

# Ageing *Better*

→ in Lincolnshire  
Adding Life to Years

Director of Public Health  
Annual Report 2023

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# 1 Foreword



Welcome to my fifth annual report as Director of Public Health for Lincolnshire. Last year my report focused on the diversity in the communities spanning Greater Lincolnshire, highlighting some of the disparities in health outcomes

and wellbeing. This year my report focuses on the importance of addressing the needs of our ageing population. We will shed light on the current situation in Lincolnshire and address the pressing health and, equally important, social issues which affect our ageing population.

The ageing agenda has always been of paramount importance in Lincolnshire due to the number of older residents. Our county experiences the dual challenge of an ageing population alongside a rural and coastal geography, where many of our older residents live. This combination of factors necessitates tailored solutions to address the distinct needs of, and support for, our older population to live and age well. However, as we will see through the lens of the Age-friendly Communities Framework, there is a positive outlook for the older population, by harnessing the potential to help improve the health and wellbeing of older people in the county.

Using the World Health Organisation (WHO) Age-friendly Communities Framework, which emphasises some of the key determinants of healthy ageing and promoting the well-being of older individuals, as our guide, we can begin to understand the challenges within the context of Lincolnshire. Additionally, the Centre for Ageing Better in Lincolnshire is a strategic partner of Lincolnshire County Council and continues to play a pivotal role in supporting the implementation of policies and initiatives to address the needs of the ageing population.

By embracing the healthy ageing agenda and addressing the needs and challenges of our older population, we can foster a healthier, more resilient society for generations to come. We must all engage to build a future where age does not limit potential but enhances the richness of life for people in Lincolnshire.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank all of those who have supported the writing and production of this year's Director of Public Health Annual report.

**Derek Ward**  
Director of Public Health



I am very pleased to co-present the 2023 Director of Public Health annual report with Derek. Our report stresses the importance of addressing the needs of our older population people in Lincolnshire and additionally, allows us to

highlight the challenges experienced by Lincolnshire's adult social care workforce and unpaid carers (most often family or friends) who contribute so much to our communities. A high number of older people, particularly in our rural and coastal communities, face personal and present social care challenges, both for professional services and unpaid carers. Additionally, in their everyday lives whether getting around the house, undertaking everyday tasks or who have no other support. In this report we highlight the growth in the prevalence of preventable health conditions requiring supportive social care support. This should focus our attention on finding innovative ways to support those in most need, whilst empowering those who can be supported with a lighter touch an opportunity to retain independence, be more resilient and stay connected.

Digital Technology is playing an increasing role not just in our personal and private lives but also in transforming the health and care system in Lincolnshire. We are working with our health partners to maximise use of technology in key areas.

I echo Derek's call to action to embrace the healthy ageing agenda. It is vital that we address the needs of our older population, and the challenges they face, enabling them to enjoy rich and rewarding later lives. For health and social care services to remain sustainable for Lincolnshire's growing population of older people, substantial investment is required in new ways of working, better use of improved housing and technology, reaping a return on investment both socially and economically.

### **Glen Garrod**

**Director of Adult Social Services**

## 2 Introduction

In this annual report for 2023, we will be describing how the World Health Organization (WHO) Age-friendly Cities Framework (Figure 1) can be applied to the older population of Lincolnshire. In doing so we will see that, with the right provision of services and support, there is a positive outlook for older people in the county.

The Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities was established by the WHO in 2010 and connects cities, communities, and organisations around the world through a common vision of ‘making their community a great place to grow old in’. (WHO, n.d.) In the UK, the Centre for Ageing Better is the affiliated network who work with partners across the Country to test out new approaches to ageing better that could be rolled out to other areas. Due to its coastal and rural population, Lincolnshire was selected as one of the three original partners along with Greater Manchester and Leeds (Centre for Ageing Better, 2023a,b)

Establishing Lincolnshire as a positive age-friendly place for our older population to live is important. In comparison to inner cities, our large proportion of older people, combined with the rural and coastal geography in Lincolnshire, add different logistical and personal dimensions to good provision of services and infrastructure that support the health and wellbeing of older people.



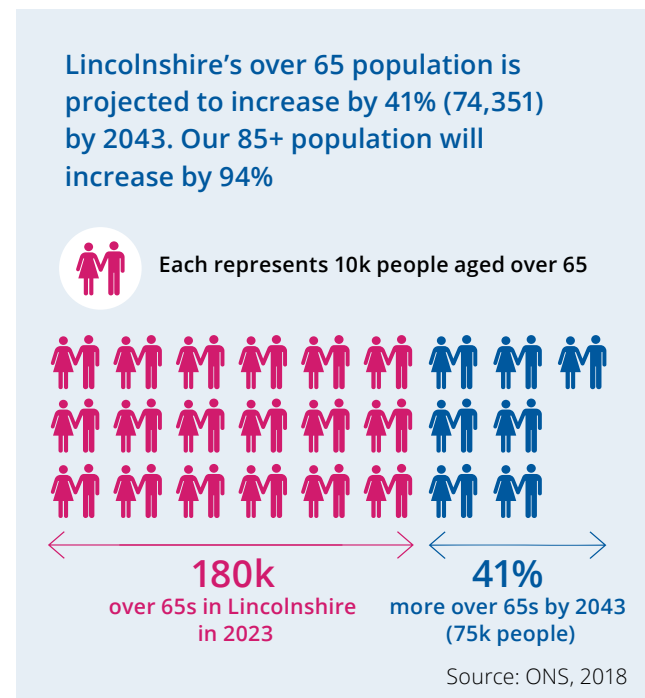
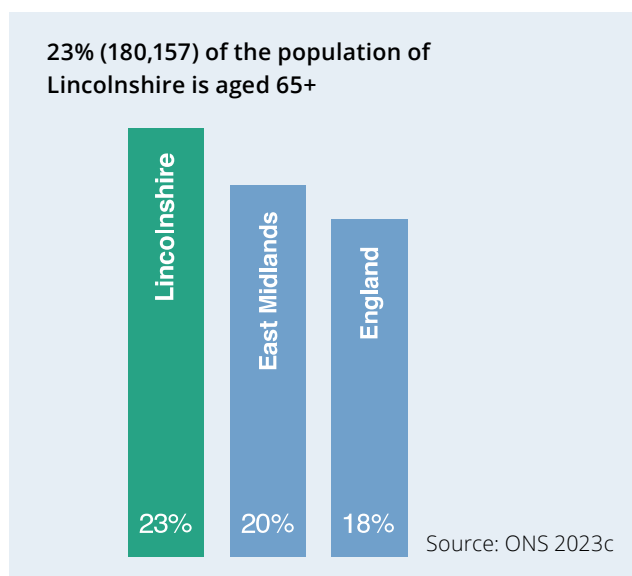
Figure 1 (Centre for Ageing Better 2023c)

The work done in East Lindsey and the legacy of that work provide an example of what is achievable. The next section in this introduction, along with each chapter in this report, describes the impact our older population, in rural and coastal settings where appropriate, has on health and social care provision in Lincolnshire and how each domain links to personal circumstances and local infrastructure. Each chapter begins with an infographic which illustrates how its theme interconnects with other domains.

# 3 Lincolnshire Geography and Population

Lincolnshire has a diverse population with a mix of urban, rural and coastal areas. The density of the population is relatively low due to the rurality of the county but can vary considerably between Districts. Almost all our districts are in the top 30% of the least dense districts in Great Britain. In Lincolnshire, nearly a quarter (23%, 180,157) of the population are aged 65 and over, higher than the East Midlands (20%) and England (18%) and this is estimated to grow by 41% to 255,000 people over the next 20 years. The Old Age Dependency Ratio (OADR), a measure of the number of people aged 65 years and over for every 1,000 people of working age (16 to 64) is also more pronounced in Lincolnshire (39.4) compared to the England average (29.4), and East Lindsey has the fifth highest proportion of over 65s in Great Britain with an OADR of 54.8. (Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2023c).

## Proportion of Population Aged 65+

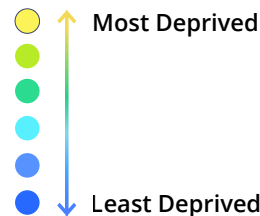
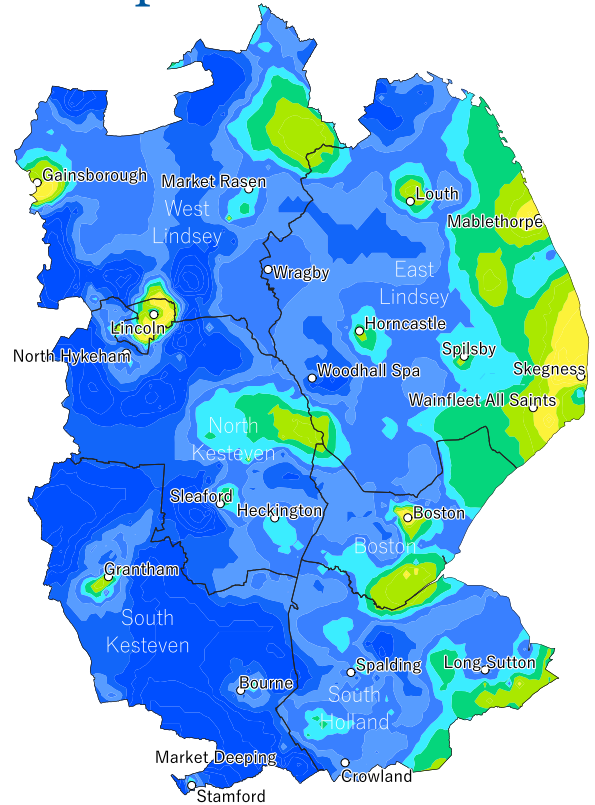


Lincolnshire demography presents unique challenges in rural and coastal areas, the vastness and scattered population can make it difficult for older adults to access essential services including health care, transport, and social support. Despite these challenges, the ageing population is a valuable resource, many older people actively contribute to the community and participate in voluntary activities, which can promote active ageing and enhance the wellbeing and quality of life.

