

**AGEING  
IN PLACE  
PATHFINDER**



Part of

**LIVE WELL**

DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY WITH  
GREATER MANCHESTER'S COMMUNITIES

# Taking Up Space

**Celebrating two years of the  
Ageing in Place Pathfinder, 2022-2024**

**October 2024**



# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>Taking Up Space</b>	<b>04</b>
Little Lever, Bolton	06
Moorside, Bury	08
<b>An evidence-based approach to tackling health inequalities in ageing</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Highlights to date</b>	<b>13</b>
Gorton and Abbey Hey, Manchester	14
Kirkholt, Rochdale	16
<b>About participants</b>	<b>18</b>
Smallbridge, Rochdale	20
Pendleton and Charlestown, Salford	22
<b>Creating connections in place: preventing loneliness and social isolation</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Sharing learning, creating knowledge</b>	<b>25</b>
Brinnington, Stockport	26
Old Trafford, Trafford	28
<b>Growing and spreading: a blueprint for Ageing in Place</b>	<b>30</b>
Ridge Hill, Tameside	32
Goose Green, Hawkley Hall and Worsley Mesnes, Wigan	34

**With thanks to all those who have supported and engaged with the Ageing in Place Pathfinder over the first two years, including:**

Worwin UK Foundation, Manchester School of Architecture, Manchester Metropolitan University, Bolton at Home, Persona, Southway Housing Trust, Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, Inspiring Communities Together, Stockport Homes Group, Trafford Community Collective, Jigsaw, Wigan Council, Greater Manchester Older People's Network, Talking About My Generation and Yellow Jigsaw CIC, Good Practice Mentors, CADA, A Brilliant Thing CIC, Curators of Change CIC. And to all of the residents and local stakeholders engaged in the Ageing in Place Partnership Boards.

# Foreword

The Greater Manchester Ageing in Place Pathfinder is demonstrating the commitment of our Age-Friendly Strategy to tackle inequalities in ageing. Working in neighbourhoods across Greater Manchester the Pathfinder is delivering on our ambitions for community-led responses of everyday support.

Ageing in Place is part of our work growing opportunities for everyone in GM to Live Well in healthier, happier and fairer communities and developing a Live Well in later life offer. As co-chair of Greater Manchester's Integrated Care Partnership I am clear on the importance of working differently with residents in mid and later life as part of our pivot to prevention to support more adults to age well and reduce the pressure on our health and care system.

We are grateful for the generous financial support from our grant funding partner. This is matched by resources, leadership and time from our many other partners committed to developing new ways of working with older residents and enabling them to take decisions about what matters in their experiences of ageing in place.

Delivering the ageing well neighbourhood plans and projects you will read about in this report would not be possible without the engagement, trust and expertise of our older residents. I want to extend my appreciation to the more than 2,500 residents in mid and later life that have engaged across the ten neighbourhoods. Sharing their knowledge and experiences to shape the kind of local and preventative responses that support them and their communities to age well.

In the final year of the Ageing in Place Pathfinder I am keen to support our GM

system to accelerate how we grow and spread our approach to ageing in place to enable us to deliver everyday support for everyone, everywhere.

**Andy Burnham**  
Mayor of Greater Manchester

*Andy Burnham*



**“...the Pathfinder is delivering on our ambitions for community-led responses of everyday support.”**



# Taking Up Space

## Our places and spaces

Welcoming and safe  
Will feel relaxed, inclusive and happy  
They'll be no need to be brave  
Social, active, participatory

Places to be me  
Spaces to be free  
With intergenerational connection  
Respects, giggles and laughter  
We will be rebellious, unshackled

Run wild, play and hang out  
Enjoy joyful ways to get about  
No need to be responsible  
To be home before dark  
We'll go wherever, whenever  
Wearing what we want  
Hanging out in the park

Dancing on the pews  
Singing in the loos  
Music with our brews  
So many fun things for us to do

We've a long history to unpick  
Messages to unstick, joyful boxes to tick  
To create places and spaces  
To be proud, visible, out loud  
Places and community and unity



Poem created with residents at a workshop facilitated by Eve Holt & Kelly Rodgers (GM Moving) at the GM Ageing in Place Pathfinder, 1 Year Learning Event, 18 October 2023.

**Our neighbourhood spaces are of vital importance. They host our social and civic lives; enabling us to engage in work, leisure and entertainments, education, and contribute as part of a caring and supportive community.**

Evidence shows that neighbourhoods and community are major determining factors in the quality of our lives, and greatly influence how healthy and long our lives are (1). Inequities in social and physical environments can exacerbate the impact of other social determinants of health (e.g. income, education) to increase vulnerability and widen inequalities in ageing between groups.

The Ageing in Place Pathfinder is working to enable all older residents in 10 neighbourhoods to shape and enjoy their chosen place and spaces in the world as they grow older. Places that are welcoming and inclusive of older residents, supporting them to come together to create, demand and celebrate spaces for the lives they want to live. Bringing their expertise and lived experience to release the potential of neighbourhoods to improve their experiences of ageing and improve neighbourhoods for everyone.



**Residents have been taking up space in the Pathfinder neighbourhoods by:**

- Opening up green spaces with benches, walking routes and groups in Moorside, Abbey Hey and Brinnington.
- Creating welcoming age-friendly spaces in the café and community social hub in Clarence Park in Moorside; weekly drop-in space at Gorton Central; waterside pod installation at Scotman's Flash and drop-ins and pop-ups across Brinnington.
- Harnessing the power of space for "brew and chat" in the medical centre in Little Lever and on benches across Old Trafford.
- Making sure pavements are accessible for walking and wheeling to shops, community and green spaces near Scotman's Flash in Worsley Mesnes and Kirkholt.
- Nurturing gardening and growing spaces for the wellbeing of nature and people, and growing local produce in Brinnington, Kirkholt, Moorside and Ridge Hill.
- Learning to get online and access digital spaces across all of the neighbourhoods with courses, drop-ins, devices and wifi accessibility.
- Coming together with young people to explore what makes spaces safe and welcoming for all with photography in Charlestown and Pendleton and in creating a mural in Smallbridge.

<sup>1</sup> Closing the gap in a generation: health equity through action on the social determinants of health – Final report of the commission on social determinants of health <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-IER-CSDH-08.1> accessed 09/2024



## Pathfinder Profile

## Little Lever, Bolton

**About the partnership and neighbourhood**

Bolton at Home is the lead organisation. Nazira is working with colleagues Lesley, Gaynor and Keith at Age UK Bolton on engagement in the neighbourhood. Partners include Little Lever Library, Bolton Cares, Lever Gardens Court and Crompton Court (Onward Homes), Great Places Housing Group, local PCSO's (GMP), local schools and churches, and Little Lever Health Centre.

Little Lever is a neighbourhood in the southeast of Bolton, between Bolton and Radcliffe town centres. Little Lever is served by a small 1970s parade-style shopping precinct with high street shops, a post office, and traditional market hall. There are a number of pubs, working men's clubs and social clubs, a medical centre, library and green spaces including linear walkways and parks.

Little Lever is home to 15,115 residents (Census, 2021). Of this 3,366 (22%) are aged 65 and over (22%) and the population aged over 50 is 6,623 (44%). While the majority of residents are homeowners, a sizeable number of older households experience significant income, employment, and health inequalities (1). 60% of residents engaged in the Pathfinder who completed the community audit self-reported their health status as poor.

**Understanding local voice and lived experience**

The team engaged initially with residents to develop a calendar of social activities and then to co-produce the neighbourhood action plan.

A steering group of local residents meets regularly with Bolton at Home and Age UK staff. Residents have also taken part in consultations with TfGM on the Vision Zero Strategy and Bus Network Review. A 'Community Connect' Group brings together all officers working in Little Lever quarterly to share what is going on in the area, discuss best practice and network with partners.

Key issues older people highlighted about the neighbourhood:

- **Respect and safety:** concerns about safety, especially at night, due to anti-social behaviour. The presence of litter, noise pollution, and fly-tipping exacerbate feelings of insecurity.
- **Accessibility of things to do:** shops, social and cultural assets are unevenly distributed, mostly concentrated south of Church Street and High Street. Combined with transport issues this creates difficulties for residents outside of these areas who don't drive.
- **Social activities:** most activities finish by 3pm with few alternatives to pubs in the late afternoon or early evening. Residents are interested in a more diverse and accessible nighttime economy.

**Pathfinder Partnership Priorities**

1. Age-friendly town development to create an age-inclusive environment.
2. Expand late afternoon activities by exploring suitable and willing venues.
3. Increase volunteer participation.
4. Partner with health and social care providers.

**Highlights from the first two years Social Activities Calendar**

A programme of social activities through fourteen local groups has been developed with a community calendar. Tailored to different interests, accessibility needs, and age groups, including sign language classes, 'Village Voices' singing and volunteer led Botanical Arts. Enabling activities that meet diverse needs helps residents to feel acknowledged and valued, reducing social isolation and fostering relationships.

**Men's Fellowship**

The Men's Fellowship was introduced following engagement with local older men to provide a space to socialise and offer peer support. The Fellowship aims to create a supportive network that empowers older men and reduces feelings of loneliness and vulnerability. The Fellowship has helped smooth transitions from hospital to home by offering practical support and connection to men using the Home from Hospital Service provided by Age UK Bolton.

**'You, Me & a Cup of Tea'**

Starting with an available room and cups of tea the Partnership have worked with the

Spring View Medical Centre to create this weekly drop-in session. Offering a welcoming space for a chat and to connect with others. Feeling welcome has supported residents to discuss appointments with staff, improved the flow of information and reduced anxiety levels for older people. Trusted relationships have been built with Age UK Bolton staff, enabling advice and assistance on issues such as benefit applications.

There are examples of older people in the space providing mutual support. One attendee was encouraged to seek advice about his eyesight. Having acted on the advice he received cataract surgery that has significantly improved his quality of life.

**"I teach songs in sign language so that people can communicate with those who are deaf. I look forward to it every week."**



**Pat, local resident**

<sup>1</sup> About one-fourth of Little Lever is within the most deprived 30% (nationally) of the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPi 2019), with the rest of the area within the least deprived 10-30% of the same index.



