



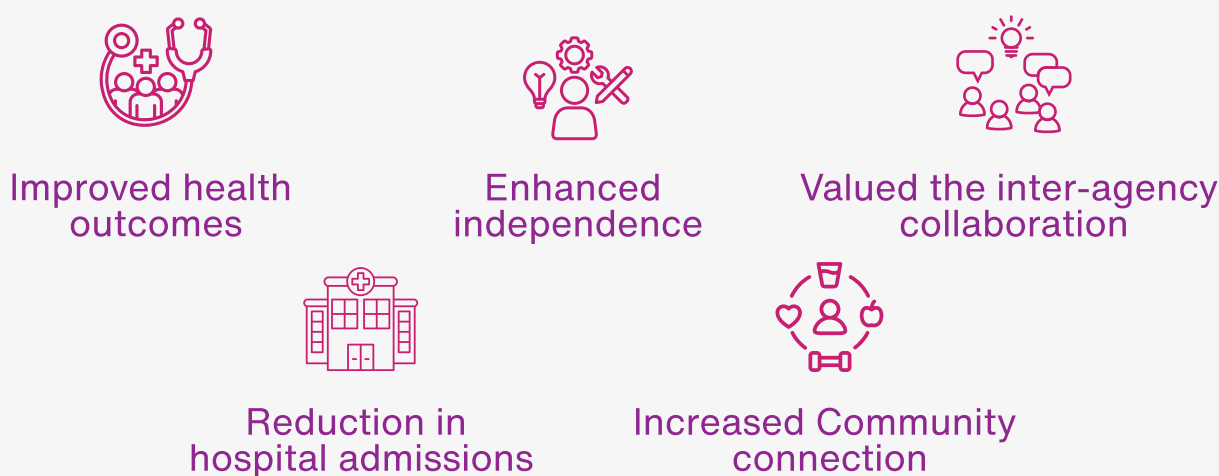
HEALTHY ME HEALTHY COMMUNITIES & AGEING IN PLACE IMPACT REPORT 2025



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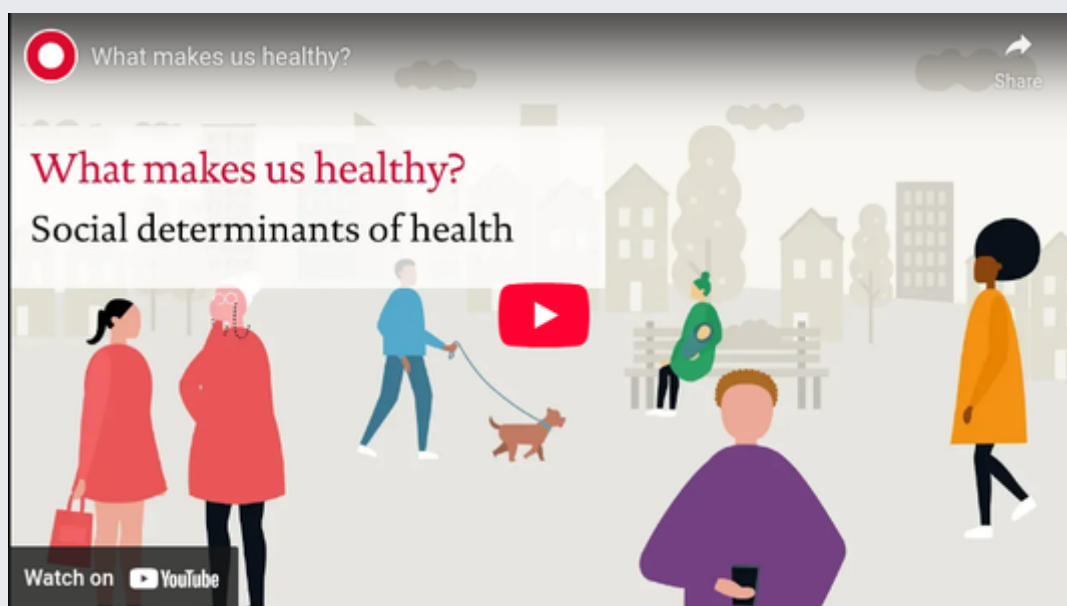
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report reviews and highlights the social impact of Healthy Me Healthy Communities (HMHC) involvement in making Gorton's and Abbey Hey's older people's lives better. Feedback from attendees has been overwhelmingly positive, thus contributing to the improvement of community life in Gorton and Abbey Hey. This feedback is reinforced with key findings from the Ageing in Place Pathfinders report noted below (1):



The [video](#) below briefly introduces the social determinants of health, highlighting some areas that can be improved to help communities have better opportunities for good health. This includes an ageing well space.

