



leave the world a better place

Hope for all ages

Fifty ways to leave the world a
better place by 2050

by Stephen Burke
and a cast of changemakers

August 2025



Why hope for all ages?

“We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors;
we borrow it from our children”

To build a better future, we must
imagine ourselves there. That’s why
we challenged a cast of changemakers
to tell us what needs to change by
2050 to make the world a better place
for current and future generations.
Globally, nationally and locally.
In 100 words (or so).

What can we dream about? What’s realistic and what’s
possible? Our contributors have shared both big dreams
and small hopes. Foresight is a wonderful thing.

The changemakers have together produced a vision
and a manifesto for the next 25 years – the lifetime of at
least five British governments. By 2050 many of us will
no longer be here but millions more will be. Will we
leave a better world behind?

We currently live in volatile times. Unpredictable,
untrusting, uncertain. Young people face insecure futures
as the first generation to be worse off than their parents.
Many feel powerless, unable to influence or change their
world. Without hope.

It doesn’t have to be this way. United for All Ages has
always been an optimistic social enterprise, bringing
people of different ages together, mixing and sharing with
common purpose, while tackling big social issues from
ageism and loneliness to care, work, housing and learning.

United for All Ages is a thinktank and social enterprise
that brings younger and older people together to
build stronger communities and a stronger Britain.

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Designed by Carol Enright

Having hope can change the way we approach the future. Sharing that hope across generations and for future generations will make us all stronger in our homes and our communities, our country and our world.

There are ideas galore – Fifty for 2050 - in this paper that we have grouped under five themes from global to local. Binding them together are three common threads:

1) Connection and interdependence – while Britain has become one of the most age segregated countries in the world (see Appendix A), there is a growing desire for increased contact and mixing between generations through reimagining our homes, communities, workplaces, public services and infrastructure, and leading better balanced lives, listening and acting together on shared concerns and through new relationships with our planet, nature and time

2) Fairness for all generations – younger people want better futures, which requires honesty and genuine public debate about poverty and wealth, tax and spend, housing and care and more, while also recognising that we are not a poor country and we have global as well as domestic responsibilities to future generations through a strengthened social contract and addressing inequalities faced by all ages

3) Thinking big – Britain (and the wider world) is crying out for strategic vision with ambition and a real say in all our futures, moving from a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness to shared awareness and understanding of what we can do together, what we can achieve and how we can make it happen, with revitalised democratic participation and education

Pulling these threads together requires us all to plan longer term and strategically. 2050 may seem a long way off, given the increasingly rapid pace of change and growing global and financial insecurity. But looking back over our shoulders, the year 2000 still feels like a relatively recent memory. We have no time to lose. We must prioritise. This all requires bold leadership.

As Cat Tully says in this paper, the UN Declaration on Future Generations signed in 2024 points the way forward globally and nationally in the UK. And we must learn the lessons from Wales of ten years implementing the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

This paper suggests strategic actions at every level for all generations, now and in the future. We look forward to debating these in the months and years to come and making them a reality by 2050.

Many thanks to the cast of changemakers who have shared their hopes and visions. This is just the beginning of imagining a better world and building it for all ages.

Stephen Burke
Director, United for All Ages

FIFTY for 2050

Fifty ways to leave the world a better place by 2050

A world for all ages

1. A shared compass towards collective well-being
2. Collaborating for peace and sustainable development
3. Listening and empathy, walking in each other's shoes
4. Putting nature and the planet before growth
5. New relationships with time and the planet
6. Global commitments and action on climate change
7. Belonging underpins the way we do everything
8. Acting on the UN Declaration on Future Generations
9. Supporting #AWorld4AllAges to combat ageism

Policies for all ages

10. Radically re-thinking tax ('bad') and spend ('good')
11. Addressing the reality and influence of wealth
12. Co-operating on the benefits and harms of AI
13. Implementing an Intergenerational Equity Index
14. Ensuring a decent childhood for all now
15. Exploring a minimum income guarantee for life
16. Political action on equity and equal opportunities

17. Joined up government department for connection
18. Commissioners for all generations, now and future
19. Local conventions of all ages about their community
20. Local strategies to create communities for all ages

Fairness for all ages

21. Improving longevity by acting across the life course
22. Lifetime health literacy to combat inequalities
23. Supporting planning for end of life decisions
24. Ending ageing inequality faced by older people
25. Putting children at the heart of every policy
26. Long term commitment to older people's safety
27. Creating a baby bond asset for every young person
28. Learning from global and UK healthy ageing indexes
29. Investing in health prevention throughout life

Places for all ages

30. Promoting equivalence through everyday contact
31. Neighbourhoods where all ages can create together
32. Intergenerational living designed for togetherness

33. Every care provider connected to educational settings
34. Valuing shared lives, giving and time together
35. Outdoor and indoor spaces boosting age integration
36. Intergenerational housing for health and company
37. Generations putting the world to rights together
38. Children before cars in our streets and communities
39. Building 300,000 new lifetime homes a year
40. Encouraging shared spaces in all new developments

Opportunities for all ages

41. Better balance between life and work for all
42. New freedoms and responsibilities at work
43. Designing workplaces that support and care
44. Valuing each other for a fairer, inclusive society
45. Ensuring all children in care have lifelong love
46. Storytelling and AI connecting all generations
47. Radically transforming education with purpose
48. Investing in quality universal care for all ages
49. Care and education seen as investing in ourselves
50. Imagining a better world is vital to make it happen

Big dreams, big hopes

A world for all ages

We asked fifty people from a wide range of backgrounds a simple question: what would you like to see changed by 2050 to create a better world for future generations? Their responses are published throughout this paper to stimulate thinking, ideas, conversations -and change. Some are radical, some are practical and pragmatic, some could happen now, some by 2050. They are a starting point for creating that better world. The challenge for us all is to imagine and hope together.

In the last 25 years key areas of change include the rise of social media and smartphones, rapid technological advances, shifts in global power and economic structures, migration, and increased awareness and concern regarding climate change and energy. These along with demographic change and increasing inequalities are likely to be particularly influential over the next 25 years.

