



Intersectional Stigma of Place-Based Ageing (ISPA) Project

Celebrating Year Three

September 2025

In Partnership with



INTERSECTIONAL STIGMA OF PLACE-BASED AGEING (ISPA)

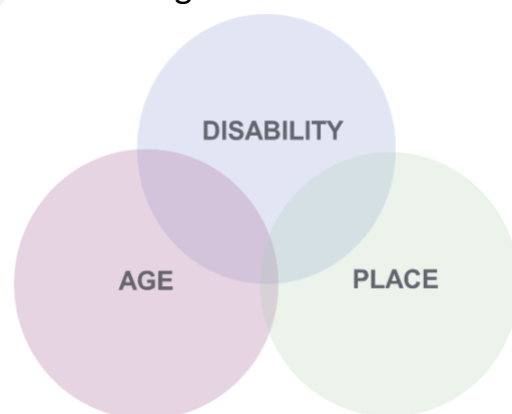
YEAR THREE UPDATE

Intersectional Stigma of Place-Based Ageing (ISPA) Project

The Intersectional Stigma of Place-Based Ageing (ISPA) Project is an ambitious five-year participatory and mixed-methods study. We are exploring how the stigma attached to where people live intersects with experiences of disability and ageing.

Since launching in September 2022, our goal has been to uncover how structural and systemic factors drive exclusion, and to identify ways to challenge the inequalities faced by older disabled adults.

This Year 3 update shares highlights from September 2024 to September 2025, including major milestones in data collection and co-production, new publications, international collaborations, and growing networks that are sparking fresh conversations on stigma, ageing, and place.



Delivering on Inclusion

Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), ISPA is dedicated to tackling the negative consequences of stigma through research that is both rigorous and inclusive. Co-production is at the heart of what we do, ensuring that lived experience shapes every stage of the project.

Over the past year, ISPA has continued to build momentum and enthusiasm around inclusive housing solutions. By placing older and disabled people at the centre, we're generating evidence and partnerships that challenge stigma linked to age, disability, and place - and open up new possibilities for policy, practice, and everyday life.

Some highlights this year!

A big congratulations to Professor Kim McKee, who was invited to speak at Scotland's 50th anniversary celebration of community-based housing associations, hosted by Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum (GWSF) and partners. Her work on women in housing has been extremely well received across the sector.



Figure 1: Professor Kim McKee speaking at Scotland's 50th anniversary of community-based housing associations



Figure 2: The Cake & Co-production training at Stirling Impact Accelerator with 30 academics

In addition, Professor Peter Matthews invited us to showcase ISPA best practice within the Stirling Impact Accelerator project for a Cake & Co-production training event, where we trained around 30 fellow Academics in the principles and practice of co-production.

Professor Vikki McCall was invited to speak at the Manchester Urban Ageing Research Group on 1st May 2025, where she presented on Inclusive Design: Planning the Future of Housing and Tackling Stigma.



Figure 3: Professor Vikki McCall (right) speaking at the Manchester Urban Ageing Research Group with Professor Tine Buffell (left)



Figure 4: Jill Pritchard, Occupational Therapist (left) with Rachel Russell, Occupational Therapist and Senior Regional Advisor for Foundations (right)

We were delighted to host the Housing/Social Care Occupational Therapy CPD event at Stirling on 3rd October 2024. Led by the amazing Jill Pritchard and supported by our ISPA Alliance member, Foundations, the event provided a fantastic opportunity to share ISPA insights with frontline practitioners who are making a real difference in people's lives every day.

In this year's *Royal* news, Julia and Vikki represented ISPA and the University of Stirling at the Holyrood Garden Party, mingling with (or at least observing from a distance!) the King and Queen.

Vikki also represented ISPA at a special event hosted by Shakespeare Martineau, held aboard the Royal Yacht Britannia. As part of the occasion, she was invited to sit in the very chair once used by the Queen to speak with the Captain - a memorable moment that underlined the recognition of ISPA's work at the highest levels!



Figure 5: Julia and Vikki representing ISPA at the Holyrood Garden Party, with the historic palace as a stunning backdrop



Figure 6: Julia and Vikki enjoying a quintessentially British treat: cucumber sandwiches at the Holyrood Garden Party



Figure 7: Vikki McCall seated in the chair once used by the Queen aboard the Royal Yacht Britannia

Vikki was also shortlisted for the UK's Times Higher Education (THE) Award for most Innovative Teacher of the Year 2024!



Figure 8: Vikki McCall with fellow shortlisted candidates for the Times Higher Education (THE) Award for Most Innovative Teacher of the Year 2024

The team were also out in force at key academic conferences this year, with ISPA represented at the British Society of Gerontology (BSG), the Social Policy Association (SPA), the Housing Studies Association (HAS) and the Transforming Care Conference (TCC). These events provided valuable opportunities to share our work, strengthen collaborations, and showcase ISPA to the wider academic community.



Figure 9: ISPA team members sharing their research and insights at conferences across the sector

We were also asked to speak at the Cycling without Age Grand Gathering!



Figure 10: Vikki experiencing a wheelchair-friendly trishaw and speaking at the Cycling Without Age

Lisa spoke about ISPA at the relaunch of the Falkirk Older Persons' Network in August. The event brought together key community members and partners involved in supporting older people in Falkirk.