## Pathfinder Profile

## Moorside, Bury

**About the partnership and neighbourhood**

Persona Support is the lead organisation, Steven and Hannah lead the engagement and delivery. Partners include Bury Council, YES Older Peoples Partnership Group, Bury VCFA, Friends of Clarence Park, Seedfield and Chesham Fold Tenancy and Residents association, Integrated Neighbourhood Team, Friends of Chesham Woods and local primary care services.

Moorside is in the north of Bury, bordering the town of Ramsbottom. Moorside is largely a residential area and has a number of green spaces. The neighbourhood has a particular focus in Clarence Park, Walkers field and Chesham woods.

Moorside has a population of 18,021 (Census, 2021). Of this 2,926 are aged 65 and over (16%) and the population aged over 50 is 6,436 (36%). Many of those aged over 50 are concentrated in the northern part of Moorside, many live in specialist housing, and a significant number of households are socially rented. There are sizeable Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi populations (19% over 18s) and 31% of those who completed the community audit identify as South Asian. A majority of older households in the neighbourhood experience considerable income, employment, and health inequalities (1). 31% of residents engaged in the Pathfinder who completed the community audit self-reported their health status as poor.

**Understanding local voice and lived experience**

Residents have been engaged through working with local volunteering groups,

facilitating the traditional South Asian breakfast morning and regular engagement from the Green Community Café. The Partnership particularly utilises heritage-based engagement activities with Memories of Moorside and Sounds of Moorside. The Partnership Development Board meets quarterly with representation from residents and local services.

Key issues older people highlighted about the neighbourhood:

- **Safety:** concerns about anti-social behaviour in Clarence Park and Hoyles Park, leading to feelings of insecurity, particularly at night. Lighting in and around the parks viewed as inadequate.
- **Social activities:** a lack of opportunities to gather and socialise inside and outside. There are few benches in Chesham Woods for older residents to socialise and these are often vandalised. The Green Community Café was closed and few activities are available on weekends and evenings.
- **Diversity and inclusion:** despite the neighbourhood's diverse composition, it was identified that more efforts are needed to foster intercultural activities and engagement among older residents from diverse groups.

**Pathfinder Partnership Priorities**

1. Community hub development to transform the Green Community Café.
2. Promote health and wellbeing to sustain meaningful connections.
3. Facilitate intergenerational activities in collaboration with youth services.

**Highlights from the first two years****Age-Friendly Space – Green Community Café**

Reopening the Green Community Café has revitalised a central gathering space in Clarence Park. The goal was to transform the space to run as a hub for Moorside where different organisations can deliver a wide range of activities as well as a central space for all residents to enjoy. A welcoming environment, staffed in part by local volunteers, promotes belonging and intergenerational interaction and helps reduce social isolation by building stronger community networks.

The café has been well utilised by stakeholders to engage with the community. GMP have worked with staff and volunteers to designate the café a hate-crime reporting centre as part of the plan to tackle ASB and promote inclusion in Moorside. A sustainability plan includes reinvestment of the profits from the café into the space.

**Engagement with the South Asian community**

The team have been working closely with local women's group Supporting Sisters to understand and address the barriers that

older South Asian residents in the neighbourhood experience to connecting in the local community. A Zumba session started on a Thursday night and 6 months of funding has facilitated a monthly traditional South Asian breakfast morning to create a welcoming space to connect; 42 women attended the first two breakfasts. Supported Sisters have applied directly for funding to deliver a warm hub for both women and men.

**Couch to Out and About**

This project encourages older residents to explore the neighbourhood and stay active by making local green spaces more accessible. In collaboration with Bury Council, a network of walking routes around Clarence Park was created, connected by six age-friendly benches on sites identified by the Friends of Chesham. Building on the Memories of Moorside work, benches have been equipped with sound posts playing residents' memories to add personal touches to the walks and deepen the community's connection to its heritage.

**“It's a good thing for my health, to get out, to mingle and mix with younger people – it helps keep us young!”**

**Kath, local resident**



<sup>1</sup> Moorside pathfinder area is within the most deprived 10% - 30% (nationally) of the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPi 2019).



# An evidence-based approach to tackling health inequalities in ageing

**Ageing in Place has been defined as working to enable people “to remain at home in their familiar surroundings and maintain the relationships that are important to them” (1). Academic research across a range of disciplines highlights the significance of building and maintaining social connections to the quality of our life as we grow older. Central to this is the ability of older people to decide what is home, familiar and important to them.**

The World Health Organisation’s (WHO) Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Framework centres on improving the experience of the range of factors (social economic, environmental, personal, physical) which play an important role in how well individuals age, and the interactions between these factors. This is expressed in the eight domains of the age-friendly framework.

The framework emphasises the importance of targeting efforts to address inequalities in healthy ageing by identifying those communities most vulnerable to risk factors associated with poor health, social isolation and financial hardship. The evidence promotes place-based partnerships that enable residents in mid and later life to work alongside cross-sector stakeholders including planning, housing, health, transport and policing to deliver place-specific, pro-active responses to transform ageing well.

Neighbourhoods in the Ageing in Place Pathfinder demonstrate a range of economic, social and health factors that place residents at a higher risk of poor outcomes in later life.

Almost all of the neighbourhoods have significant populations of older households living in areas recorded as being in the most income deprived 10% of older people in the UK (2).

The Ageing in Place Pathfinder seeks to build enduring community connections through partnerships that are resident-led to address the challenges and realise the opportunities experienced by older people in that neighbourhood. In each Pathfinder the age-friendly planning process supports the partnership of local service providers, VCFSE organisations, businesses and older people to build a shared understanding of what ageing well could look like in that community by answering the core questions of:

- 1 What’s it like to live here?
- 2 How can we make it better?
- 3 How can we work together?

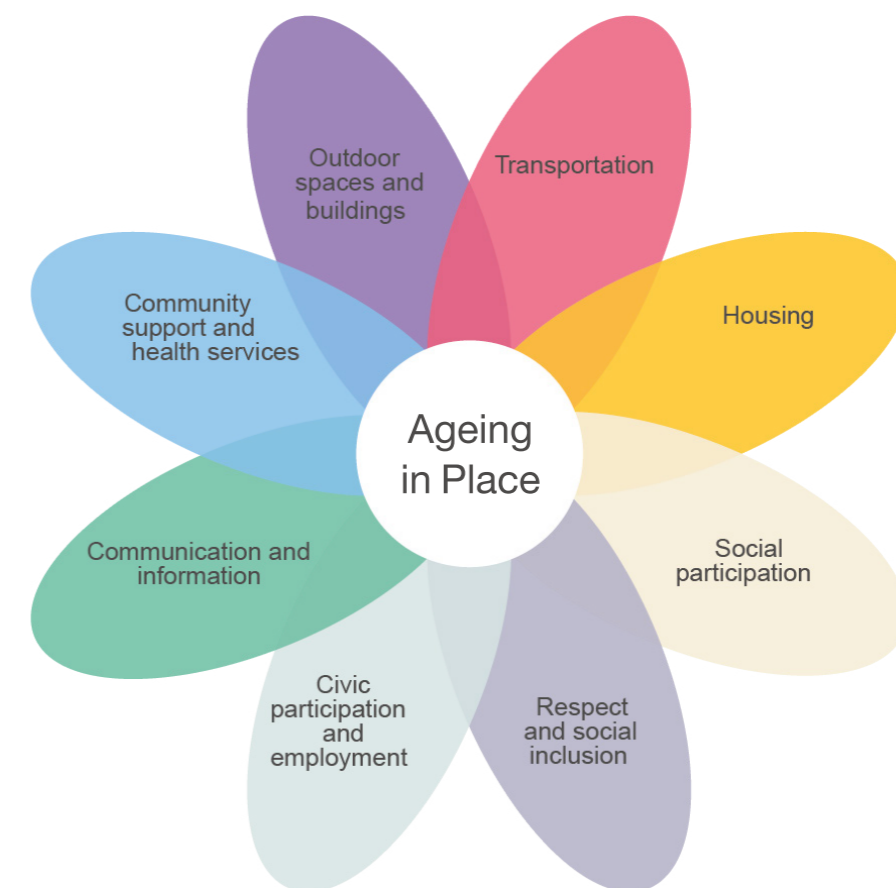
Each of the neighbourhoods are unique with specific opportunities and challenges. The partnership is anchored by a lead organisation that is a key stakeholder in the neighbourhood, e.g. housing provider, voluntary organisation, local council or care provider. An individual or small team are working in the community to engage residents and local stakeholders, nurturing and building community connections.

<sup>1</sup> Decade of healthy ageing: Baseline Report. Geneva: WHO(2020).

<sup>2</sup> Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOP) 2019).

## Spatial approach to creating neighbourhood action plans

The age-friendly framework promotes the need to work across the eight domains to enable an understanding of and response to the whole experience of older residents.



The Ageing in Place Partnerships are using a neighbourhood planning process that builds on learning developed in Greater Manchester over the last 15 years. This creates a neighbourhood level understanding of the eight domains through three information sources:

### 1. Voice and lived experience of residents in mid and later life

Gathering expertise from lived experience enables the accessibility of local resources and social infrastructure for different groups of people to be better understood, especially those who may experience greater vulnerability. Extensive and inclusive engagement using a wide range of methods is key to ensure the strengths, issues and experiences of diverse groups of older people across the neighbourhood are recorded.

