Outlook

Friday three - 12 April 2024

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International Longevity Centre UK

Latest news

ILC Friday three

- Reason for optimism - a less obese future?
- Communal living - can we share our homes?
- ILC's Strategic Advisory Board - a little help from our friends

Reasons for optimism - a less obese future?



Across the world, 2.8 million people died last year as a result of being overweight or obese. In the UK almost two-thirds of us are overweight or living with obesity.

But as we discussed this week at our Futures workshop supported by Brightwell, perhaps there are reasons for optimism.

The proportion of children, aged 10 and 11, living with obesity fell last year.

New effective weight management drugs that reduce appetite and helps us manage diabetes are now available in the UK on the NHS and privately.

What and when we eat is changing. Last year we ate less meat than at any point since records began. There has been a 14% drop in meat consumption over the past decade which has potential benefits for both health and the environment. Evidence from the US suggests more of us are eating earlier in the evening which too could have significant health benefits.

We are likely to follow the example of Rio City Council and ban some ultra processed foods while incentivising the manufacture of functional foods packed with protein, vitamins and minerals to provide medical nutrition. The functional food industry is estimated to grow to $228 billion by 2030.

It's hard to foresee a similarly quick turnaround in how much exercise we do, after all, across the world, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men do not do enough physical activity to stay healthy. But we may well see pills that mimic the benefits of exercise. The evidence about the most effective ways to lose weight is improving. AI alongside human coaching appears to deliver more successful weight loss outcomes, for example.

Our attitudes towards alcohol are changing. 9 million people in the UK planned to take a dry January last year. Younger people seem to be drinking less alcohol and driving demand for low alcohol drinks. The top selling beer at Whole Foods is non-alcoholic. Scientists are even developing alcohol substitutes that allow for social drinking but don't have the same negative health impact.

We shouldn't be complacent. And there is a chance that at a global level, the incidence of obesity will increase even if prevalence falls. But there are reasons for optimism. If you have any positive stories or solutions for ways policy needs to adapt to sustain our ageing populations, please tell us via the button below.

REASONS FOR OPTIMISM

Communal living - can we share our homes?



Communal living? Custom-sizing or sub-dividing? Down-sizing or right-sizing? Suitable solutions for sustainable housing

In a blog on housing solutions, DanthePlan, a regular Friday three reader wrote *"the future will be a foreign country where things will be done differently. In that sense we are all migrants from an uncertain present to a future that we hope will include answers to our various problems and crises."* This is very much the flavour of our Futures project with Brightwell.

At the workshop this week, one of the six top trends that people chose for discussion was communal living as a possible solution for the housing crisis – as well as bringing other social benefits such as reducing loneliness. However, there was certain scepticism about whether this would happen. Mainly it was felt that, in the UK, we're culturally not suited to sharing our lives and managing the awkwardness of sharing space as our needs and preferences change; for example, if care needs become more substantial or people fall out with each other.

A report by the Intergenerational Foundation in 2016 estimated that that 110,000 new homes could be created if just 2.5% of the 4.4 million owner-occupied households, with two or more spare bedrooms and no dependent children, decided to downsize-in-situ. These new homes would have the advantage of already being located in established communities which can provide access to jobs, transport and public services. And DanthePlan has argued that sub-dividing existing housing stock is the best and only way to meet housing needs within the UK's carbon reduction budgets.