Figure 11: Group photo at the Falkirk Older Person's Network relaunch (Left to Right): Eloise Wilson (CVS Falkirk), John McGee (OPN Co-Chair and Scottish Senior Computers Club Falkirk), Cllr Alf Kelly (Falkirk Older People's Champion), David Paterson (Co-chair of OPN, and from NHS Retirement Fellowship), Lisa Davison (ISPA Project, University of Stirling).



Figure 12: Lisa speaking community members and partners involved in supporting older people in Falkirk at the Falkirk Older Persons' Network in August 2025

ISPA's international efforts/activities are well underway this year. Vikki was invited to speak at the University of Lund in Sweden and to the supported housing network (called ICCER) in Edmonton, Canada, where exciting discussions are now taking place around building their own version of an Inclusive Living Alliance. Watch this space!



Figure 13: Kungshuset ("The King's House") in Lund, Sweden, a historic building located in the Lundagård park near Lund University

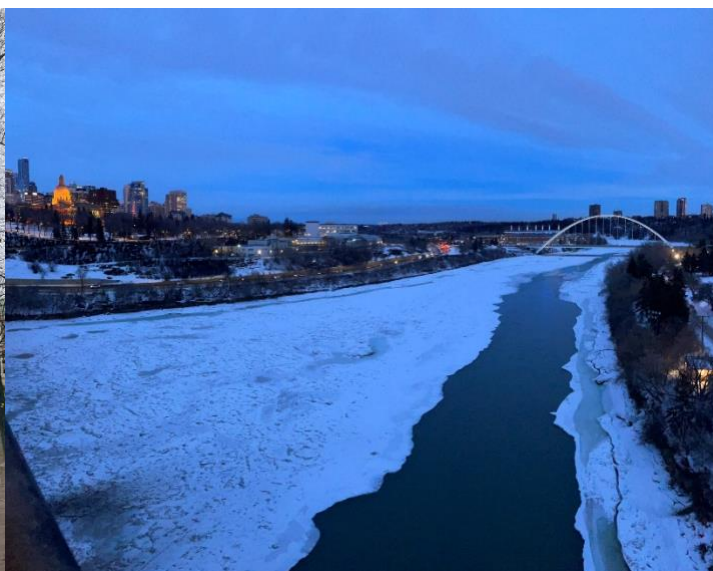


Figure 14: The Edmonton, Canada skyline featuring the Walterdale Bridge, a distinctive white arch bridge spanning the North Saskatchewan River



Figure 15: Front row, left to right: Chris, Faith, and Helen (Friend Autism Scotland and ISPA Inclusive Living Alliance members) with Julia (ISPA Project, University of Stirling) at the Divergent Engineers' Bazaar. Chris and Faith are wearing Victorian-Inspired Steampunk Fashion

On 7 February 2025, Lisa, Dianne, Carol, and Julia attended the UK Ageing Research Funders' Forum (UKARFF) Early Career Researcher (ECR) event, hosted by the [Health Foundation](#) in Central London. The programme began with an interactive Q&A session with Professor Sir Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer for England, who addressed questions on the key priorities highlighted in his [2023 annual report, Health in an Ageing Society](#). This was followed by a series of eight engaging presentations from ECRs supported by various UKARFF members.



Figure 16: Professor Sir Chris Whitty presenting via video link at the UKARFF Early Career Researcher event

In April, ISPA were invited to talk to the Callander & West Perthshire U3A group, a national network for individuals no longer in employment. The Network organises a range of activities, events and talks within local communities. Presenting an update on ISPA progress to date, discussions took place around the challenges experienced within the Callander area.

Our Early Career Network (ECN)

Our Early Career Network (ECN) is a group of 21 early-career academics and practitioners working on ISPA-relevant topics. Over the past year, there have been several online reading group sessions and in-person activities for our ECN members, and each of them has a dedicated 'buddy' (a member of the ISPA academic team who acts as a mentor, supporting funding applications, providing career advice and giving feedback on publications).

Following the International Networking event held in September 2024 at the University of Stirling, three of our ECN members, Lucia, Tom and Robert published a blog post about their experience at the event.

The ISPA ECN have also benefited from other international networking opportunities. Dr Lisa Davison (ISPA Research Fellow and Chair of the British Society of Gerontology Emerging Researchers in Ageing) collaborated with the SWEAH Alumni International Network (SAIN) to organise a writing retreat at Långholmen Hotel, a former prison converted into a hotel and conference centre on the island of Långholmen in Stockholm. The action-packed 2-day programme included dedicated writing time, networking activities, and opportunities for early career researchers to present their research through 3 minute presentations, alongside a workshop on funding and extracurricular activities such as a tour of the prison grounds and Långholmen Museum. A further three ISPA ECN members, Lucia, Sadhana and Frankie were supported to attend, with Lucia and Sadhana reflecting on their experience in a blog post.