### 2. Spatial mapping of population-level data

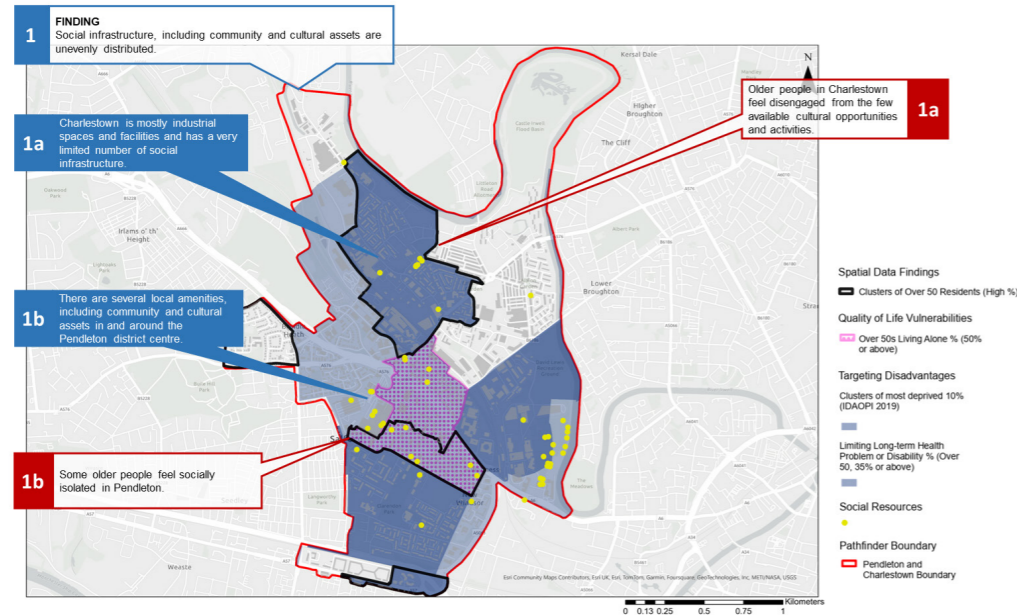
Spatial data mapping enables inequalities in social, economic and health status to be geographically located. Presenting data visually on a map shows differences between parts of a neighbourhood. Maps indicate where clusters of older people live and supports consideration of their access to local services, spaces and social connection in the specific neighbourhood context.

### 3. Understanding the strengths and barriers of the local physical environment and assets

Mapping of local physical and social assets in the physical environment allows exploration of both opportunities and challenges that can then be related to lived experience and spatial data. Activities such as “walk and talks” and walking and wheeling audits with residents offer detailed and insightful understanding.



### Outdoor Spaces & Buildings, and Social Participation

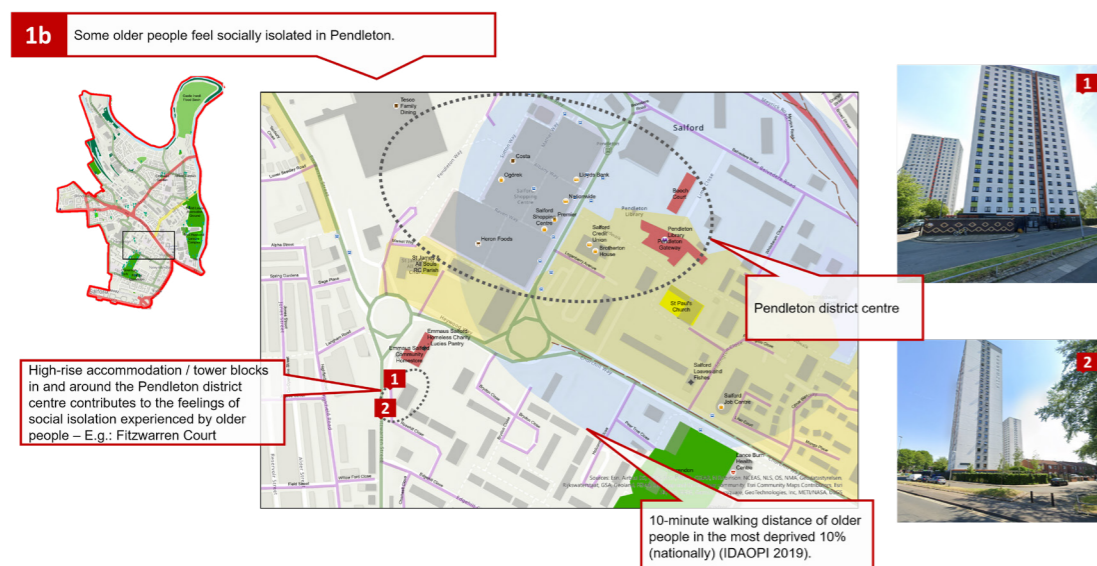


The map above shows how this information is collated through the neighbourhood planning process to offer an understanding of the place. Visualisation of the combined data sources is a vital part of understanding the strengths and challenges of the neighbourhood and developing preventative responses. The shaded areas demonstrate a focus on those people aged over 50 years living in households most likely to experience deprivation and poor health.

This can then reveal for example gaps in local infrastructure, a lack of age-appropriate housing or where different solutions are required to support mobility around the place.

In the second map below a more detailed or “zoomed in” approach to visual representation of a place enables residents to identify specific barriers that are impacting on wellbeing such as unlit walkways, uneven pavements or walks that are inaccessible due to a lack of benches.

The partnership can identify, agree and record the specific opportunities and challenges that exist for the different groups of older people living in the neighbourhood and design specific local responses. A wide range of place-specific projects and activities are co-created which work to increase social connections, improve access to services and public spaces and are supported by evidence-based decision-making in the distribution of resources.



Source of images: Google Street View, August 2022

## Highlights to date

**2,596 Greater Manchester residents over 50 years old**

have engaged in the Pathfinder over 2 years

**10 Pathfinder Partnerships established**

with residents and over 185 organisations engaged as partners

**17 Ageing in Place Academy sessions**

supporting Pathfinder Leads to share experiences, practice and knowledge

**7 neighbourhoods installed**

or installing benches to deliver accessibility, social interaction and mobility

**9 neighbourhoods started a walking group,** completed a walking audit and/ or developed walking routes and maps

**8 neighbourhoods nurturing and enjoying** at least one green space, community garden or growing on an allotment

**10 programmes of social activities** publicised and new activities delivered

**Creativity at the core: 8 visual artist micro-residencies, local heritage and history books and walks, 1 playlist, 2 murals ..... and 1 song for Ridge Hill all created!**



## Pathfinder Profile

# Gorton and Abbey Hey, Manchester

## About the partnership and neighbourhood

Southway Housing Trust are the lead organisation with Miu, Helen and Vanessa working with Amanda at Healthy Me Healthy Communities. Partners include High Bank Bowling Club, Friends of Vine Street Park, Gordon Street Resident Group, Debdale Park Bowling and Social Club, Manchester LCO, Manchester City Council, local Councillors, GMP, Bolton at Home, Jigsaw Homes, One Manchester, Groundwork Manchester and Trinity Baptist Church.

Abbey Hey is a residential neighbourhood benefitting from green and blue spaces, notably Debdale Park and two local cycleways. Gorton district centre provides Gorton Market, library and job centre, and Manchester Monastery is a local social and cultural asset. Gorton Mill House with cafe and Gorton Central provide key community spaces.

22,487 people live in the neighbourhood (Census 2021). Of this 2,274 are aged 65 and over (10%) and the population aged over 50 is 5,988 (27%). A higher proportion of older residents live in socially rented accommodation than the national average. Sizeable African (16% over 18s) and Pakistani populations (8% over 18s) live in the neighbourhood. A majority of older



households experience considerable income, employment, and health inequalities (1). 71% of residents engaged in the Pathfinder who completed the community audit self-reported their health status as poor.

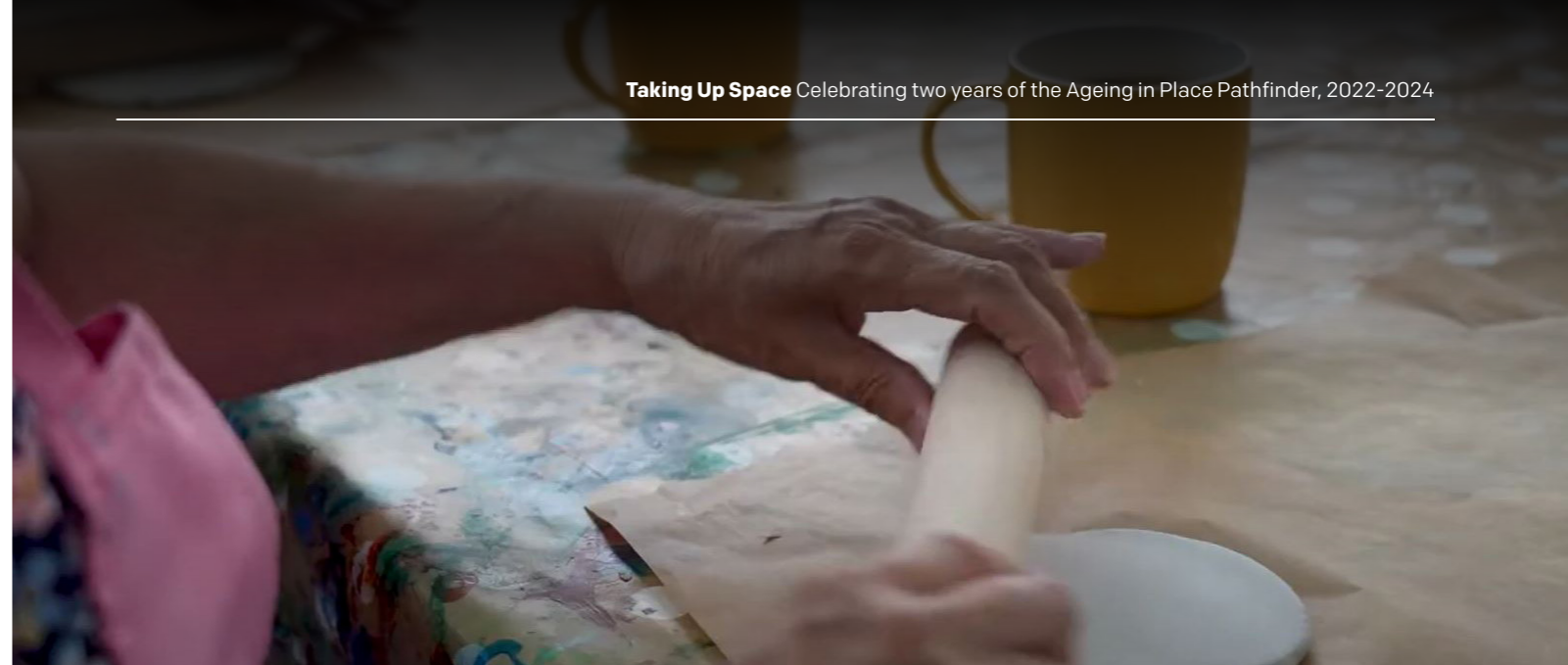
## Understanding local voice and lived experience

Engagement activity has included a “Tell Me About Gorton” event, “Walk and Talks”, a micro-residency project and a digital needs survey. Themed consultations focused on alleyway cleanliness, transport, green spaces, social activities and café provision. A Partnership Board has been in place since October 2022 with both residents and stakeholders.