The health of our older population is of great concern particularly when we consider this alongside the projected rise in the over 65 population in the next 20 years. When we factor in the levels of disability-free, and healthy life expectancy, this tells us that both women and men in the county are likely to live

at least part of their older age in ill health. In addition, inequalities impact negatively on health and life expectancy, the most deprived areas in the county, seen on the east coast and in urban areas such as Lincoln, Gainsborough, Boston, and Grantham, have lower life expectancy and poorer health outcomes than those living in the least deprived areas (OHID, 2023). This illustrates the scale of potential reliance on health and care services over the next 20 years, not just in rural and coastal areas but in urban centres too.

## Deprivation Affecting Older People

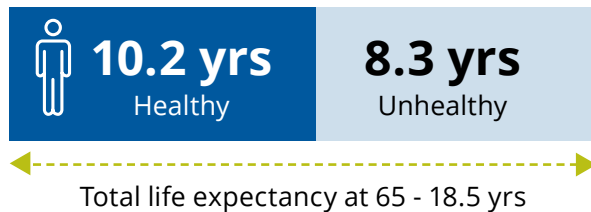


Source: GOV.UK English Indices of Deprivation, 2019

## Are we Ageing Well?

Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy at 65 in Lincolnshire

### Male



### Female



Source: OHID 2023

It is estimated that of all those aged 65 and over in Lincolnshire, 48,000 (27%) have a limiting long-term illness whose day-to-day activities are limited a little. This is projected to increase by 18,000 (40%) by 2040. For those with a limiting long-term illness whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot, the increase is expected to be closer to 47%, affecting 61,000 people. (Projecting Older People Population Information (POPPI) 2023). Adults aged over 65 have on average 2.6 long term conditions, those under 65 average 0.7, (NHS Lincolnshire ICB, 2023).

# 4 Community Support and Health Services



In an age-friendly Lincolnshire, providing care for older individuals is vital for maintaining their health, independence, and activity levels, and this includes easy access to a range of health and social care services (WHO, 2023). As our older population grows, the demand for community support and health services will increase (Centre for Ageing Better, 2023). This projected rise presents a significant challenge, as older people tend to develop long-term conditions and require more health and social care (NHS England, 2023). Lincolnshire faces higher prevalence rates both regionally and nationally, for many long-term conditions, and our population of over 70s will be around 100,000 by 2040 (Office for National Statistics, 2023). This presents a significant challenge for health and care services. Our rural and coastal areas encounter additional challenges related to workforce recruitment and retention including the distances required to access services.

In Lincolnshire, healthcare provision centres around hospitals in Lincoln and Boston, offering major

specialties and 24-hour emergency services, while other areas provide community health clinics and support services (United Lincolnshire Hospitals Trust, 2023). However, older people in rural and coastal communities often face long journeys to access specialist healthcare, a concern discussed further in the Transport chapter. Residents near Lincolnshire’s non-coastal borders often travel to neighbouring counties for hospital care, imposing significant barriers, particularly for people without private transport.

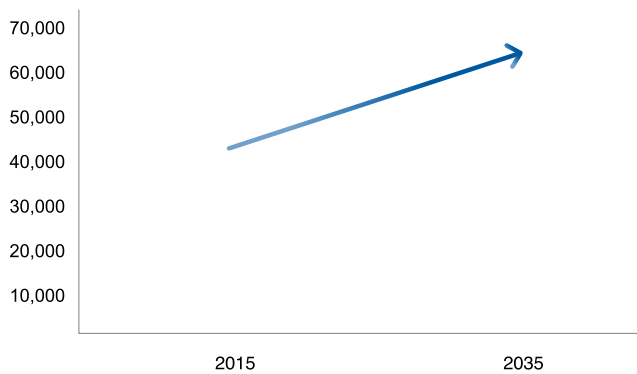
Nationally, NHS waiting lists for elective care are increasing, and progress in reducing wait times is slow (Nuffield Trust, 2023). Lincolnshire’s ageing population compounds the pressure on hospital, general practice, and social care services, and the county struggles to recruit qualified staff. Challenges such as low pay and unsociable hours affect recruitment and retention in social care (HM Government, 2022). An ageing population with complex health needs adds to GPs’ workloads, already affected by NHS backlogs (NHS Digital, 2023).



Innovative solutions are needed, and Lincolnshire’s health and social care system is already starting to adopt these. Digital technology can free home care staff to visit service users with higher needs, of particular importance to rural and coastal areas where service users are spread across large distances; and the LIVES falls response units help prevent unnecessary visits to A&E. (LIVES, 2023). Utilising our data and information more effectively through adopting population health management (PHM) approaches can address specific health needs, using evidence-based strategies to enhance outcomes and quality of life.

### Challenging Need in the Next 10-15 Years

Over half of 65 - 74 year olds are expected to be multimorbid (2+LTCs) by 2035



Source: Kingston, et al., 2018

## Falls Case Study

Falls are the most frequent type of accident in people over 65 and the number of injuries increases with age. It is estimated that around 53,000 people in Lincolnshire will suffer a fall each year creating a significant strain on health and care services. In 2021/22 for the age 65-79 group there were 1,095 Emergency Hospital Admissions due to a fall, for those age 80+ this rose to 1,990 (OHID, 2023d). Someone who has fallen has a 50% probability of significantly impaired mobility and 10% probability of dying within a year.

The LIVES Falls Response Team provide immediate assessment and treatment for fallers in their homes and have reduced the number of transfers to hospital for urgent care by 5%. LIVES are also proactively referring patients onto prevention and early intervention services (5.5 times more than EMAS) – helping to reduce pressure on services.

One You Lincolnshire are also piloting a programme to help older people at risk of falls through strength and balance activity.

Source: unless otherwise stated: Lincolnshire Health Intelligence Hub (LHIH), JSNA: Falls, 2023

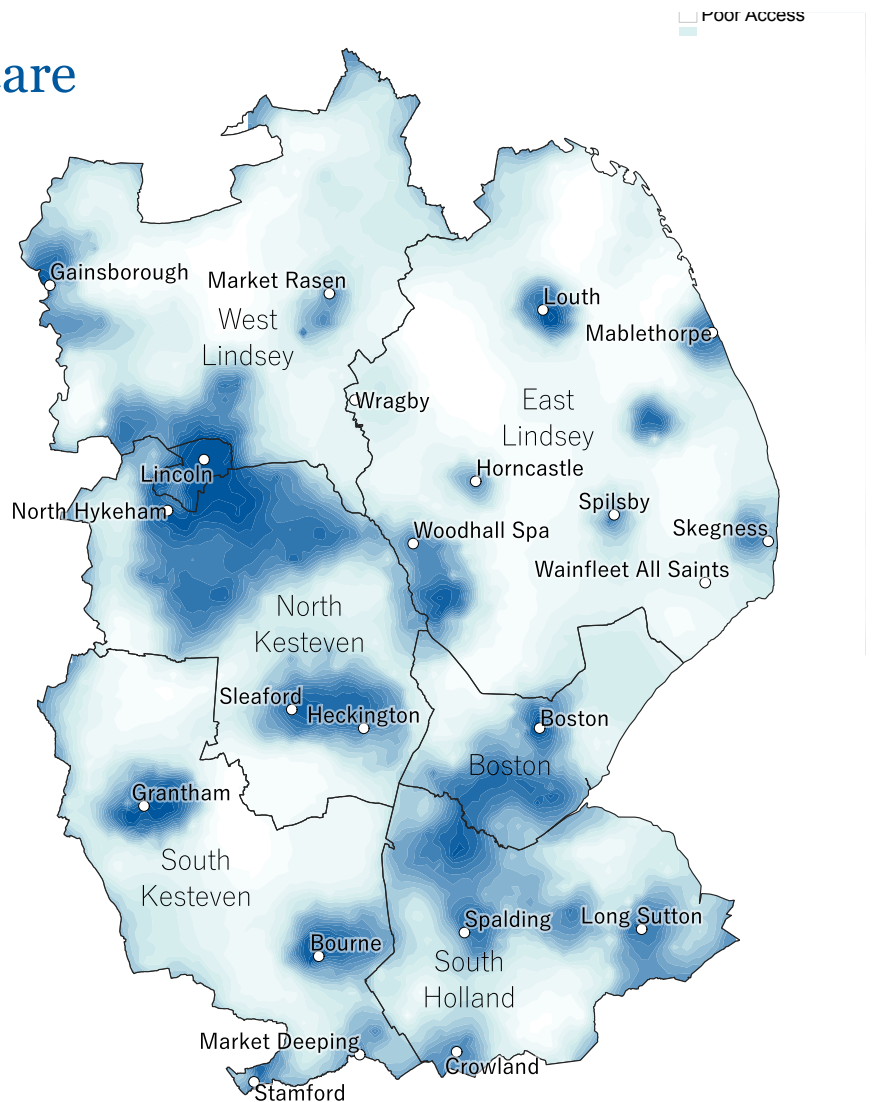
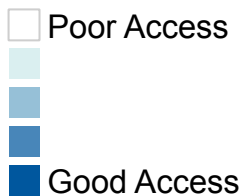


Every hip fracture costs the NHS an average of  
**£14.6k** (NHIR, 2023)



Each day in hospital costs approximately  
**£400** to the NHS (BMJ Open, 2020)

## Access to any healthcare in Lincolnshire



### Key Points

- In an age friendly world, the provision of health and care, including preventative measures, which is accessible and timely is essential in enabling older people to remain independent, healthy and active.
- The county has issues with workforce recruitment and retainment in both health and care sectors.
- Health and care services are impacted by the large ageing population who require higher levels of medical and social care.
- In rural and coastal areas, patients need to travel long distances to access hospital care.
- Service responses are in place and being developed which help reduce the impact on services.

