

Age-friendly Belfast Charter: Information for organisations

‘A city where older people live life to the full’



**Making life better,
together**

Belfast Strategic Partnership

What is the Age-friendly Belfast Charter?

The Age-friendly Belfast Charter is a statement of commitment by participating organisations to work together towards a more age-friendly city. Our shared principles and standards will lead to a more supportive and inclusive city for older people in Belfast.

This charter will help us to realise the vision in our Age-friendly Belfast Plan that:

Belfast will be a city where older people live life to the full.

The plan describes how Age-friendly Belfast will work with older people, community, voluntary and statutory organisations as well as non profit and businesses to ensure our city is ready to meet the needs of our changing population. www.makinglifebettertogether.com

This charter identifies simple steps you can take to make your organisation more age-friendly.

Population ageing is one of the major successes of the 20th Century and Belfast, along with most developed nations, has an ageing population. We have seen a 17% increase in the numbers of people age 85+ since 2001. Currently 19% of the population is over 60 and this is expected to increase to 36% by 2050.

Why have an Age-friendly Charter?

By committing to the shared principles and standards in this charter organisations will support older people to reach their full potential. Some simple actions can improve the accessibility and design of our city.

Our city relies heavily on the contribution older people make to their families, their communities and the economy. We have found that older people are a diverse group involved in a wide range of activities including; seeking employment, caring for family members, volunteering, taking part in lifelong learning, participating in community groups and using parks and leisure centres.

According to Appreciating Age: Valuing the positive contribution made by older people in Northern Ireland; the total value of financial contributions made by older people in Northern Ireland in 2012 was almost £1.4 billion

(Source: Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland Report, October 2014.)

The charter outlines straightforward standards of customer care for older people. Older people tend to be loyal customers. If your business is age-friendly you can attract and keep customers within a large and expanding demographic.

Why should my organisation get involved?

By signing up to the Age-friendly Belfast Charter you will have:

1) Better representation

Enhancing your brand and reputation

Being an age-friendly organisation serves as a powerful expression of responsibility. Your efforts will demonstrate a clear commitment to supporting your community that will be noticed and appreciated by the citizens of Belfast.

2) Better work

Gaining from the skills and experience of older workers

Many organisations are recognising that the workforce is changing. A good mix of older and younger employees often make the highest performing teams and learning from older staff is often the best way to develop younger employees.

3) Better business

Developing an age diverse workforce makes good business sense

An age diverse workforce will reflect an age diverse customer base offering better customer service and driving customer loyalty. The contribution of workers of all ages to business planning is likely to greatly enhance future business success.

Who can take part in this initiative?

Any public, private, voluntary or community organisation who commits to the Age-friendly principles can take part. If you would like further information, you can complete Age-friendly expression of interest form included with this document and a member of our team will contact you directly.



What are the Age-friendly principles?

- **Customer care** that presents opportunities for older people to provide feedback and shape services
- **Communication** which provides accessible information and respects diverse decisions and lifestyle choices of older people, promoting a positive view of ageing
- **Accessibility and signage** which anticipates and responds flexibly to the needs of older people
- **Valuing a diverse workforce** by recognising the wide range of capabilities and resources for people of every age.

Signing up to the Age-friendly Belfast Charter:

Signing up is straightforward:

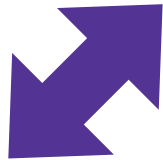
1. A senior member of your organisation will sign the Age-friendly Belfast Charter agreement, which states that the organisation will adhere to the Age-friendly principles, use the Age-friendly checklist and develop an action plan for improvement. Visit www.makinglifebettertogether.com for some good practice examples
2. The signed agreement should be returned to the Age-friendly Belfast Team
3. The Age-friendly Belfast Team will issue a certificate and window sticker once the signed agreement is received
4. The name of your organisation will be added to Age-friendly Belfast website and you can provide information for the age-friendly update
5. Ongoing monitoring will be undertaken by older people or a member of the Age-friendly Belfast Team who will carry out mystery shopper visits and provide feedback
6. In order to maintain your age-friendly status you will be required to show evidence of your commitment to improvements

If your improvement plan is not implemented you will be given 12 months for these changes to take place. We reserve the right to remove our certificate and sticker if improvements are not being met.

An annual Age-friendly Belfast Business Award will be developed to support this Charter.