Fig 1. A concise summary [video](#) on the Social Determinants of Health (2)



INTRODUCTION



Background/missions/priorities/objectives aligned

Healthy Me Healthy Communities (HMHC) is a community interest company located in Gorton at their community centre 'Gorton Central' and "believe in the power of people and place, working together to tackle today's societal challenges, alleviating the everyday struggle faced by many people and meeting the ambitions of residents and communities. Often, when organisations look to improve the lives of those affected by poverty, discrimination, and exclusion, they overlook local knowledge, skills and expertise. HMHC's comes from first-hand experience of supporting individuals, working in resourceful communities and across multi-sector partnerships" (3).

OUR OUTCOMES

1

Make a big difference
to people's lives

2

Creates lasting positive
change for communities

3

Influence and improve
practice & policy



Gorton Central community hub is our home where we develop exciting, innovative, and quality services and collaborations. HMHC leads, hosts, facilitates and is involved in many innovative projects, ensuring Gorton Central is a safe, inclusive, informative and welcoming hub. The following report focuses on the Ageing in Place (AiP) work that is part of the Ageing in Place Pathfinder (AiPP) (4) (1) based at Gorton Central.

HMHC are collaborating with Southway Housing on the AiPP project, led by Greater Manchester Combined Local Authority (GMCA), who in turn are working with the Advanced & Applied Architecture Research Office (ARO) at Manchester School of Architecture (MSA), a partnership between Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Manchester.

The AiPP is based on a theory of change model using intervention activities designed to enable the programme objectives that are based on the co-produced multi-stakeholder resident-led partnership approach developed across the Manchester Age Friendly Neighbourhoods project(s) - also known as the 'people, place and resident led' model. This theory of change model is based on the World Health Organisation Commission for Social Determinants of Health (WHO CSDH), responding to the Diderichsen conceptual model through multiple implementation iterations across a range of urban and social contexts (5).

The model has three key objectives:

1. Make the strategy context specific
2. Enable intersectional collaboration and action
3. Ensure the leading participation of older residents



Using similar people, place, and resident-led methods, HMHC, AiPP, and Manchester City Council (MCC) missions, priorities, and objectives are very much aligned, striving for parallel outcomes (see Table 1: Manchester's Priorities and Objectives Aligned)

- HMHC's promise being 'co-creating lasting improvements for people and places, practice and policy' (3)
- MCC's ageing strategy is documented in 'Manchester a city for life 2023-2028'(6), Manchester Population Health Plan (7) & Making Manchester Fairer (8)
- AiPP's main priority is 'to create great places to grow older' (4)

Table 1: Manchester's Priorities and Objectives Aligned

	HMHC	AiPP	MCC
Voices of the people/community	Adopt asset-based, needs-led and trauma-informed approaches to all our work. Involve residents most affected by poverty, social exclusion and inequalities.	Voices of people in mid and later life are heard and valued in the places they live.	Being heard & age equality - outlining an equalities approach & the importance of the voices of people in middle to later life in shaping the life of the city.
Neighbourhood approach	Connect people to services and support networks that can address some of the underlying causes of health inequalities.	Creating strong and supportive neighbourhoods to improve connection, health and wellbeing in later life.	Age-friendly neighbourhoods where we can all age in place - setting out how people can age well in the neighbourhoods of their choice with access to the right services, housing, information and opportunities - social, cultural or economic.
Prevention	Address the underlying causes of poor health outcomes.	Tackling inequalities in ageing well across our city-region.	Age-friendly services that support us to age well - is concerned with services, plans and commissioning adopting age friendly approaches. We will support age-friendly employers and work programmes for over-50s, build age-friendly elements into all services, and improve older people's uptake of prevention services such as screening and health checks. We will also strengthen the links between age-friendly activities and dementia networks and will do more to prevent falls.
Involving & listening stakeholders	Involve residents most affected by poverty, social exclusion and inequalities. Collaborate across different sectors coproducing meaningful and lasting change.	Working with stakeholders to learn and create a system shift to sustain and scale delivery of a neighbourhood approach to ageing well.	Being heard & age equality - outlining an equalities approach and the importance of the voices of people in middle to later life in shaping the life of the city.

OUTPUTS TO DATE

Over **135+** engaged local community residents were consulted, and their voices heard to co-design the Gorton and Abbey Hey age-friendly offer (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: Reaction to community voices.