# 5 Respect and Social Inclusion

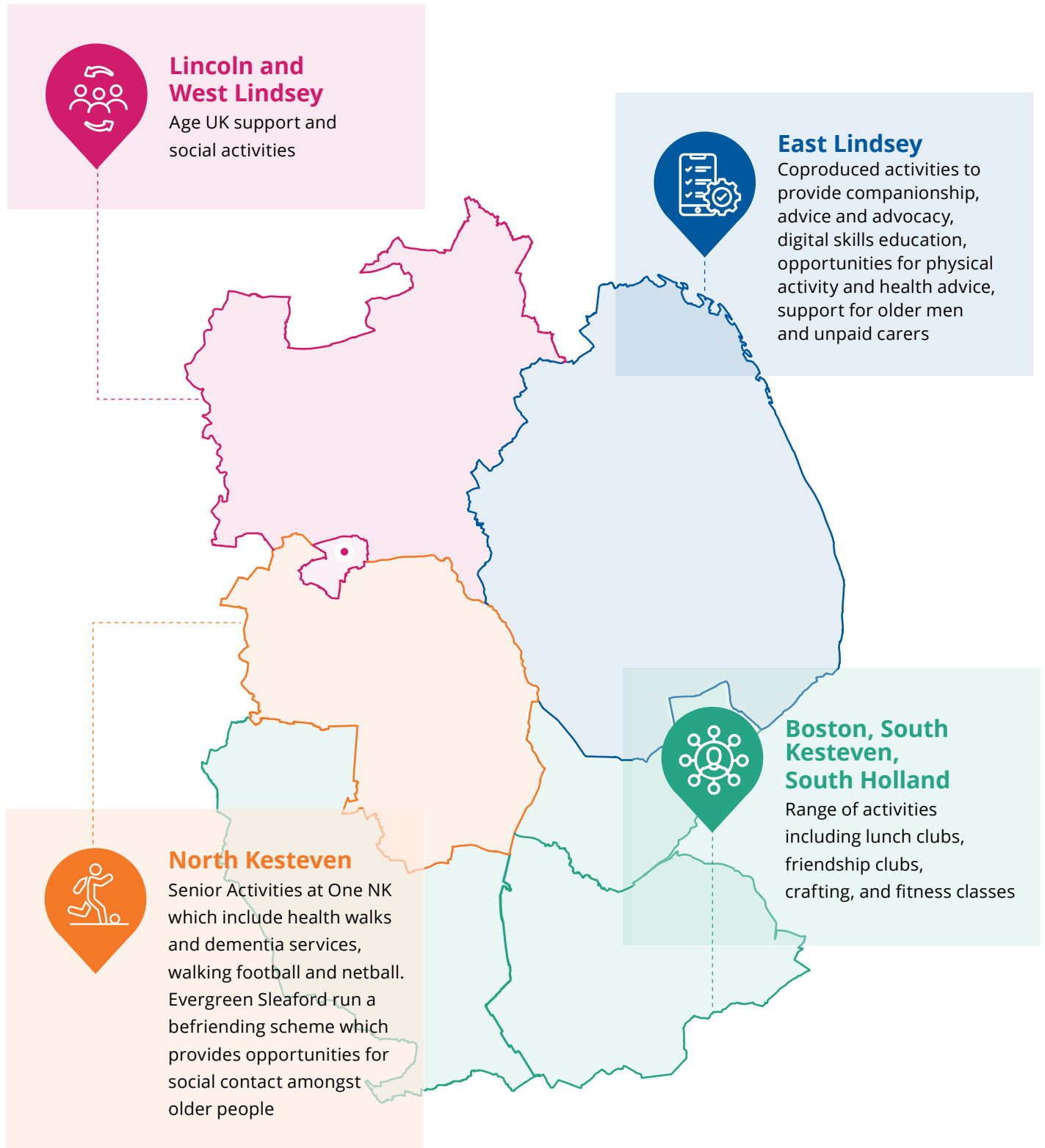


Respect and Social Inclusion is characterised by; intergenerational interactions; education about ageing; an expectation that people will appreciate the elderly; and social and economic inclusion. (WHO, 2023). Despite age being a protected characteristic, ageism remains prevalent (Centre for Ageing Better, 2023). Changing perceptions of ageing is challenging, but ensuring older people feel valued and included by their community, and are supported to stay well for longer, will reduce the need for health and social care services.

The risk of isolation increases with age, ageism can exacerbate this, leading to multiple disadvantages and isolation among older people (Age UK, 2018). There is a need to identify and include our LGBTQ+, Black, Asian and Ethnic Minorities (BAME), and migrant populations. Our older LGBTQ+ population, although relatively small in number, often lack traditional support structures and may face discrimination, impacting their mental health and well-being (Age UK, 2021). BAME groups, again a relatively small population compared to other areas of the country, are disproportionately affected by certain health conditions and institutional racism, necessitating recognition of their needs (King's Fund, 2023).

East Lindsey, our most sparsely populated district with market towns and seaside villages, faces unique challenges, including high levels of deprivation, especially in coastal communities, and a seasonal economy that offers limited opportunities for older job seekers (Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2023). It is the only area in Lincolnshire with WHO Age-Friendly status. This status signifies a commitment to listening to the needs of its ageing population (nearly 40% of East Lindsey's residents are aged over 60, exceeding the national average) to create age-friendly environments. In collaboration with the Centre for Ageing Better and Lincolnshire County Council, the Rural Strategic Partnership was created to focus on housing, communities, health, and work (Centre for Ageing Better, n.d.). Using a co-production approach involving older people, activities were developed to provide (TED in East Lindsey). Despite barriers in remote areas, intergenerational contact facilitated by co-production can dispel negative perceptions and foster community integration, preventing ageism (WHO, 2021b).

## There are a range of activities available across Lincolnshire to support our older residents



These evidence-based initiatives in East Lindsey are positively supporting the local older population, fostering mutual respect, reducing social isolation, influencing health and wellbeing services and most importantly, providing an example of how facilitating an age friendly community approach has created a legacy which continues to shape older people's positive experiences.

Throughout Lincolnshire there is a wide variety of formally co-ordinated and localised activities for older people. These provide a mixture of opportunities for friendship and healthy activities designed to keep body and mind active, in turn contributing significantly to older people's health and wellbeing. For example, Age UK in Lincoln provide a range of different activities in their Park Street Venue, which acts as both a hub for support information and offers both virtual and venue based social activities. In the Boston, South Holland, and South Kesteven districts social groups include lunch clubs, friendship clubs, crafting, and fitness classes. (Lincoln & South Lincolnshire Age UK, 2023) Elsewhere, in North Kesteven, there are Senior Activities at One NK which include health walks and dementia services, walking football and netball, and over 50s activity groups (Better, 2023). Localised activities include warm spaces which are available throughout the county in diverse locations such as churches, garden centres and village halls. (Warm Spaces, 2023), and Evergreen Sleaford run a befriending scheme which provides opportunities for social contact amongst older people (Evergreen Sleaford, 2023). These are representative examples of the excellent work being carried out in the county to enable older people to live socially active lives and reduce isolation and loneliness.

## Key Points

- Social interaction is crucial to reducing isolation and has potential to reduce burdens on health and care provision.
- There are potential benefits to the community in increasing activities for intergenerational interactions.
- Facilitating intergenerational contact through the coproduction of services and activities is good practice in an age friendly community and can lead to greater understanding between age groups.
- Some older people in minority groups can be further marginalised due to social perceptions.

# 6 Communication and Information



Our ability to communicate effectively plays a crucial role in active ageing, but modern times often bring information overload. Recognising the diverse needs of Lincolnshire’s older residents and service users is essential, including those who speak languages other than English, those with limited digital technology skills, or those with dementia or sensory and physical impairments (WHO, 2023; Centre for Ageing Better, 2023). Barriers to communication and information access can stem from individual capabilities, financial constraints, poor signage and inadequate digital infrastructure (Chief Medical Officer, 2021).

Recognising and addressing these factors is crucial, particularly in our health and care settings where insufficient support can lead to increased demands or deter individuals from seeking care, leading to poorer health outcomes and inequalities (National Voices, 2023). Staff awareness of communication barriers can promote positive interactions between professionals and service users/patients.

Digital activities like online shopping, social media engagement, and accessing information, have the potential to enrich the lives of older people, especially

in rural and coastal areas with limited transport options (Haartsen et al., 2021). Digital connectivity can contribute to better overall health by reducing isolation and loneliness, a topic discussed in our social participation chapter. Some services, like GP bookings, health checks, and medication reviews, increasingly depend on online tools and apps. However, older people still primarily prefer to receive information through traditional media and personal contact, such as phone calls (WHO, 2023). Local data indicates that for Lincolnshire residents aged over 65, postal communication remains the preferred method (Experian, 2023). How service providers communicate with older residents is fundamental to their ability to interact with the Lincolnshire health and social care system.

Barriers to digital communication include financial limitations, inadequate digital infrastructure, and a lack of digital skills (Ofcom, 2022). For people with limited incomes, the cost of internet access or mobile phones can be prohibitive. Some areas in the county suffer from poor digital connectivity and our local digital exclusion analysis shows that communities more

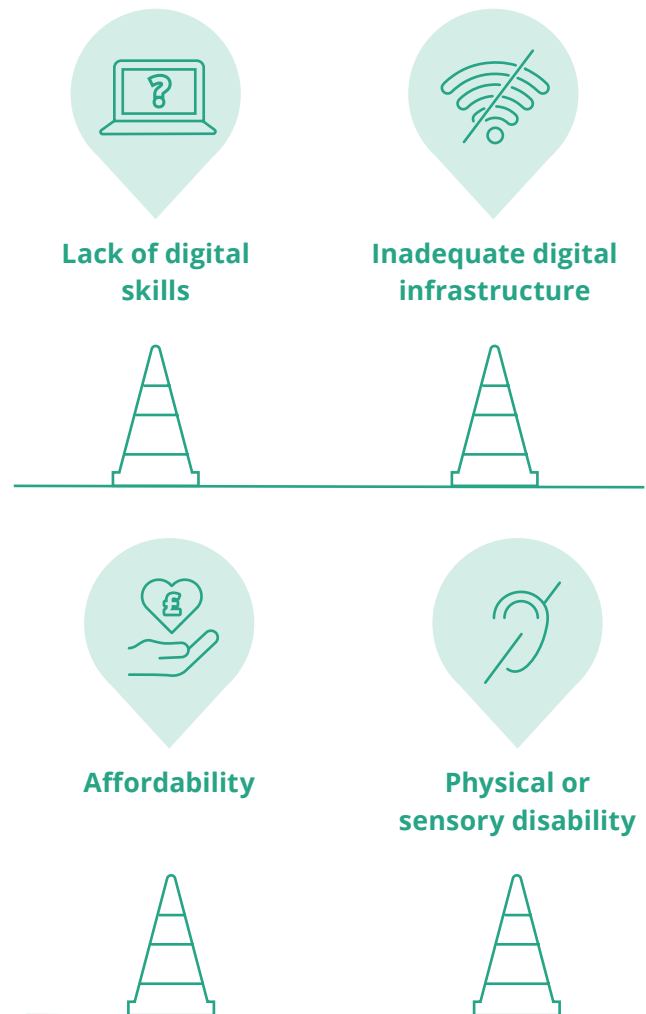
at risk are those within our coastal and rural areas and closely aligns to areas of deprivation (Lincolnshire Health Intelligence Hub, 2023).