Link to all blog posts here:
<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design-building/InclusiveDesign/ISPA/useful-resources/>

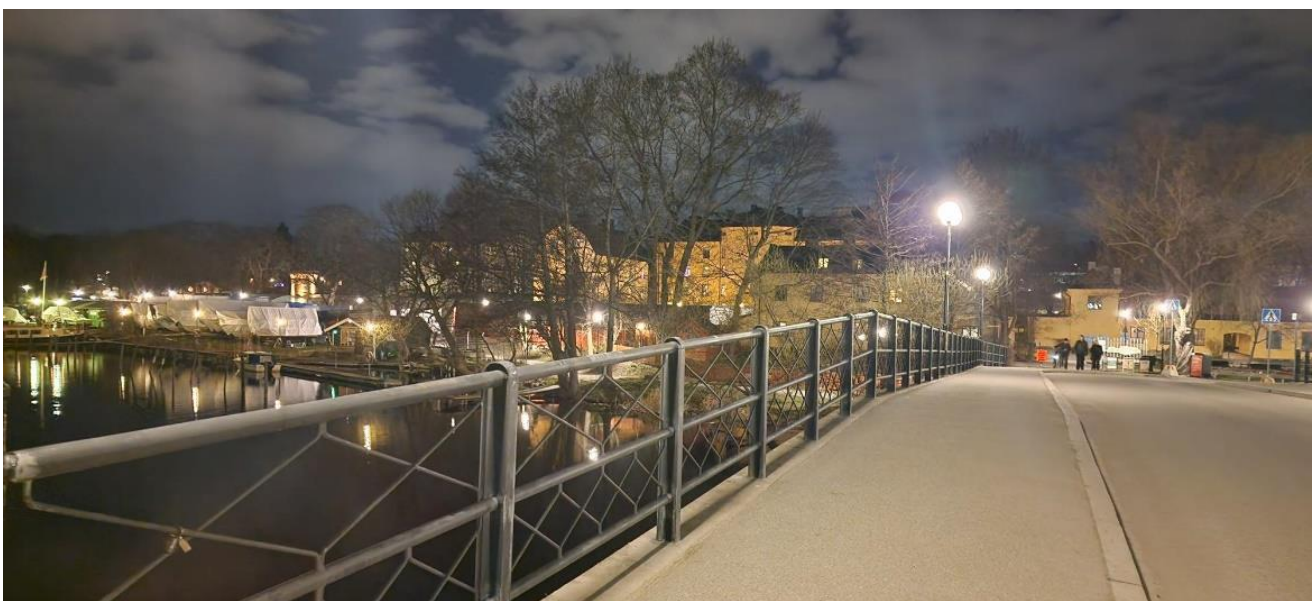


Figure 17: The island of Långholmen in Stockholm

Exploring the representation of disability in homes and neighbourhoods (work package 1)

In addition to the analysis of adaptations across Scotland (detailed ahead), the quantitative analysis in Year 3 sought to understand the geographical distribution of ageing, disability, and accessibility across the UK. Our aim is to explore not just where older and disabled populations live, but also whether the surrounding infrastructure supports their mobility and participation in daily life. To do this, we are combining large-scale demographic datasets with spatial information on transport and public facilities, helping to build a more complete picture of the environments in which people are ageing.

Using census data (2021 for England and Wales and 2022 for Scotland) we were able to map areas with high or low levels of ageing and disability. The map showing quintiles of disability (Figure 18) demonstrates that the lowest concentrations of disability within the population are in and around London (<14%) and highest proportions of disability in the population are across Scotland and Southwest Wales (>21%). The highest concentration of disability within the population was observed in Inverclyde, 29%, and lowest concentration of disability within the population was observed in City of London, 10%.

Similarly, the map on ageing (Figure 19) demonstrates that those living in London are typically younger, with the smallest proportion of over 65s (<16%) and that areas such as East Anglia, South West England, Wales and several areas across Scotland such as the West coast and Scottish Borders have high concentrations of over 65s (>24%). The highest concentration of people aged 65 or older was observed in North Norfolk, 33%, and lowest concentration of people aged 65 or older was observed in Tower Hamlets, 6%.

Understanding the spatial distribution of ageing and disability is an important first step and helps us to visualize where disabled and older populations live. However, this data tells us very little about how well these populations can access essential services and opportunities. To address how accessible spaces are, we introduced accessibility data from several sources, including National

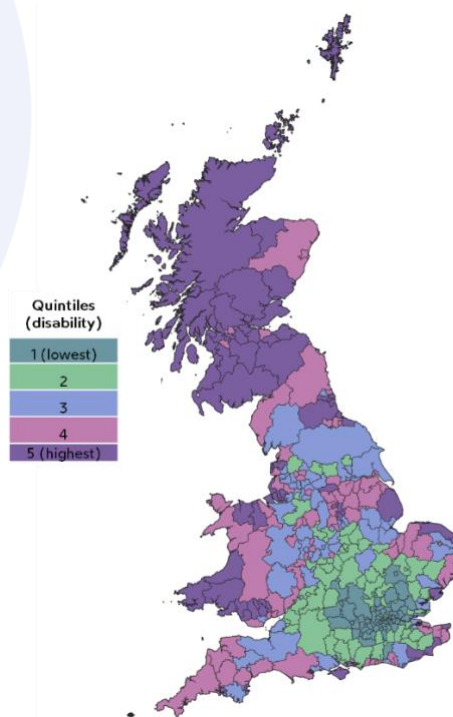


Figure 18: Map of Great Britain showing quintiles of disability from 2021/22 census data

