

***Age Friendly Check In: Give us your input***

# ***Outdoor Spaces & Buildings***



## **Older people in Bristol can access outdoor spaces and buildings that meet their needs**

Bristol Ageing Better has been working with the City Council and partners to get Bristol recognised as an Age Friendly City by the World Health Organisation.

To gain status as an Age Friendly City, we have been building up an action plan that will demonstrate what Bristol is currently doing as a city to help older people, and also what needs to change in the city to make it even better for older people in the future.

This draft document is one part of the action plan and focuses on the Outdoor Spaces and Buildings domain. We have created this based on conversations and involvement from older people and partners. This draft document contains some examples of age friendly work that is happening in the city, however more examples can be found on the age friendly website here:

<http://agefriendlybristol.org.uk/>

We would like to invite you to take a look at this draft document and give your input before we submit it to the World Health Organisation.

When you are looking through this draft action plan please consider the following questions:

- 1) **Do you think that the “what do older people think” section reflects opinion in the city?**
- 2) **Do you think we have identified the right factors affecting Outdoor Spaces and Buildings? Would you want to include anything else?**
- 3) **Do you agree with the outcomes?**
  - i. **What actions do you think are needed?**
  - ii. **What can you do to help?**
- 4) **What other age friendly examples are you aware of for the Outdoor Spaces and Buildings domain?**

**If you would like to give your input please fill out the online form here:**

**<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/R2PFHWG>**

**Please do this by 5:00pm on 24<sup>th</sup> July.**

# Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Older people in Bristol can access outdoor spaces and buildings that meet their needs

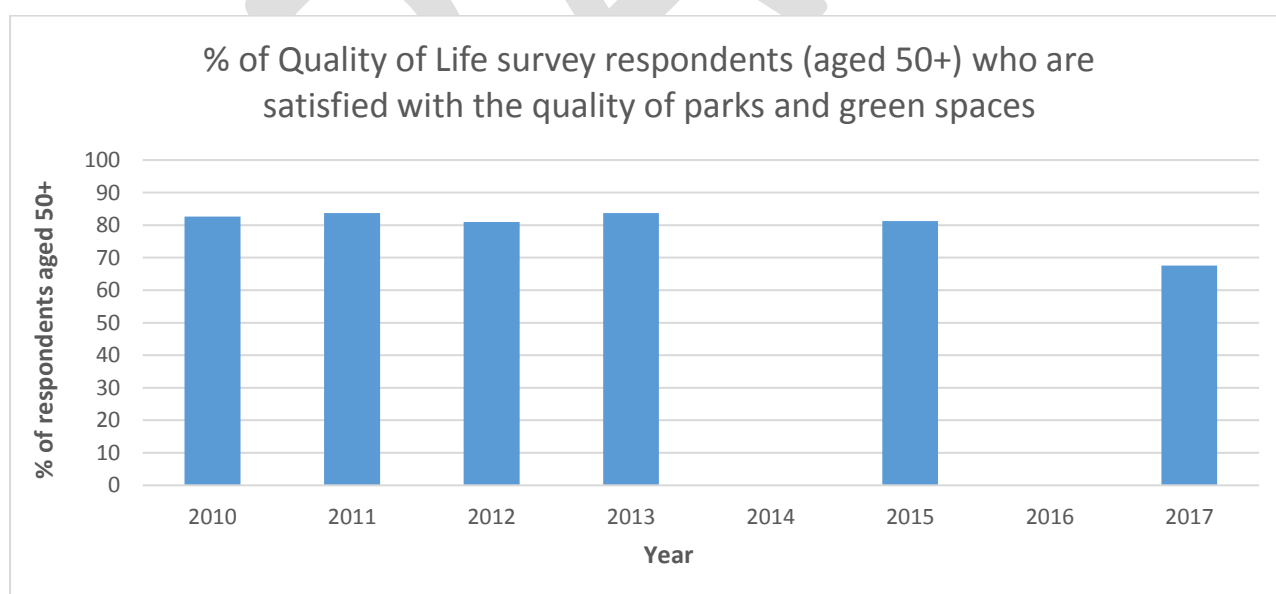


The environment and buildings in a community have a major impact on an older person's quality of life. We want a city where older people are able to 'age in place' where they can remain mobile and have easy access to services. This includes having barrier-free public space and buildings that are useable and accessible for people with impairments and having urban environments that support belonging, continuity and sense of self.

The availability of outdoor spaces for leisure and recreation is important for the physical and mental wellbeing of all people and research has shown that taking up physical activity in older age has clear health benefits in respect to reducing the risk of dementia and increasing life expectancy.

## What do older people in Bristol think about outdoor spaces and buildings?

According to the 2017 Quality of Life survey, 68% of respondents aged 50+ are satisfied with the quality of parks and green spaces. It is important to be aware that this satisfaction was previously higher. For example between 2010 and 2015, satisfaction among respondents aged 50+ was 82% on average. This is a decrease of 14% in satisfaction among the this age group this year (2017/18). This can be seen in the graph below:



A similar decrease can be seen in respondent's satisfaction with their local area. While 75% of respondents aged 50+ reported being satisfied, this is the lowest level since 2006. In the years 2006 – 2015 satisfaction among those aged 50 and over was 81% on average, indicating a decrease of 6%. However when making comparisons with previous years it is important to remember that this year's responses are likely to be influenced by changes in how the survey was conducted.