The Community Said	HMHC & AiP/P Did
Lack of social gathering location for older people.	Co-created, maintain & facilitate Age Friendly Weekly Drop in Space.
Lack of social eating venue for older people (absence of local café nearby).	Provide quarterly social eating events.
Wanted a one-stop location to access community information about local area (didn't know what was happening locally).	Compile, quarterly update and share an over 50's calendar, via email, displays and at AfS. Update new events at AfS.

Healthy Me Healthy Communities co-created, set up, and facilitate the Age Friendly Space (AfS) drop-in session at Gorton Central community centre every Monday between 1-3 pm. The AfS drop in space is part of the AiPP's ambition to make Gorton & Abbey Hey a supportive and inclusive place for people over 50 to grow older with better health, wellbeing and social connections. Additionally, an active response to the community's voices. The drop-in session has become a hub of connections, information and activities.



HMHC, as part of their commitment to making Gorton Central a modern community hub, develop exciting, innovative, and quality services. At Gorton Central there is chair-based exercise, Tai Chi, the meeting point for the weekly walking group, and a community garden.

Healthy Me Healthy Community's Age Friendly Space

Age Friendly Space (AfS) - a welcoming inclusive drop- in space for the over 50's, aimed to reduce social isolation and loneliness, both known to reduce quality of life and life expectancy.



Free tea and snacks are offered weekly on a Monday afternoon, alongside a range of free activities to target physical and/or mental health improvement. Examples of some of the activities provided at AfS are puzzles, colouring, clay pot painting, wreath making, digital skills, meditation and nutrition & cooking.

Guest physical activity (PA) experts are invited to AfS to deliver 'taster' sessions such as balance, yoga and Tai Chi (gentle strengthening exercises) to encourage continued physical exercise and activity uptake. Fall prevention is key for older people's health and this has been promoted at AfS via regular visits from a qualified physiotherapist and promotion of the UoM KOKU (Keep On & Keep Up) app as part of a scientific falls prevention study, see table 3 below.

All guest visits are designed & implemented to improve and/or maintain mental and physical health with the aim of reducing the risk of depression, anxiety, loneliness and social isolation.



Social Eating Events

In addition to the weekly drop-ins, quarterly social events are planned, a chance to come together to eat socially together for about 40 older people. Games, singalongs and choir visits from the local school have featured to date.

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

1389+

Attendances

Avg. age 71yrs
(age range 53-86 yrs)



7

Quarterly Social Events

Avg. attendance 40+
older people



77+

Sessions

Avg. weekly attendance 18
older people (range 14-24)



44+

Guest Agencies

E.g. estate planning, scam awareness,
nutrition sessions, Tai Chi, digital skills



9+

Regular Volunteers

770+ volunteer hours



Activity	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts	Improved overall health = Live longer better	Prevention
Actively seek, encourage & invite participants along AfS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Older people (OP) join in, feel less lonely• Make new friends• Join other clubs• Extended social connections	Improved mental & physical wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Able to contribute to community by volunteering or working• Happier, more confident• Fuller life	✓	✓
Actively source & invite external agencies to visit AfS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• OP get free advice• Learn about local initiatives• ‘Taste’ activities they may not otherwise think to try	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Save money,• Meet people,• Learn new things• Try new activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feel warmer, safer, healthier• Confidence improved• Able to ask for help• Feel valued & listened to	✓	✓
Early Detection of Heart Failure Study Health Innovation Manchester	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15 OP joined the presentation• 4 participants were eligible for a free heart scan as part of the study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health prevention and early disease detection• More awareness of heart health• 1 ppt was diagnosed with heart disease and is now under medical supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Earlier preventative medical intervention• Improved wellbeing, better quality of life	✓	✓

Activity	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts	Improved overall health = Live longer better	Prevention
KOKU	Free tablet & access to exercise app for 8 OP	Access to specifically designed falls prevention app	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreases risk of fall Improved balance Improved fitness 	✓	✓
Gardening sessions	2 members now have their own community gardening pods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to outside space Camaraderie within growing, fresh veg, physical activity & improved mental health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel better, physically & mentally Reduced social isolation, have a purpose (growing) Feel part of a group/community Increased confidence to volunteer elsewhere Feel valued Confidence to share opinions 	✓	✓
Volunteering at AfS	Confidence to volunteer in more impactful roles	Sense of purpose, make more friends, busy (not bored)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to contribute to community by volunteering or working Happier more confident 	✓	✓
AfS consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel voices heard Feel opinion is valued 	Feel more confident, increased mood and mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel heard and valued, confidence building Able to contribute more to their community 	✓	✓

HMHC AIP VOLUNTEERS



Volunteering has changed my life; I love volunteering. When I first moved into the flat, I did not go anywhere. Never looked back after I started (volunteering). Volunteering has made me feel happier & more confident - I love it. If I were not doing any of that, I would just be shopping or watching television. I feel like it is not a job, but like going to work you always have somewhere to go”.

