Future of Ageing 2026 Speaker biographies

Acting now: creating communities where everyone thrives

With populations ageing rapidly and resources stretched, how can policymakers, workplaces and learning centres urgently collaborate within their communities to tackle deepening inequality and rising isolation - so all people and places can experience longer, better lives?

Chair: Sarah Walker, Partner, Travers Smith



Sarah is a partner at Traver Smiths Real Estate team with a particular focus on the investment into, and development of, non-core real estate assets.

Sarah has a particular focus and considerable experience in the investment into and development of housing and healthcare for older people acting for investors, developers and operators, such as long-standing clients Care REIT plc (formerly Impact REIT) and McCarthy Stone.

Sarah has a genuine and keen interest in the decarbonisation of the built environment through active asset management and, more broadly, impact investing, leading on ESG within the real estate team at Travers Smith. She is a member of various ESG committees within Travers Smith and sits on the AREF D&I Working Group Committee focusing on capturing and benchmarking industry standards.

Rt Hon Baroness Hilary Armstrong, Chair, Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods



Baroness Armstrong was a Cabinet minister in the Labour Government from 2001 to 2007. She was also Minister for Local Government and Minister for Social Exclusion during her time in office. A Member of Parliament from 1987 to 2010, she represented the seat of North West Durham. Armstrong worked as a social worker and university lecturer before entering politics. During her time in office, she was responsible for many major government initiatives, including the New Deal for Communities, one of the most successful regeneration initiatives by government in recent times.

Jacynth Bassett, Founder and CEO, Ageism Is Never In Style



Jacynth Bassett is a globally recognised expert, consultant, and keynote speaker on age inclusivity, longevity, and intergenerational strategy. She is the Founder and CEO of Ageism Is Never In Style®, the leading award-winning global consultancy and platform driving business and cultural change by reshaping how organisations and society engages with ageing, generations, longevity and life stages.

Sitting at the intersection of culture, commerce, and strategy, Jacynth is widely regarded as one of the most distinctive, actionable, and commercially driven voices shaping the global age-inclusivity, longevity and intergenerational agenda. Through a holistic approach spanning strategy, talent, market intelligence, and culture, she helps organisations eradicate age bias, and move beyond siloed thinking to build age-

inclusive, intergenerational and longevity systems that enable retention, productivity, collaboration, relevance, and long-term growth.

Rt Hon Chloe Smith, President, Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development



Rt Hon Chloe Smith is a senior leader with expertise in technological change, workforce transformation and skills, global economics, regulation, risk and governance. She uses her experience, insight and network to help organisations to navigate these challenges. Chloe is passionate about people and technology.

As a Cabinet minister, she built and led the new government department for Science, Innovation and Technology. She provides insight into the global economy, labour market, pensions, health and productivity and the future of work from her service as Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work.

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Caroline Waters In conversation with Lord Wood Acting Now for and ageing society

Chair: Caroline Waters OBE, Strategic Advisory Board**, ILCUK**



Caroline is Vice President of RSPCA and Carers UK and Founder of CW Consulting Box. Formerly the Vice Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and Director of People & Policy at BT, she routinely set the agenda; demonstrating real thought leadership.

She is an influential leader and practitioner in the original movement to create new ways of working and a leader of the nascent flexible working agenda, Caroline continues to build more inclusive approaches to work.

Lord Stewart Wood of Anfield, Chair**,** House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee



Lord Wood of Anfield is a Labour member of the House of Lords and currently the Chair of the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee. From 2001–2007 he was a member of the Treasury's Council of Economic Advisers, working on a range of public policy issues for the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He then worked at 10 Downing Street as a Senior Special Adviser to Prime Minister Gordon Brown, leading on foreign policy (Europe, USA & Middle East); culture, media & sports policy; and Northern Irish affairs. He was a member of the Labour Shadow Cabinet & an adviser to Ed Miliband from 2010-2015.

Acting now - delivering financial security to shape longer, better lives

As lifespans extend and household finances tighten, can we act in time to shape the future of retirement – protecting pensions, securing savings and preventing financial insecurity from shortening and diminishing lives, while turning longer lives into a source of opportunity?

