



Policy & Research Update

August 2019

One of the joys of working in ageing policy is that it covers so many topics – from health to technology, money to transport. One way we keep track of it all is through our series of policy positions, which set out key statistics in each area, recent development in public policy, and our top recommendations. Over the summer, Age UK policy colleagues have been taking the opportunity to refresh many of our policy positions, and to produce two new ones – on Mental Health and Digital Assistive Technology. Read on for links to our new and updated positions, as well as our new publication on polypharmacy entitled More Harm Than Good

– Jane Vass

News

[Age UK delivers 634,334 strong petition to new Prime Minister at No 10 Downing Street](#)



Age UK staff accompanied a party of older people to hand in our #Switched Off petition to No 10 Downing Street, which urged the new Prime Minister to intervene and take back responsibility for funding free TV licences for the over 75s.

Over four-fifths (83 per cent) of those polled by Age UK – equivalent to over 42 million people – believe the Conservative Party should keep its manifesto pledge to fund free TV licences for the over-75s until 2022.

Caroline Abrahams, Charity Director at Age UK said: “Today we presented Age UK’s #Switched Off petition to No 10, backed by 634,334 people who are telling the Government to save free TV licences for over 75s.

“We call on our new Prime Minister to listen to the staggering number of people of all ages who truly believe the funding of TV licences firmly rests with the Government and not the BBC. We ask him to intervene and abide by the last Conservative manifesto pledge to keep free TV licences for the over 75s.”

[Read the full press release](#)

Feature

Age UK calls for a more considered approach to prescribing medicines for our older population

Nearly 2 million older people on 7+ prescription medicines at risk of side effects that are severe in some cases, and occasionally even life threatening.

Age UK has launched a [report](#) which says that too many older people in our society are on too many prescribed medicines, putting them at risk of side effects that in a worrying number of cases can lead to falls and a range of other serious harms.

The report, entitled '[More Harm than Good](#)', provides evidence showing that prescribing more drugs isn't always the best option, particularly when it comes to older people. It also demonstrates that at the moment medicines are sometimes being prescribed:

- in excessive numbers
- in unsafe combinations
- without the consent or involvement of the older people concerned
- and without the support and help older people need to take them.

Age UK estimates that almost two million people over 65 are likely to be taking at least seven prescribed medicines. This number doubles to approaching four million for those taking at least five medicines.

Access to medicine is often vital to older people's health and wellbeing and no medicine should ever be stopped without the advice and support of a GP or another clinician. However, research has found that as many as one in five prescriptions for older people living at home may be inappropriate so it makes sense for them to be regularly reviewed.

Age UK is calling on the Government to take fully into account the harmful effects of inappropriate 'polypharmacy' (multiple medicine use) on older people as it carries out a review of overprescribing in the NHS.

[Read more Harm Than Good](#)

Policy & Research

Publications

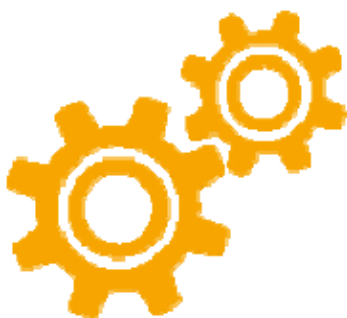
Over the past few months the Policy and Research team have been busy updating and developing new [policy positions](#).

Our page listing all our policy positions can be accessed [here](#).

View our updated [Quick Reference Guide](#), and direct links to all the refreshed or new positions are below.

Health and wellbeing

- [Ageing well – health and prevention](#)
- [Carers](#)
- [Loneliness](#)
- New policy: [Mental Health](#)



Care and Support:

- [Care Homes](#)
- [Digital Assistive Technology](#)
- [End of life care](#)
- [Improving Healthcare](#)
- [Older Prisoners](#)
- [Social care assessment and eligibility](#)
- [Social care reform and funding](#)

Housing and Homes

- [Age Friendly Communities](#)
- [Older Homelessness](#)
- [Retirement housing](#)
- [Housing and design, adaptations and support](#)



Consultation Responses

The World Health Organisation are developing ‘a Decade of Healthy Ageing’, which aims to bring together global, regional, and national stakeholders in a decade of concerted action to improve the lives of older people across the world.

[Age UK’s response to the draft proposal.](#)

Ofgem, the energy regulator, are consulting on their updated Consumer Vulnerability Strategy (CVS2025). When finalised, the strategy will build upon existing work delivered under the 2013 Consumer Vulnerability Strategy, and will set out priorities to help protect gas and electricity consumers in vulnerable situations until 2025.

[Read Age UK’s response to the consultation.](#)

Discover



In this month’s feature Caroline Abrahams looks at [The future of social care](#). Caroline unpicks the new Prime Minister’s intentions and the most important things to consider in improving the state of social care.

[Read the blog post.](#)

You can see all of our **Discover** articles [here](#).

More from Age UK

Age UK information guides and factsheets

The following factsheets have been updated:

- FS14 *Dealing with an estate*
- FS37 *Hospital discharge*
- FS38 *Property and paying for residential care*
- FS61 *Help with health costs*
- FS75 *Dealing with debt*
- FS79 *Equality, discrimination and the Public Sector Equality Duty*

All factsheets can be found on the Age UK website [here](#).

Large Print versions of all factsheets are now also available to download [here](#).

Our previous Policy and Research Updates are available [here](#) to download.