

Age-friendly in your community

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A good life in our later years depends not just on the individual but on where we live – do we feel secure, can we access the services we need and are we able to participate in the community as we wish?

Ensuring older people are seen as an important part of all populations gave rise to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Age-friendly City and Community model. This model has been adopted by hundreds of communities around the world now recognised as age-friendly by the WHO.

The Office for Seniors is advocating for age-friendly communities in New Zealand.

We are also supporting communities in New Zealand to become age-friendly – whether urban, suburban or rural.

What does an age-friendly community look like?

In an age-friendly community, people can actively participate in their community and its activities and are treated with respect, regardless of their age.

This means that different generations are able to mix together. People of all ages are able to access local services, parks, attend cultural events, and take part in further education.

Examples of age-friendliness in communities

- > Events are scheduled at different times in the day with varying prices so people on fixed incomes can afford to be there
- > Public transport provides low rider buses and the driver waits until people sit down before they start
- > Services, such as pharmacies and banks, have seats for older people
- > Banks might set aside space so staff can work one-on-one or there is a particular teller to serve older people so they don't need to stand in queues

What are the benefits of age-friendly?

Like the rest of the world, New Zealand has an ageing population. By planning to make our communities good places to age, we can actively ensure better health and wellbeing for seniors and the community as a whole.

An age-friendly environment is not just good for older people – it can create a more connected, responsive and supportive community for all of us – no matter our age or abilities.

How does a community become age-friendly?

To become age-friendly, older people partner with their local council and local organisations with an interest in the wellbeing of older people.

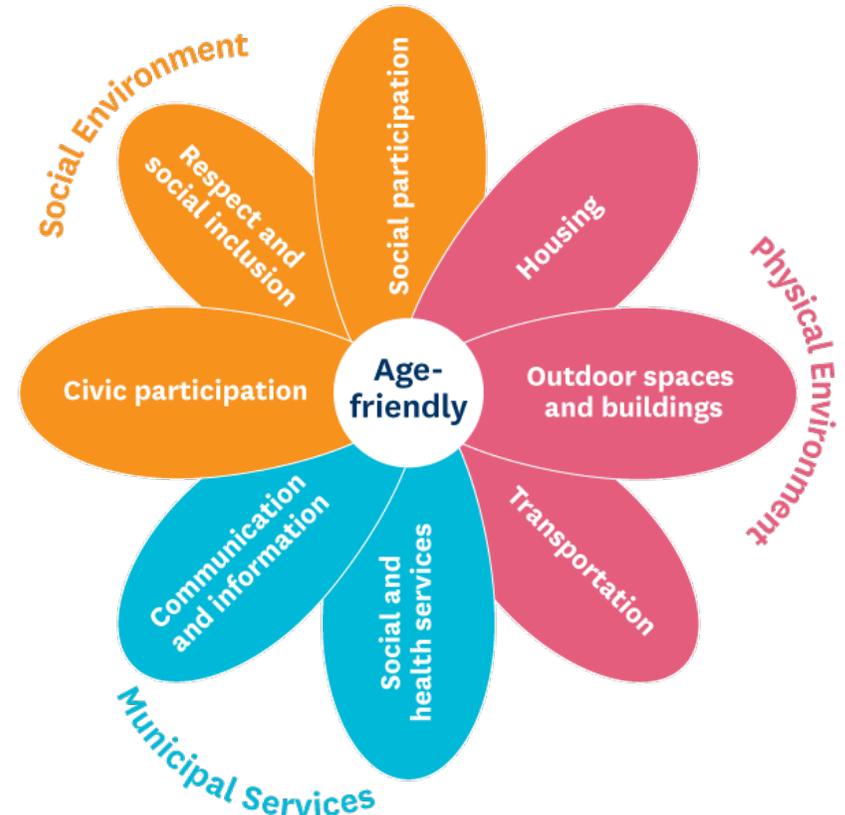
Partners form a steering group that works with older people to identify what is already age-friendly in the community and what needs to be improved to encourage active ageing for health, participation and security.

Priorities are then recorded in a three-year action plan which guides the community to take positive and achievable steps to becoming more age-friendly.

How does a community become age-friendly?

These steps are developed into projects, covering both the physical and social environments that make up a community, from transport and housing to social participation.

Reviewing the success of the plan, celebrating progress and identifying the next steps, completes the cycle and ensures the age-friendly process remains part of the community for the longer term.



Who should be involved?

To succeed, the age-friendly process needs people throughout the community to be involved and it must recognise that older people are the experts in their own lives – their voice is crucial.

Age-friendly may be started by people in the community or a local council. Either way, it's important that local organisations and charities that provide services for or advocate for older people come on board and that any solutions work alongside or with other programmes in the community.

People of all generations are encouraged to be a part of the projects and initiatives.

Find out more

To find out more about age-friendly email the
Office for Seniors at **osc@msd.govt.nz**

We can let you know what is happening in
New Zealand communities and how you
might start or progress age-friendly in your
city or community.

www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz