

A Place for me? Northampton Town Centre Research Study

Report authors.

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**A big thank you to all those who
contributed to the research!**



Choose a photograph

1. What do you see?

**Record on a post-it
Complete additional
post-its for additional
points if necessary**

**2. What does
this image mean
*for you?***

Place on A3 paper

**3. Feedback
and plenary**

The number of people in Northamptonshire over the age of 65 continues to increase faster than the rest of the population in the UK. In 2018 there was an estimated total population of 225,146 people in Northampton, of those 32,128 (14%) were over the age of 65 and 8,783 (3%) were aged 80 and over. Current projected population figures suggest that there will be more than 45,000 people in Northampton over 65 by 2030.

There is now extensive evidence that isolation and loneliness can increase pressures on services, with lonely and isolated people more likely to:

- **visit their GP more often**
- **have a higher use of medication**
- **use accident and emergency services independent of chronic illness**
- **be admitted to adult social care**
- **make more use of mental health services**
- **have early admission to residential or nursing care**

The health impact of loneliness has been greatest among older people

What we wanted to contribute to...

- increasing the vitality and prosperity of Northampton town centre by making the town centre a place older people can, and want to, utilise
- improving older people's wellbeing through reduced isolation and increased autonomy
- reducing the use of health and social care services through the improved wellbeing of older people



About the study

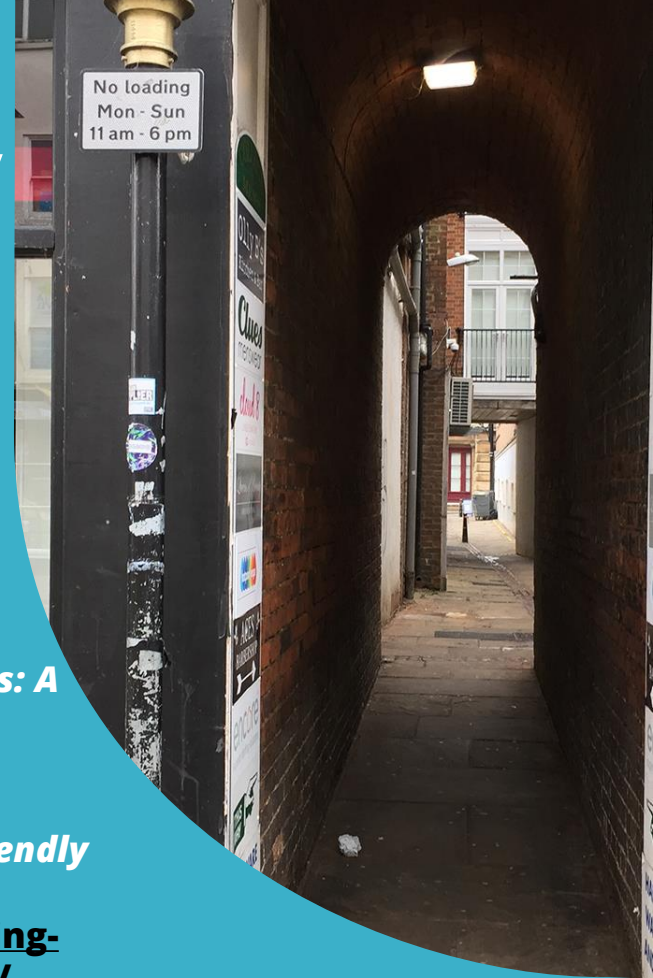
- **Ethics, mental capacity and safeguarding**
- **Recruitment via Age UK**
- **9 people took part: 5m/4f,**
- **Average age 82, white British, all lived locally**
- **How we collected the information:**
 - **snap and chat,**
 - **individual interviews,**
 - **focus group**
- **Analysis: thematic analysis**
- **Limitations**



The findings resonate strongly with other national and international research

World Health Organisation (WHO). (2007). *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide*. WHO. Geneva

PLACE-AGE. (2019). *Place-Making with Older Adults: Towards Age-Friendly Cities and Communities*. PLACE-AGE. Available from:
<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/type/Place-Age-Place-Making-with-Older-Adults-Towards-Age-Friendly-Cities-and-Communities/>



Some key findings

- Town centre history and memories built a sense of identity
- A place older people could take part in life and culture
- A lost sense of belonging for older people
- A difficult place to be proud of

I was just talking about an aeroplane in about 1941/42 time that crashed and lay here on the ground. It flew up Gold Street and as the wings were passing the houses, it left scars which are still visible now. I can remember the incident very well.

Jack



Key findings continued

- Not an easy place to get around
- The town does not feel safe
- The bus station was a problem
- Concern how money was spent and what was an improvement

Some buses have never gone into the new bus station; those buses weren't given a place.... [My friend/relative] had to wait out here in the rain to get to her bus. God rest her soul, she died a couple of months ago, she had to wait out here in the rain to get her bus.

Isla



Recommendations

Review the retail offer in relation to the potential custom and spend of older people. For example, ensuring goods, such as clothing, are targeted for the older customer and offering time for a more personal service to older customers.

Ensure the design and plans for signage and wayfinding in the town centre includes supported involvement of older people in decisions and agreed changes.



Recommendations continued

Review the design and function of the current bus station with specific consideration and supported involvement of older people in the context of the impact on their accessibility, safety and welfare.

Actively enhance older people's participation in decisions about how public money is used to transform and regenerate urban areas, such as the town centre. Demonstrate consideration of older people's 'voice' and the evidence of what enables age friendly places in any transformation plans for the town centre.



**Making the town all
age friendly would
potentially benefit all
those using the town,
families, new visitors
and businesses**

Thank you

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Link to report

<https://www.northampton.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/older-people-and-the-future-northampton-town-centre-age-uk.pdf>