



Press Release

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Charities criticise Government's continued failure to plan for our rapidly ageing society

- **Charities call for an urgent focus on the 'crisis in social care' and urge an extended remit for the planned auto-enrolment review.**

A group of national charities have criticised the Government's "incredibly disappointing" progress in planning for our ageing society.

A new paper "*Still not Ready for Ageing*" by the Ready for Ageing Alliance (R4AA) argues that Government action on tackling the challenges and maximising the opportunities of ageing has stalled. The charities argue that far from seeing sustained progress over the past few years, society is seemingly going into "reverse gear" in some respects.

In July, the Government published a report – with no fanfare - which it itself commissioned from the Chief Scientist to gather the latest evidence and draw appropriate conclusions on the future of ageing. The Chief Scientist's report correctly stated that government "will require a co-ordinated response between departments that reflects the robust evidence for the inter-connectedness of policies affected by ageing".

The Ready for Ageing Alliance argues that we are a long way from achieving this and making the progress we need, pointing out that:

- Savings levels remain far too low and, without significant increases, future generations of older people will find themselves poorer than today's pensioners.
- Real wage growth is low, meaning that the incomes of most younger people do not allow them to save more.
- Social Care funding reform has received little discussion since plans for its reform were shelved and the funding gap in social care, which grows by the day, is a disaster for older people today and tomorrow
- Health and care face major staffing shortages over the short and medium term and unless this reality is properly gripped now we are storing up even bigger problems for the future
- Our economy loses billions due to the underemployment of older people who would prefer to keep working but who can't because of ageism and/or a shortage of flexible working opportunities

- Isolation and loneliness remain blights on our society, with too little progress in ensuring communities are equipped to help us live independently for longer.
- We have a huge undersupply of retirement housing and new mainstream housing is not meeting the needs of older people today or tomorrow.

In terms of pressing public policy issues today the Ready for Ageing Alliance ask for “An urgent focus on the crisis in social care with the aim of achieving a sustainable long term financial settlement which ensures people’s care needs are met”. They also call for the planned review into auto-enrolment to be extended to look broadly at how to increase savings and ensure today’s young people – our future pensioners - can realise an adequate income when they reach later life.

The Ready for Ageing Alliance also calls for:

- The creation of a permanent commission on Demographic Change which would focus on making progress in responding to our changing society.
- A single point of contact in Government responsible for leading and responding to the challenges and opportunities of ageing set out by the Chief Scientist.

David Sinclair of the Ready for Ageing Alliance said:

“The new Prime Minister and her Cabinet have a great opportunity now to set out an agenda to respond to the longer term challenges and opportunities of ageing. The Government must deliver an action plan to respond to the issues highlighted by the Chief Scientist and ensure the report isn’t left to gather dust on the shelf – the issues are far too important for that to happen and affect every single one of us alive today, and future generations too. We also need urgent recognition of the crisis on social care and a plan to fill the funding gap.”

The R4AA members are: Age UK, Alzheimer’s Society, Anchor, Carers UK, Centre for Policy on Ageing, the International Longevity Centre - UK (ILC-UK), Independent Age, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

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“Still not Ready for Ageing” is available on the ILC-UK website at www.ilcuk.org.uk and on the website of other Ready for Ageing Alliance Members

Notes

The Ready for Ageing Alliance

Members of the Ready for Ageing Alliance (R4AA) are: Age UK, Alzheimer’s Society, Anchor, Carers UK, Centre for Policy on Ageing, the International Longevity Centre - UK (ILC-UK), Independent Age, Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The Ready for Ageing Alliance is a coalition

of independent organisations based in England. We formed in 2013, following publication of 'the Filkin report'. We came together in order to make the case for action to ensure that our society is ready for our ageing world. Most of us are organisations that are known to have a special interest in understanding and meeting the needs of older people. But 'ready for ageing' is not just about today's older people. It is about everyone alive now as well as those who are yet to come. Indeed, 'ready for ageing' is even more important for younger generations than for those who have already reached later life. It is future generations who stand to lose out the most if we are too slow, individually and collectively, to recognise the need for change in response to longer life spans.

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