This first section incorporates global proposals for a better world. These focus on how we create new connections with each other, collaboration between nations and new relationships with nature and our planet. Can older and younger people create 'a shared compass' to point the way forward? And what will bring everyone to the table with a real sense of belonging?

The answers will mean challenging some old notions about peace and war, wealth distribution, growth and GDP, and replacing them with a global future built on interdependence – relationships with each other, with nature and the planet, based on collaboration, democracy and sustainability.

There is already a global framework in place to help make this happen: the United Nations Declaration on Future Generations signed in 2024. This is our chance to change the world, along with #AWorld4AllAges, the World Health Organisation's global campaign to combat ageism and promote intergenerational interaction.



GEORGE LEE, THE COMMON LAND

— A shared compass — rethinking wealth, care and connection

By 2050, may we have let go of the myth of independence and embraced interdependence - with one another and with nature — as our greatest strength. A better world means recognising that it takes a village — not just to raise a child, but to support every stage of life. True wealth will be measured in kindness, in connection, in the quiet heroism of care. Let us hold a shared compass — one that points toward collective wellbeing, not individual gain. Let us become good ancestors, paying forward what we've been given as part of the beautiful relay of generations. To live fully and with joy, we must walk together.

>> ED MAYO

Collaborating for peace

I love an idea floated by the late Hazel Henderson, in a book I commissioned her to write, which proposed a global standing army. Funded by annual fees from participating nations, this force would replace national armies and offer protection against invasion.

Running the numbers, a few years now after Hazel's death, I estimate that, assuming that USA, China and Russia stay out:

1. Countries would save 70% of their military budgets.
2. The global army, with a potential budget of \$377.4 billion, would become the largest military body after the United States.
3. Crucially, the resulting \$880.6 billion in annual savings could be redirected to achieve transformative social development, fully funding universal education and healthcare in low- and middle-income countries.

This is a simple but radical switch - from nations preparing for war to nations in 2050 collaborating for peace and sustainable development.

>> MARK HONIGSBAUM, HISTORIAN AND JOURNALIST

Big dreams or small hopes?

The problem, as I see it today, is that politics has become a zero-sum game. Instead, I propose we each conduct a thought experiment and ask ourselves: "What is more important — the big dream or the small hope?" For example, the big dream for both Palestinians and Israelis is a single state "from the river to the sea". But that is a dream that brooks no compromise and can only result in conflict and the destruction of the land both covet. By contrast, the smaller dream – a two-state solution where both share the same land – is not. But to achieve it will require a willingness to put oneself in others' shoes. That will require listening and empathy.

>> CAT TULLY, SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL FUTURES

A turning point for future generations

Sitting here in 2050, now 74 years old, I find myself reflecting on the past 25 years. They have not been easy. The UK has faced severe climate crises, waves of migration, and rapid changes—both globally and in our everyday lives. Yet through it all, we held on to hope and remained committed to our net zero goals, managing to navigate profound geopolitical and technological disruption in ways that benefitted everyone.

A turning point came in 2024, when the UN Declaration on Future Generations was signed. The UK government elected that year began implementing its measures in the years that followed. These included establishing a Parliamentary Committee for the Future, introducing new legislation, embedding generational impact assessments in policymaking, and developing a whole-of-society National Strategy with a 25-year outlook.

These democratic innovations helped transform government, rebuild trust with citizens who had grown disillusioned, foster intergenerational solidarity, and reorient our economy and society towards the wellbeing of both current and future generations.

>> KIM SAMUEL, FOUNDER OF THE BELONGING FORUM AND AUTHOR OF ON BELONGING: FINDING CONNECTION IN AN AGE OF ISOLATION

— Belonging in all we do

I envision a world where all can fulfil their right to belong. By 2050, governments should measure progress by dignity, connection and care more than GDP. A society where children grow up with purpose and older generations are visible, valued and engaged—no one is pushed to the margins. Cities nurture social connection as much as productivity, and technology deepens relationships. Intergenerational spaces such as nurseries paired with care homes fostering mutual joy, learning and wellbeing are commonplace. We live in balance with nature, and power is shared fairly. A future worth building is one where belonging is woven into how we live, plan and lead. preparing for war to nations in 2050 collaborating for peace and sustainable development.

>> DAVID POWELL, ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIST AND PODCASTER (YOUR BRAIN ON CLIMATE)

— Beyond growth to nature and planet

By 2050 we really need to have had a generational shift in some most deeply held cultural ideas about our relationship with nature and the planet. We need to live as if we knew that the Earth can't absorb everything we chuck at it, jettison the idea that growth at all costs is a sensible metric for success, and have new ideas of good ancestry that leave the soil, air and wildlife of this planet better than we found it. There's no one lever but it starts from deep education reform - living ecologically has to span the curriculum, and all young people should get to immerse in nature from an early age. But let's not leave it all to future generations to get of out of this mess: changing company law (planet > profit) and the Treasury's growth-first mandate wouldn't be a bad idea either.

I envision a world where all can fulfil their right to belong...

A society where children grow up with purpose and older generations are visible, valued and engaged—no one is pushed to the margins

>> DAVE MARTIN, ASSOCIATE, CANOPY

— **New relationships with time and planet**

By 2050 all beings are afforded the same rights; see New Zealand river granted same legal rights as human being, Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature; promoting planetary inclusion and equality.

Alongside this shift away from a dominant human perspective we have developed awareness of communication with all beings such as trees, thus stimulating empathy, understanding and respect.

Finally, having examined the limitations of a western linear approach to time which compartmentalises our lives into time segments, losing touch with matter and meaning, we have created a new relationship with time evolving towards a more Polychronic approach.

UK Government Policies for all ages

‘Money money money’ is the starting point for the contribution by Morgan Vine. Money underpins everything that needs to be done in the UK now, by 2050 and beyond. If only we were ‘free from money’...but it forces us to prioritise, not just how we spend and raise more money, but also how we determine notions of fairness between generations, now and in the future. We have seen in the first year of the Labour government in the UK how decisions on winter fuel allowance and disability benefits, for example, have generated division and debate. More is to come with pension age reform and reduced voting age.