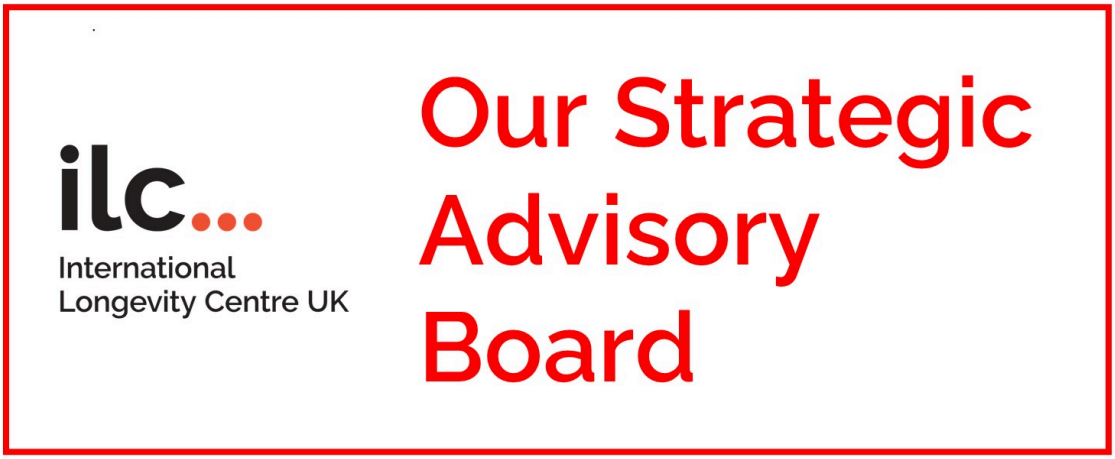
However, realistically getting people to make the choice between mutual benefit and perceived individual disadvantage is always going to be difficult. Home ownership (and by extension, not living with housemates) remains a key ambition for many and so it is difficult to see how housing needs can be met without building more homes. In his ILC Guest blog published today, Nick Sanderson, CEO at Audley Group, calls for more age-specific housing, particularly in areas where the over-65 population is high.

By 2040, the ONS estimates that a quarter of the population will be over 65, yet only 3% of new homes are retirement units. Nick Sanderson argues, *"We have to give people more choice. Not everyone living in a large family property will choose to move into a retirement property, but we must give people the option. Firstly, to show the different lifestyle options available, importantly ones which can enhance people's quality of life as they get older, and secondly to encourage those that want to move to do so."*

Currently, our homes are not enough, too expensive, and ill-suited to the adaptations we need to meet net zero and our changing needs over longer lives. As we have said on many occasions, including recently in 'One Hundred Not Out', something needs to change.

The Audley Group is a member of the ILC's Partners Programme. If you are interested in working with us, please contact Paul Goulden, ILC Head of Partnerships.

ILC's Strategic Advisory Board - help from our friends



We're excited to announce some changes and additions to our advisory boards.

Just like the Beatles, we too “get by with a little help from our friends”. To ensure we stay ahead of the game, we have a fantastic Strategic Advisory Board of world-renowned thought leaders and a savvy group of Insight Experts that help us test policy ideas, identify and respond to emerging trends.

Joining our Strategic Advisory Board are Professor Andrew Scott from London Business School, Avnish Goyal CBE from Hallmark, and Catherine Foot from Phoenix Insights.

Andrew Scott is both a veteran and trailblazer in the longevity space. We've worked with him closely for a number of years. With numerous guest blogs, the introduction to one of our reports “navigating the unchartered waters of population ageing”, speaking engagements at our events, Andrew's policy nous and expertise has shaped our thinking for a long time.

When we asked Andrew what he thought the one thing would be that governments and policymakers needed to do to make sure we were ready for longer lives, he said focusing on getting people to stay in work for longer. Have a look at how, here.

Avnish Goyal, Chair of Hallmark Care Homes and the Hallmark Foundation, has supported our work on our Healthy Ageing and Prevention Index and is a true champion for social care.

Avnish was the Chair of Care England for 9 years and the founding Trustee, now Patron of The Care Workers' Charity. He founded the Hallmark Foundation in 2020 and is the Chair of the Championing Social Care initiative, as well as an Ambassador for the Alzheimer's Society.

Also joining our ranks is Catherine Foot, Chief Executive of Phoenix Insights. We've worked with Catherine in a number of roles and look forward to deepening our relationship with Phoenix Insights. Earlier this year, we published our research, supported by Phoenix Insights that looks at what works in removing barriers to lifelong learning across the world.

Another interesting blog worth looking out for is from fellow Strategic Advisory Board member Professor Judith Phillips from Stirling University, where she sets out what she thinks the next government ought to do to get longevity on the agenda.

Take a look at our full Strategic Advisory Board and Insight Experts here and via the button below.