Chair: Patrick Thomson, Head of Research Analysis and Policy, Standard Life Centre for the Future of Retirement



Patrick leads policy and research for the Standard Life Centre, exploring the changing way that people save, work and retire. He has nearly 20 years experience of policy, research, and delivery in government, the private sector, and a What Works Centre. He previously led the Centre for Ageing Better's programme on age-inclusive employment, has been an expert witness to Select Committees, and authored a review of the case for longer working lives for the Intergenerational Commission.

As a former member of the Government Social Research Unit he managed a research, policy and analysis portfolio for the Department for Work and Pensions' ageing society and extending working lives strategy, and helped produce the evidence base which led to the removal of the Default Retirement Age in 2011.

Theo Bertram, Director, Social Market Foundation



Theo Bertram studied at the University of Cambridge before completing a PhD on Samuel Beckett at the University of Bristol. After leaving Downing Street in 2010, Bertram worked as Head of Public Affairs at Telefonica O2 UK before joining Google, where he worked on a range of UK and European public policy issues for eight years. In 2019, he joined TikTok, where he was Vice President for Public Policy and Government Relations, focused on European and global technology public policy issues and engaging with global institutions on behalf of TikTok.

He started his career in politics as a regional organiser for the Labour Party and rose through the ranks to become a Special Adviser in Downing Street to Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2006. He was one of the few advisers to serve both Blair and Gordon Brown, becoming Head of Research and Information at No. 10.

Lawrence Churchill CBE, Chair of Trustees, ILC-UK



Lawrence has had an extensive career in Financial Services focused on innovation, governance and improving consumer outcomes. In private sector commercial life, he has been Chief Executive of three insurance groups, Senior Independent Director of BUPA and currently chairs Clara Pensions and the Independent Governance Committee at Vanguard. In the public sector, he was the founding Chairman of both the Pension Protection Fund and the National Employment Savings Trust as well as chairing the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. He has been a Director of the Personal Investment Authority, The Financial Ombudsman Service and the Board for Actuarial Standards.

In the third sector he has been a Trustee of the Royal Society of Arts, the Employers Forum on Disability, the ILC-UK, the Pensions Policy Institute and has played multiple leadership roles for Business in the Community.

He read Greats at St. John's College, Oxford, was appointed CBE in 2010 for Public Service and awarded an Honorary Doctorate at the University of Bath in 2024.

Dr Hayley James, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Personal Financially Wellbeing, Aston University



Hayley is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Personal Financially Wellbeing, Aston University. She has extensive research experience on pension policy and pension saving behaviours, including her recently published book 'Pension Saving in a Gendered Lifecourse'. She has recently completed a British Academy Innovation Fellowship on Real Accounts, a ten-month financial diaries study which followed households on low to medium incomes.

Dr Suzy Morrissey FCA, Deputy Director, Pensions Policy Institute



Suzy is the Deputy Director of the Pensions Policy Institute where she is responsible for the PPI work programme and manages the policy research and modelling teams. Suzy was recently appointed by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to be the Independent Reviewer for the third State Pension Age Review. Suzy's career includes experience in both the public and private sectors. She started her career working for global consulting firms in Australia and New Zealand. She then moved to the public sector and held several senior positions in the New Zealand civil service, including at Treasury and the Retirement Commission, before recently returning to the UK. In 2018, Suzy was conferred Fellowship (FCA) by Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the profession.

Acting now: shifting from sickness service to prevention for healthier lives

With multimorbidity rising and health systems under pressure, how can we urgently innovate and integrate prevention across communities and services - so longer lives are truly healthier lives?

Chair: Arun Himawan, Senior Health Policy and Research Manager, ILC UK



Arunima Himawan is the Senior Health Policy and Research Manager at ILC. Arun heads ILC's Global Health Programme, which includes the organisation's flagship global Healthy Ageing and Prevention Index. Her background is in global health and social epidemiology, and has particular expertise in life course immunisation, NCDs, system strengthening, health inequity and convening high-level policy forums alongside multilateral meetings. She sits on the Steering Committee of the EU Structural Heart Disease Coalition, the EU Steering Group on Prevention of Respiratory Infections and is a member of ILC-Global Alliance Gender and Ageing Committee and ILC-Global Alliance International Committee.