An Intergenerational Equity Index would provide a better way of assessing the impact of policies long term and informing revitalised democratic participation based around foresight. That assessment needs to be done fairly, transparently and swiftly if governments, now and in the future, are to make the progress needed.

The wish lists are long and inevitably inter-related. How can we change Britain for all ages while tackling modern scourges from child poverty, cost of living and loneliness to inadequate housing and care? Can we create a Britain that is socially connected and economically just?

Intergenerational action involving people of all ages can promote togetherness while building a fairer

and better country. Starting early in life is key, with a lifelong approach to prevention. Recognising that social connection is key to health and wellbeing and can also boost economic productivity. Revitalising communities, town centres and high streets and building the homes we all need. Learning and caring together across generations. Sharing interests and experiences as we mix wherever we live, work and play. All underpinned by fairer taxation and use of resources as part of a new social and economic contract uniting the generations.

This is all possible but it's only happening small scale at the moment. The intergenerational movement is growing again after Covid and needs more encouragement and support. It's time to imagine a Britain transformed for all ages – and make it happen. A good step forward would be the appointment of commissioners in all four UK nations for older people, children and future generations, learning in particular from the experience in Wales. >>

Recognising that social connection is key to health and wellbeing and can also boost economic productivity

One of the big challenges is bringing Britain

together. We are divided and fragmented in many ways, not least as one of the most age segregated countries in the world (see Appendix A). That was also evident during the 2024 general election when age was the best predictor of how people voted.

Joined up government, with strategies and action nationally and locally, is central to changing Britain for all ages. We need a renewed focus on core values and principles such as prevention across the life course, fairness and social justice, and universality.

Here are just some of the changes United for All Ages is calling for:

- Joined up strategies and action across government and public agencies with a Department for Connection
- Tackling child poverty, baby bonds to encourage savings for all young people, while making childcare and housing affordable
- Public health starting early across generations for longer, better lives
- Supporting families and communities and recognising their assets and diversity
- Making Britain's wealth work for the whole country and establishing a commission on fairness in the tax system
- An older people's commissioner alongside a children's commissioner and a future generations commissioner in all four UK nations
- Assessing all policies for their intergenerational impact

At a time when economists continue to highlight serious financial challenges and trade-offs, the big question for government is how to lead radical change without incurring significant costs. Many of the intergenerational steps outlined in this paper include cost neutral ideas and would help deliver sustainable growth and social security. Not forgetting that Britain is a wealthy country which with boldness could support fairer tax and spending.

What we need is hope – hope that political action can and does lead to change. Helen Jackson tells about her motivation for becoming politically active over sixty years ago – the state of maternity services. In 2025 the NHS faces legal claims for failing maternity services costing much more than the services themselves. We can't allow this cycle of decline to happen again – for women, for ethnic minority communities, for low income households and for future generations.



DR CAROLE EASTON OBE, CENTRE FOR AGEING BETTER

What I want to see changed by 2050

- Global commitments and effective action to tackle climate change.
 - International co-operation on harnessing the benefits and controlling the harms of AI.
 - National strategies implemented to eradicate systemic inequalities and discrimination on the grounds of social class, age and other protected characteristics.
 - Creation of a universal high quality care system for children and adults with highly qualified and paid staff.
 - Sufficient provision of homes and places that are inclusive, accessible and affordable.
 - Access to quality employment that pays a truly living wage until retirement.
 - State pension provision, flexible to individual needs, ensuring no-one lives below minimum income standards
 - Growth in GDP combined with a measure of wellbeing as a measure of progress.
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JENNY KARTUPELIS MBE, AUTHOR AND RESEARCHER ON OLDER ADULT SOCIAL CARE ISSUES

A radical re-think about tax and spend

The problems looming for future generations are not yet insoluble if there is wise, brave and effective investment between now and 2050. What holds this back? One key issue is the belief fostered by widely accepted political discourse that taxation is 'bad' but state provision for all generations – education, health, care, pensions – is 'good'. With the courage to challenge this impossible paradox and make hard decisions about how everyone gives and takes, creating a trust-based community where investment yields a safer future, a 'better world for all' may still be possible.



WILL SNELL, FAIRNESS FOUNDATION

Addressing wealth

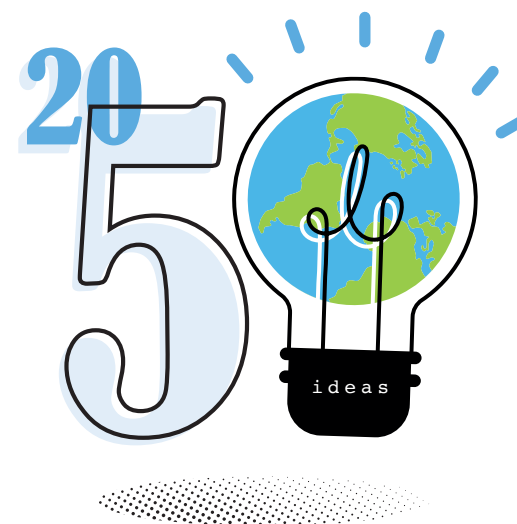
By 2050, I'd like us to have abandoned the 'meritocratic myth' that gaslights us into believing that anyone can make it in life if they try, however high the barriers they face, and so people with material wealth have earned their success while those without deserve their plight. If we faced up to the reality that people are held back or pushed forward by factors outside their control, like being born into wealth or poverty, then we'd do much more to change this, like taxing wealth, giving everyone a citizen's inheritance, and reducing the influence of wealth on democratic decision-making.



ALISON GARNHAM, CHILD POVERTY ACTION GROUP

A decent childhood for all

Child poverty steals away children's life chances leaving them behind in education, with poorer health and low self-esteem. Numbers rose from 3.6 million in 2010 to 4.5 million in 2024 after social security cuts of £50 billion a year. This autumn, the new, cross-government child poverty strategy must first remove policies that drive up poverty, like the two-child limit and benefit cap; then invest in the policies shown to reduce child poverty such as investment in social security; and then imagine a low child poverty society as seen elsewhere such as universal child benefits, universal, high-quality childcare, flexible working and generous parental leaves. We all depend on the next generation as future taxpayers and workers, but above all they have the right to a decent childhood in the here and now.