Key issues older people highlighted about the neighbourhood:

- **Social connection:** spaces needed for gathering, social eating, access to community information and a wider range of activities, particularly for men, intergenerational and day trips.
- **Outdoor spaces:** poorly maintained or inaccessible facilities (e.g. lack of benches) leave green spaces underused. Combined with problems with fly tipping and ASB, this contributes to feeling unsafe and a lack of community belonging.
- **Digital exclusion:** contributes to feelings of disconnection. Practical struggles include contacting GPs, online banking and using the transport app.
- **Getting out and about:** strong discontent on bus services from unreliability, re-routing, reduced timetable and absence of shelter and seating at bus stops.

<sup>1</sup> About 50% of the households in the pathfinder neighbourhood are within the most deprived 10% (nationally) of the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI 2019), with Abbey Hey area within the most deprived 20% of the same index.



## Pathfinder Partnership Priorities

1. Build age-friendly spaces and environment to host accessible and inclusive activities.
2. Create a peer support network to foster social connections and reduce loneliness.
3. Enhance capability and empowerment by building trust and partnerships among residents and stakeholders, produce useful resources and sustainability.

## Highlights from the first two years Walking Project

Additional funding from TfGM has supported residents to start a walking group, design four walking routes, a walking map and handbook and train five Walk Ambassadors to lead weekly community walks.

Over 240 attendees have participated, including older men and individuals with mobility difficulties. Members stay connected and support each other through a WhatsApp group. Residents report feeling welcome, making friends, feeling safer and more confident to walk in the community with benefits for both physical and mental health. Local GPs and social prescribers are engaged and the group has reported unsafe walking areas to the council.

## Age-Friendly Space

Gorton Central Community Centre has created a space providing free tea and toast on Mondays. 54 weekly sessions have

attracted over 880 attendances. 30 partner organisations have contributed to creating a vibrant, inclusive space providing a platform for socialisation, accessing services, advice and information, learning new things, social eating and volunteering. Activities have included energy advice, scam awareness, digital support, health checks, cooking, relaxation, arts and crafts.

Residents report stronger peer relationships, and motivating each other to join other social activities beyond the space. The space is complemented by a Men’s Breakfast Club at Gorton Mill House.



“I love this walking group. The people are so welcoming. It helps to cope with my illness and mental health.”

Denise, resident



## Pathfinder Profile

## Kirkholt, Rochdale

## About the partnership and neighbourhood

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) is the lead organisation. Becky leads on resident and stakeholder engagement and the delivery of projects to improve the neighbourhood. Other partners include the local Youth Service, GP surgery and social prescribers, Rochdale Council, Greater Manchester Police, HMR Circle, Living Well Rochdale, Rochdale Culture Co-op and Action Together.

Kirkholt is a neighbourhood in the south of Rochdale, predominantly residential with good local green spaces. There are local amenities in The Strand: a Community Hub and cafe, a food pantry, shops, a dentist, a GP surgery and a community garden.

10,058 people live in Kirkholt (Census 2021). Of this 1,236 are aged 65 and over (12%) and the population aged over 50 is 2,960 (29%). A majority of older households in the neighbourhood experience considerable income, employment, and health inequalities (1). 76% of residents engaged in the Pathfinder who completed the community audit self-reported their health status as poor (across Kirkholt and Smallbridge).

## Understanding local voice and lived experience

Becky engaged initially with the Kirkholt age-friendly steering group then reached out to wider residents about desired improvements in their neighbourhoods. Door knocking exercises with local faith leaders and housing officers have proved successful

in engaging residents and promoting the project. A Partnership Board meets every three months, bringing residents and partner organisations together to discuss ideas and suggestions.

Key issues older people highlighted about the neighbourhood:

- **Safety:** concerns about safety, particularly at night and the prevalence of anti-social behaviour such as drug dealing and dangerous driving.
- **Walkability:** the hilly nature of Kirkholt poses difficulties; a lack of benches, handrails, and ramps makes it challenging to reach essential facilities, local amenities and impacts their ability to walk around.
- **Social activities for men:** while there are valued local opportunities for social interaction, there is a lack of participation from local older men.
- **Communication and information:** available and accessible information about what is going on locally is a challenge and many feel uninformed. There is heavy reliance on word of mouth, leaflets and notice boards but these need to be kept up to date and streamlined to be effective.



Click to watch video

## Pathfinder Partnership Priorities

1. Community support and investment to empower local organisations.
2. Environmental and accessibility enhancements to make the neighbourhood age-friendly.
3. Community cafe development to enhance social interactions.

## Highlights from the first two years

## Environmental improvements to get out and about

Making it easier and safer for older residents to navigate the area is key to fostering greater social inclusion and activity levels. Improvements included replacing decayed street furniture, installation of two new benches, a planter, and handrails at Hilltop Drive, Ruskin Road, and Broadshaw Edge Close. Much of the enhancement was secured through the social value contribution of contractors. Road safety was a concern behind the new GP practice. By working with local Councillors and Highways a new zebra crossing and traffic lights system is to be installed in late 2024.

## Community Garden

Located at the Strand Hub the garden provides residents a welcoming space for gardening, social interactions and other activities. Creative Health Ltd worked with volunteers to design mosaic tiles from

recycled materials, adding a vibrant touch to wooden planters, and bird boxes were installed. The garden has boosted community involvement and environmental stewardship, fostering a stronger sense of local pride and connection. The group have submitted their entry to North West In Bloom, in the 'It's Your Neighbourhood' category for judging in October 2024 and will attend the awards ceremony.

## Age-friendly guides and community notice boards

Age-friendly guides have been created for both new and existing residents to provide essential information about resources, walking routes, projects, and services in the local area. Two community notice boards are updated to provide residents with current and relevant information. Supporting residents to access and engage in local activities.

**“From the gardening group, people have formed new friendships. People have been commenting on what it does for their mental wellbeing.”**



**Becky,**  
Age-Friendly Advisor



<sup>1</sup> Majority of older households within Kirkholt are within the most deprived 10% - 20% (nationally) of the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOP1 2019).



# About participants

**Evaluation is part of the work Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) contribute to the Ageing in Place Pathfinder. Progress is tracked in a number of ways which will help to understand the impact the programme is having and what are the most effective mechanisms for supporting residents to participate in making their neighbourhoods better places to grow older.**

One way researchers are following the programme is through taking a relatively small number of measurements of individual health and wellbeing in relation to residents' personal experience of the neighbourhood. This is done through a community audit. The community audit is completed with a sample of around 50 of the older people engaged in each of the neighbourhoods. A first set of community audits were completed in late 2023/ early 2024 and a follow up will be conducted in early 2025.

The community audit enables an understanding of which groups of older people are engaging and begins to identify specific vulnerabilities and issues related to each neighbourhood. Over time it will be able to explore which aspects of the programme have most impacted on improving the health and wellbeing of the residents. The audit can inform the neighbourhood planning process by being a method of engagement on the key lived experience questions.

Initial analysis of the community audits demonstrates some findings about participants to date:

- Overall the age of participants demonstrates a good spread across 50 to 90+ years, in line with Greater Manchester averages. Lower rates of 50-69 year olds is expected with older people in work less likely to engage with community activities predominantly in the daytime; some Pathfinders are considering how to engage those in work more.
- Engagement with people of different ethnic backgrounds is similar to Greater Manchester averages but the sample within individual Pathfinders is very small. It is important that each Pathfinder works inclusively to engage older people from ethnically diverse backgrounds within the specific neighbourhood.
- Questions on sexuality were answered by less than 85% of respondents; 5% of those residents identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual. As the figure across Greater Manchester is 1% this indicates that the programme may be having some success in being accessible to the LGBTQ+ communities, but the number of participants is very small.

- As a third of participants, men were under-represented. This is in line with previous expectations of community engagement programmes and a number of responses to engaging men have been created in Pathfinder neighbourhoods.
- While single older people are over-represented at 21% compared with the Greater Manchester average of 12.95%, this may be expected as they could be more incentivised to seek out new social opportunities and Pathfinders are pro-actively targeting those at risk of social isolation.
- The most striking figure in the data is the self-reported health of participants. This is significantly worse than the Greater

Manchester averages. It is those in poorer health that the Pathfinder is designed to target. Other data may suggest that the sample is skewed towards older age groups and engagement within specialist housing.

Analysis of this data confirms that working to include all residents in mid and later life in neighbourhoods is an essential responsibility of partnerships. Many individuals within these under-represented groups can be the most vulnerable to social isolation and at risk of poorer outcomes. Partnerships have all developed engagement plans that continue to respond to who is and who is not engaged as understood from the data and context of the specific neighbourhood.



## Age range

	Pathfinder (%)	Greater Manchester (%)
50-69	53%	67%
70-79	34%	22%
80-89	12%	9.5%
90+	1%	1.5%

## Tenure

	Pathfinder (%)	Greater Manchester (%)
Owner occupier	55%	74%
Social rental	40%	17%
Private rental	6%	8%

## Employment status

	Pathfinder (%)	Greater Manchester (%)
Employed	16%	40%
Retired	61%	45%
Unemployed	17%	15%

## Marital status

	Pathfinder (%)	Greater Manchester (%)
Married or civil partnered	33%	44%
Co-habiting	5%	7%
Divorced	17%	19%
Single	21%	13%
Widow/ Widower	21%	17%

## Gender

	Pathfinder (%)	Greater Manchester (%)
Male	33%	48%
Female	66%	52%

## Health status

	Pathfinder (%)	Greater Manchester (%)
Good	38%	64%
Poor	62%	36%



## Pathfinder Profile

# Smallbridge, Rochdale

## About the partnership and neighbourhood

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) is the lead organisation. Becky leads on resident and stakeholder engagement in the neighbourhood and the delivery of projects to improve the neighbourhood. Other partners include Rochdale Youth Service, Branches Fellowship Church, local library, Living Well Rochdale, Rochdale Council, Rochdale Culture Coop and Action Together.

Smallbridge is a neighbourhood to the east of Rochdale's town centre. The neighbourhood is primarily residential with some social and community infrastructure concentrated in the centre at Stevenson Square where the local food pantry, community hub, library and some local shops are situated.

