

Feel good about ageing

We know that ageism can have harmful effects on our health and wellbeing. Ageism can affect our mental health, and impact on our physical health, including shortening our life expectancy.¹

Getting involved in campaigning against ageism is a great way to reduce the negative impacts of ageism for everyone. There are also ways you can reduce the impact for yourself as an individual.

It is important to accept that we are all exposed to negative beliefs about ageing throughout our lives, and that to some extent we have taken on board these beliefs. The first step is to decide that you want to become more aware and change the way you think about yourself and your beliefs about ageing. This is something people of any age can do.

Anne from the Age Friendly Leeds Steering Group described her own experience of this in an interview with [East Leeds FM](#) :

“I recently had a milestone birthday, I turned 60 and I thought I can’t pretend I’m not old anymore. Then I thought I’ve got to stop thinking like that. Nowadays I’m very aware that remaining youthful has almost become an obsession for many and I think it’s really sad to see. As we grow older, so long as we remain relatively happy and in reasonable health, we should be glad and celebrate that we have lived as long as we have.”

Here are some ways you can start to explore these issues for yourself :

Learn more about ageism

- Check out the [Age Proud Leeds](#) website for guides and resources around ageing and ageism.
- Take part in a ‘Wise Up to Ageism’ session. We’re developing a one hour awareness raising session around ageism. If you want to find out more and book your place please contact sarah@opforum.org.uk
- Read ‘[This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto against Ageism](#)’ by Ashton Applewhite, and watch Ashton’s [Ted Talk](#)
- Listen to this [lecture about COVID-19 and ageism](#) on You Tube in which Professor Thomas Scharf says tackling ageism is an important part of the way forward.

Challenge Ageism

- Notice examples of ageism in the world around you - advertisements, social media posts, tv programmes, at work, amongst friends etc. Could you try to challenge it?
- We have resources to help you including [Challenging Ageism - Top Tips](#) and [Challenging Ageism in the Media](#)
- Share any examples of ageism you see with Age Proud Leeds through our [Ey Up. is this Ageist?](#) page

Seek out the positives

There's an imbalance of negative stories in the media and the wider world surrounding ageing and older people². But there are many positive stories out there that aren't getting the same level of attention. Try to seek out positive stories, including examples of people who have continued to achieve, contribute and find happiness in later life. Here are a few examples:

- [Grandma Williams](#)
- [Wendy Mitchell](#)
- [Floella Benjamin](#)
- [Jane Campbell](#)
- [Ping Pong: Never too old for gold](#)

Think differently

Remember that ageism, like all 'isms' - racism, sexism - is just a set of ideas that people have made up, and these ideas change over time, as society changes. We can choose to think differently about older people and ageing. [Think Differently about Ageing](#) is a campaign by Action for Elders, to change how UK society and older people themselves look at ageing.

Get involved

There are many campaigns and organisations working to challenge ageism across the UK. In Leeds you can get involved in Age Proud Leeds by [signing up for updates](#), becoming an [Age Friendly Ambassador](#) or joining the [Age Friendly Steering Group](#)

Look after your wellbeing

Taking action to improve our wellbeing is a way we can value ourselves at whatever age we are. Many of these activities will help to boost our self-esteem and in combination with the more direct ways to address ageism, can help people to feel positive about themselves and their own ageing.

[Mindwell](#) contains lots of information about Mental Health service in Leeds, including steps we can take as individuals to feel better and improve our wellbeing. Here are a few links to information around improving our mental and physical wellbeing, during the Covid 19 pandemic and beyond:

[Weekly self-care planner](#)

[Find a moment of calm](#)

[Get Creative](#)

[Mindfulness](#)

[Keep Moving](#)

[Eat Well](#)

[Stay Connected](#)

References:

¹<https://news.yale.edu/2020/01/15/harmful-effects-ageism-older-persons-health-found-45-countries>

² <https://thinks.ipsos-mori.com/representing-later-life/#3.2>