MORGAN VINE, INDEPENDENT AGE

— Money money money

Every day older people who are struggling to make ends meet contact the charity I work for asking if we can help. For many of them, financial insecurity has blighted every stage of their life. Not having enough money to live on removes power, independence and choice. By 2050, I'd like everyone in the UK to have an income which allows them to achieve a decent standard of living. To make this a reality, bold solutions are needed, including exploring policies like introducing a Minimum Income Guarantee. Action is needed now; people living on a low income don't have time to waste.



NATHANIEL BECKETT, YOUNG FUTURIST AND NEXT GEN CHAMPION

— An Intergenerational Equity Index

By 2050, breakthroughs in data transparency, AI analytics and secure digital ledgers could be used to create an Intergenerational Equity Index (IEI). Real-time tracking of debt burdens, housing capacity, and education spending—powered by privacy-preserving blockchain and zero-knowledge proofs—would allow precise auditing of policy impacts across generations. AI-driven forecasting would instantly measure fairness, assigning AAA-to-D scores visible to all. By using advanced technology to embed accountability deeply into decision-making, the IEI can reshape politics, rebuild trust, and nurture genuine cohesion between younger, older and future generations alike.



HELEN JACKSON CBE, FORMER SHEFFIELD MP AND COUNCILLOR

— Life and politics

Childbirth or more generally “reproduction of the species” has a universality that is both intense and memorable. It has global relevance and no truck with racism. When it goes wrong the urge to take action is powerful.

Taking action leads to politics where related issues around equity and equal opportunity predominate.

I joined the local Labour Party in 1962 after the prolonged hospital childbirth of my first child had left me feeling bitterly disappointed. Six months later I was on a coach travelling to London to campaign for the reform of maternity services.

As an elected councillor and later in Parliament I appreciated how listening to people's life experiences drove priorities to take action. From birth to death, in virtually every culture, life is still especially hard for women. Their work, paid or unpaid, is less recognised; affordable childcare not universally adequate; social care given less time and investment it needs; gender inequality remains within pensions.

Close contact with children gives me huge pleasure and delight. When children have close contact with their grandparents or great-grandparents, they learn more about their own past and foster their curiosity and understanding; for those in-between, simply watching this going well gives everyone a basic sense of security.

Ageing and demographics

Fairness for all ages

Increasing longevity has concentrated policy focus on the cost and reform of pensions, care and health services. While the bulk of the costs of longevity are skewed towards the last third of life, not nearly enough attention has been paid to what individuals, supported by government, can do in the first two-thirds of life to live longer, healthier and happier lives and to boost the longevity dividend of a later life full of economic activity as well as fitness and social activity.

Since the pandemic, longer lives have gone into reverse and often mean more years in poor health. Ill health is increasing across the life course – from obesity in childhood to cancer rates in middle age to mental health issues across all ages. This is particularly so for those on lower incomes and from minority ethnic communities. ILC-UK will shortly publish its first Better Living Index for the UK to see how all parts of our country can support longer and healthier lives.

United for All Ages has focused on prevention across the life course, starting with better maternity services

By 2050, the social contract needs to be rebalanced, ensuring longer lives mean greater responsibility to future generations

as above, early education and childcare, the growing number of Best Start family hubs, and the curriculum and activities in schools, colleges and universities. That then needs to continue throughout our changing lives so we eat and drink better, exercise more, stay connected and curious, and lead meaningful lives in many different ways. Intergenerational public health toolkits produced by Open University need to be widely shared across all generations and families, with grandparents and grandchildren acting together. Above all, we believe in the power of positive mindsets whatever your age as being a key driver to better longer lives.

By 2050, the social contract needs to be rebalanced, ensuring longer lives mean greater responsibility to future generations. That includes a redistribution of wealth from older to younger people through a Baby Bond: a one-off government payment, say £5k at birth, invested in UK equities, with annual family contributions of up to £1,200 matched by the state. By 18, every young person

would then have a meaningful asset to invest in education, housing or enterprise. It would be a shared investment in a fairer future, where the benefits of longevity are passed forward, not just upward.

There is also much more that could be done to ensure that all older people benefit from longevity and ageing inequality is ended. As Richard Robinson says, many older people experience abuse and live in fear and despair. Economic abuse is perhaps the most prevalent form of abuse, yet still largely hidden, and requires much more urgent action by police and partner agencies in the face of growing insecurity.

Finally, Parliament is on the verge of a once in a generation decision about choice at the end of life. It's essential that people are properly supported in making choices.



>> SARAH WOOTTON, DIGNITY IN DYING

— Planning ahead for death

In the future, people, and communities, will own dying. Society will view dying as a normal phase of life, not a medical event, and it will be accepted that dying people plan ahead and make decisions about how they die. People will have accessible information about how they might die and the consequent choices, and be supported to plan and record their preferences if they want to. Among the options for terminally ill people will be the choice of accelerating their death, in this country and with the support of their doctors. People's decisions will be respected, free from judgement. There will be open and honest conversations, professional support, and importantly, the power will be in the hands of patients.

>> DAVID SINCLAIR, INTERNATIONAL LONGEVITY CENTRE UK

— Getting longevity right

By 2050, I want us to have transformed how we think about ageing - not just to benefit older people, but to build a better future for the young. That means redesigning education, work and housing for flexibility across the life course; embedding lifelong learning from early on; and ensuring health systems focus on prevention from childhood, not crisis in later life. Intergenerational fairness must be hardwired into policy - from pensions to climate to care. If we get longevity right, we won't just add years to life - we'll create a society where today's young people can thrive well into tomorrow..

>> MARTINA ZIMMERMAN, KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

— Improving lifetime health literacy

Cumulative inequalities determine how early or late in life we see the decline of capabilities that can compensate for biological ageing, with physiological consequences and functional outcomes.