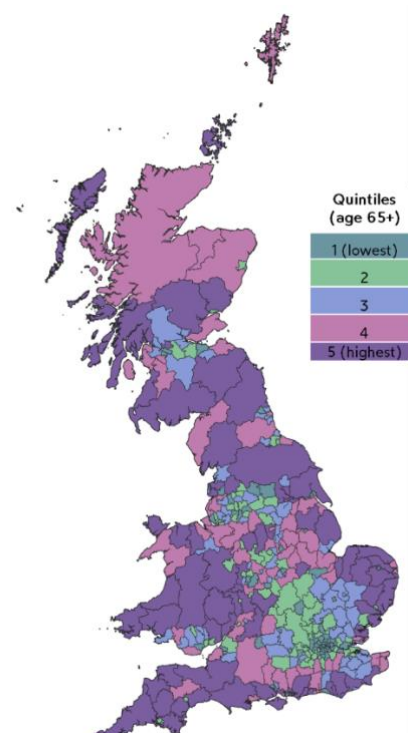


Figure 19: Map of Great Britain showing quintiles of people aged 65 and over from 2021/22 census data

Rail (on train station accessibility), the Toilet Map (on public accessible bathrooms), and Park Mark (on accessible parking). This will enable us to assess whether areas with high concentrations of disabled and/or older residents also have the infrastructure to support inclusive travel and participation. Importantly, we plan to link this accessibility data with survey responses from the UK Household Longitudinal Study, to investigate whether people living in areas with more or less accessible infrastructure report different levels of experienced stigma.

Preliminary analysis of the accessibility data started with the National Rail data on train station accessibility. This data allows us to identify the locations of train stations across Great Britain and map which of those stations have accessible features. For the purposes of this analysis, we considered “accessible” train stations (N=1,100) to have the four following features: step free access, ramp for train access, accessible ticket machine and staff help available. The map (Figure 20) shows all train stations (grey) and those with all four abovementioned accessibility features (blue). Table 1 shows the proportion of train stations with each of the identified accessibility features. By combining demographic, accessibility, and survey data, we can begin to identify places that support inclusion, and accessible infrastructure is associated with reported stigma and discrimination.

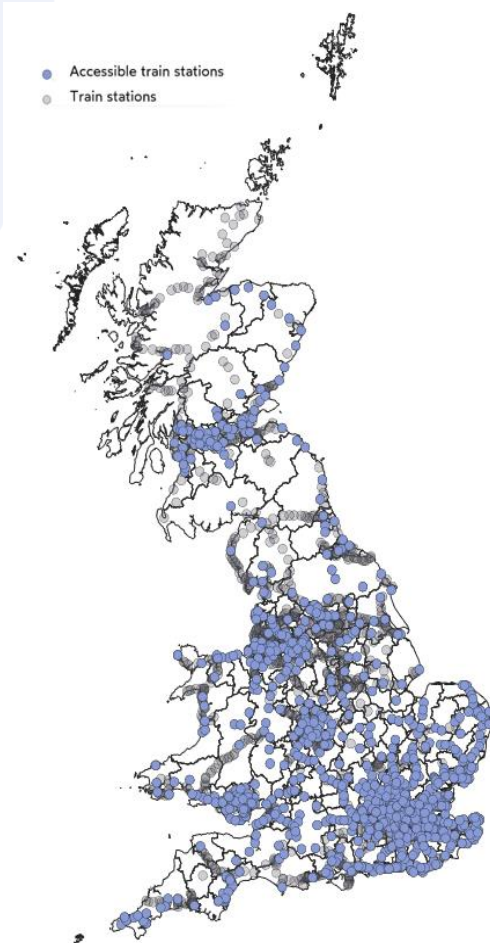


Figure 20: Map of Great Britain showing train stations and accessible train stations

Table 1: Proportion of train stations across Great Britain with accessibility features

Accessibility feature	Number of train stations	% of train stations
Step free access	2,274	88%
Ramp for train access	2,090	81%
Accessible ticket machine	1,790	69%
Staff help available	1,787	69%
Step free, ramp access, accessible ticket machine & staff help available	1,100	43%

Our next steps are to model accessibility within the combined datasets to explore correlations between accessible infrastructure (e.g. additional distance travelled to accessible train stations, and proximity and availability of accessible bathrooms) and individual’s experiences of stigma.

Launch of the Adaptations Report

A major highlight of Year 3 was the successful launch of the Adaptations Report, delivered in partnership with the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) and ALACHO. The report brought together evidence from across Scotland on how housing adaptations are delivered, identifying both strengths and critical areas for improvement. The launch generated strong interest from policy, practice, and academic communities, reinforcing ISPA's role in driving forward debates about housing, inclusion, and healthy ageing. Link here:

<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/topics/type/whats-next-for-adaptations/>



Figure 21: Front cover of the *What's next for adaptations?* report

Connecting ‘ageing-in-place’ to lived experiences of stigma (work package 2)

Figures 22 and 23: images generated from photographs of our in-person Community Peer Researcher (CPR) Co-Production Events. These images capture the spirit of the activities while protecting the identities of our CPR participants.