Free internet access is available in public libraries, but accessibility remains an issue for those without a local resource. The Lincolnshire Digital Inclusion Group is working to engage with vulnerable groups by connecting organisations to address digital inclusion (Lincolnshire County Council, 2023).

Digital skills are crucial, but a significant portion of the population, particularly those over 55, have never used the internet (Tabassum, N., 2020). This puts older people at risk of being excluded from essential services and communication channels. Lincolnshire offers initiatives to help older individuals gain digital skills, such as Lincs Digital - community-based learning in East Lindsey - and digital hubs provided by North Kesteven District Council (NKDC). Age UK runs a digital champion programme and Connect to Support offers online guidance for digital and technology support (Age UK, 2023b; NKDC, 2023). Despite these efforts, reaching isolated older individuals remains a challenge (Berni, J., East Lindsey District Council, 2023).

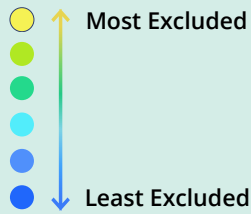
Organisations should provide resources in formats that meet the needs of older people, including adjustments for the physically and sensorially impaired. There is no reason why older people cannot access information digitally and many learn to embrace digital technology successfully, however a minority will remain unable to do so.

## Barriers to digital communication

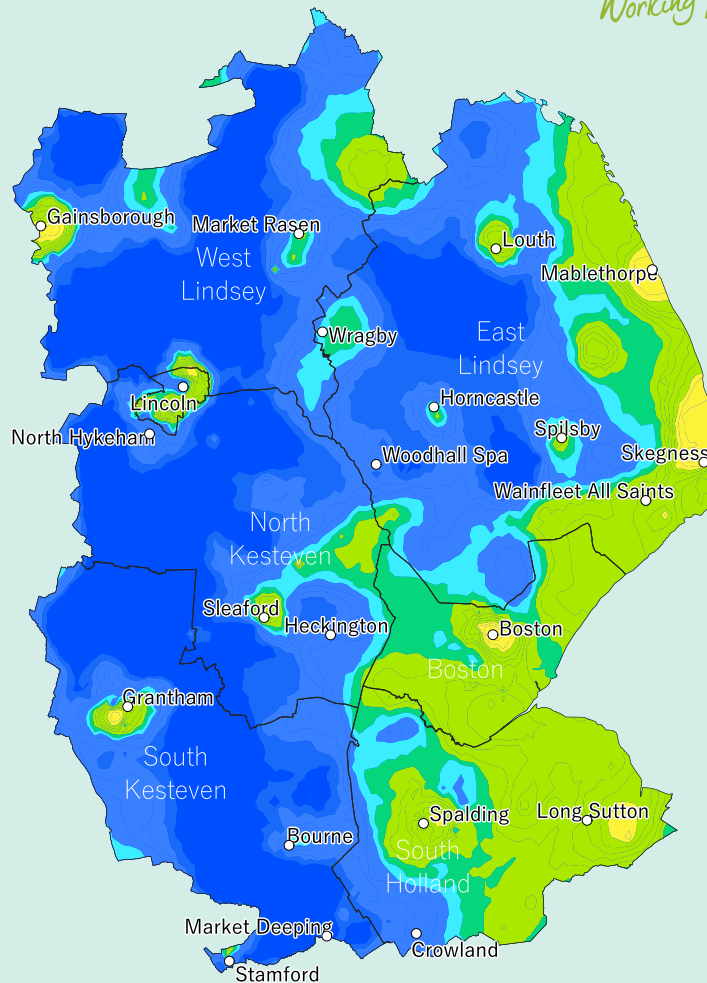


Source: Age UK, 2023

## Digital Exclusion



Source: LHIH 2023

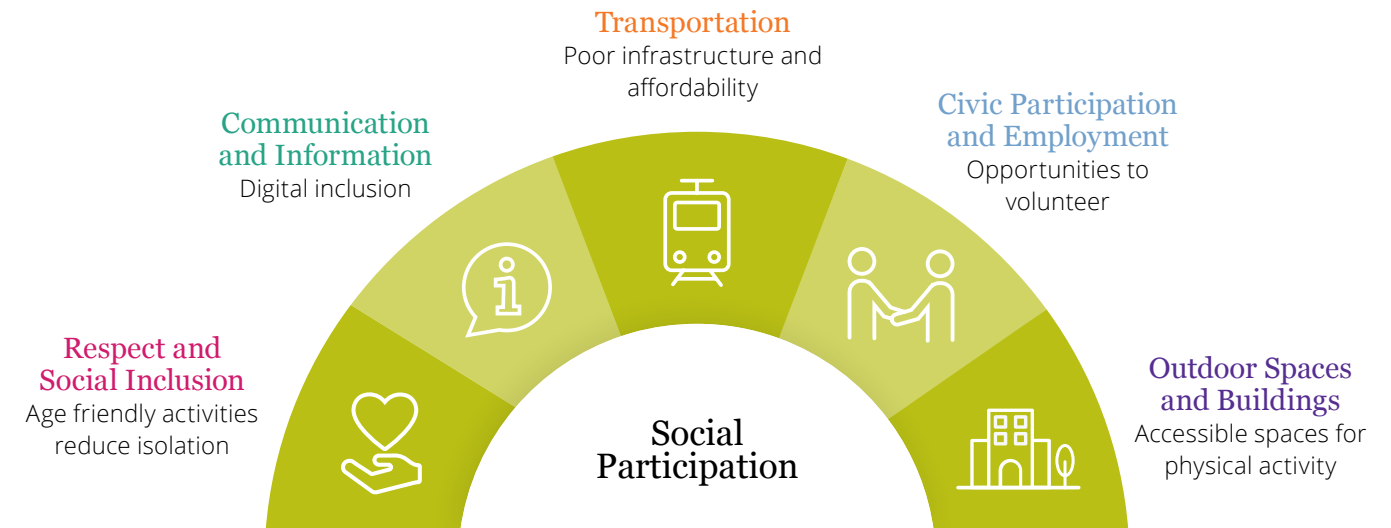


## Key Points

- Communication and Information is a key part of active ageing and providers should have an awareness of the range of needs and resources older people require to support our older residents who are at risk of experiencing difficulties engaging with health and social care services.
- There has been a move from traditional methods of communicating information and staying in touch, this is driving the need for older people to have good digital skills they are confident in and trust.
- 25% of over 65s do not currently use the internet.
- Barriers to good digital communication are fourfold: lack of digital skills, inadequate digital infrastructure, affordability, and physical or sensory disability. Age is not a barrier in itself.
- The challenge is how to include those at most risk of being isolated by not having digital access, the most complex being affordability.
- It is vital that organisations recognise and respect the communication needs of individuals with physical and sensory impairment including dementia.



# 7 Social Participation

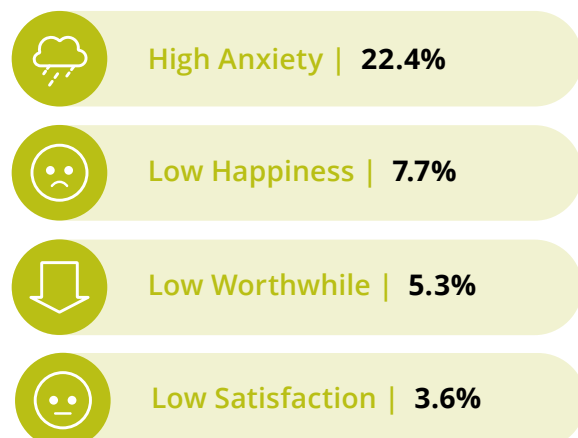


Social Participation means, the engagement in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities in the community; which leads to the integration of older people in society, helping them feel engaged and informed. Participation levels are influenced by various factors, including access to transport, physical and mental health conditions, affordability, awareness of activities, and local facilities (WHO, 2020). The importance of social participation as a means of integration and combatting loneliness, with a focus on unpaid carers is paramount for supporting Lincolnshire's older residents.

We know there are several factors that can lead to isolation and hinder social participation of older people, such as transportation challenges, financial constraints, limited access to information (increasingly online), personal choice, loss of a spouse and a lack of suitable opportunities. Isolation and loneliness can negatively impact health and well-being, creating additional pressure on health and social care services. Isolation and loneliness are not the same, but statistics indicate that 50% of individuals over 60 are at risk of social isolation, and one-third experience some degree of loneliness (Fakoya et al., 2020).

## How are our communities affected?

Source: OHID, 2021



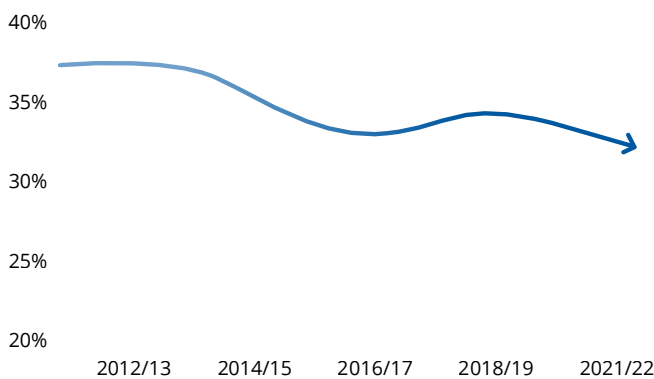
The impact of social isolation on the wellbeing of our residents' health and well-being is significant. Loneliness can lead to anxiety and further withdrawal from society, making intervention critical. Health impacts are thought to be equal with other public health priorities like obesity and smoking. Loneliness is also associated with increased risks of: Inactivity, smoking, Coronary Heart Disease, Stroke and Alzheimer's (DCMS, 2018). The prevalence of these conditions is getting worse in Lincolnshire (except for smoking). Alongside this, it is predicted by 2040, for the projected 65+ population, Dementia will affect

19,800 or 7.8% (an increase of 7,000 people) and falls that require hospital admission will rise by 56.0% (Source: POPPI, 2023), underscoring the need to reduce isolation and loneliness to alleviate pressure on health and care services (POPPI, 2023). More concerning for Lincolnshire is that rural and coastal residents are at a greater risk of loneliness than those living in our urban areas.