Lord Peter Babudu, Executive Director, Impact on Urban Health



Peter has been the Director for Impact on Urban Health since 2023. He brings together Impact on Urban Healths programmes' funding and partnerships, as well as the work of their data, evidence and innovation teams in support of our urban health work.

Peter brings a range of experience in senior leadership roles, in organisations including the Youth Edowment Fund and The Social Innovation Partnership. He also previously served as a Councillor in Southwark Council and as Chair of Blagrave Trust.

Prof Karen Glaser, Professor of Gerontology, King's College London



Professor Karen Glaser is a researcher in social gerontology at King's College London, where she previously served as Director of the Institute of Gerontology. Her research focuses on grandparental care, working lives beyond the state pension age, and long-term care. She currently co-leads the Work and Welfare Programme at the Economic and Social Research Council-funded Centre for Society and Mental Health, investigating the links between mental distress and economic inactivity, and exploring how individuals experiencing mental distress, as well as their carers, can be supported to remain in work.

Her research adopts a life course approach to examine how work and family biographies shape health and well-being in later life. She has conducted cross-national studies on the determinants and consequences of grandparental childcare and explored how welfare regimes influence the roles grandparents play in family support. She led a UK ESRC-funded project on long-term care and inequalities in later life, as part of an international initiative.

Dr. Adrian Hayter, GP Partner Runnymede Medical Practice and Medical Director for Clinical Policy RCGP



Adrian has been a GP for nearly 30 yrs working clinically at the Runnymede Medical Practice as a GP partner.

He held leadership roles at local and national level working in commissioning roles in Primary Care Groups Trusts and as a Chair of a Clinical Commissioning Group for Windsor Ascot and Maidenhead.

In 2019, He was appointed to National Clinical Director for Older People for NHS England (the first GP to hold the role) and lead the Ageing Well Programme supporting national policy for older people through the COVID Pandemic. He sat on the Scientific Advisory Group Emergencies subcom

mittee for people receiving social care and was the non-aged based clinical lead for the vaccination programme leading the Covid vaccination in care home programme.

In 2024. He became the Medical Director for Clinical Policy at the Royal College Of General Practitioners and is responsible for supporting the Clinical Priority for the College which is Preventive Medicine. He is a member of the WHO Clinical Consortium for Healthy Ageing and a lecturer in Gerontology at Singapore University of Social Science.

Riyad Karim, Assistant Director, Community Engagement & Health Equity, NHS England London



Riyad leads region-wide efforts to advance vaccine equity through inclusive, community-driven approaches that engage underserved populations. He pioneered the nationally recognised 3Ts model—Trusted Leaders, Trusted Places, Trusted Voices—which has reshaped how the NHS connects with communities across London, including Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Somali, Black African and Caribbean, Eastern European, Brazilian, and Portuguese-speaking populations.

His approach brings together trusted community and faith leaders with public health and NHS teams at place, system, and regional levels to improve vaccine and screening uptake, promote broader health and wellbeing, and build lasting trust through culturally grounded, community-centred engagement.

Mayor Claire Ward, Mayor of the East Midlands Combined County Authority



In May 2024, Claire Ward was elected Mayor of the East Midlands, representing 2.2 million people across the region. She has responsibility for transport, skills and adult education, housing and land, net-zero and economic development.

As the Chair of the East Midlands Combined County Authority, the Mayor works with partners across the region and beyond to deliver transformational change for the East Midlands.

The mayor also acts as a champion for the region, influencing Government at a national level to boost growth and innovation, shape policy and access further funding. She previously served as MP for Watford from 1997-2010 during which she was as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice from 2009-2010.

Ben Franklin, Deputy Chief Executive, ILC



Ben oversees major policy projects and programmes of work for ILC. He is an expert on the intersection of economic and social policy and previously ran the think tank Centre for Progressive Policy, doing groundbreaking work on spatial inequality and inclusive growth.

He has advised national and local leaders on how to address the drivers of economic inequality, and his work has been featured across all national news outlets.

Ben has specific expertise in the economic impacts of demographic change, having led research projects on older workers, retirement income adequacy and the macroeconomic impacts of ageing in a previous stint at ILC.

As well as working in think tanks, Ben has worked in the Treasury, Financial Conduct Authority and in the insurance industry.