In line with our policy reports ([2023](#), [2025](#)) a better world honours the plurality of ageing experiences where policy and practice have addressed cumulative inequalities. Shifts in health opportunities are key: acting on modifiable risk factors upstream of health inequalities, and making care for health accessible to all, especially by improving lifetime health literacy. Alongside, changes in the curriculum and media are mandatory because the stories about ageing we listen to influence how we age: more older people going into schools, and a richer imagery for representing ageing.

>> DR SOPHIA AMENYAH, NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY

— A Future without ageing inequality

It was only a few decades ago that inequalities in ageing gained significant attention in national and international policy. Today, cultural and social determinants of health are finally at the forefront, yet for many older adults from underserved groups, much more remains to be done. By 2050, I envision a world where intergenerational living fosters strong, connected communities where older adults are not only cared for but deeply valued and respected. Ours will be a society where inequality no longer exists and health, nutrition and wellbeing are no longer reactive but holistically sustained through universal, preventative and culturally responsive system



LAURA HENRY-ALLAIN MBE, EDUCATIONALIST, CONSULTANT, PRODUCER, STORYTELLER

— Centred on children

We must celebrate and acknowledge that communities are front and centre of all discussions. We must strive for a community in which poverty is eradicated and all children, and their families, can thrive. The existence of inequality and discrimination should not be up for debate but should be recognised and addressed. We must all take responsibility for the impact that we have on the environment and that Sustainability Goals have been met. Children are at the heart of every policy; everything has a direct impact on them. Irrespective of age, stage and ability, every citizen should live in adequate housing, with health needs met by a protected and well-funded NHS. Education for all must allow every child the right to play.



RICHARD ROBINSON, HOURGLASS

— Towards a safer ageing society by 2050

That is Hourglass's vision — and our challenge to the UK.

Each year, more than 2.5 million older people across the country experience physical, emotional, sexual or financial abuse, or are subjected to neglect. Yet this crisis remains largely overlooked.

With a rapidly ageing population, we cannot afford to ignore the safety and dignity of older women and men. Hourglass is calling for urgent, systemic change — a new approach that places older people's safety at the heart of public policy, service design and community life.

This is not a short-term campaign. It requires long-term commitment, public understanding, political will — and above all, parity. Older people must be seen, heard, and protected.

Our **Manifesto for a Safer Ageing Society** sets out the steps we believe are essential to end the abuse and neglect of older people by 2050.



Communities and homes

Places for all ages

Everything begins at home, whatever our age. Yet housing is not affordable for many, and homes are often overcrowded, inaccessible, cold and damp. Building new affordable homes would tackle this crisis and boost the economy – along with making existing homes warm, safe and secure. But we also need to live in communities where people can connect and interact and collaborate. Where we live, our neighbourhood and local community shape our common experiences. The spaces we share have changed rapidly in recent years as retailers and offices have moved out of town centres and other public spaces and facilities have been starved of investment.

The values central to ‘community’ are repeated time and again below and throughout this paper. Everyday connections and ‘neighbourisms’ are the common threads, the ties that bind. Despite our innate human longing for connection, we have contrived as a society to design homes, neighbourhoods and a housing market which don’t connect; they all increase age segregation. Insecurity is also one of the main features of 21st century lives – from work, income and cost of living to housing, crime and racism. One of the biggest challenges is restoring security in homes and communities, through community safety, crime prevention and local policing.

As Savannah Fishel has explained in her ground-breaking global tour of intergenerational housing, we can reimagine how we live together in ways that not only promote relationships but also better health and shared ownership. Holly Sissons imagines what life might be like for an older citizen come 2050, while Tim Gill reminds us that cars and community really don’t go well together, particularly for children.



ANDREA FRANKENTHAL, HAPIPOD

Improving health and housing

For a better world I believe loneliness, housing and healthcare in the UK could be vastly improved with a little creative thinking. I wish for:

- More intergenerational housing projects where one party contributes company and vitality, the other, life experience, placing less burden on healthcare resources.
- Communal housing built to rehabilitate the homeless, offering training and jobs in areas that will benefit the community and sustainability such as fixing Britain's crumbling streets using environmentally friendly solutions.
- Wiser use of NHS resources, creating internal recruitment agencies rather than using expensive private ones to staff hospitals, ensuring safer monitoring and better value.

United for All Ages has called for:

- Building at least 300,000 homes a year for the next decade and building to lifetime homes standards, along with a new focus on housing options for older people
- Scaling up homeshare schemes to enable more older people to share their homes with young people
- Shared spaces in housing developments designed for interaction and mixing
- More encouragement for multigenerational homes with three generations choosing to live under the same roof
- Planning guidance that facilitates and promotes intergenerational developments in town centres
- Every local authority should develop a strategy for communities for all ages
- More high streets and town centres could be reinvented with imagination and planning
- Shared spaces in local communities should promote mixing
- Centres for all ages such as family hubs can provide places where all ages could mix and share activities
- Public parks should enable people of all ages to play, exercise and simply enjoy life, while streets should encourage play, fun and togetherness
- Every council should hold conventions bringing together citizens of all ages to shape their community's future
- Prioritising community safety, reducing domestic abuse and preventing youth crime
- Crime prevention starts with families, schools and communities, supported by neighbourhood watch and community policing
- Tackling ageism and promoting safety for young and older people
- Creating a national day of unity as a new bank holiday to build understanding and trust between generations building on existing national days of community action



KATE WINBAUM, ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART

The human ties that bond

By 2050, intergenerational living could foster a renewed sense of community, where people of all ages live, learn, and grow together. Imagine vibrant, mixed-age neighbourhoods with purpose-built homes and shared spaces that nurture connection, care, and resilience. Age becomes a bridge where older adults offer wisdom, mentorship, and stability. Younger generations contribute their energy, digital fluency, and everyday support. Smart home technologies enhance safety and ease caregiving responsibilities. Co-living models help reduce costs and environmental impact. These communities are designed for togetherness. Collaboration replaces isolation and belonging is built into daily life. This future is focused on the strength of human ties, where community connection thrives.



HARRY HOBSON, NEIGHBOURLY LAB

Equivalence through contact

The thing I hope there's plenty of in 2050 is "equivalence" - the ability for humans to presume that one another are of-equal-value. Or at least: roughly, fundamentally, -ish, yes-but-not-but-yes equal value.