The population of Smallbridge is 10,027 (Census, 2021). Of this 1,355 are aged 65 and over (14%) and the population aged over 50 is 3,014 (30%). Most older adults live in the north of Smallbridge, there is a significant proportion of social housing, with some specialist accommodation. A majority of older households experience significant income, employment and health inequalities (1). 76% of residents engaged in the Pathfinder who completed the community audit self-reported their health status as poor (across Kirkholt and Smallbridge).

## Understanding local voice and lived experience

With no previous engagement activity in the neighbourhood focused on the older population, an extensive engagement plan was developed with a wide range of activities to build awareness and trust with local residents. This included door knocking, visiting existing groups and activities, organising community clean up days and creative methods such as the micro-residency creating a heritage-based mural and craft sessions such as natural wreath making.

Key issues older people highlighted about the neighbourhood:

- **Safety and local environment:** concerns about the declining social and physical environment e.g. littering, fly-tipping, and anti-social behaviour. Stevenson Square was noted as particularly unsafe in the evenings.
- **Utilisation of empty spaces:** potential for repurposing vacant indoor and outdoor spaces to functional community assets. Allotments and green corridors as ideas to reduce ASB and boost social interaction.
- **Intergenerational engagement:** desire to collaborate on fostering relationships with younger people and address community challenges, particularly the lack of social spaces.
- **Communication and information:** more effective communication to support access to services and activities.

## Pathfinder Partnership Priorities

1. Work with Youth Services, GMP and Community Safety Team to reduce anti-social behaviour and create intergenerational opportunities.
2. Promote health and wellbeing to sustain meaningful connections and healthy habits.
3. Ensure residents have a sense of pride in the area where they live.

## Highlights from the first two years

### Support to tackle fuel poverty

A 20-week "Healthy One Pot Cooking course" led by retired school catering manager Lorraine taught participants how to prepare low-cost, nutritious one-pot meals. Residents also learnt how to make eco-thermal cooker bags, attended a slow cooker demonstration and produced a cookbook. Thanks to Cadent Gas and Citizens Advice each participant received a slow cooker and carbon monoxide alarm. Citizens Advice provided information sessions on fuel tariffs and energy switching to support addressing fuel poverty issues.

### Community wall mural

Working with Rochdale Youth Service and the Culture Co-op, a mural project is due to be completed in October 2024. Positioned near the local fish and chip shop on Stevenson

Square, the project has united younger and older residents in a collective effort to enhance the area's aesthetic appeal and give the residents a sense of pride in the neighbourhood.

### Allotment plot

Run by age-friendly volunteers, an allotment plot was supported by Rochdale Council. A free ton of compost was provided through Recycle for Greater Manchester and RBH repairs teams provided volunteer hours to build raised planters. The aim is to supply fresh produce to the Smallbridge Food Pantry and encourage community interaction and involvement among older residents.

**"I help run Smallbridge pantry, we are helping between 70-80 people a week, that makes a heck of a difference to members. With the cost-of-living crisis a lot of members would not be able to make ends meet."**



**Stephen,  
local resident**



<sup>1</sup> Majority of older households within Smallbridge are within the most deprived 10% (nationally) of the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOP1 2019).



## Pathfinder Profile

# Pendleton and Charlestown, Salford

## About the partnership and neighbourhood

Inspiring Communities Together are the lead organisation with Andrea leading community engagement working closely with Vanda from Age UK Salford. Other partners include Salford Council, Salford Community Leisure, Salford Youth Service, Beacon Youth Centre and Salford Youth Zone, Albion High School, GMP, Salix Homes, Together Housing, Bridgewater Hall, Salford Museum & Art Gallery, Department of Work and Pensions, Healthwatch Salford and TfGM.

Pendleton and Charlestown is in the East of Salford. Pendleton is the district centre with several high-rise resident blocks and the “blue bridge” (M602 motorway bridge) separates the two areas. The area has well used community assets including Pendleton Gateway with library, health services and local housing provider and the Broadwalk linking to the shopping precinct. In Charlestown St Sebastian community centre is the main hub in a building with the Energise centre (GP and pharmacy) and a small parade of shops close by. Salford Art Gallery and Museum is a key creative and cultural local asset.

22,280 people live in the neighbourhood (Census, 2011). Of this 2,189 are aged 65 and over (10%) and the population aged over 50 is 5,066 (23%). Many residents live in socially rented housing and specialist accommodation. Older residents experience significant health and disability limitations, which restrict their access to information and services. 67% of residents engaged in the Pathfinder who completed the community audit self-reported their health status as poor.

## Understanding local voice and lived experience

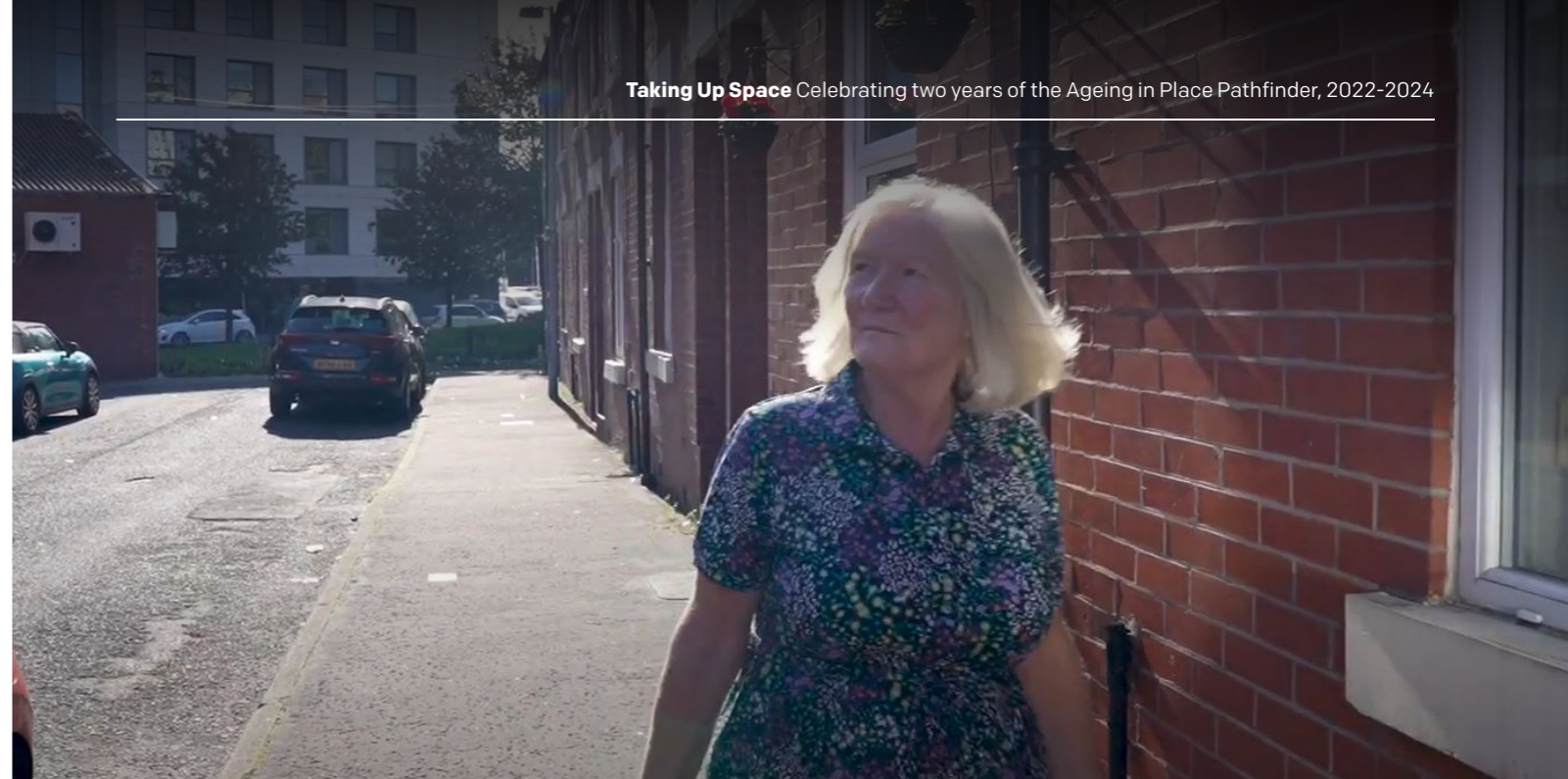
The team held initial conversations, everywhere from buses to sheltered housing schemes. Events were held in the library, museum and art gallery, sheltered housing, local churches, cafes, community centres and food clubs. The Partnership Board meets every two months and there are now 22 residents and 19 stakeholders who have attended at least once.

Key issues older people highlighted about the neighbourhood:

- **Safety:** significant issues with anti-social behaviour and feeling uneasy around younger people and university student population, particularly at night and around the Broadwalk.
- **Social isolation:** a lack of knowledge about social activities contributes to feeling isolated, particularly for those living in high-rise accommodation; residents reluctant to attend local venues like the Lowry and cinema alone.
- **Information:** having access to accurate, up to date information including in non-digital formats about ‘what’s on locally’ to support independence and reduce the likelihood of isolation and loneliness.

### Pathfinder Partnership Priorities

1. Facilitate intergenerational activities in collaboration with youth services and the local high school.
2. Reduce the digital divide to improve residents’ health and wellbeing.
3. Implement Age-Friendly Salford Standards.



## Highlights from the first two years

### Intergenerational Photography Project

The photography project engaged and connected eight older residents and eight students from Albion High School. Weekly meet-ups at the Beacon Youth Centre were supported by a youth worker and a development worker. Exploring together their experiences of the neighbourhood led to a successful photography exhibition in April 2024 during International Intergenerational Week. Participants built genuine friendships, shared skills and reported an increase in confidence. Many of the previous, and some new participants, continued to meet weekly working on an intergenerational green and grow project.

### Tech and Tea

This five-week programme delivered by Age-Friendly Salford provides older adults with access to low-cost digital equipment and digital skills. Courses run in “safe” settings such as libraries, community centres and cafes. There is an increase in the number of older people using technology to manage their health and social needs, a reduction in anxiety and improved confidence when using technology, ultimately reducing digital exclusion and promoting greater connectivity.