The work with the diaries came to life at our successful CPR Co-Production Events in May 2025 - a two-day in-person event and a shorter online workshop. Over 50 CPRs joined us for sessions of learning, training, and discussion, helping to build momentum and enthusiasm around both the emerging project data and ISPA’s wider ambitions. The following reflections were shared by CPRs about the in-person Co-Production Event:



Figure 22: CPRs collaborating in group discussions, with identities anonymised

“It helps me find overlap with other people’s experience. Even if they’re different conditions to me, we have similarities”

“Nice to hear what other people have to say, and to be able to take these back to other organisations to make changes”

“Made me realise how some of my experience affects not just me but others too”

“It helps you to understand other people’s experiences too – I’m not a wheelchair user but I’m learning more by talking to others in ISPA”

So far, 4 of our 6 diaries have been sent out to CPRs, covering topics such as *growing older, your surroundings, making everyday life easier at home*, and a *mid-term survey*. We are very grateful to all CPRs who have responded, generously sharing their experiences with us. Through this process, the ISPA team has collected hundreds of pages of text, captured hundreds of hours of conversations, and received photos, drawings, poems and many, many, emails – all contributing to the creation of a detailed dataset that captures CPR experiences.

At our Co-Production Events in May, we shared emerging findings from Diary 1. This gave our CPRs the opportunity to learn more about how we use the diary data, understand our early findings, and help us to improve them. The Co-Production Events also helped shape the team's thinking around topics and questions for Diaries 5 and 6.

Key findings presented included a focus on 'What Works' provides a positive way to highlight the ingenuity and creativity of our CPRs and allows us to share and learn from each other's experiences. For example, from Diary 1, CPRs said:



Figure 23: Interactive CPR activity capturing the energy of the Co-Production Event, with identities anonymised

"I find that a person who has different abilities is more creative and is a great problem solver because with all the challenges we face with our bodies and faculties slowly getting weaker, we have to find new ways to do basic day to day tasks keeping the mind active and quite often leading to a good belly laugh at oneself."

"I used to be rather intolerant of my mother when we were out and about as she always had an eye out for a toilet. Is it Karma or is she getting her own back from on high as I do exactly the same now! My daughter kindly bought a disabled toilet key on e-bay and that gives me a slight advantage now - a good tip for Older People but also for mothers with small children and those who have various medical problems which require more visits to the little room."

CPRs reported using a wide variety of objects to support their everyday lives, but some common themes emerged around *Reach & Grip*, *Organisation*, and *Getting Around*. For instance, litter pickers helped people to pick up things they'd dropped or helped get things down from high locations. Pull-out baskets in kitchen cupboards helped people access the contents of cupboards. Bottle and jar openers were also a frequently mentioned as everyday objects that 'work':

"Well, technology has been a great advantage to me with online shopping and all sorts of things and in actual fact the thing that's helped me the most is quite simply the bottle opener, which is a very simple thing, but it

makes my life easier on a daily basis. So yeah, quite a small thing, but a big thing."

When talking about getting around at home, CPRs talked about their specific equipment such as power chairs, walking sticks, support rails. But they also helpfully shared insights that other people would also benefit from such as electrically operated doors or rechargeable sensor lights:

"Rechargeable sensor lights - I dot these around the home so that I am not searching for the light switch for ages. When I need to fetch a glass of water, go to the loo or simply move my body to alleviate my pain, the lights automatically light up along the skirting making the floor easy to see and I am able to safely walk about without risking a fall or bumping into something that may fall onto me."

When talking about 'what works' at home, aside from objects, CPRs told us about specific rooms. Again, there was much diversity in this but common experiences in Bathrooms are helping to identify 'what works', whether that is a wet room or walk in shower, and/or raised toilet seat:

"We had the bath taken out quite a few years ago and a wide shower fitted as getting in and out of a bath was very difficult"

"... the wet room. I like it. I can wash myself"

"Raised toilet seat - Let's face it, when the hinges feel a little rusty, getting onto and off the old throne can literally be a hazardous action. Having a raised toilet seat allows me to support myself onto and off the throne thereby preventing a fall where I have to call for my care person at 2am to come and un-wedge my foot from whatever 'inbetween' it has positioned itself. Experiencing the indignity of being discovered by said care person with my knickers around my ankles and fully exposed to the poor person has not only resulted in fits of laughter but also injuries that have limited me further with mobility."

The quotes and findings above help to show some of the work that is coming out of the CPR diaries. Whilst 'what works' isn't the same for everyone, and even though 'what works' for one person may stop working if their circumstances change, we did agree that adopting the framing of 'what works' is helpful to identify common objects, rooms, services that are helpful so that we can share these more widely.

Co-production and building a cohort of disabled Community Peer-Researchers (work package 3)

Community Peer Researcher Blogs

Our Community Peer Researchers (CPRs) continue to lead the way in shaping debate and share lived experience through a growing series of Blogs. These pieces not only highlight personal perspectives but also amplify the voices of disabled people and communities at the heart of ISPA.

Accessible Housing & Social Care Summit: A Community Peer Researcher Speech and Reflection: Horizon Housing (part of the Link Group) and *Scottish Housing News* hosted the first Housing and Social Care Summit at the V&A Dundee. The event brought together leaders from housing, health, disability rights, and governance to address the chronic shortage of accessible homes in Scotland. Our CPR shared his experiences of disability and hopes for the future.

Accessible Housing & Social Care Summit: A Community Peer Researcher Speech and Reflection

🕒 15/12/24

On the 26th of September 2024, Horizon Housing (a partner in Link Group) and Scottish Housing News held the first ever Housing and Social Care Summit hosted at the V & A in Dundee. The goal was to bring together leaders, from areas such as local and national governance, disability rights advocacy, health and social care and inclusive home design, to address a chronic shortage of accessible housing in Scotland.