Unpaid carers are seven times more likely to report loneliness and face a higher risk of worsening physical and mental health conditions due to isolation (Carers UK, 2021).

Our data tells us that as our residents age they are more likely to provide unpaid care and will increase by 35% by 2040 (POPPI, 2023). A substantial number of older carers may experience limited social contact. Identifying carers with hidden needs is crucial as the ageing population and age-related illnesses increase (Carers Trust, 2023). To address these challenges in Lincolnshire, we have a range of organised social opportunities for older people, like men’s sheds and walking groups, promoting intergenerational connections. Such initiatives benefit communities and emphasise the importance of investment in such services.

**The % of adult carers who have as much Social Contact as they would like has dropped considerably over the last decade**



Source: NHS Digital, 2022

## Lincolnshire Carers Service Case Study

As the population lives longer, the Lincolnshire Carers Service is required to support many more older carers. As they become older, their caring capacity is likely to diminish, meaning that the long-term future of their current arrangements will be in many cases unsustainable. Shortly the Carers Service will be implementing a new service which will target support for this group of carers over the age of 65, who are known to adult social care and living and supporting someone with a learning disability.

### Key Points

Social Participation is engagement with cultural activities that foster older peoples’ continued integration in society, which:

- can help prevent the onset of diseases associated with ageing: dementia, strokes, and cardiovascular disease.
- is a priority for Lincolnshire because people living rurally experience higher rates of loneliness and isolation.

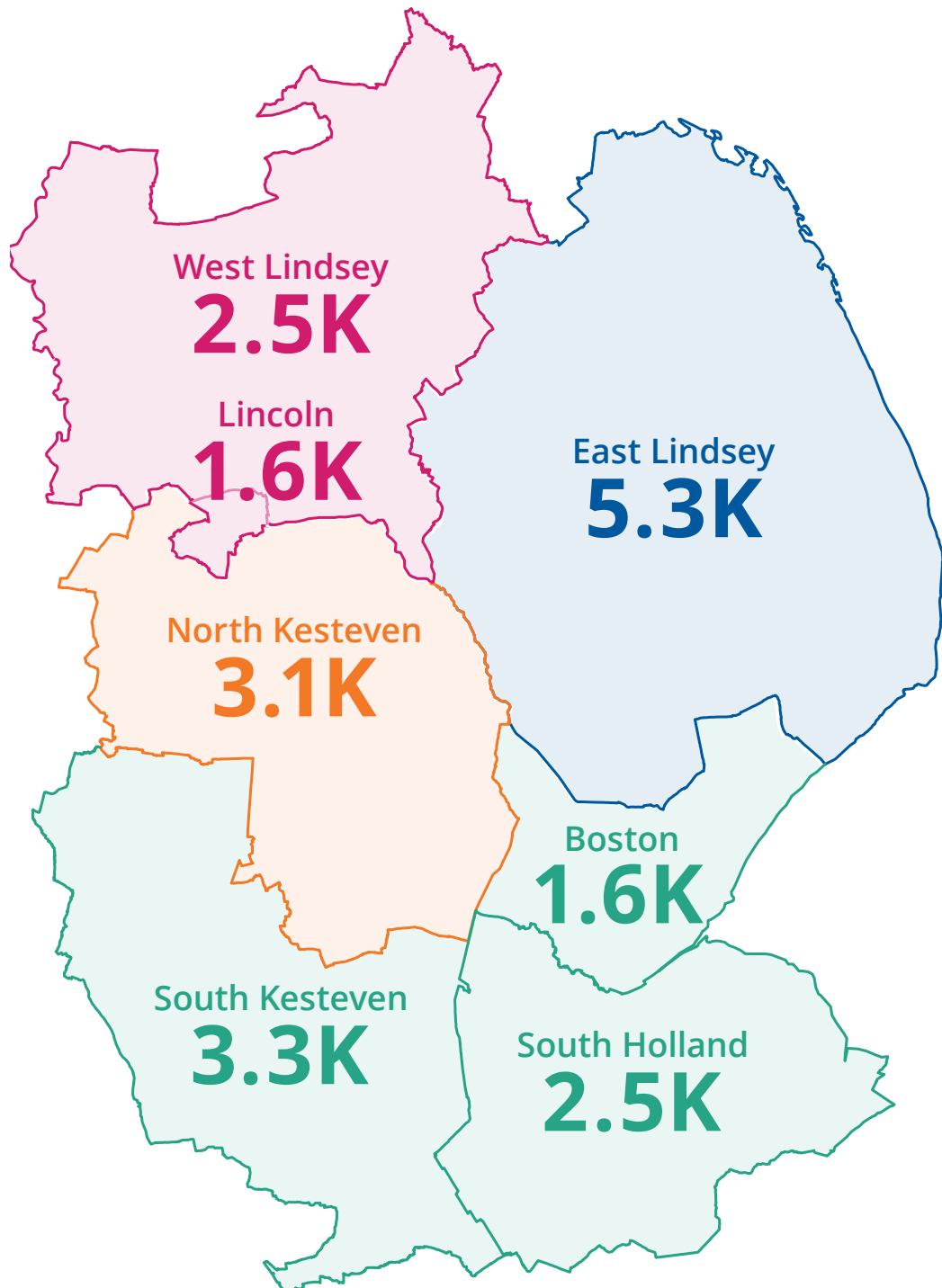
Evidence suggests isolation and loneliness are pressing public health issues barriers to increased Social Participation include:

- Transport provision and access to information.
- An unpaid caring role which increases the risk of social isolation and loneliness.
- Isolation does not imply loneliness, but both are barriers to increased participation.

# Unpaid carers in Lincolnshire



Over 20,000 people aged over 65 in Lincolnshire provide some level of care every week, 25% of which are in East Lindsey



Source: ONS, 2023

# 8 Civic Participation and Employment



Civic participation, encompassing employment, political engagement, and the availability of volunteering opportunities, is vital for our older residents to contribute to their community and maintain a sense of purpose (WHO, 2020). Opportunities for civic participation can decrease with age due to ageism, financial constraints, and perhaps most relevant - the rurality of Lincolnshire (Centre for Ageing Better, 2023a).

Although there are around 17,000 over 65s still economically active, 90% of Lincolnshire's over 65 population are economically inactive, with the majority of those (96%) having retired (ONS, 2023b). Ill health significantly impacts the ability to work, for example only 59% of working age people with musculoskeletal conditions (such as arthritis) are in work (Public Health England, 2019).

For many older individuals, finding a job is challenging due to perceived limited opportunities, leading to "discouraged workers" who have lost hope of securing employment (Stickland, 2022). Discriminatory hiring practices, skills mismatches, and access issues further complicate the situation. Schemes aimed at supporting

older residents back into work can be hindered by transport and technology access (Department for Work and Pensions, 2022).

Ageism poses a significant barrier for older job seekers who can face prejudice and discrimination, limiting their employment prospects (Centre for Ageing Better, 2023b). Volunteering offers numerous benefits, including reduced mortality rates and lower long-term care needs (Filges, T., et al., 2021). It plays a significant role in the transition from work to retirement, reducing the burden on health and care services. Good practice in volunteering should include accommodating people with disabilities, unpaid caring responsibilities, and those with long-term conditions, but barriers like financial constraints, digital exclusion, and transportation issues persist (Centre for Ageing Better, 2023a).

Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Services, along with Voluntary Centre Services, coordinate volunteering and social prescribing efforts in the county, offering comprehensive options for older individuals.

Social prescribing, which signposts people to local services and activities supporting their wellbeing, benefits those with mental health issues, long-term conditions, complex social needs, and veterans (Lincolnshire Community & Volunteering Service, 2023). Although local data is unavailable, England-wide statistics show that 61% of individuals aged 65 to 74 participate in volunteering activities, and 51% of over 75s (Statistica, 2023). This suggests almost 100,000 older residents in Lincolnshire could be participating in voluntary activities.