Only 49% of respondents aged 50+ said that they visit Bristol's parks and green spaces at least once per week. This increases slightly (to 51%) among those aged 65+, however there is still a lot of room for improvement. It is also below the average for all ages in Bristol (56%).

In terms of personal safety, 92% of respondents aged 50+ reported feeling safe when outdoors during the day. Although direct comparisons cannot be made, this figure appears to have remained stable over the past nine years and is in line with the average for all ages in Bristol.

While only 69% of respondents aged 50+ said that they felt safe when outdoors after dark, this figure appears to have been rising steadily since 2006 suggesting a positive trend in feelings of personal safety. It is also in line with the average for all ages in Bristol (70%).

## **Factors affecting Outdoor Spaces & Buildings**

### **What should we feel positive about?**

An age friendly city is a green one and Bristol is known for having an abundance of green spaces. Local parks and outdoor spaces offer older people opportunities to remain active and stay healthy. The presence of seating and benches throughout these parks is another aspect to feel positive about. A recent interview completed by the Babbers Radio show (a Bristol based radio show that is run by older people) celebrated the importance of cafes in parks and the services these spaces provide for older people to allow them to stay outside for longer periods of time and gives them an opportunity to socialise.

Recent council cuts has meant that all public toilets in Bristol have been closed and the Council are working with businesses and community spaces to offer their toilets to the public . They are committed to mapping these available toilets and sharing this with the public. In the meantime, communities such as Bedminster and Greater Brislington have created their own Toilet Maps. The toilet maps are a community resource highlighting public spaces like cafes, museums and shopping centres where people can use the bathroom free of charge. Having places of interest that are free of charge such as the museums, events and art galleries play a part in making these kind of spaces easier to access.

Thinking about the spaces and buildings that are used to run events is also important. The Reader, a charity that creates shared reading groups are running reading groups for older people in local libraries around Bristol. This is a good example of space being used that's easily accessible within the community.

With regards to making spaces accessible, the website DisabledGo.com is helping to provide access information about venues across Bristol in order to maximise independence and choice for disabled people. Which also helps to identify which buildings in Bristol are age friendly.

### **What could be better?**

Council funding cuts have regrettably had a significant impact. A reduction in the number of public toilets, benches and parks means that the city will have to find other ways of providing these services. Re-establishing these facilities could provide an opportunity to make them more age friendly. For example, when it comes to seating we should also consider whether seating is in an

appropriate style for an older person to sit on, for example, is the seating too low, are there arm rests to assist standing again?

Pavement clutter is also a serious issue that needs to be dealt with. Obstacles on the pavements such as parked cars, bins and low hanging branches often means an older person is forced to step out onto the road. Pavements could be kept in better condition and many would like to see more dropped kerbs. Bristol Walking Alliance (a consortium of organisations and individuals campaigning to improve Bristol's walking environment) has been doing a lot of work around this area in their efforts to ban pavement parking. They are currently working on a pavement parking campaign, to prevent cars parking on the pavement.

The issue around how we are sharing space is another area to be looked at. Are we sharing space in the right way. Should cyclists and pedestrians be using the same path? Should we have separate access for disabled people? Should we work together to create more intergenerational spaces, for example shared spaces between younger and older people in parks?

## *Actions*

Building on from the charter and the above exercise, these actions will reflect that and set out some goals over the next 3 years.

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Guidance Indicator</i>
Pavements are safe and free from obstructions so that older people can use the pavements without fear of falling or having their path blocked	Work with Bristol Walking Alliance on their campaign	
Older People can access events and activities that they want to in the city	Working with festivals such as Upfest and Bristol Doors Open to make it more accessible to older people	
Seating in Bristol is practical, accessible and encourages people to socialise	This could be funded via personal donations to create 'in memory of' seating.	

Buildings in Bristol are developed to be accessible and age friendly.

# What is Bristol already doing to be Age Friendly?

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## Examples of Age Friendly work happening in the city

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### **Bristol Walking Alliance**

The Alliance are currently working on a pavement parking campaign, to prevent cars parking on the pavement. Other work includes a clear air campaign, commenting on selected planning applications and transport scheme proposals and commenting on draft council strategies, policies, plans and design guidance.

*Bristol Walking Alliance is a Consortium of organisations and individuals campaigning to improve Bristol's walking environment*

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### **Bedminster Toilet Map by Ben Barker (a local older resident based in BS3)**

A toilet map highlighting public spaces such as cafes, museums and shopping centres where people can use the bathroom free of charge. Ben worked with volunteers to speak to business owners and other organisations in order to map available toilets and benches in his local area.

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### **Guide Dogs Association – My Guide**

Guide Dogs Association offer a volunteer-based service called My Guide to our visually impaired clients, many of whom are of the older generation. My Guide partners volunteers, who have been trained in sighted guiding techniques, with visually impaired people who would like support in getting out and about. The pair then meet on a regular basis, weekly or fortnightly, and undertake any number of activities. My Guide encourages people to use the public transport options that are available to them in order to access services in the city.

*Guide Dogs Association are a mobility charity and their aim is to provide people with sight loss with the support they need to be able to move around safely and confidently, to get out of their homes and be able to live life the way they choose.*

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### **The Reader**

The Reader is running reading groups for older people in local libraries around Bristol. This is a good example of space being used that's easily accessible within the community.

*The Reader is a charity that creates shared reading groups are running reading groups for older people*