It's fragile partly because it's not verifiable and it runs counter to what we see in the world, and against our power-structures and our judge-y and competitive instincts. It's radical and true only when we all agree and act to make it true; so it's fragile and threatened.

It comes from contact. We can't think our way to equivalence: but we do experience our way to it. It's underwritten by contact with one another, and it's nourished by difference: the wider range of different people we see and know, the more we feel equivalence. By us seeing and dealing with one another in the ordinary-everyday, living a common-life together.

So we need to fight for and invest in the environments and tools we have that bring us into everyday wide contact with another.

This future is focused on the strength of human ties, where community connection thrives



MELISSA POLLARD, INTERGENERATIONAL LINKING, ALIVE

Infrastructure for togetherness

Changes in infrastructure need to be considered when creating a truly intergenerational future. Outdoor spaces contribute to age segregation, with a lot of places being inaccessible for some older people who are disabled by their surroundings. Indoor spaces, such as care homes, are often unwelcoming and overwhelming for younger people, and making care homes a place where families can come and feel young people can play is a potential way to create intergenerational spaces in care. Following this, parks and outdoor communal spaces could be tailored to both young, old, and everyone in between, to feel a true sense of community and togetherness.



KATE HODSON, MAGIC ME

Everyday connection

Our vision is for neighbourhoods where generations live, learn, and create together—places where ageing is celebrated, not feared. Homes support lifelong living, with shared spaces that spark everyday connection. Underused or unlikely buildings—care homes, schools, shops, offices—are reimagined as hubs of intergenerational life. The health system prioritises prevention, enabling healthier, more connected ageing. Creativity is lifelong, encouraged in babies, centenarians and everyone in between. Imagination is valued at every stage. Technology and AI free us to connect in person, not isolate behind screens. Media becomes less divisive and ageist, helping us feel more confident in ourselves—and more curious, kind, and connected to others.



POLLY VAN MARKEN, BRIGHTER TOGETHER

Value and invest in community

Community can sound fluffy, even nebulous, but without it, we lose the foundation of what makes life worth living. Without social connections and shared spaces, we become isolated, life becomes transactional, and our worth feels tied only to what we own or earn. I believe a good life is rooted in what we give to others. We need to make progress and technology work for us to free up our time to spend with each other rather than becoming slaves to working more.

Let's revalue our time and redefine success. Let's use our time and talents for what technology cannot replace: meaningful time together, helping, learning, and sharing our lives. We will all be happier and healthier for it.



SAVANNAH FISHEL, SERVICE DESIGNER, CAMPAIGNER, RESEARCHER, COACH

A relational economy: health as a social movement

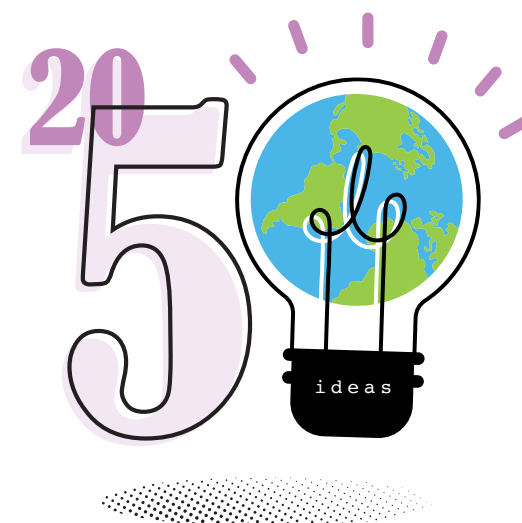
By 2050, we should be building neighbourhoods shaped around relationships, not property value. Policy and media would champion social connection across age groups - embracing neighbour and 'chosen family' ties - as essential infrastructure. Everyday 'neighbourisms' — sharing tools, collective childcare, cooking for others — would be recognised as preventative health essentials. This would see: redistribution with empty home deterrents; unused buildings repurposed as community hubs; shared land and property ownership widely enabled; and developers supported and incentivised to deliver social and environmental value. A relational economy, rooted in shared ownership, care and collective resilience.



HANNAH KAYI MASON, INCOMMON

Generations together

We would like to see a future where an intergenerational society is the norm. We know from our many years of experience connecting generations that society's challenges become smaller when we approach them together, with all of the generations united. We take social action working together to look after the planet. We have created places and spaces across the world where different generations live together, work together, socialise and come together, to maintain an equitable status quo. And when we go astray? We all put the world to rights!



>> TIM GILL, WRITER AND INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR

Children before cars

Cars are a curse for children. When moving, cars are a mortal threat to children’s bodies, brains, hearts, and lungs. When stationery, they take up precious space, pushing children into the margins. At the dawn of the motor age a hundred years ago, cars colonised the most vibrant, vital, shared intergenerational spaces of any city: its streets. It is time to end this corporate capture. By putting children before cars, future generations can rebuild connections between people of all ages, reinvigorate human habitats, and restore children to their rightful place as active, visible, engaged citizens of our towns and cities.

>> HOLLY SISSONS, CORSTOPHINE & WRIGHT ARCHITECTS

Diary entry of a senior resident, August 2050

- 6.00 am Wake up to the birds of my childhood
- 6.30 am Pre-breakfast personalised exercise
- 7.30 am Sam arrives to walk Lucky, earlier than normal so I can help with his homework before school
- 11.00 am Toronto wakes up – play virtual cards with Julie, just like she’s in the room!
- 12.00 pm Regular doctor check-in
- 13.00 pm Lunch – seasonal food picked fresh from garden
- 14.00 pm Work - feeling useful and learning new things
- 16.00 pm Walked back by Becky enroute to her university halls next door, remember when this used to be a dangerous, busy road!
- 17.00 pm Attend community group
- 18.00 pm Family visit for dinner
- 21.30 pm Stroll through garden with Lucky before bed
- 22.30 pm Really starry night now the city’s switching off

Work, learning and care Opportunities for all ages

At some point in our lives, we will all be carers or need care. Care is central to our society and to our economy. Yet childcare and care for older and disabled adults are under-valued. Valuing care and all those who care is key, as Jon Glasby argues. And we could do much more to improve care for looked after children and for adults with learning disabilities.

