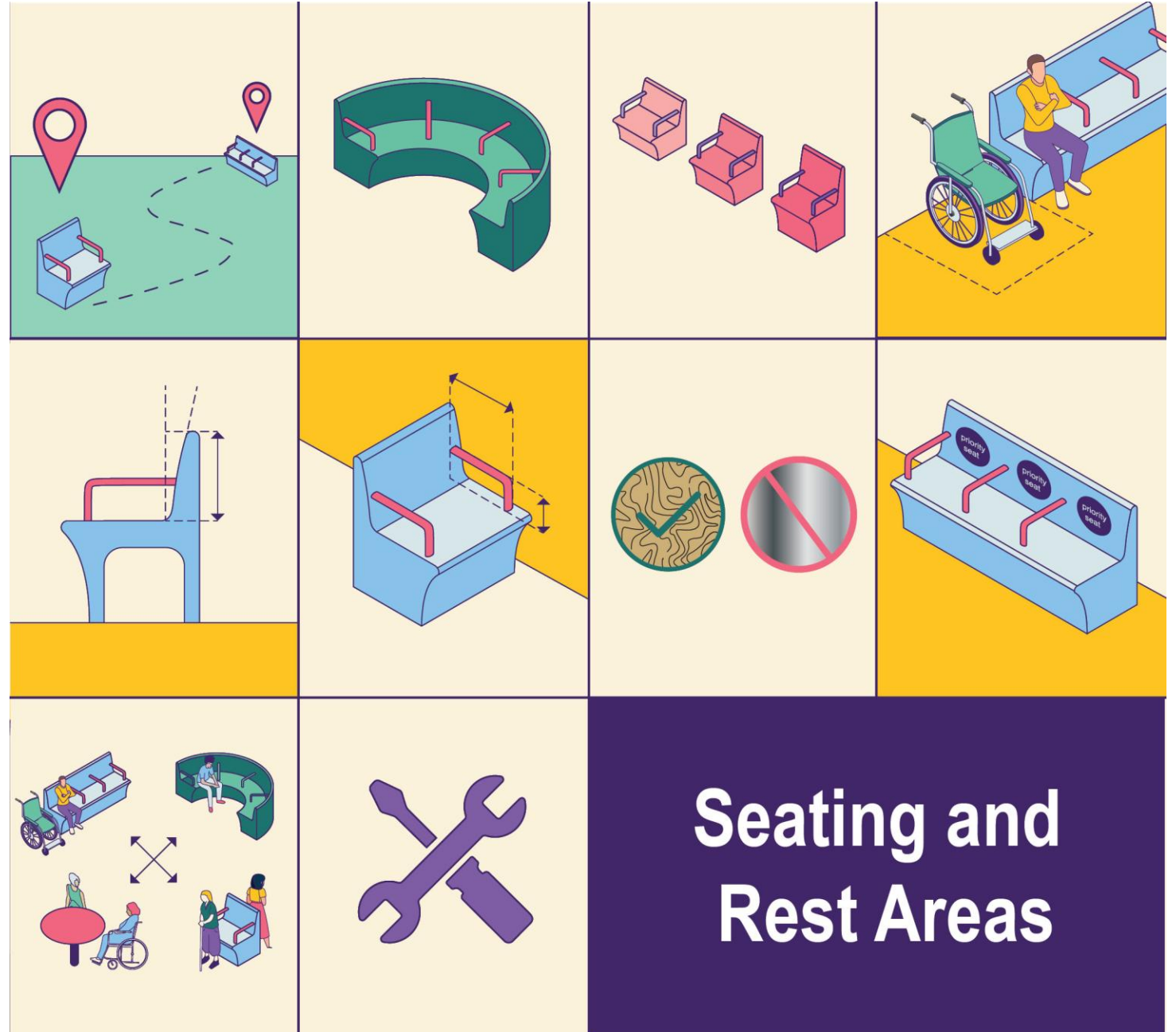
Parks and Green Spaces

- Location
- Wayfinding and signage
- Accessible routes
- Changes in level
- Perceptions of safety
- Toilets
- Seating / rest areas
- Participation in the park
- Inclusive play/movement
- Maintenance



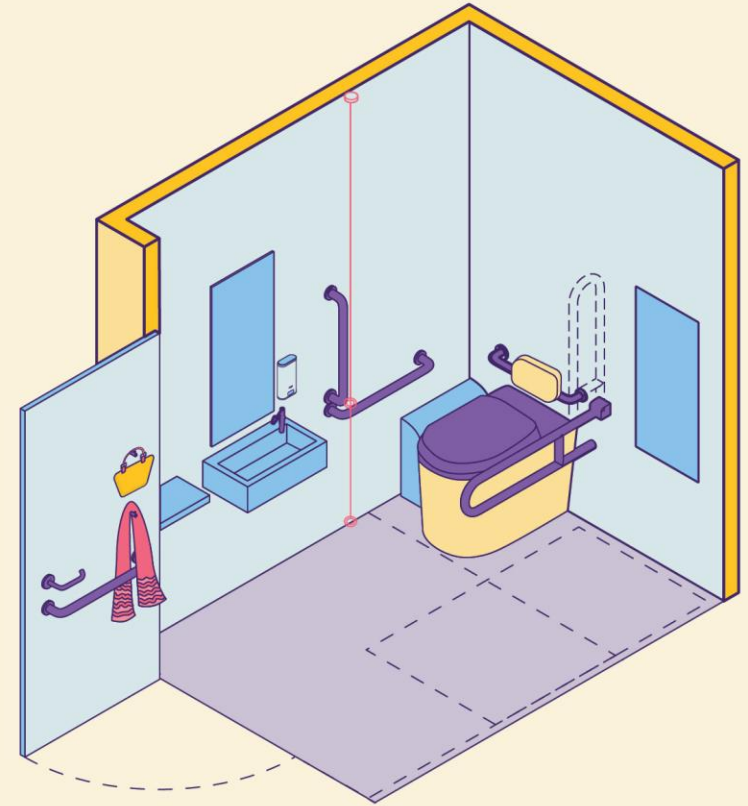
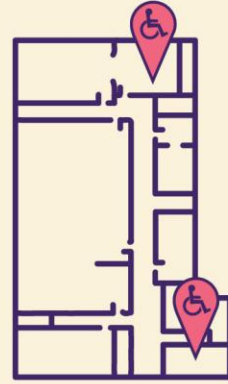
Seating and Rest Areas