Figure 24: Screenshot of webpage linking to the Blog: *Accessible Housing & Social Care Summit: A Community Peer Researcher Speech and Reflection*



Thriving by responding to trends and challenges

A Blog from an ISPA Community Peer-Researcher

December 2024

Figure 25: Front cover of the *Thriving by Responding to Trends and Challenges - A Blog from an ISPA CPR*

Thriving by Responding to Trends and Challenges: Our ISPA CPR reflects on the importance of community engagement and partnership working. Ro draws attention to the insecurity and scepticism felt by many communities - from unpaid carers to local residents navigating planning processes - and highlights the potential of grassroots voices to drive democratic renewal and support thriving communities.

Our latest CPR blog, *Flushing Out Accessibility*, features ISPA CPR's, Cindy and Evander carrying out an accessibility audit of public toilets in Perth. The exercise was carried out in conjunction with the Centre for Inclusive Living, Perth & Kinross. The group highlighted the ongoing challenges disabled people face in finding and using accessible toilets - demonstrating the value of audits led by individuals with lived experience of disability - and emphasised that much more work is needed to ensure safe and hygienic standards.



Figure 26: Front cover of Flushing Out Accessibility - the Toilets Around Perth, Scotland Project

Together, these blogs showcase the unique perspectives our CPRs bring to national debates, helping to ensure that lived experience remains central to the design of inclusive housing and communities:

You can read the Blogs here:

<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design-building/InclusiveDesign/ISPA/useful-resources/>

Building Community

Community building is a key focus of the ISPA project and our CPR's have been busy throughout the year, getting involved in a diverse range of activities. Here's a snapshot of what our CPR's have been involved in:

Conferences

The Scottish Towns Partnership held in Perth in November 2024 was attended by Dianne and ISPA CPR, Ro. The theme, "[Investing in Our Assets for Sustainable Towns of the Future](#)" explored the impact of assets in driving sustainable economic and social progress in Scotland's towns.



Figure 27: The Scottish Towns Partnership Conference. ISPA Team Members Dianne (left), Ro (right)

Social Connections

The Forth Valley Group have had an active year attending a number of events held by the Stirling and Clackmannanshire Community Health & Care Partnership including – The Big Tea Party, Remembrance Service and Christmas Carol Concert, taking part in a range of activities throughout the events.



Figure 28: Forth Valley Group and ISPA Team Members (from left to right) John, Irene, Dianne and Jack at Stirling Community Hospital



Figure 29: Teacup planting session, highlighting the importance of inclusive outdoor activities



Figure 30: Forth Valley Group and ISPA Team Members (from left to right) June, Hillary and Adrian at the Christmas Carol Concert

Creative Endeavors

Several of our CPR's from Forth Valley got together in November 2024 to try out a research technique called Poetic Transcription which uses interview transcripts to create poetry. Here is an example of one of the poems.

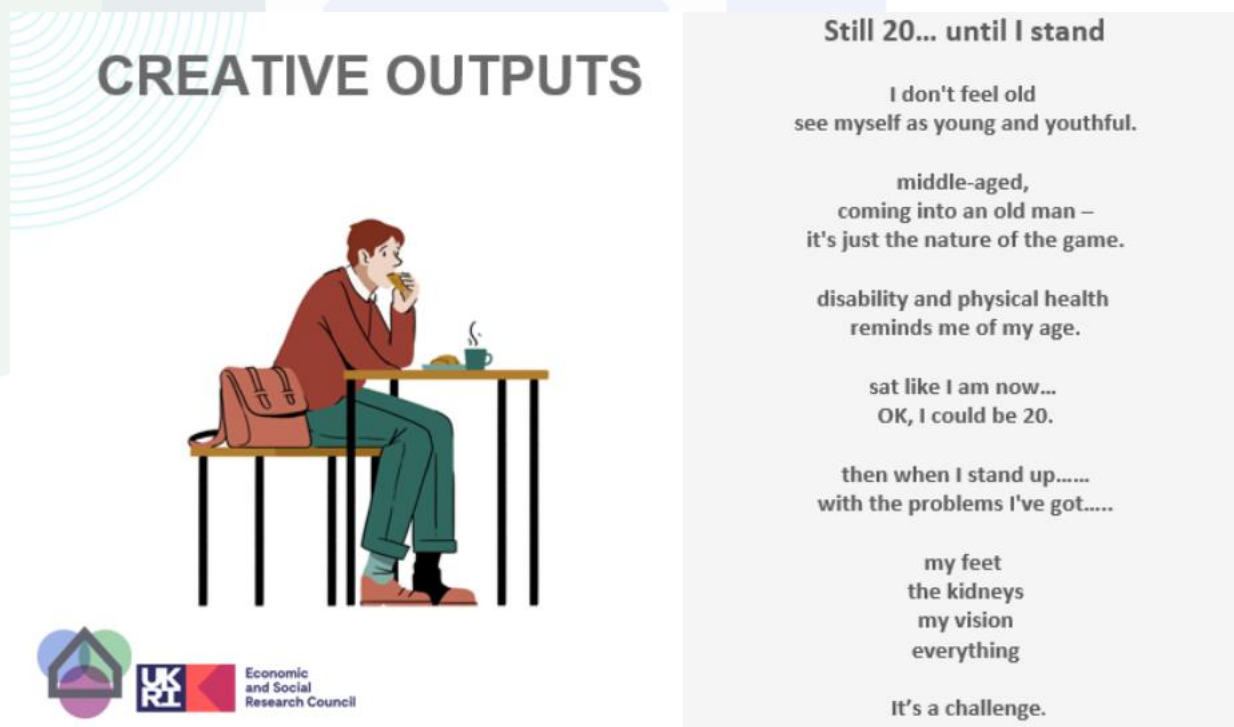


Figure 31: Example of poetic transcription – cartoon illustrating a CPR reflecting and creating poetry from interview transcripts, alongside an example poem

Following on from our poetic transcription workshop, in February 2025 Dianne and ISPA CPR's took part in an International Women's Day event. There were a few hiccups along the way - a lost speech and some battery problems! Rather than speaking about themselves, they presented poems about each other, giving their approach a unique twist.