Working longer is good for our health. There are now at least four generations working for many employers. That presents both challenges about working well together and opportunities for learning from each other as well as changing jobs and careers throughout life. Marisa Toldo and Lucy Standing explain how work has to change – for example employers need to recognise that some 30% of their staff are caregivers and need additional support (as already provided for parents with childcare responsibilities).

Shared interests and experiences bring people of all ages together to pursue common passions and activities. These include a wide range of sporting and cultural interests that often lead to connection and friendship between generations.

Our world is changing faster than ever and technology is central to so many aspects of our lives and communication. Artificial intelligence can do much to improve our lives and work. Yet many feel

excluded and isolated with a growing digital divide. Darren Evans shows how technology can support intergenerational connection.

Learning should be for life as the pace of change increases. Yet early education and schools are failing too many children and their life chances, while adult education has declined rather than flourished. Ironically the key building block of education for societal change is in need of substantial transformation itself, with a complete shift of focus, as described by Chloe Bradwell. Are we prepared to invest in those things that really fulfil our human potential and purpose?

Artificial intelligence can do much to improve our lives and work. Yet many feel excluded and isolated with a growing digital divide.

Linking care and education has so many benefits for all generations. Young children's isolation needs more attention, particularly post-Covid. Family life has for many reasons left children without the social interaction to which older people could contribute by alleviating some of the loneliness that has made interactions at nursery and in school more problematic. Judith Ish-Horowicz sums up below why by 2050 every care provider should link with education settings so relationships between old and young can give all children, the time, confidence and skills they need. This building of positive mindsets and life skills needs to continue throughout and beyond school to build a better world.



United for All Ages has called for:

- Intergenerational care – co-located care homes and nurseries – promoting relational care
- Affordable childcare and parental support, reviving the children's centres infrastructure
- Improved support for family carers as part of a national carers strategy
- Care homes as community hubs also providing social support and activities for older people living in the local community
- Radical care reform creating universal support that is fairer, simpler and sustainable
- Links between all care homes and older people's housing schemes and local nurseries, schools and colleges
- Advising employers on the benefits of multigenerational workforces
- Maximising innovation and productivity growth by promoting intergenerational connection
- Learning between generations through coaching and mentoring, team building and teamwork
- Flexibility and hybrid working for all who want and need it, recognising the breadth of caring responsibilities
- From opera to football, gardening to fishing, supporting the growth of shared interests
- Team sports for young people are a crucial part of learning while walking football and cricket and similar later life sports maintain the art of collaboration
- Using the power of sport and culture to promote intergenerational interaction, fitness and health as well as volunteering
- Making low-cost accessible technology widely available to people of all ages
- Young and older people learning together and sharing life stories using technology
- All public agencies to promote digital inclusion
- Investment in lifelong learning and technology skills
- Support intergenerational innovation through generations working together
- Open University and University of the Third Age to enable lifelong learning for all ages
- Creating an intergenerational curriculum for learning, development and citizenship
- Schools could become community spaces for all ages during the week and weekends
- Enabling students to train together with older adults on intergenerational projects
- Online mentoring to enable young people to use technology to learn intergenerationally



ANNABEL JAMES, AGE SPACE

Better balance of life and work

By 2050 we will have worked out the balance between paid work and the business of life enabling people to work to live rather than live to work. Academic success will be better balanced by practical life skills. Life will be more local, a return to community proper with intergenerational living, support and help. Everyone will learn to read for pleasure, grow produce and cook food from primary school age and sport/physical activity will be compulsory (winners and losers). Technology will be the great enabler, not the master.



MARISA TOLDO, SPACE YOUR PLACE

Working with care

Care can't wait. And governments won't move fast enough. By 2050, community and workplace must be the engines of a better world. Adult care will be as expected as childcare—designed into offices, cities, and company culture. Workplaces won't compete with care; they'll power it. Generations will learn, trust, and build side by side. And success? It won't be measured by speed alone, but by this: Who felt supported? Who belonged? A world that values care isn't softer. It's smarter. Stronger. Built to last. If we want a future worth inheriting—**we must choose to design it now.**

>> LISA HARKER, NUFFIELD FAMILY JUSTICE OBSERVATORY

Care for life

In the next 25 years we could close the gap in life outcomes for children taken into the care of the state, ensuring that they are no more likely to be unemployed, become homeless, go to prison or die than their peers. This would transform the lives of one in thirty children – equivalent to one child in every classroom. It would reduce inequality and help to break intergenerational disadvantage. And it would benefit us all, because we would be a happier, more productive society. How? We could end the notion that children 'leave' care at 18 and ensure no child in care grows up without having someone committed to love and care for them for life.

>> DARREN EVANS, AFTER CLOUD

Well-being through storytelling

By 2050, dementia care will be transformed into a frontier of proactive and personalised health, built on revolutionary AI and storytelling platforms like After Cloud. Personal histories, merged with advanced speech and cognitive analyses, will empower early detection and intervention, safeguarding identities while fostering human dignity and intergenerational connectivity. This vision transcends conventional care, shifting the paradigm toward preventative healthcare solutions, where data-driven insights shape lives well before symptoms emerge. In this future, individuals will gain autonomy, families will find clarity, and healthcare systems will thrive through seamless integration of narratives and intelligence, redefining well-being for generations to come.

>> PROFESSOR JON GLASBY, IMPACT

Valuing each other

I've been working with people with learning disabilities in 'long-stay' hospitals – a national scandal we've collectively failed to resolve over many years. Deep down, I can't help feeling that we get the kind of services we deserve as a society. If we cared enough about people with learning disabilities (and other people who draw on care and support), then we simply wouldn't put up with many aspects of current services, and we'd demand more fundamental change. By 2050, I'd love to see a fairer, more equal, more inclusive society – where we more genuinely value each other for who we are.