**90%** of Lincolnshire's over 65s population are economically inactive with the majority of those (96%) having retired

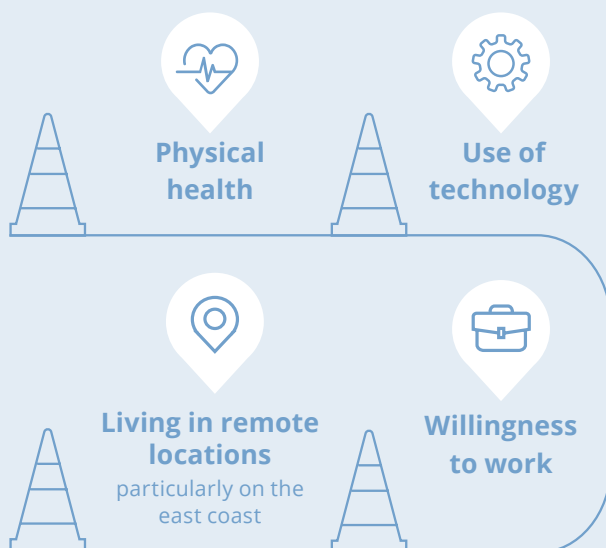
Source: ONS, 2023b



**100,000** older residents in Lincolnshire could be participating in voluntary activities

Source: Statistica, 2023

### The key barriers to employability for older people wanting to work

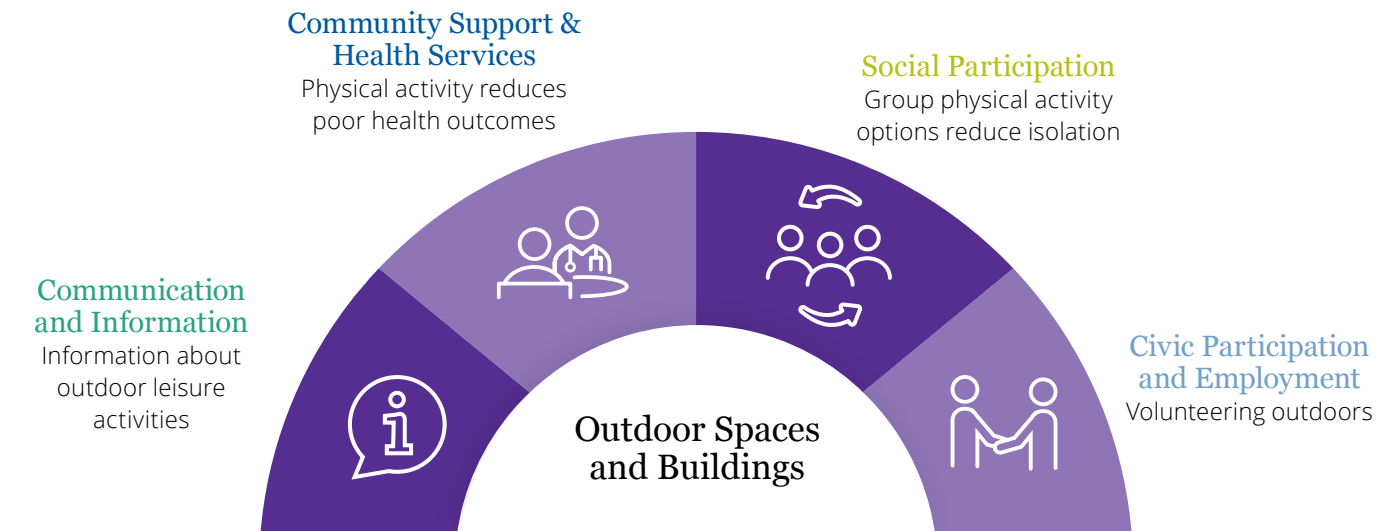


Source: Age UK, 2021

## Key Points

- Civic participation and work enhance an individual's ability to contribute to society, in addition it can provide financial stability, improve health and increase social contacts
- Options for paid employment diminish as we get older, in part due to perceptions of ageing, or a lack of opportunities which become pronounced in deprived rural areas, particularly along the east Coast.
- Employability is affected by individual circumstances: physical health, use of technology, willingness to work, and living in remote locations particularly on the east coast.
- For many, retirement and reduced incomes can lead to a sense of disempowerment, this is compounded where transport is an issue.
- Older people can continue to be engaged with their local community, through paid work or meaningful and inclusive volunteering.
- Volunteering can provide: a gateway into work, new social networks, opportunities to gain new skills or pass on experience, and personal fulfilment after retirement.
- Organised volunteering networks cover the whole county providing a range of opportunities for all abilities. These include social prescribing for people with disabilities and unpaid caring responsibilities.

# 9 Outdoor Spaces and Buildings



In an age-friendly world, outdoor spaces and buildings play a pivotal role in ensuring a secure, pleasant, and welcoming environment for older people. These spaces should feature age-friendly elements such as well-maintained buildings, walkways, safe pedestrian crossings, and rest areas, all of which support the mobility, independence, and overall quality of life for older people outside their homes (WHO, 2023). Good practices include local businesses offering resting spots and walk audits involving older individuals identifying pavement, curb, and crossing needs (Centre for Ageing Better, 2023).

Lincolnshire, boasting an abundance of green spaces, public parks, over 2,5000 miles of public rights of way, and around 50 miles of coastline (Lincolnshire County Council, 2023; Explore Lincolnshire, 2023), offers ample opportunities for outdoor activities. However, access to these spaces can be hindered by factors including disability, lack of transportation, absence of toilet facilities, and a move to car parking apps. In urban areas, concerns about personal safety and poor air quality can create additional obstacles. Addressing these barriers is essential, as local research links higher levels of inactivity to greater deprivation,

poorer health, and reduced social and community cohesion, contributing to significant health inequalities across Lincolnshire (LHIH, 2023).

As our older population in Lincolnshire increases, a corresponding growth in disability and ill health due to inactivity is expected. This will place further strain on health and social care services. While gyms, swimming pools, and sports clubs can be costly and less accessible in rural and coastal areas, walking and gardening remain popular physical activities that are less income-dependent and more accessible (Active Lincs, 2019). Our One You Lincolnshire lifestyle service offers tailored support for healthy ageing for our over 55s and has proven effective in improving the lifestyles of our older residents (One You Lincolnshire, 2022).

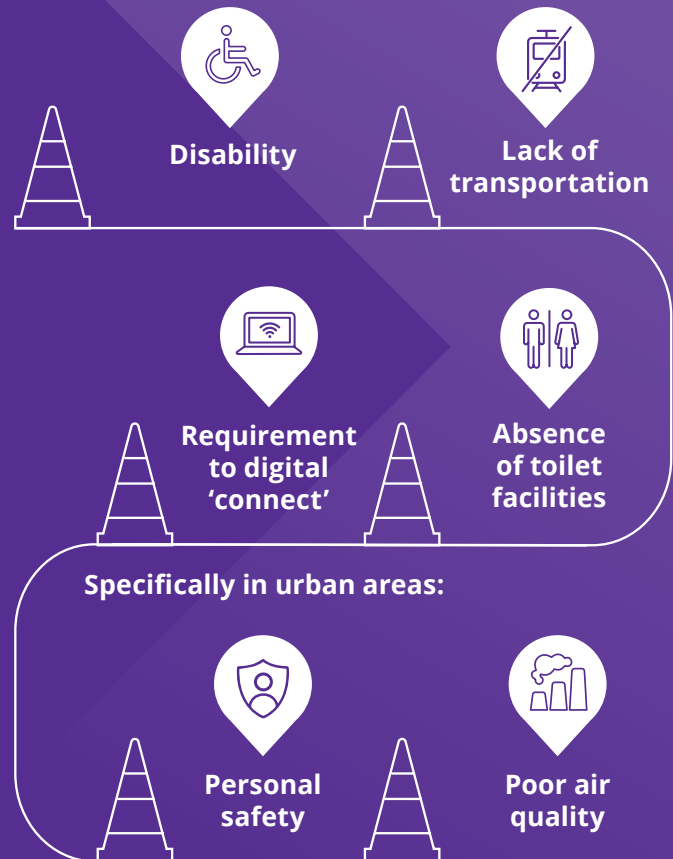
## Case Study: One You Lincolnshire

One You Lincolnshire are commissioned by Lincolnshire County Council to deliver interventions to help people who want to make healthy lifestyle changes.

- The One You Lincolnshire 'Move More' programme encourages people to meet the Chief Medical Officer's recommended 150 minutes of physical activity per week through a mixture of free 1-1 and group sessions, both online and in gyms/leisure centres.
- 'Move More' includes 'tailored support for over 55s' which offers advice on healthy ageing including nutrition, mental health, falls and dementia prevention'.
- An evaluation of 'Move More' shows that in 2021/22, more than 4,500 over 55s improved their physical activity status (Source: One You Lincolnshire, 2022).
- Anyone can access this service, and GP practices can refer patients to it through the social prescribing pathway. (Source: One You Lincolnshire, 2023).
- A pilot is underway to target people at risk of falls through strength and balance activities.

Age-friendly outdoor spaces play a vital role in encouraging active lifestyles, improving the well-being of older individuals, and reducing the burden on healthcare services.

## Barriers to physical activity for older people



## In Lincolnshire...



**93%** of all households in Lincolnshire have access to private outdoor space



The average distance to the nearest park or outdoor space for Lincolnshire residents is **650 metres**

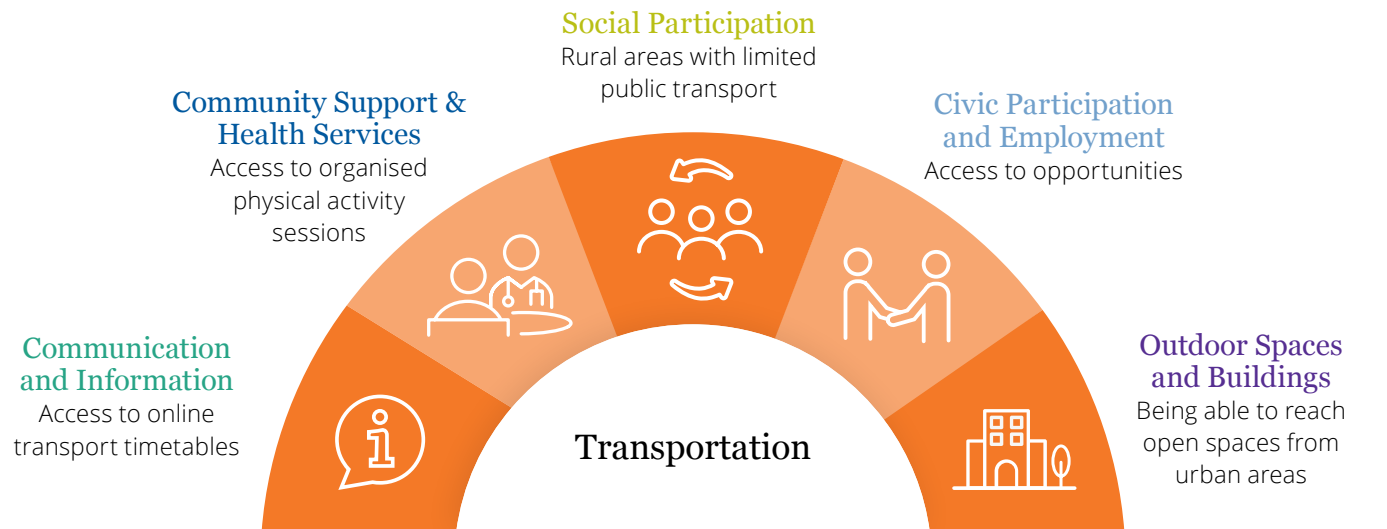
Source: ONS, 2023

## Key Points

- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings refers to recreational areas which provide an age friendly environment which older people feel safe to visit.
- In the context of physical activity, Lincolnshire has good provision of outdoor spaces - parks, public footpaths and the coast - providing free or low-cost areas for exercise which benefits those living with the highest levels of deprivation.
- Provision of age-friendly facilities is necessary for older people to take part in physical activity, particularly for those with limited resources.
- In turn this reduces pressure on health and care services where the population of older people is predicted to grow by up to 48% by 2040.
- Structural barriers to older people taking part in physical activity include a lack of toilets, use of car parking apps, and poor public transport networks in rural and coastal areas.
- Human barriers include ageism, both negative attitudes towards older people, and their own perceptions relating to ageing, put them off participating.
- Social prescribing can help put older people in touch with support and advice from organisations like One You Lincolnshire and can be a way through both human and structural barriers.