Pat - An AiP volunteer for Age Friendly Space, Age friendly weekly walk group ambassador, AiP excursions co-ordinator and AiP partnership board member.

From 2022 Pat has participated in the Ageing in Place Pathfinder Project ('AIPP Project') in Gorton and volunteered – setting up tables and preparing tea and coffee in a the AFS at GC on Monday afternoons; becoming one of the Walk Ambassadors leading the weekly community walks on Wednesday mornings, welcoming new members, promoting walking, and maintaining the walking group; joining the Ageing in Place Partnership Board as one of the resident members and attending meetings; planning day trip activities for older people. Pat loves volunteering and it has definitely made a difference to her personally and changed her life; now she has purpose in life.

Pat said, “It’s nice meeting people and making friends.” Pat is also more confident in meetings, happier to contribute and less shy. Pat is very proud of completing her mental health first aid course and gaining a certificate. Furthermore, she feels healthier both mentally and physically because of getting out and about leading the weekly walk, meeting people in the fresh air, and appreciating her surroundings.

She feels more connected to her community, happier, and her life is more enjoyable. There are so many good things happening in her neighbourhood and feels lucky to live in there.

HMHC AIP VOLUNTEERS

Joan is a finalist of the Manchester City Council's Be Proud Award 2025 (Making our Neighbourhood Cleaner and Greener), team member of 'Best Community Team' winner 2023, resident member of the AiP partnership board, member of the Age Friendly Older People's board, featured in "They call us Baby Boomers" (9) an Age Friendly Manchester poem, a funding panellist for 'Gather Eat Move' funding, AfS volunteer from 2022 and a long-standing HMHC volunteer.

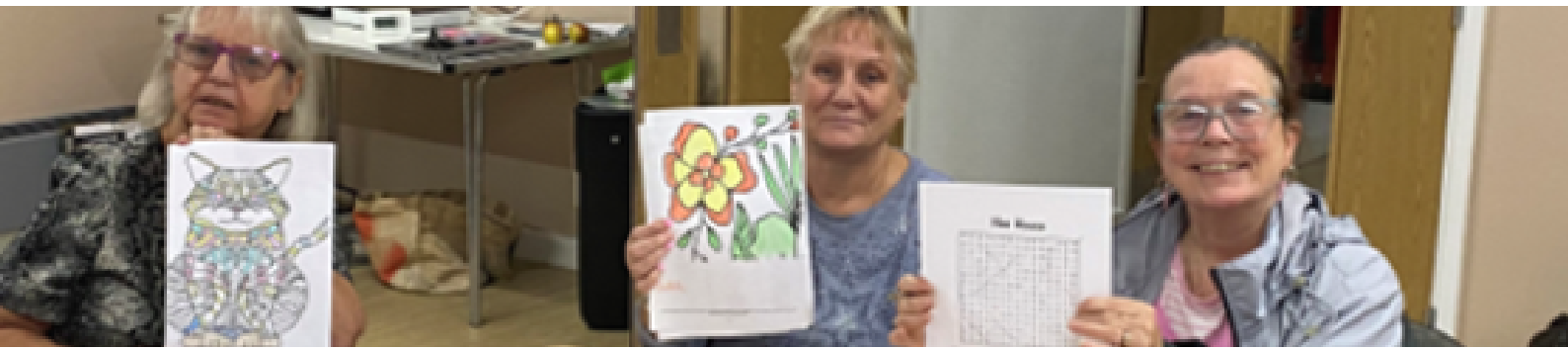


Joan is an enthusiastic and excellent volunteer, with her rich knowledge of the neighbourhood and what's happening in the community. She is keen to have her voice heard by being a board member in many groups. As one of the core volunteers at HMHC, Joan was key to the early days of AfS and helped set it up.