>> LUCY STANDING, BRAVE STARTS

Freedom and responsibility at work

To build a better future, we must foster greater personal agency as the world of work becomes less stable and more fluid. A birth fund (invested and compounded over time) could replace complex social support systems like pensions, maternity leave, and sabbaticals. It simplifies welfare, treats everyone equally, and gives individuals real freedom to make life choices on their terms. Alongside this, we should instil a sense of shared responsibility through a modern form of national service a year at 18 and another at 65 – contributing to society by helping in schools, care homes, or public spaces. These changes would promote fairness, independence, and a stronger social fabric.

>> DR CHLOE BRADWELL, LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

— Transforming education

By 2050, we must radically transform education to serve all generations. The current school system stifles creativity, causes burnout, and often fails to prepare children for meaningful lives. Replace standardised exams with project-based learning rooted in real-world impact. Prioritise hands-on experiences, ecological education, mindfulness and intergenerational volunteering to foster empathy, resilience and connection. Let classrooms extend into nature and communities—where knowledge is lived, not memorised. Education should cultivate purpose, not performance. A reimagined system like this benefits future workers, caregivers, citizens and leaders alike—grounded in wellbeing, curiosity, and social responsibility, not outdated academic benchmarks..

>> JUDITH ISH-HOROWICZ MBE, APPLES AND HONEY NIGHTINGALE, GEN-ALL

— Living and learning together, cradle to grave

I don't want to sound trite, but the saying 'it takes a village to raise a child' is not just a truism, it's an exponential alarm call. Without the wisdom of experience, nurturing of relationships, the security and confidence of belonging, the future of humanity is bleak. My vision of 2050 is one where every care organisation is connected to an educational setting whether it be co-located daycare or neighbouring school. Our future is in the custody of the children of today. Living and learning together with all generations from birth to death is the most effective remedy for healing a fractured society.

>> PROFESSOR JON GLASBY, IMPACT

— Investing in ourselves

We live in a very individualistic society, where we offer support to specific 'users' of public services, and see other people as being their 'carers'. To me, this has always been an artificial division – not least with an older couple who support each other in different ways – which also creates a sense of 'us' and 'them'. By 2050, I hope we focus more on the kind of society we want to be and the kind of relationships we want to have with each other in our local communities. In this scenario, adult social care would be seen as a form of social and economic investment we make in ourselves.

Hope for all ages Making it happen

“The past we inherit; the future we build.”

The Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, earlier this year promised to “repair the broken contract with young people” and “secure our future.”

In a world increasingly shaped by division and instability, intergenerational cohesion is a national strategic asset we can’t afford to ignore. Young people have significant issues with how the system is failing them, but a majority do not want to tear it down, they’re simply asking for a future that works. Instead of exaggerating divides, we need to bring young people and their priorities in to rebuild trust – to listen, to involve and to act.

That means shaping a shared, long-term vision for the UK to 2050 – one that addresses very real concerns about prospects around housing, jobs, climate, health, care, pensions, debt as well as security. This paper has attempted to address these issues and show how we can create a better world by 2050.

Together with other organisations, United for All Ages has called on the UK government to take the lead and:

- Embed a principle of intergenerational fairness in policymaking, assessing policies and budgets;

- Create a parliamentary committee for the future and involve young people in a national strategy and dialogue;
- Support local councils to develop an intergenerational strategy with communities of all ages.

Building a future-fit Britain requires intergenerational solidarity and bold, long-term thinking. It’s our shared duty to make that happen – for today’s citizens and for generations to come. We welcome the government’s commitment to enable voting at age 16 but much more needs to be done to make our democratic system more inclusive and participative. The best change comes about through dialogue and we welcome the World Health Organisation’s promotion of intergenerational dialogue.

Underpinning this is hope. That hope is instilled by the [Future Generations Commissioner in Wales](#) in his recent report celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. With vision, drive and togetherness, we can make it happen.

If we can’t imagine it, we can’t make it happen.

>> The line it is drawn
The curse it is cast
The slow one now
Will later be fast
As the present now
Will later be past
The order is rapidly fadin’
And the first one now
Will later be last
For the times they are a-changin’

Bob Dylan

Appendix A

Imagine a world without age segregation

United for All Ages has long been concerned that age segregation in the UK (and elsewhere) is increasing, with younger and older adults living in increasingly separate areas. This trend is particularly noticeable in areas with high housing unaffordability, where younger people are often priced out of desirable neighbourhoods. This separation can lead to social isolation, intergenerational tensions and hinder social cohesion. That's why United for All Ages has long said 'Mixing Matters'.

What does age segregation look like?

Increased Spatial Segregation:

- Younger people and older people are living in different areas:

Young adults are gravitating towards gentrifying city centres, while older adults are more likely to live in suburbs and rural areas.

- High housing costs contribute:

The rising cost of housing, particularly in desirable urban areas, is a major factor driving this segregation, as it limits where younger people can afford to live.

- Social housing policies:

In some areas, social housing policies have also contributed to the concentration of certain age groups in specific locations.

- Fewer shared community spaces:

The decline in shared spaces like leisure centres, libraries and parks further reduces opportunities for intergenerational interaction.

What are the consequences of age segregation?

- Social isolation and loneliness:

Age segregation can lead to loneliness and isolation, particularly among older adults who have fewer opportunities to interact with younger generations.

- Intergenerational tensions:

Living in separate areas can create a divide between generations, potentially leading to misunderstandings and conflict.

- Reduced social cohesion:

Age segregation can hinder the development of strong, cohesive communities where people of all ages feel connected and valued.

- Impact on health and well-being:

Loneliness and isolation can negatively impact both physical and mental health.

- Economic consequences:

Age segregation can lead to economic inefficiencies, such as reduced access to job opportunities for younger people in some areas.

Writing in the Sunday Times on 13 July 2025, Matthew Syed highlighted the impact of housing and wealth on relations between generations and the balance of power.

How can we address age segregation?

- Promoting mixed-age communities:

There is a need to create more opportunities for people of all ages to live, work, and interact in the same areas.

- Addressing housing affordability:

Policies to improve housing affordability and availability are crucial to allow for more diverse communities.

- Encouraging intergenerational activities:

Initiatives that promote interaction and collaboration between different age groups can help bridge the divide.

Mixing matters!