# 10 Transportation



Accessible, affordable, and safe public transport is a crucial element of an age-friendly environment, facilitating active ageing and community engagement (WHO, 2020). This includes age-friendly driving conditions and parking facilities. It is important that transportation options are not only accessible but affordable, reliable, and convenient to meet the diverse needs of our older residents, especially in a rural county like Lincolnshire. Failure to provide suitable transportation options can lead to isolation, hinder access to healthcare, shopping and social activities, and disconnect older people from society. Transportation challenges disproportionately affect those in rural and coastal areas, where poor bus and rail networks, as well as long distances from population centres create barriers.

In Lincolnshire, transportation issues faced by our older residents can be influenced by personal circumstances including financial constraints, not owning a car or having to stop driving for health reasons, social connections, and digital exclusion which impact their ability to connect to services and social networks. Those with poor health, frailty, and a lack of local support connections are particularly affected by

limited transportation options. This can lead to physical and social isolation, loneliness, and poor mental health outcomes (Mental Health Foundation, 2023). Low income can further exacerbate transportation challenges, making it difficult for our residents to afford fuel or access affordable shopping options (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2019). While some provision exists for those who cannot afford private transport, such as voluntary car schemes and CallConnect on-demand bus services (Lincs Bus, n.d.), these options are stretched, especially in areas of Lincolnshire with large distances to cover between amenities, commercial centres, and health services. Public transport infrastructure varies across Lincolnshire, the west of the county benefiting from good connections while more rural and coastal regions lack comprehensive transportation options. As people age and their confidence in driving decreases, reliable and accessible public transport becomes even more critical. Further challenges like the withdrawal of 3G networks and the introduction of digital parking systems can create additional barriers for older individuals (BBC, 2023).

This results in embedding reliance on home care provision as people are left with no transport choices. Additionally, unpaid carers are also adversely affected by poor access to transport (Watts, 2022).

Ensuring accessible, affordable, and safe public transport is essential to support active, healthy ageing, community engagement, and access to essential services. Addressing transportation challenges, especially in rural and coastal areas, is crucial to promote social inclusion and well-being for older individuals in Lincolnshire.

Less than **45%** of over 85s have access to private transport



Around **half** of Lincolnshire residents are unable to access their GP by walking or public transport within 15 minutes

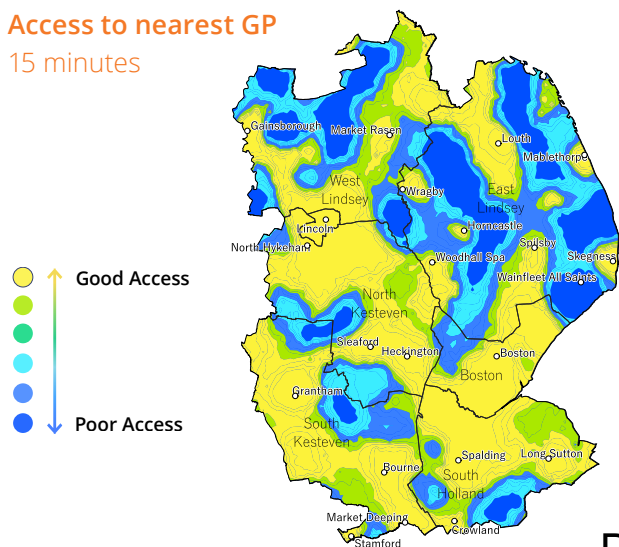


Less than **half** of Lincolnshire's residents can access urgent care or a community hospital within 30 minutes on public transport



Source: TBC

Access to nearest GP  
15 minutes

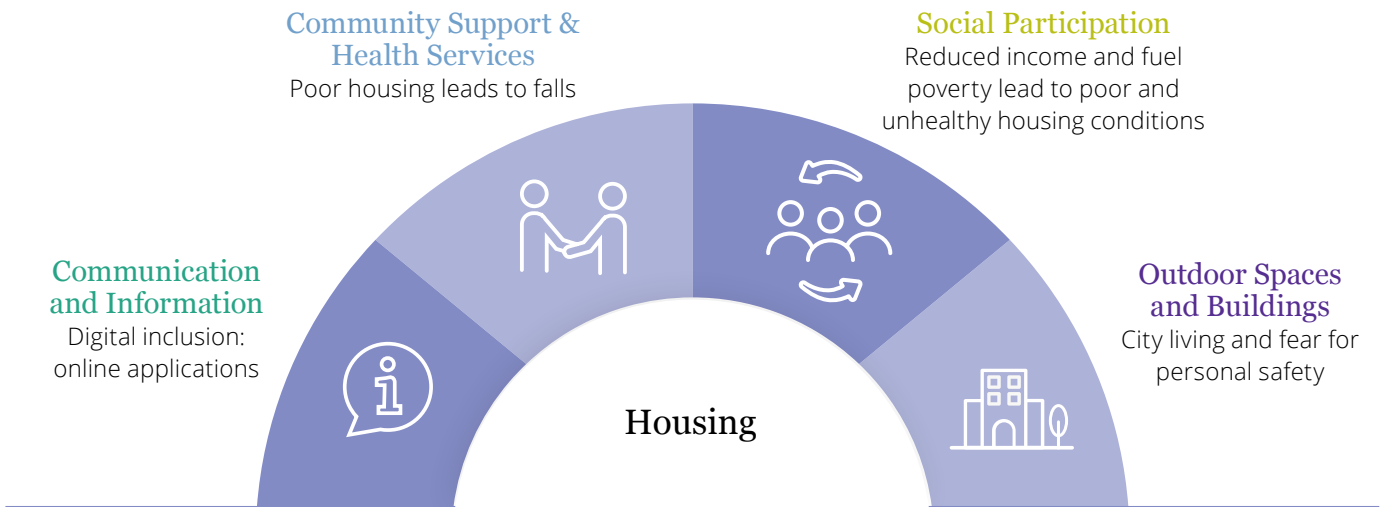


Source: LHIH, 2023

## Key Points

- Transport should be affordable and accessible to enable older people to age actively and engage with their communities.
- Long distances to access services and social support, particularly in eastern Lincolnshire which has sparse and inconsistent rural public transport connections and a poor road infrastructure, exacerbates social isolation.
- Considerable inequalities exist between those who must rely on public transport and those with access to personal transport.
- Services in Lincolnshire include; subsidised bus routes; hospital transport schemes; CallConnect bus services; and free bus passes.
- High costs and long travel distances further disadvantage unpaid carers.
- Transportation barriers potentially add to the burden on delivery of home care services which are already stretched.

# 11 Housing



Housing is fundamental to quality of life and ageing independently in the community. Suitable housing close to essential services plays a pivotal role in enabling older people to live comfortably and securely. Age-friendly adaptations support people to stay in their homes for as long as possible (WHO, 2023). When this is no longer feasible, a variety of housing options can help enable continued independent living.

Poor-quality housing, particularly cold and poorly maintained homes can significantly impact older residents, making them vulnerable to low temperatures, falls and accidents which can trigger a decline in health and potentially lead to a move into residential care (Lincolnshire County Council, 2022; UK Parliament 2018). There are many reasons people live in poor or unsuitable housing; fuel poverty where fuel costs leave people below the poverty line, lack of mains gas supply in rural areas, insufficient insulation, and poor ventilation, which may result in deteriorating living conditions (UKERC Energy Data Centre, 2023). Furthermore, those on low and reduced incomes are limited in their housing choices, typically having less desirable or poorer housing conditions than others, and finding themselves more likely to be living in rented tenures (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2013). Poor housing stock particularly affects older people living in the most deprived areas, along the east coast and

urban areas. This means that some older people in the county are likely to live at least part of their later years in ill health due to poor quality housing. There are a number of funds that District Councils administer, which are designed to provide support to people on low incomes to help them improve the energy efficiency of their homes.



**1 in 5** homes in Lincolnshire do not meet Decent Homes Standards



**14%** of households in Lincolnshire in fuel poverty

Source: UKERC Energy Data Centre, 2023

Lincolnshire Community Equipment Service (LCES) provides and maintains clinically prescribed equipment such as simple aids and hoists, this collaborative service is our response to the growing demand and complexity of need seen in recent years. In the period 2022/23 around 30k people were helped by this service, and to date around 115k items of equipment have been supplied. There is a current pilot scheme with a District Councils to install and maintain stairlifts and access equipment, and from 2024 a wheel chair service will also sit under the LCES team.

In partnership with the Centre for Ageing Better, local authorities and other agencies across Lincolnshire are establishing a Good Home Alliance. To help local people and professionals access a comprehensive range of housing support and information, the Good Home Hub will be available shortly, via the Connect to Support website. This will help older people to make informed choices to maximise their independence for as long as practical.

Targeted support is available via the Wellbeing Service commissioned by the County Council, which includes help with small aids for daily living, minor adaptations, and other home-related needs. Financial assistance in the form of means tested Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) for major adaptations such as installing showers or ramps are available. Work is ongoing to streamline this funding which will ensure an equitable and consistent approach countywide. Additionally local energy advice services will help older residents to make their homes more fuel efficient and District councils have developed a common discretionary housing assistance policy to support people who fall outside the provisions of the mandatory DFG or government energy efficiency grants schemes.

The Supported Housing Act 2023 requires local housing authorities and social services providers, to develop

a strategy that aims to meet demand. In 2030, the need for over 65s supported housing or Extra Care Housing is expected to increase by more than a fifth in Lincolnshire, highlighting the potential impact on health and care services if supported housing requirements are unmet (Housing Health and Care Delivery Group (HHCDG), 2021). Due to a shortage of Extra Care Housing, the county council developed a programme with a variety of partners, resulting in De Wint Court Lincoln being fully operational. Future schemes are being developed, and by the end of 2027, it is projected there will be an additional 134 homes for older residents and people with disabilities.



**62%** of residents (65+) who own their own home report good health status compared to only **42%** for those who rent

Source: Census 2023



The cost of residential care per week is around **£800** rising to **£1,078** for nursing care

Source: Age UK, 2023

## Case Study: Lincolnshire Wellbeing Service

- The Wellbeing Service in Lincolnshire is designed to help residents to live independently, this is supported through a personal assessment, usually in the individual's home and includes identification of equipment and adaptations required and a survey of the property to assess its suitability.
- For those eligible for care and support, services may be supplied directly, or the individual may be put in touch with specialist services such as those supplying home equipment; simple aids for daily living; telecare; and the wellbeing response service.
- In the period 2022/23 9,754 referrals were made into the Wellbeing service, an increase of 9% on the previous year; the majority of referrals (62%) are for people over 65 years.