I enjoy helping people, being a part of what's going on in the community centre and meeting new people. I started at the Community Grocers as a volunteer and then got involved in helping out with the Age Friendly drop-in, the Citizens Advice drop-in, and helping with events and promoting the centre's activities. It's led me to being on the Manchester Age Friendly board. I've done an accredited course and two years ago I won a volunteer community award. I'm now at a point where I tell people I know in the community about what's going on at the centre and how they can meet others and get help. I feel stronger and more confident."

HMHC AIP VOLUNTEERS



Belinda is a local older resident living in Gorton and Abbey Hey.

Belinda was not in a good condition when she first visited the weekly drop-in AfS due to losing her husband. It was very hard for her to cope with. She was always sad and sometimes felt tearful.

After visiting the AfS, Belinda met new people and made many friends, which has helped her cope with her grief. The AfS is always an open door for her, and she is thankful that she was encouraged to join the local walking group and Debdale Ramblers on Thursdays.

Belinda enjoys the walks and meets new people each week. She completed the Walk Ambassadors training and is now contributing back to the walking group. She also volunteers to plant flowers and plants in Debdale Park. The AIP Project helped her to cope with the grief and her bereavement, she feels so much better a few months later. The AfS was a good start for her.



Jonathan AIP Volunteer for Age Friendly Space, HMHC and Gather Eat Move Funding Panellist



The highlight of my 18 months with the age-friendly space was being invited and taking part in the assessment of funding applications for Gather, Eat, Move. I enjoyed learning from others and using some of my transferable skills in assisting with this. I have enjoyed the talks and activities given by people such as the physiotherapist, energy efficiency, IT security (anti-scams), Tai Chi, etc. I enjoyed contributing to the consultation on drawing up an age-friendly walk map for Gorton and Abbey Hey.

FEEDBACK



“

What does this group mean to you?

“provides a warm and social caring place, new friends and a very happy place to be”

“gets me out of the house”

“friendly group nice people”

“meeting own people of own age”

“makes me feel inclusive and welcome”

“friendly non-judgmental”

“good atmosphere”

“meet people...”

“something different to do”

“warm friendly people, cup of tea and toast”

“a lot of difference”

“very friendly group of people - we put the world to rights between us”

“great company and interesting activities”

“not travel too far!”

“being with people”

WORKSHOP FEEDBACK



Ripple Effect Workshop April 2025

How do you feel about coming to the community centre age friendly space ? Has it made a difference in your social or wellbeing?	“Lifts depression”	“makes me feel happy”	“Makes you aware that people are still living and making sure they are OK”
	“Creates friendship/s”	“Experience is welcoming”	“Get local information/whats happening – going on””
	“Find out what goes on the community”	“Reduces the feeling of isolation”	“Go home in a happier frame of mind”
How have the past activities been helpful to you?	“Learned new things”	“Liked occupational therapy”	“Different people have informed us on what’s going on in Manchester”
	“Exercise”	“Healthy eating - changed things at home”	“Communal meal brings everyone together”
Have you noticed any changes in your mood and /or health since coming to the age friendly space?	“Brightens up my Monday”	“Get to know people”	“Yes, people were quiet when they first came, now they are open”
	“Look forward to Monday”	“Excited to come in when Monday hits”	

WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

What do you enjoy most about coming here?	“Friendship”	“Everything”	“Mixed group – not many groups are mixed”
	“Company”	“Comfort”	“Other people’s company”

Has coming to AfS led to other things?	“Walking group”	“Gardening”	“Heart scans”	“Christmas dinner”
	“Go to events”	“Easter celebrations”	“Volunteering”	“Pancake Day pancakes”
	“Guest speakers”		“learn about others- different ethnicities”	

OBSERVATIONAL COMMENTS

The group come in every week a little apprehensive but excited to be there. They leave jolly, buoyant, connected, uplifted and much happier. The group has a strong core of regulars that really enjoy coming to the session and being part of it in their own way – be it volunteering or taking part. Furthermore, sometimes the OP arrive with ideas for future sessions, sweet treats they’ve made or bought to share with their peers.

One OP’s family said at her recent funeral that “the community centre had changed our Mam’s life and we had to book in around what was going on at the centre to visit our Mam. We are extremely thankful”.



OUR AGEING POPULATION

The World Health Organization has recognised the efforts Manchester is making, and Manchester is a designated Age-Friendly city (7).

People aged 85 years+ are the fastest growing segment of Manchester's ageing population, which is growing both in numbers and in the proportion of the overall population. Furthermore, the older population is becoming more diverse.

In every Manchester local authority, the percentage of people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds aged 50 to 64 is more than that of people aged 65 and over. This is particularly true in urban areas (7).

