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International Longevity Centre UK

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ILC Friday three

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Reversing the lens – best UK places to be born, grow up & grow old



Where is the best place to be born, grow up and grow old in the UK? That's the question at the heart of our newest project: the UK Better Lives Index. This brand-new tool brings together data on health, wealth and opportunity across all four devolved nations of the UK, so we can offer a fresh perspective on how place shapes

our lives at all ages, and how inequalities permeate across the life course. This project is possible through the support of and grants from Edwards Lifesciences, the Hallmark Foundation and Pfizer.

The Times has already reported on the findings, noting that Hart in Hampshire tops the Index thanks to long life expectancy, low child poverty and strong incomes. But not everywhere shares Hart's good fortune. In Oldham, Pendle and Bradford, more than 40% of children grow up in poverty. In Blackpool, life expectancy at birth is just 76 years – nine years lower than in Richmond upon Thames. Across the bottom fifth of areas, rates of avoidable mortality are almost double those in the best.

The picture is no brighter in later life. Economic inactivity among 50–64-year-olds averages 34.5% in the lowest-ranked places, compared with 21.5% in the best. Pensioner poverty also varies dramatically, with nearly 40% of older people in Tower Hamlets claiming pension credit, versus just 4% in Hart.

Yet the Index also points to potential. ILC analysis shows that if all areas matched the best employment rates for older workers, the UK economy could gain £109 billion. Even modest improvements would deliver nearly £20 billion. These benefits aren't confined to wealthy regions – Ashfield and Burnley alone could boost local output by over a third.

With the right mix of policies and investment, every place has the potential to support longer, better lives. That means tackling child poverty where it is entrenched, closing gaps in life expectancy, and enabling more older people to stay in work. It also means recognising the strengths that already exist in communities and building on them to deliver growth that works for everyone. But to meet this potential we must act now.

We'll be fully launching the UK Better Lives Index in November, where we'll showcase the online tool, explore the findings behind the data and discuss how policy can shape healthier, longer and more equal lives across the UK. Do join us on the morning of **Monday 3 November 2025** in the City of London where M&G are kindly hosting the the event at their offices at 10 Fenchurch Avenue, London. You can register for the launch, which is also supported by the Hallmark Foundation, via the button below.

REGISTER

ILC Global Alliance - working together to lift heads out of the sand



Any fool can turn a blind eye but who knows what the ostrich sees in the sand — Samuel Beckett, 1938

While this might stretch Beckett's point, the 16 ILCs that make up the ILC Global Alliance share a frustration: governments have not only turned a blind eye to ageing, but, even when they do act, those actions rarely match the ambition and concrete steps required.

David Sinclair, ILC-UK's Chief Executive, has returned from a week at the International Federation on Ageing conference in Cape Town combined with the Annual Meeting of the ILC Global Alliance. International work is a core part of the ILC-UK's mission, helping to test ideas, build credibility and bring global practice back to the UK. Tools like our Healthy Ageing and Prevention Index are now widely recognised as useful for policymakers and practitioners, and our work on the longevity dividend has opened collaboration with the UK's Department for Business and Trade and the Foreign & Commonwealth Development Office as well as partners from Korea to Portugal, Japan to the USA.

Across the week David contributed to five sessions. He co-led a global ILC workshop with Professors Julie Byles and Kiran Rabheru on the Healthy Ageing and Prevention Index, drawing participation from South Africa, China, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Canada, Israel and Australia. He spoke on age discrimination as part of a new ILC Global Alliance campaign tackling ageism. In a packed plenary, he set out how improving vaccination across the life course supports healthier, longer working lives and can ease pressure on health systems. He shared findings from ILC UK's report The future of ageing in an uncertain world, supported by Brightwell, highlighting practical policy levers to unlock prevention and participation. He also presented on the economics of ageing, including the evidence ILC-UK has provided to the House of Lords on the fiscal and growth implications of longer lives.

Beyond the formal programme, David joined Age International's timely event on state pension age increases. He also took part in a lively discussion on the impact of aid cuts on older people where the prevailing view was clear – the cuts risk widening inequalities and undermining progress on healthy ageing. The Cape Town setting brought strong South African participation and a candid conversation about how to support older people in a context of high youth unemployment. A consistent theme was that an age-friendly strategy must also invest in youth so that communities benefit across generations.

The week underlined the strength of the ILC Global Alliance. David reconnected with colleagues working on themes from gender to climate change and marked the 80th birthday of ILC Brazil's founder, Alex Kalache, who is still working and campaigning – a reminder of the movement's history and momentum. The take-home message is practical: with the right investment in prevention, skills and inclusive employment, countries can build a healthy, productive workforce at every age and realise real growth. ILC-UK will continue to translate these international lessons into UK policy

and practice, and to share UK learning globally, so that older people are better supported to work, care, participate and thrive.

You can find out more about the work of the ILC Global Alliance via the button below.

READ MORE

Future of Ageing 2026 - act now to deliver longer, better lives for all



We're pleased to announce the date of our Future of Ageing conference on **Thursday 5 March 2026**. Next year's theme calls on ministers and governments to pull their proverbial heads out of the sand. We'll bring together policymakers, business leaders, innovators and researchers to set a new agenda for urgent action – highlighting how nations, regions and communities can, and must, act now.

Population ageing is no distant issue. It is both a seismic challenge and a huge opportunity we must confront today. Rising health and pension costs, alongside mounting national debt, make the status quo unsustainable. But healthier, longer working lives could deliver a powerful economic dividend. With advanced economies searching for supply-side growth, acting now on ageing is not optional. It is essential.

These discussions will be underpinned by our new UK Better Lives Index, exploring the best and worst places to be born, grow up, and grow old across the UK, and our Global Health and Prevention Index, our flagship international barometer of healthy ageing.

Future of Ageing is the UK's only annual conference focused on the impact of longevity on society. ILC marked Future of Ageing's 10th anniversary in February 2025 with a sellout conference. Throughout the day, we held expert plenary sessions and panel discussions, featuring a keynote speech from the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, alongside a curated series of interactive breakout sessions. Speakers and attendees alike reported that the 2025 conference was *"a breath of fresh air"* and *"there was never a dull moment, with so much to learn from each other throughout the day"*.

As a charity, we can only put on our conference through the support of partners, so funding through external sponsors is greatly appreciated. If you would be interested

in supporting the conference do get in touch with Patrick Swain, ILC's Head of Partnerships and External Relations.

We are starting to develop the agenda for Future of Ageing 2026 and will circulate further details about the conference in the weeks to follow. In the meantime, you can get tickets directly through Eventbrite and via the button below.

MORE HERE

The Friday three newsletter, edited by Emily Evans, usually goes out fortnightly

To keep up-to-date with ILC events throughout the year, please continue to check our website on a regular basis.

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