



GATESHEAD OLDER PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY

Our Strategy
to 2024





Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 has had a devastating effect on the lives of older people across the world and throughout the UK. Here in Gateshead, after 10 years of hard-hitting austerity measures, the number of cases was much greater than the UK national average and older people were the worst affected group.

Exacerbated by the pandemic, our beneficiaries are experiencing increased loneliness and isolation, poor mental health, reduced physical health, and for those of working age, an unprecedented increase in unemployment.

For the next three years, we will work closely with our beneficiaries and stakeholders to devise targeted activities and projects that will improve the lives of thousands of older people from across our borough.

Not only will we be improving the health and wellbeing of our existing beneficiaries, we will also be reaching out to find all of those who are in need of our support from the urban east right across to the rural west. We will build upon our established approach of supporting people to support themselves and others in their own areas to help them build sustainable communities.

This strategic plan provides an insight into the priorities and goals that will guide our work as we help people aged 50+ to become happier, healthier, and more connected.

Our Mission

We improve the health, wellbeing, and happiness of people aged 50+ from across Gateshead by providing, promoting, and co-creating activities and opportunities that are empowering, engaging, and enjoyable.

Our Vision

Everyone over 50 from across the borough of Gateshead will live a full and happy life that is rich with opportunities to connect within their own community.



Our priorities and goals

Everyone aged 50+ from Gateshead wants a happy and healthy life. We want to take an active role in making that happen.

It is important to make clear that people aged 50 or over will have very different needs and that they are not a homogenous group. We can't support people based on the false premise that older people are all the same.

We will work closely with our beneficiaries to design a multifaceted, person-centred programme of activities, classes, and groups. What we will deliver will respond to the challenges our beneficiaries tell us they are facing, meet their needs and interests, and allow them to thrive. We will continue to avoid offering opportunities based on the stereotypes associated with ageing.

We will work with our local communities to provide opportunities and activities in the following priority areas.

Physical health

Being fit, active and physically well is important at any age. This becomes even more important as we get older. We will provide opportunities for people aged 50+ of all abilities to participate in a range of accessible wellness activities in community-based settings across Gateshead.

Mental health

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic will have a long-lasting impact on people's mental health. This is especially true in areas with higher levels of deprivation like Gateshead. We will continue to offer a range of opportunities for people aged 50+ to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

Personal development

We recognise that the desire to learn new skills and reach our individual potential does not lessen as we age. We will provide opportunities for our beneficiaries to pursue their interests, whether that means taking up a new hobby or looking for a new job.

Equality

We want our beneficiary group to represent to population of Gateshead and we will actively engage with groups of people who traditionally have not engaged with our activities and opportunities. We will also provide opportunities for all of our beneficiaries to engage in sessions in which they increase their understanding and knowledge of Gateshead's rich and diverse community.

Environment

As well as supporting the older people of Gateshead, we wish to support the environment in which they live and work. We will be mindful about how our projects contribute to reducing our carbon footprint and will work to increase our beneficiaries' knowledge about saving energy, recycling, and improving their environment.

Digital confidence

Many of our beneficiaries are recent converts to using information and communication technology to stay in touch with their friends and family while unable to meet in person. Sadly, many remain excluded from this increasingly vital loop, leading to increased isolation and feelings of loneliness. We will embed opportunities for our beneficiaries to engage via digital routes and will work to increase the number of older people who feel confident in using digital technology.

Community connectedness

Many older people have the desire to be more active in their local neighbourhood and Gateshead as a whole. We will support them in identifying appropriate opportunities to volunteer, participate, or help shape their local culture.

We will continue to listen to and support our beneficiaries in shaping how each of these priorities is tackled. Consultation with the very people that our charity was established to support is at the heart of how we do things at Gateshead Older People's Assembly. We will continue to do things with our beneficiaries and not to them.



Gateshead 50+ - our new sub-brand

In October 2020, we conducted a survey with more than 100 people aged over 50 from across the borough of Gateshead. We wanted to find out about people's perceptions not only of our organisation but of themselves and whether they felt the phrase 'older person' applies to them.

More than half of those who took part in our survey don't consider themselves to be older people. And most of those don't really think the word 'assembly' is positive or describes what we do, which is a bit of a shame for an organisation called Gateshead Older People's Assembly.

Based on this consultation, we have created a sub-brand called Gateshead 50+, which will be carried on all future promotion and advertising of our activities. This sub-brand allows us to carry on supporting those people who consider themselves to be older people while helping us to appeal to those who are unlikely to participate in activities offered by an organisation with 'older' in its name.

The introduction of the Gateshead 50+ sub-brand is not without risk and we will be closely monitoring our beneficiaries' perceptions to ensure we are not causing unnecessary confusion. We feel, however, that if the existing name of our charity is not attracting potential beneficiaries then we have no choice but to do something about it.

Gateshead Older People's Assembly will still exist, but we will take care to reinforce that our activities are being delivered under the Gateshead 50+ brand.







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