Figure 32: Dianne (left) and Irene (right) presenting poems about each other at the International Women's Day event

ISPA Fieldwork

In May some of our CPRs from North England co-designed an accessible conference guide for the Social Policy Association Conference 2025, held at the University of York. The mapping exercise not only identified accessibility issues within the building but also highlighted the broader challenges that individuals with lived experience of disability face when attending conference venues, particularly in securing accessible transport.

Earlier in the summer the Borders and Forth Valley Groups carried out local mapping exercises in their respective communities, supported by our ILA Members, Artlink Central. The groups focused on a short route and some interesting discussions emerged regarding the impact of light levels on different sides of the street and the choice of route.

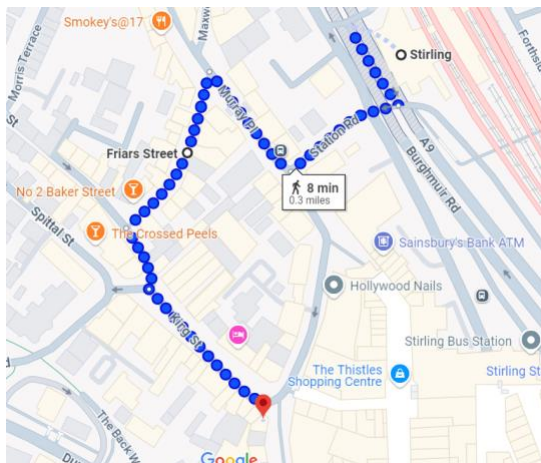


Figure 33: Route mapped around Stirling town centre by the Forth Valley CPR group as part of their accessibility mapping exercise



Figure 34: Looking up Friar Street - Part of the Stirling town centre mapped for accessibility by the Forth Valley CPR group

In response to the Forth Valley Mapping exercise, Dianne, with Artlink Central got together with some of our CPRs in July 2024 to carry out a creative session. The group explored a range of activities from felting and painting to clay sculpting. Have a look at Dianne's artwork in progress.

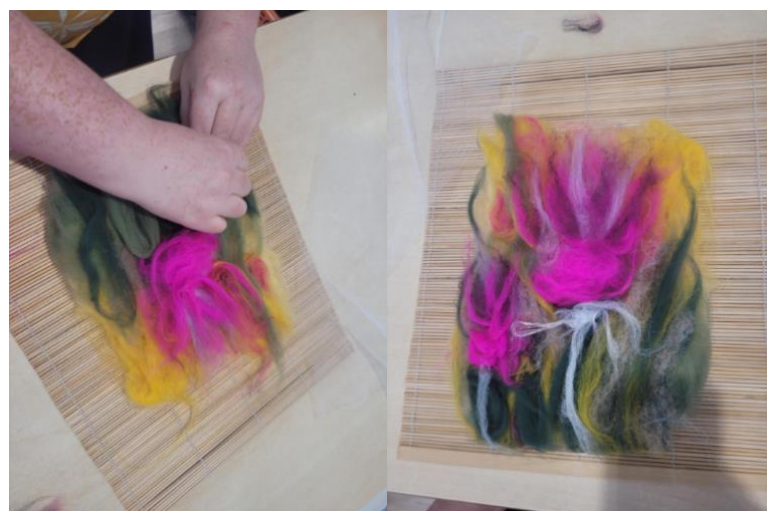


Figure 35: Dianne's Scottish Thistle artwork in progress, shown left to right, made with felt.

New Initiatives

September 2025 saw the launch of the Highland Inclusive Living Group, a new lived-experience-led forum emerging directly from the Intersectional Stigma of Place-Based Ageing (ISPA) project. The group brings together older and disabled people across the Highlands who want their experiences to shape the future of housing, care, and community life in the region. The report was launched on the 15 September 2025.



Figure 36: ISPA's Jill Pritchard speaking at the Highland Inclusive Living Group event in September 2025



Figure 37: Front cover of ISPA in the Highlands (ISPA and Highland Inclusive Living Group)

Tackling inequalities via organisational change, policy and practice (work package 4)

WP4 published its first journal article in Housing Studies (Understanding the intersectional stigma of ageing, disability, and place: A systematic literature mapping review); launched its first case study report (Local People Leading); and Kim has given several presentations about the work package in general (to ASPE, MHCLG and varied housing associations), and spotlighting the Local People Leading research (GWSF regeneration conference & CBHA 50th anniversary event). Kim also promoted this study further through a BBC Good Morning Scotland interview on the housing emergency in May, and a co-authored opinion piece with Vikki in the Scottish Housing News in June.