### Health Research Champions

A project in collaboration with the NIHR Clinical Research Network Greater Manchester. Residents were recruited and trained as Health Research Champions to then carry out listening exercises with older people in the neighbourhood, on a one to one basis and in group sessions. Champions contributed to a community mapping exercise identifying sources of strength in the community that could support access to information about health research. The project identified a real opportunity for research connections to grow in the neighbourhood. Residents have since been involved in a project with NHS England to develop an animation to encourage more people to get involved in health research.

**“We saw an increase in empathy and understanding between young and old through their shared experience of exploring, “what’s it like to live around here.”**

**Antonia Dunn,  
Inspiring Communities Together**



## Creating connections in place: preventing loneliness and social isolation

Creating the conditions for connections, building relationships and undertaking shared activities to thrive is essential to supporting people to live well in later life in Greater Manchester.

Maintaining high quality social connections through mid and later life is critical to tackling the very serious impacts that social isolation and loneliness can have on older people's physical and mental health and quality of life. The World Health Organisation estimates 1 in 4 older adults experience social isolation and has identified the issue as a global health concern (1).

In mid and later life a number of life events and transitions, such as retirement, bereavement, ill health, reduced mobility and caring responsibilities, present risk factors for becoming socially disconnected, i.e. they can reduce accessibility of social networks or make being socially active harder. There are also wider changes to the way people are living that are impacting on the prevalence of social isolation, including more older people living alone, rising rates of divorce and more people ageing without children or with families that are geographically dispersed.

These factors when combined with a reduction in the availability of social spaces and social infrastructure in local neighbourhoods, the growing pace of digitalisation, reduced investment in local services and the enduring impact of the covid pandemic on behaviours mean that social

isolation and loneliness present a priority challenge to living well in later life.

The Pathfinder Partnerships are demonstrating how community-enabled responses, informed by and led by older people working with a wide range of local stakeholders are effectively tackling social isolation and loneliness. The work is demonstrating the importance of connections and relationships that are high-quality, diverse and meaningful, and that enable participation in a wide range of shared activities.

These connections can offer the potential to build confidence, improve sense of belonging and enable access to community support and informal care. Being connected and feeling a sense of belonging in place can provide a platform for people to contribute both formally and informally to their community e.g. through volunteering and contribute to social cohesion e.g. through intergenerational activities.

**“There’s nothing worse than walking to any place and you don’t know anybody. I mean, you don’t, you won’t go. Everybody needs a friend to say, come on.”**

**Mary, resident Brinnington**

## Sharing learning, creating knowledge

**The Ageing in Place Academy provides a platform for people working in the Pathfinder neighbourhoods to share their experiences and create learning. The Academy is an integral part of the Pathfinder and has been playing a key role in convening and supporting colleagues, building knowledge and skills and innovation in engagement practice.**

Monthly online meetings consider topics that have emerged from discussion with Pathfinder Leads based on the resident engagement and source additional evidence and contributions. On occasion Academy sessions have supported attendees to discuss how to respond to pressing issues for older people, such as financial hardship and changes to winter fuel allowances.

Sessions have been supported by Good Practice Mentors, academics and researchers from local universities and other partners.

Thematic issues covered include:

- Working with faith groups and spaces in neighbourhoods.
- Creating successful engagement with men.
- Building equality, diversity and inclusion practice into engagement plans.
- Engaging residents in falls prevention activities.
- Developing intergenerational engagement opportunities.
- Bringing age-friendly neighbourhoods and dementia-friendly opportunities together.
- Building sustainable locally constituted groups led by residents.

In-person visits to the Pathfinder neighbourhoods were added in January 2024 and have been hosted in Brinnington, Smallbridge, Moorside and Kirkholt. These give Pathfinder Leads an opportunity to showcase neighbourhood projects and share their learning. To date there has been a focus on developing green and outdoor spaces projects with residents.

Feedback demonstrates that the Academy has increased knowledge, confidence and provided inspiration and ideas. Hosting visits allows Pathfinder Leads to narrate and share their practice and encourages relationship building and shared problem-solving.

The Academy has also supported residents in Pathfinder neighbourhoods to become members of the GM Older People's Network and the GM Older People's Equality Panel. This brings the voice and lived experience of these residents directly from neighbourhoods to be heard in Greater Manchester forums.

**“After hearing about GM Older People’s Network at the Academy, we presented this back to our Steering Group and two members of the community have now signed up to the Network.”**

**Clare Hughes, Brinnington Pathfinder**

In the coming year monthly sessions and visits will continue and attention will turn to how the learning community can be embedded in supporting the broader GM ageing eco-system to grow and spread the ageing in place approach.

<sup>1</sup> Social isolation and loneliness among older people: advocacy brief, WHO 2021 [www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240030749](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240030749)



## Pathfinder Profile

# Brinnington, Stockport

## About the partnership and neighbourhood

Stockport Homes Group are the lead organisation with an engagement team of Nerys, Clare and Adela working with residents and stakeholders in the neighbourhood. Partners include The Big Local, Brinnington Health Centre, Stockport Council, Life Leisure, Lighthouse Community Church, St Lukes and Age UK Stockport.

Brinnington is in the south-east of Stockport. The neighbourhood is largely residential with a close-knit community with several passionate community groups at the heart supporting the community. Brinnington is “like an island”, there are good transport links to centres of Stockport and Manchester but many residents prefer to use the amenities that the community provides.

Brinnington has a population of 11,117 (Census, 2021). Of this 1,423 are aged 65 and over (13%) and the population aged over 50 is 3,206 (29%). 40% of older residents live in social housing with many living in the six high-rise tower blocks in the area. A majority of older households in the neighbourhood experience considerable income, employment, and health inequalities (1). 82% of residents engaged in the Pathfinder who completed the community audit self-reported their health status as poor.

<sup>1</sup> Brinnington and Central are among the most deprived areas in England, ranking within most deprived 10%-20% of the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index 2019 (IDAOPI). The area was also listed in the top 2% most deprived regions in England and Wales according to the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), with two small areas ranking within the most deprived 1% nationally.

## Understanding local voice and lived experience

The team have worked hard to build trust and engage widely in the neighbourhood with a comprehensive programme of drop-ins, pop-ups, visits to existing groups and creating a consistent presence in the neighbourhood. Taking time to listen to the views of what the community feel is important to them was important to overcome resistance and some mistrust. There are now a number of strong relationships and residents very actively involved in the Partnership Board.

Key issues older people highlighted about the neighbourhood:

- Deteriorating social and green spaces:** there is a great sense of pride for the neighbourhood. Poorly maintained social and green spaces, fly-tipping, litter and poor lighting reduce usability for older adults and contribute to feelings of neglect and insecurity.
- Social connection:** more intergenerational opportunities were seen as an opportunity to improve relationships and social interaction with younger people, reduce anti-social behaviour and utilise local facilities to reduce social isolation.
- Health and wellbeing:** focus on enabling better dietary and exercise habits to enhance wellbeing; rather than, attention was drawn to a lack of health and lifestyle education, high costs and accessibility of fitness and health facilities.

## Pathfinder Partnership Priorities

1. Improve community support and health by running health and wellbeing projects.
2. Foster social participation and inclusion to enhance social cohesion.
3. Enhance outdoor spaces and buildings to better serve the community's needs.

## Highlights from the first two years

### Allotment and Green Spaces

An allotment space has been secured in Offerton, a community garden is being established at First House and raised planters are being set up at Dunton Towers. The aim is to promote healthy eating and exercise and enable residents to grow vegetables. Produce will support local organisations The Pantry and First House Café. The initiatives foster community relationships with people from different areas getting involved, including residents from Appleton Manor Care Home.

### Monthly Newsletter

A monthly newsletter has been created and distributed in Brinnington to keep local people informed and engaged, helping to address social isolation. The newsletter gives stakeholders a platform to promote local events and initiatives which is circulated both electronically and in printed copies distributed via the Community Pop Up, local groups and the health and leisure centre.

## Community social events

In the first year a trip to Blackpool Zoo was arranged in collaboration with the Brinnington Big Local. The trip gave the opportunity for both younger and older residents to come together and relationships to be built through conversation and shared experience. The trip also helped promote the Pathfinder to the community and supported relationship building with community partners and residents.

This year a Brinnington Summer Festival was delivered in collaboration between the Pathfinder, Life Leisure, Age UK Stockport and BLOGS (Brinnington Local Organised Group Society). This highlighted how far the relationships have developed within the community. Monies raised will go towards a Community Christmas Party.

**“It’s got a great community of older people to grow old with.”**



**Geoff, local resident**





## Pathfinder Profile

# Old Trafford, Trafford

## About the partnership and neighbourhood

Old Trafford joined the Ageing in Place Pathfinder in autumn 2023 and Trafford Community Collective are the lead organisation working with a well-established local partnership. Other partners include St John's Community Centre and the North Trafford Community Hub, Trafford Council, Limelight, Age UK Trafford, Trafford LCO, Lowry Lodge, Out There, African Caribbean Carers Group, OT Creative Space, Bluesci Mental Health and Wellbeing, Breathchamps, Beyond Empower, String of Hearts and Henshaws.

Old Trafford is in the north of Trafford, bordering Manchester. Old Trafford is a multi-cultural community with a history of immigration resulting in a diverse population and a rich vibrancy of community activity. The neighbourhood is home to both Manchester United and Old Trafford cricket ground.

14,903 people live in the Pathfinder neighbourhood (Census 2011) and of this, 1,476 people are aged 65 and over (10%) and the population aged over 50 is 3,408 (23%). A notable number of older residents experience significant income, employment, and health inequalities (1).