Lincolnshire County Council, 2023

## Key Points

- Poor housing conditions for older people can impact physical and mental health, quality of life and the ability to age independently and actively in their communities, in turn these impact on health and social care services.
- Means tested Disabled Facilities Grants, discretionary housing assistance and energy efficiency schemes are available to enable older people to remain in their homes for as long as possible.
- Supported Housing and Extra Care Housing provides older people with housing options which enable them to remain independent but with appropriate support when needed. Both are cost-effective options which help reduce the costs of providing residential care.
- Various partnerships are working together to provide more extra care housing and information resources to enable older people to live as independently as possible for as long as possible.



It is estimated the cost to the NHS for each cold or damp home is **£750** per year (BRE Group, 2023)



Costs for homecare average around **£15** per hour

Source: Age UK, 2021

## Extra Care Housing Case Study – De Wint Court, Lincoln

In Lincolnshire there are currently seven extra care schemes, with a total of 339 units of accommodation for older people. Following the development of De Wint Court in Lincoln in March 2022, the number of units available in the county increased by 20%. It is anticipated this will further increase by a further 25% by the end of 2025.

De Wint Court offers 70 extra care housing units and approximately 10% of residents came from residential care, thus reducing the financial burden on local authorities as well as supporting our vision to enable people to live independent lives in their own homes.

In the first year, residents reported reductions in isolation, loneliness, and self-neglect as well as significant increase in independence. In addition, a 30% reduction in care and support hours has been reported.

(Source: Lincolnshire County Council, 2023)

# 12 Conclusion

Collectively the domains discussed in this report highlight the challenges and opportunities in empowering ageing populations in Lincolnshire, with a focus on promoting active ageing, improving access to essential services, and creating age-friendly environments. Without this focus on supporting our population to age well, the demands upon our over-stretched health and care services and workforce will continue to rise.

**‘Personal circumstances have a big impact on healthy ageing...’**

We have demonstrated how a person’s individual circumstances can present opportunities to thrive in later life or become barriers to ageing well. These include financial status, physical and mental health, family and social networks, digital inclusion, and employment.

**‘...but there are considerable structural challenges that older people face too.’**

Elements outside a person’s control can be detrimental to ageing well in Lincolnshire. We know that living in a rural or coastal community has its benefits in terms of access to green and blue space and mitigating the onset of ageing but it can also negatively impact how older people age. For those who are digitally excluded, or without access to reliable transport options to enable access to amenities, services and social opportunities, they can become isolated. In turn this can exacerbate health inequalities and pressures on health and social care services.

## What’s Next

Our analysis of the age friendly community framework in this report has demonstrated the interdependency between domains. Throughout the report we have detailed the links between the domains, showing where we are likely to be able to make the most impact (Figure 2). By effecting a change or improvement in an aspect of one domain, there can be far reaching positive impacts on others, which cover all interdependent aspects of ageing well in Lincolnshire.

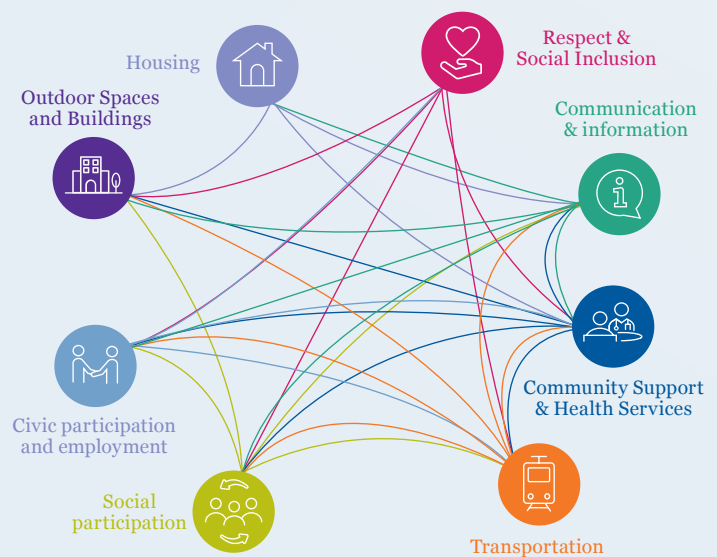


Figure 2

By effecting a change or improvement in an aspect of one domain, there can be far reaching positive impacts on others, which cover all interdependent aspects of ageing well in Lincolnshire.

Whilst challenges are not insurmountable, we have the ability within LCC and across District Councils and 3rd sector organisations to prioritise specific focus areas to reasonably effect measurable impact. Within the eight domains, we can pick out some of the ‘sub-themes’ where if focussed efforts on improving opportunities were made, we could not only add years to life, but life to years.

## Social isolation

In a rural county where experience of loneliness and isolation is likely to be greater, tackling social isolation through social participation and integration, through volunteering opportunities and intergenerational activity can prevent the onset of long-term conditions and reduce unnecessary utilisation of health and social care services.

**RECOMMENDATION** Link up, make accessible and promote the existing services that prevent social isolation among our older residents in Lincolnshire.

## Transportation

Rurality and distance between local amenities or health care provision plays a major role in health outcomes, while at the same time increasing the potential burden on the delivery of stretched care services. Promoting affordable, accessible public transport infrastructure to enable better access to health care, and green and blue spaces, will link our most isolated communities and be fundamental in reducing health inequalities.

**RECOMMENDATION** Promote our subsidised travel hospital transport schemes and support the expansion of voluntary car schemes to improve access for our most isolated communities.

## Digital inclusion

Whilst we expect issues with digital exclusion amongst our older communities to diminish, it is important to ensure the barriers to exclusion are understood and tackled. By utilising and building upon existing intelligence we can ensure 'excluded' communities are supported in the ways required to ensure they are not left behind in an increasingly digital world.

**RECOMMENDATION** Continue to support efforts for the expansion of broadband and digital connectivity across Lincolnshire. Promote the many services and schemes for our communities to become digitally aware and skilled.

## Housing

As our population ages we inevitably need to consider whether housing provision is suitable and sufficient. By supporting older people to make informed decisions about where they live and how they can be supported to stay in their own home, if they choose to do so (through simple housing adaptations for example), this can have a lasting impact on healthy ageing.



**RECOMMENDATION** Continue to support our older residents to decide where they choose to live through our established offers.

East Lindsey has been recognised as a WHO healthy ageing area, showcasing the potential for positive outcomes when addressing the ageing agenda strategically. The local legacy of this initiative can serve as a model for other districts to learn from and potentially build upon. Sharing experiences and insights can foster collaboration among our services, leading to improved provisions and better outcomes for ageing populations across the nation.

**RECOMMENDATION** Utilise the DPH report as a precursor for a Lincolnshire State of Ageing Report and support our districts to develop baseline assessment of need.

Through reviewing literature within the context of Lincolnshire and using local intelligence we have illustrated that without the strategic direction to prioritise how we support older people to live healthy, active, productive and fulfilling lives in Lincolnshire, we will only be exacerbating the burden of ill health and reliance on an overburdened health and social care workforce. This is an increasing and ever-present consideration when accounting for the increases in population growth expected in the older population over the next 20 years. As ever, these challenges often have the greatest impact on the most vulnerable or hardest to reach residents, as a result intensifying health inequalities. By gaining a more insightful understanding of what it is like to age in Lincolnshire we can start enhancing and adapting our approaches to better meet the needs of the local population. Addressing the ageing agenda in Lincolnshire is a collective effort, and we are committed to working together with all our partners to create a healthier and more inclusive environment for our ageing population. By recognising the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, we can build a brighter future for older residents.



# 13 Glossary

## **COPD – Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease**

The name for a group of lung conditions that cause breathing difficulties, it includes emphysema (damage to the air sacs in the lungs) and chronic bronchitis (long-term inflammation of the airways). Mainly affects middle-aged and older adults who smoke. (NHS)

**Co-production** This refers to a way of working, whereby everyone works together on an equal basis to create a service or come to a decision which works for them all, in the context of this report this would be older people collaborating with service commissioners. (Think Local Act Personal)

**Digital Inclusion** This covers three things:

**Digital skills** being able to use digital devices such as computers and the internet

**Connectivity** Access to the internet through broadband, wi-fi, and mobile

**Accessibility** Services designed to meet all users' needs, including assistive technology. (NHS Digital)

**Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)** Means tested grant paid by local authorities to aid owners or tenants to adapt their accommodation. (Age UK)

**Extra Care Housing** Assisted living (also known as extra-care housing) is a type of 'housing with care' which means you retain independence while you're assisted with personal tasks. (Age UK)

**Fuel Poverty** Relates to households that must spend a high proportion of their income to keep their home at a reasonable temperature. It is affected by three factors: household income, fuel costs, and energy consumption which is often affected by poor energy efficiency of the dwelling. (House of Commons Library)

**Mortality** Death. (NIHR (National Institute of Health Research))

**Pension Credit** Pension Credit gives you extra money to help with your living costs if you're over State Pension age and on a low income. Pension Credit can also help with housing costs such as ground rent or service charges. (GOV.UK)

**Population Health Management (PHM)** PHM is a way of working to help frontline teams understand current health and care need and predict what local people will need in the future. This means that care and support can be tailored for individuals, and more joined-up and sustainable health and care services can be designed to make better use of public resources. (NHS England)

**Protected Characteristic** It is against the law (Equality Act, 2010) to discriminate against anyone because of age, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy or maternal leave, disability, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. (GOV.UK)

**Social Prescribing** An approach that connects people to activities, groups, and services in their community to meet the practical, social, and emotional needs that affect health and wellbeing. Referrals come from local agencies, charities, social care, and health services such as GPs. (NHS England)

**Supported Housing** Accommodation which is provided alongside support, supervision or care to help people live as independently as possible in the community. (Dept. For Levelling Up, Housing & Communities)

**World Health Organization (WHO)** The World Health Organization is the United Nations agency dedicated to the well-being of all people and guided by science, that leads and champions global efforts to give everyone, everywhere an equal chance to live a healthy life. (WHO)

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