Building on this first WP4 case study, Kim, Anna and colleagues hosted a research symposium on Women, Housing & Place at the University earlier this month, featuring a range of guest speakers from practice and academia (photo below). It included a keynote from Professor Katherine Brickell (King's College London) on her new book 'Debt Trap Nation', and presentations across the day reinforced key themes around intersectionality, gender, stigma and place. The symposium also included funded places for ISPA's early-career network members and was co-funded by the Leverhulme-funded Centre for the Sciences of Place & Memory, based at Stirling.

Kim and Anna have also been taking forward data collection for new case studies looking at the tensions between fire safety and accessibility in Scotland, and also accessibility challenges in the private rented sector. We anticipate launching these reports later in 2025, and also taking forward further organisational case studies in line with ISPA's aims.



A real highlight of this year was Kim being invited to speak both at the 50th anniversary event celebrating Scotland's community-based housing associations and Scottish Housing Day on September 17th, which this year focused on 'everybody needs good neighbours'. Both presentations spotlighted WP4's first case study: Local People Leading.

Figure 38: ISPA's Anna (left) and Kim (right) organisers of the Women, Housing & Place Symposium at the University of Stirling on 12th September, 2025. The event was funded by the Leverhulme Centre for the Sciences of Place & Memory and to the ISPA project

Local People Leading

Our new report highlights the often-overlooked role women played in shaping Scotland's community-based housing association (CBHA) sector from the mid-1970s onwards. These women were not just contributors - they were leaders, driving forward change in their neighbourhoods. The report highlights how their leadership and activism laid the foundations for a model of community ownership in Scotland that remains unique and powerful today. It also explores the gendered barriers they faced, the achievements of CBHAs over five decades, and the challenges they continue to encounter. CBHAs provide excellent examples of how housing organisations have tackled place-based inequality and stigma in a Scottish context, with this research adding a gendered perspective to ISPA's work. The report concludes with five key recommendations:

- The social housing sector should celebrate Scotland's distinct CBHA model and learn from its experience and its emphasis on local, place-based knowledge.
- The Scottish Government and local authorities should continue to invest in CBHAs to enable them to deliver more affordable homes and their pivotal wider role activities – recognising the social and economic value of their contribution as community-anchors.
- The need for CBHAs (and their education and training partners) to augment existing resources to develop a bespoke training offer for new CBHA committee members/staff.
- The potential for partnership working across the housing association sector to promote the benefits of volunteering in housing. This would support succession planning and board recruitment and could be targeted towards under-represented groups.
- For policy development on culture and leadership (led by the Scottish Housing Regulator and the Scottish Government) to recognise the diversity of the social housing sector in Scotland and that a 'one size fits all solution' is unhelpful.

Full report here: <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/type/Women-in-Scotlands-community-based-housing-associations/>



Local People Leading: the role of women in the birth of Scotland's community-based housing associations



Professor Kim McKee

University of Stirling (April 2025)

Figure 39: Cover of Local People Leading: the role of women in the birth of Scotland's community-based housing associations

Making Change via an Inclusive Living Alliance

In June 2025, we were proud to host the second Inclusive Living Alliance (ILA) Conference at the University of Stirling. The ILA, a core strand of the ISPA project, brings together housing providers, policy partners, practitioners, and people with lived experience to develop more inclusive approaches to ageing, disability, and place.



Figure 40: ILA members in group sessions, engaging with presentations at the conference

Over two days, members explored key ISPA findings - including the *Local People Leading* study and the *What's Next for Adaptations?* report - alongside powerful insights from Community Peer Researchers on “what works” in practice. We also spent ALOT of time on the importance of Fire Doors! (which is the next WP4 case study).

Highlights included:

- Amazing learning hearing from partners such as Foundations, Hanover Housing Association, Talking Mats and Stop Social Housing Stigma, who shared better practice examples.
- The interactive “Minister for the Day” challenge, encouraging participants to imagine bold policy changes and test their ideas against a real ministerial response.
- Hands-on sessions where members co-designed the Inclusive Living Toolkit, setting priorities and commitments for collective action.
- A vibrant mix of learning, collaboration, and co-production, reinforcing the ILA’s role as a growing movement for inclusive housing and communities.

We also had stalls from some of our amazing Inclusive Living Alliance members!



Figure 41: Inclusive Living Alliance members at their stalls, showcasing their organisations projects and initiatives during the conference.

Summary

What a year it has been – from launching major reports and international collaborations to growing our Community Peer Researcher network and hosting the Inclusive Living Alliance Conference. None of this would have been possible without the energy, insight, and commitment of our CPRs and Alliance members, who continue to drive ISPA’s values of inclusion and co-production. As we move into Year 4, our focus turns to completing the diaries, advancing our data analysis, and beginning to build the Inclusive Living Toolkit. Together, we are laying the foundations for real change in housing, ageing, and inclusive communities!

Contact Details



Professor Vikki McCall, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Stirling and Principal Investigator on the Intersectional Stigma of Place-based Ageing (ISPA) project

E-mail: vikki.mccall@stir.ac.uk

Tel: +44 (0) 1786 467698

X: @vikki_mccall and @HousingStirUni

Linkedin: [linkedin.com/in/vikkimccall](https://www.linkedin.com/in/vikkimccall)



The support of the Inclusive Ageing call grant number: ES/W012677/1 from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is gratefully acknowledged.