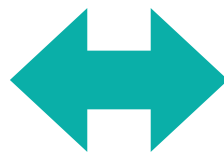
Step 1: Commitment to the Age-friendly Belfast principles,

- Sign Age-friendly Charter Agreement and return it to Age-friendly Belfast Team
- On receipt of your agreement the Age-friendly Belfast certificate and window sticker will be sent to you
- Your organisation will be added to our Age-friendly Belfast website



Step 3: Evaluation progress

- Measure progress yearly against your improvement plan
- Report progress to the Age-friendly Belfast Team yearly
- A Mystery Shopper or Monitoring visit will take place



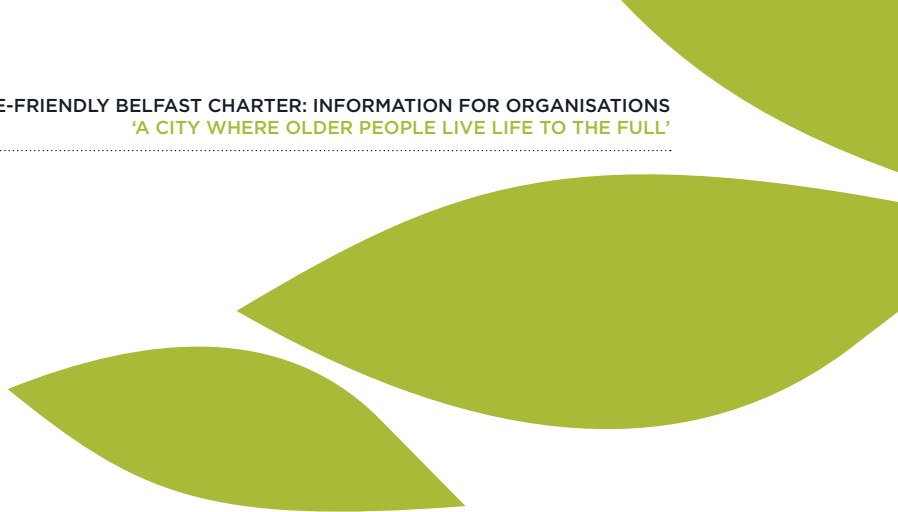
Step 2: Implementation

- Carry out Age-friendly checklist assessment and develop your plan for improvement
- Your improvement plan should cover a 2 year period
- Return your plan to the Age-friendly Belfast Team
- Look out for our Age-friendly Charter Training 3 to 4 times per year

Age-friendly Checklist

The following checklist helps you to identify how age-friendly your organisation is. It will be unusual for you to be able to tick all measures on initial assessment.

Customer care /staff training	Older people are treated respectfully by staff.	
	Staff are courteous, helpful and speak clearly.	
	Staff give extra time or there is a quiet space for older people who have dementia or are anxious.	
	Staff are trained to listen and respond to the varying needs of older people-for example disability or dementia awareness training.	
	Discounts or special offers for older people are promoted when possible.	
Communication	Older people can easily find information about your organisation and services.	
	Printed information is clear and straightforward.	
	Older people are visible in advertising and are depicted positively and without stereotyping.	
	Telephone answering services give instructions clearly and tell callers how to repeat message at anytime.	
	You moderate excessively loud music and consider use of music in your premises.	
Accessibility	Entrances are kept free of dirt, leaves, snow or other obstacles.	
	People in wheelchairs or with walking aids can easily navigate spaces in your premises or services.	
	Products are placed on shelves that are reachable or help is offered to reach items.	
	There is a place where clients or customers can sit and rest.	
	You provide, or sign post to toilet facilities.	
	You provide adequate lighting at entrance and throughout your premises.	
	You avoid heavy doors or offer electronic doors.	



Signage	Large clear font is used on signage, with good contrast between text and background.	
	There is good contrast between signs and the surface they are mounted on.	
	Signs for toilets and exits are clear.	
	Glass doors are marked.	
	Signs are at eye level and are well lit.	
Valuing an ageing workforce	Older staff have opportunities for up-skilling and in-work training.	
	There are opportunities and support for intergenerational mentoring.	
	Policies and procedures are in place for supporting staff members with caring responsibilities.	
	Your organisation is committed to working flexibly; support is available for all ages joining, employed and leaving employment.	



Belfast

Age- friendly Belfast

Age-friendly Belfast Team

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