- Location of seats
- Social seats
- Seat dimensions
- Wheelchair spaces
- Back rests
- Arm rests
- Materials
- Contrast/priority seating
- Choice of seating
- Maintenance



Toilets

- Availability of toilets
- Types of toilets
- Ambulant accessible toilets
- Wheelchair accessible toilets dimensions
- Doors
- Support features
- Operable controls
- Contrast and finishes
- Emergency alarm
- Maintenance



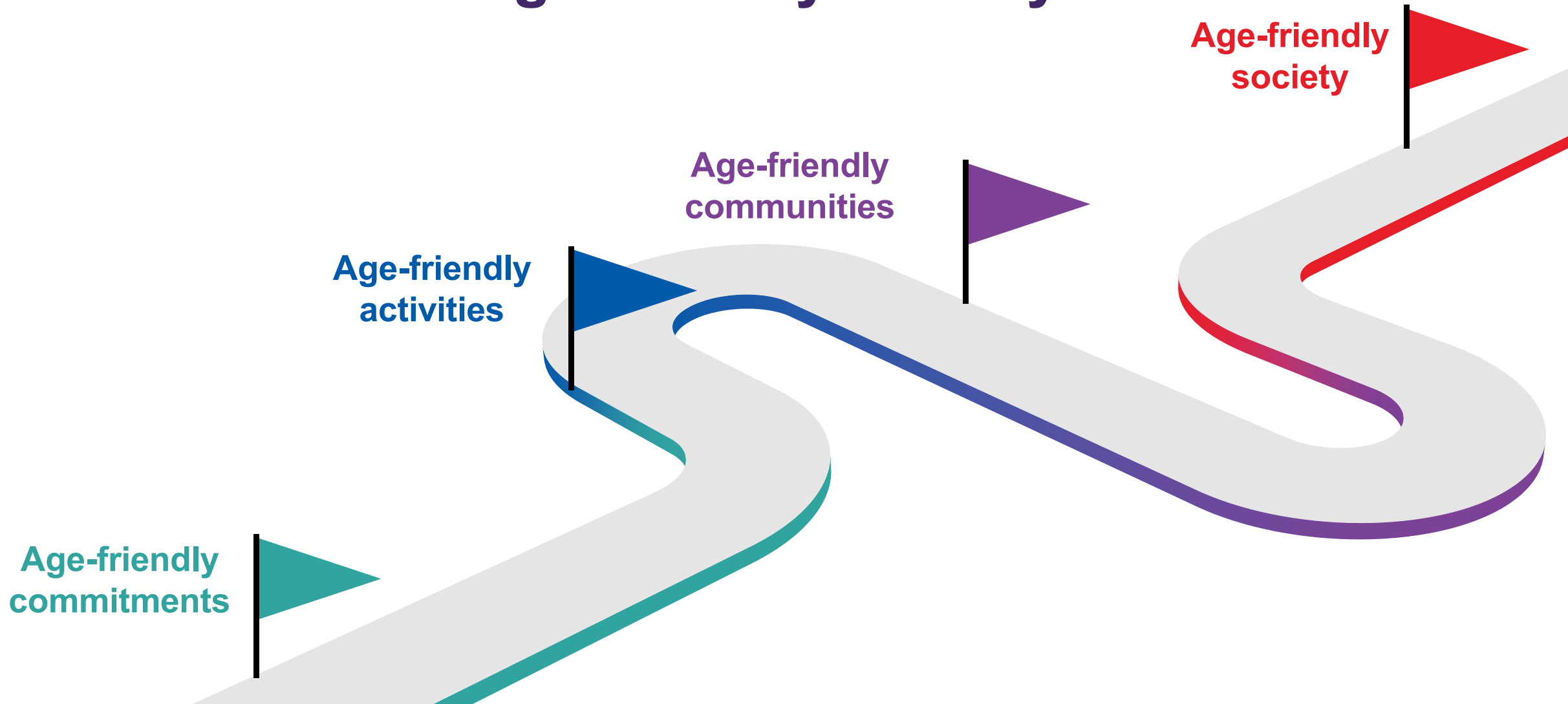
Toilets

Wayfinding and Signage

- Intuitive layout
- Key destinations and info
- Consistent and regular
- Multiple formats
- Visual communication
- Graphic communication
- Tactile communication
- Audible communication
- Non-ageist graphics/language
- maintenance



The goal? To help us work together towards a more age-friendly society



Thank you!



ARUP

Questions? Contact us:

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