More than one-third of Manchester's older people experience deprivation related to low income. This demographic shift increases demand for solutions that support independent living and models such as the Ageing in Place Pathfinder (1).

Longevity and Health

Manchester's older residents live less of their life in good health compared to older people in other regions (7). Statistics reveal that disabled individuals aged 50-69 in the most deprived areas are twice as likely to report significant limitations due to their disabilities compared to their counterparts in wealthier areas. Furthermore, this demographic is also twice as likely to require assistance with daily activities, yet paradoxically, they are the least likely to receive help.

Gorton & Abbey Hey Ward Status

Data from the 2021 Census reports that for Gorton and Abbey Hey's population (8)

- 10% over 65 years
- 27% over 50 years

Ethnic Diversity (Census 2011) Gorton is known for its multicultural community, to note:

- White 13, 147 (72%)
- BAME 5195 (28%)
- Mixed multiple ethnic groups 4.6%
- Asian/Asian British 8.2%
- Black, African, Caribbean, Black British, 14.3%

HEALTH INEQUALITIES

In Gorton and Abbey Hey, a majority of older households experience considerable income, employment and health inequalities (9). 50% of the households in Gorton & Abbey Hey are within the most deprived 10% (nationally) of the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People's Index (IDAOP 2019). Additionally, Abbey Hey is in the most deprived 20% of IDAOP (9).

The Centre of Ageing Better's analysis of the 2021 Census of self-reported health data indicates significant health inequalities related to wealth, ethnicity, and geography. Health disparities linked to ethnicity and wealth emerge. For instance, 22% of Bangladeshi women aged 50-64 report poor health, comparable to the rate among White British women aged 85 and older, highlighting a 30 to 35-year gap (10).

Compared to the rest of England & Manchester, Gorton & Abbey Hey were significantly worse for:

- All causes of death
- All cancer
- All circulatory diseases
- Coronary Heart Disease
- Stroke (compared to England only)
- Respiratory Disease
- Deaths from all causes under 75years (compared to Manchester only)

Additionally, HMHC's snapshot data collection revealed that 47% of participants who completed the winter social feedback form self-reported having a health problem expected to last 12 months or more. In line with 71% of residents in the Gorton/Abbey Hey pathfinder neighbourhood who self-reported their health status as poor (1) .



AGEING IN PLACE CONCEPT

Ageing in Place (AIP) is a concept that empowers older adults to live independently in their own homes and communities for as long as possible, rather than requiring relocation to institutional settings, such as nursing homes or assisted living facilities.

This approach to ageing is increasingly significant in the context of contemporary challenges faced by societies with ageing populations, particularly in developed countries such as the United Kingdom. As the demographic landscape shifts, with an increasing proportion of individuals aged 65 and older, the imperative to adapt healthcare delivery and social support systems to allow older adults to remain in their homes has never been more critical.

Ageing in Place is a vital concept that addresses the needs of an ageing population and the complexities faced by contemporary healthcare systems. By facilitating independence and promoting accessible services, AIP not only improves the lives of older adults but also presents a sustainable approach to care that benefits communities as a whole.



PREVENTION

The AiP model has the potential to significantly reduce the rising costs associated with aged care facilities and hospitals. By facilitating preventative care and support in the community, AIP promotes cost-effective service delivery. As healthcare costs continue to rise and resources become strained, AIP offers a viable solution to alleviate pressures on health systems.

Enabling older people to remain at home, supported by community & local services, can substantially decrease the need for costly institutional care, thereby promoting more efficient resource allocation. This is particularly crucial for healthcare systems like the NHS and local authorities, which face budget constraints and need innovative community-based care models to maintain quality and efficiency.

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND WELLBEING

Ageing in Place (AIP) promotes social engagement and community participation, which are essential for the mental and emotional well-being of older adults. By allowing older people to remain close to family, friends, and familiar community networks, AIP helps combat social isolation—a growing concern, especially for those living alone or far from loved ones.

A meta-analysis concluded that for older adults, both loneliness and small social network size are associated with increased mortality (11). Studies indicate that older adults who age in place report higher satisfaction levels and better overall health outcomes (12).

By fostering social connections and maintaining ties to their community, AIP not only encourages social interaction but also enhances mental and emotional well-being, ultimately leading to improved health outcomes for older people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are to sustain, improve and build upon HMHC's age-friendly work in Abbey Hey & Gorton by collectively & collaboratively pulling all resources from various stakeholders to proact, prevent, and reap the economic & social benefits outlined by the positive impact described in this report.

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