## Understanding local voice and lived experience

Initial engagement was via visiting existing groups at Limelight and Lowry Lodge housing schemes, community walks, "brew on a bench" and environmental audits. In March 2024 a large community event attracted over 40 residents and stakeholders. Originally

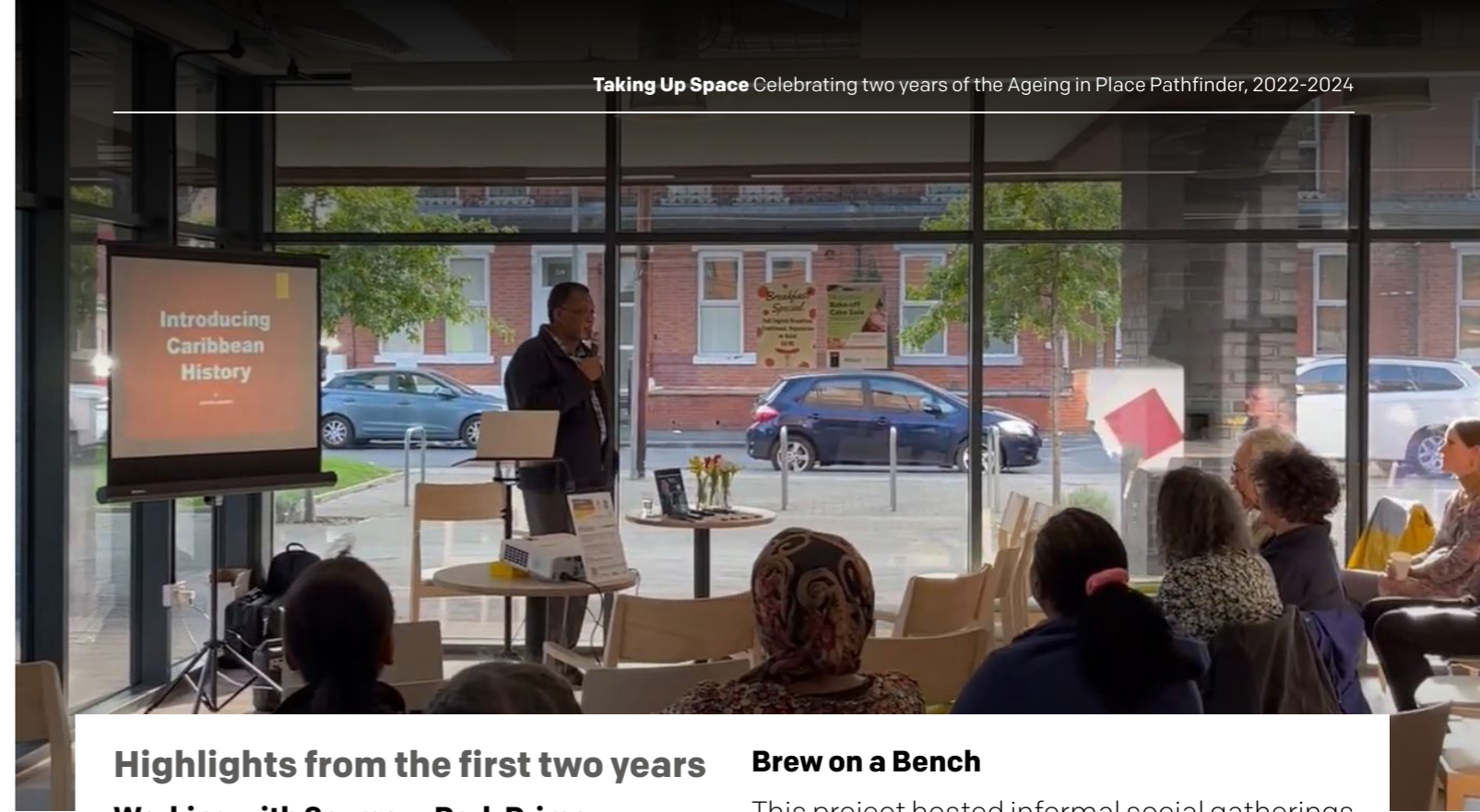
facilitated by Verity, engagement has been led by Carrie since June 2024. A Partnership Steering Group includes 10 older people and meets monthly. The Ageing in Place work is embedded in the Trafford North Neighbourhood Delivery Action Plan to improve health and wellbeing. The Collective has been supported as part of the GM Live Well programme.

Key issues older people highlighted about the neighbourhood:

- **Safety:** concerns about feeling unsafe and discouraged from going out in the public realm and parks, particularly at night and where there is inadequate lighting.
- **Barriers to walking:** poorly maintained pavements restrict ability to get out and about locally; a 'walk and wheel ability' audit will be completed to provide a more detailed understanding.
- **Social isolation and information:** lack of awareness of existing activities and opportunities restricts social participation.

## Pathfinder Partnership Priorities

1. Addressing financial hardship by supporting more older residents to claim entitlements.
2. Designing an improved offer for social community activities.
3. Supporting local people to manage weight, blood pressure and other projects to improve physical and mental wellbeing.



## Highlights from the first two years

### Working with Seymour Park Primary School

International Older Persons Day will be celebrated with an intergenerational event at Seymour Park Primary school. A 'Grandparent Special Day' with the 'Little Explorers' will invite older generations into school and make them aware of Ageing in Place. A pilot session will explore using this opportunity for conversations about financial hardship and awareness around pension credit eligibility. Grandparents will also be encouraged to join the School Streets project to walk to school two days per week. It is hoped activities will be extended to other local schools.

### Social Activities programme

The Pathfinder has connected with a wide range of local community groups offering exercise, local walk groups, wellbeing and creative spaces to bring together a weekly calendar of activities to support social connection and active participation. Gaps in activities are being explored and tested, e.g. String of Hearts delivered a daytime open mic session at Limelight. Feedback from residents was good. Further activities being explored include songs and fun with a local nursery and a 'Young Identity' cross generational writing and spoken word group.

## Brew on a Bench

This project hosted informal social gatherings at local benches, providing refreshments and creating a welcoming environment where residents could meet and interact to foster social connections. Two Steering Group members were recruited directly from Brew on a Bench and it has become a recognised source of sharing local information, engagement and social activity. The Partnership are exploring other new opportunities for community members in advocacy, volunteering and 'togetherness champions' to tackle social isolation and loneliness.

**"I got connected to Limelight which is a sociable place that saves me being at home by myself. There is always a nice atmosphere and environment that is welcome and pleasing and people just smile."**



**Mark, resident**

<sup>1</sup> (2019 IDAOPI). Old Trafford falls within the 3rd and 4th most deprived deciles of the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index



# Growing and spreading: creating a blueprint to Live Well in later life

**Creating strong and supportive neighbourhoods to improve connection, health and wellbeing in later life is central to achieving the "Places" priority of Greater Manchester's Age-Friendly Strategy and part of Greater Manchester's Live Well commitment to ensuring consistent, everyday support across all neighbourhoods.**

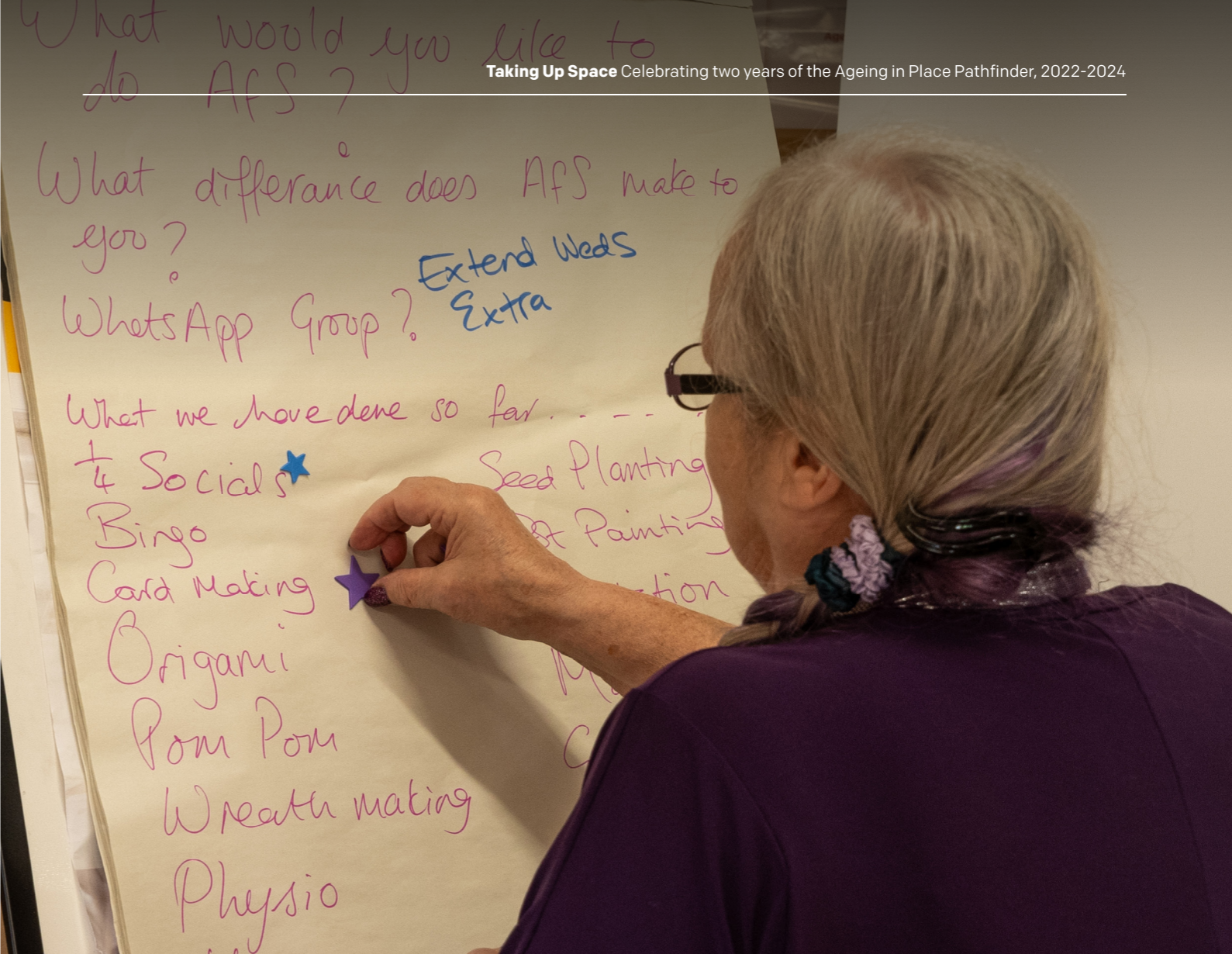
From inception the Ageing in Place Pathfinder has been designed to deliver both impact for residents in these ten neighbourhoods and create learning that supports all partners to grow and spread a neighbourhood-based, resident-led and prevention focused approach to ageing well.

Achieving this requires meaningful system change working with a wide and complex range of partners and stakeholders and is focused on achieving key outcomes:

- Establishing an age-inclusive culture across Greater Manchester.
- Routinely developing preventative responses with older people in the places they live.

- Building capacity and capability with communities and the VCFSE to engage and support residents in mid and later life.
- Greater spatial inclusion and less structural discrimination for older people in housing choices and service provision.

Raising awareness about what matters for older residents in the places they live, what they want to be different and how they are working together are critical activities for achieving change. This is being supported in the Pathfinder by creating films, sharing impact stories, hosting events, sharing practice in the Ageing in Place Academy and convening partners at neighbourhood, local authority and Greater Manchester level in conversations designed to influence policy and practice.



In the third year of the Pathfinder work will continue to share this learning and understand the things that support and the barriers that get in the way of older residents and our communities leading the change. Work to grow and spread the approach and impact will need to focus on those neighbourhoods where older populations are growing over the next 5 to 10 years and are more likely to experience health, social and economic inequalities as they age. Activities to support this will include:

- Developing a "blueprint" describing the key features to deliver Live Well in later life and convening with partners including local authorities and NHS GM to consider how and where this can be delivered as a priority responding to local need and circumstance.

- Creating and sharing impact stories and building more opportunities for older residents to lead this in a community reporting project with Talking About My Generation.
- Continuing to support Pathfinder Lead Organisations and Pathfinder Partnership Boards to explore options for long-term sustainability; building skills and knowledge to support this.
- Developing a dissemination plan for the resources, tools and practice developed in the Pathfinder to share across Greater Manchester, and further afield.
- Completing the evaluation of the impact of the Ageing in Place Pathfinder.



## Pathfinder Profile

## Ridge Hill, Tameside

**About the partnership and neighbourhood**

Jigsaw Homes are the lead organisation and Philip is delivering neighbourhood engagement working closely with colleagues from The Big Local. Other partners include Tameside Council, Age UK Tameside, Johnnie Johnson Housing, Silver Springs Primary School, Action Together, Stalybridge Primary Care Network, Be Well Tameside, local Community Groups, Active Tameside and CADA.

Ridge Hill is in Stalybridge in the north of Tameside, built on a steep hill bordering Mossley and Ashton-Under-Lyne and adjacent to Stamford Park. The neighbourhood offers an array of green spaces but has limited social infrastructure. Primary health care services are notably at the bottom of the hill, and limited public transport results in a heavy reliance on taxi services. Local shopping is limited to corner shops and takeaways.

Ridge Hill is home to 9,350 people (Census 2021). Of this 1,473 are aged 65 and over (16%) and the population aged over 50 is 3,192 (34%). The area is split into four distinct areas known as Springs, Hague, Ridge Hill and Arlies. The majority of the older population live in clusters in socially rented or specialist housing particularly in the Springs area. A majority of older households in the neighbourhood experience considerable income, employment, and health inequalities (1). 73% of residents engaged in the Pathfinder who completed the community audit self-reported their health status as poor.

**Understanding local voice and lived experience**

Philip has built close relationships with organisations and residents to understand local lived experiences and foster collaboration. Engagement has harnessed the community's creativity with a visual artist micro-residency, music and heritage. Good Practice Mentors provided training on a door knocking approach to engage those who may be more isolated or unaware of the Pathfinder.

The Pathfinder has played a key part in developing a new constituted organisation for the neighbourhood. Towards the end of 2025 the Partnership Board will merge with The Big Local Board forming Ridge Hill Together CIO to ensure continued future community engagement, participation and development.

Key issues older people highlighted about the neighbourhood:

- **Social inclusion:** more opportunities needed to form relationships with residents who are at risk of social isolation, particularly creating social opportunities for men.
- **Social spaces:** whilst there are several relatively small social spaces, there isn't one main community space that is recognised as open to all and existing spaces can feel underutilised or exclusive.
- **Communication and information:** there are concerns that local groups and services are only utilising online forms and digital exclusion is impacting on social isolation.
- **Community safety:** concerns around ASB, as well as problems with cleanliness and maintenance of public spaces.

**Pathfinder Partnership Priorities**

1. Strengthen community cohesion to engage and empower residents.
2. Increase skills and physical activity to improve residents' health and wellbeing.
3. Promote digital inclusion to reduce the digital divide.
4. Enhance local support services to provide wrap-around support for residents.

**Highlights from the first two years****Music and memories to engage Ridge Hill**

It was clear early on that the "power of music" was important to engaging residents. The Music To Memories project created a Playlist for Ridge Hill with residents (Spotify) to be used at any occasion from parties to exercise classes.

From this a project launched to create a 'Song for Ridge Hill' to reflect the diverse tastes, memories, and experiences of residents. Tameside Music Service have hosted a series of musical workshops with groups including Knit n Natter, Dementia Group, Infant Schools, Chatty Café, Bread n Butter volunteers and Teenage Rappers. The project is enhancing intergenerational connections and the sense of belonging within the community.

*Release date is targeting the Christmas 2024 chart on local radio!!*

**Cycle Project**

As part of the Healthier You initiative the cycle project supports residents of all ages to become a little more active and responsible for their health and wellbeing. Funding from TfGM and Cycling UK supports cycle maintenance, Bike Library, learn to ride sessions, group rides, indoor seated cycle exercise, Cycling Without Age trishaw and a delivery bike service. Hosted in a dedicated Cycle Station on land leased from Jigsaw Homes the Cycle Project aims to form a sustainable community legacy.

**Memorial Trees and Edible Walkway**

This project honours local history, promotes physical activity, and provides a sustainable source of fresh produce. Trees, fruits, and herbs have been planted throughout the four areas of the community to establish an 'edible walking route'. Green spaces in the neighbourhood are enhanced, offering residents a space to reflect and connect with nature, while promoting increased environmental responsibility.

**“Where I lived previously, I was a bit isolated, and I didn't want to become too isolated. Now, here I play games like pool, snooker and darts or cards. The people are friendly and welcoming and when I go on the walks it keeps me in touch with other people.”**



**Peter Hewitt, resident**

**In loving memory of Peter Hewitt, 20 June 1934 – 21 June 2024**

<sup>1</sup> Majority of older households within Ridgehill are within the most deprived 10% (nationally) of the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOP1 2019).



## Pathfinder Profile

# Goose Green, Hawkley Hall and Worsley Mesnes, Wigan

## About the partnership and neighbourhood

Wigan Council is the lead organisation with Kate and Zoe from the Public Health Team leading engagement in the neighbourhood. Partners include Wigan Adult Health and Social Care, Wigan Wellness Web, Chandler House and Eliot Gardens Gardening Groups, Walk and Talk Group at Chandler house, St Judes Social Club, Wigan Athletic Community Trust, Groundworks, local extra care and residential care homes, the South Wigan Primary Care network and Scotman's Flash Activity Centre.

The neighbourhoods feature a mix of residential, commercial and green spaces. There are a range of community assets across the neighbourhood including places of worship, community and sports clubs, activity groups, parks and an outdoor water sports centre.

13,698 people live in the neighbourhoods (Census 2021). Of this 2,818 are aged 65 and over (21%) and the population aged over 50 is 5,681 (41%). The area has a significant number of socially rented households among older adults, including some specialist housing. Many older households experience income, employment and health inequalities (1). This includes some older owner occupiers in the neighbourhood who have difficulties maintaining safe and warm homes. 50% of residents engaged in the Pathfinder who completed the community audit self-reported their health status as poor.

## Understanding local voice and lived experience

Zoe and Kate have used various methods to engage residents including visiting existing groups, community events, talk-and-walk sessions and micro-residency art workshops. Positive buy-in from local organisations has enabled a Partnership Group to evolve with residents whose voice may not traditionally have been heard and resulted in collaboration to address key issues and improvements. Residents skills and confidence have grown and relationships developed to support the work and take decisions on what to prioritise for funding.

Key issues older people highlighted about the neighbourhood:

- **Information and communication:** to be streamlined so updates on local activities and services are accessible with better consideration of how limited access to digital devices and skills hinders their ability to stay informed.
- **Social participation:** lack of spaces and opportunities to engage in recreational activities, especially those in care homes and living south of Poolstock Lane.
- **Outdoor space and active travel:** lack of resting benches along busy walking routes and in available green spaces leaving these underutilised.



## Pathfinder Partnership Priorities

1. Expand community activities to engage socially isolated residents.
2. Address ageing in place barriers to create an age-friendly community.
3. Improve social connectivity to enhance older residents' health and wellbeing.

## Highlights from the first two years

### Age-Friendly Spaces: Cabin at Scotman's Flash

Scotman's Flash is a local nature reserve where residents have worked with Wigan Council Be Well and the Scotman's Flash Activity Centre to deliver an accessible cabin designed for all ages to enjoy. For older residents it offers a new space to relax by the water and enjoy a diverse range of activities such as, bird watching, photography, and arts and crafts. The cabin has enhanced the site's local appeal and promotes a deeper connection between nature and residents.

### Walking and Wheeling Audit and highways improvements

Residents undertook a Walking and Wheeling Audit to identify key issues affecting active travel around the neighbourhood and co-design improvements. Debra, a local resident and wheelchair user, took the lead in taking officers from the local highways department on the audit to demonstrate directly the changes needed for accessibility. Taking the lead in the audit has had a significant impact by developing confidence, giving a voice and demonstrating how working together can

deliver improvements. Changes have resulted in reconstruction of drop kerbs and new tactile paving, carriageway improvements and reconstruction of a footpath.

### Installation of benches to support and improve active travel

With limited benches available in the neighbourhood the Partnership were keen to explore investing in a "Couch to Out & About" project to enable residents to be more active and to encourage walking as a mode of transport by installing places to stop and rest if necessary. Locations were agreed between residents and other stakeholders. The Be Well Activation Manager is supporting development of a map of accessible, quick and easy walks around the neighbourhood and an exploration of a bike library scheme for the local community.

**"I have lived here for over 52 years. I come to St. Jude's social club to have a cup of tea, eat sandwiches and natter with people I see around the community. You are always made to feel welcome."**



**Dave, resident**

<sup>1</sup> The majority of the Worsley Mesnes, Hawkley Hall, and Goose Green neighbourhood fall within the most deprived 10%-20% of the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (2019 IDAOPI).



