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International Longevity Centre UK

Latest news

ILC Friday three

- Reasons for optimism - the Paralympic inclusion revolution
- Trading on healthy ageing - are we maximising the potential?
- Pension Credit - 850,000 households are missing out, are you?

Reason for optimism - the Paralympic inclusion revolution



ILC's recent blog, part of the Going for Gold project, found there wasn't much of a correlation between sporting success and healthy ageing. But when it comes to longer, healthier, and more fulfilling lives for all, how much do such events help shift the dial?

Following the London 2012 Olympic Games, the UK's Channel 4 began promoting its Paralympic coverage with the strapline: "Thanks for the warm-up" and the broadcaster's largest ever, award-winning marketing campaign "Meet the Superhumans". The 2012 Paralympics were broadcast across 100 countries, amassing 3.8 billion viewers and leading to claims by Lord Coe, President of the London 2012 Organising Committee, among others, that "people would never think of disability in the same way again."

Unfortunately, as the experience of former British Paralympian Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson this week illustrates, individual and institutional ableism remains. Not only did Baroness Grey-Thompson face the indignity of being forced to crawl off a train at London's King's Cross station, but she was also subsequently abused via social media for complaining.

While many of us watching Paralympic sport may have good intentions, our reactions can often be misguided, failing to appreciate Paralympians, like Olympians, for what they are – world-class athletes. Prior to this year's Games, Channel 4 commissioned research showing that 59% of people said they watch the Paralympic Games to "see athletes overcoming their disabilities", whereas just 37% say they watch the Paralympics for "exciting sporting competition".

To counter such attitudes, Channel 4's promotions for the Games showcase athletes not just "overcoming their disabilities", but also taking on and overcoming forces such as gravity, friction, and time that make no exceptions for any athlete, regardless of disability.

With or without a disability, only a few of us can ever inspire that level of superhuman achievement, and clearly, even Paralympians suffer pain, weakness, and daily frustrations. While broadcasters have a role in changing public perceptions, far-reaching social change requires much more. In the words of International Paralympic Committee (IPC) President, Andrew Parsons: "We cannot achieve equality and inclusion in our world until our cities are accessible, our schools inclusive, and the right of access to sport for the world's 1.3 billion persons with disabilities is a reality."

A positive feature of the Paris 2024 Games – both Olympic and Paralympic – is that the organisers have strived to showcase not just sporting prowess but also the potential for social change across the wider public environment. As with ageism, progress in countering bias against disability is slowly won, but the events at and around the Paris Paralympics allow us to further imagine what the future could be like if societies could make space to accommodate differences more effectively.

In our route map for long lives, and elsewhere, the ILC has argued that making our environments more accessible supports independence, helps us stay fit, and ensures that people who have a health condition, disability, or caring responsibility can maintain access to the products and services they want. Encouraging inclusive spaces is better for everyone, no matter our age or ability. Vive la révolution!

READ MORE

Trading on healthy ageing - are we maximising the potential?

- Global longevity economy is estimated at over $6trillion.
- By 2040, 63p in every pound will be spent by older UK households.
- Yet, most innovation still focuses on the basic needs of an ageing population.

Maximising the trade opportunities of healthy ageing

Across the world, populations in many countries are ageing. However, despite the potentially huge business opportunities of investing in healthy ageing, are governments and businesses responding quickly enough? What does the innovation landscape look like when it comes to healthy ageing? And how can businesses trade and scale up to match the potential?

This week, the ILC has published a piece of work, supported by UKRI, to map the opportunities for business, innovation, and trade across the world.

The value of the global longevity economy is estimated at over $6trillion and in the UK alone, by 2040, 63p in every pound will be spent by older households.Yet, most innovation still focuses on covering the basic needs of an ageing population. We need to go beyond this and cater to people's psychological and self-fulfillment needs.

While there are pockets of good practice and examples of promising innovation globally, progress is still too slow. Government commitments and pledges don't always connect with direct routes for investment. Despite recognising healthy ageing as a priority, healthy life expectancy is still declining worldwide. The ILC's Healthy Ageing and Prevention Index shows that across 153 countries, between 2019 and 2022, the average time spent in good health fell by 7 months.

Moreover, we're still viewing ageing in a paternalistic way. Healthy ageing isn't just about home alarm systems or walking aids; it's about how we can live well and continue doing the things we enjoy for as long as possible.

This is a practical guide to the opportunities and key stakeholders across the world, focusing on four key economies – China, Japan, Canada, and Sweden – which have a specific interest in innovation within the healthy ageing space.

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Pension Credit - 850,000 households still missing out, are you?

Pension Credit – might anyone you know be missing out?



Next week the Department for Work and Pension (DWP) launches Pension Credit Week of Action, to raise awareness of Pension Credit and encourage people to check their eligibility and make a claim. Families, friends and neighbours are also being encouraged to reach out to those pensioners not claiming Pension Credit and encourage them to apply.

Pension Credit provides extra money to help with living costs for those over State Pension age and on a weekly income less than the minimum amount the government says you need to live on. For 2024/25, this is £218.15 for a single person and £332.95 for a couple. This amount could be higher if you're disabled, a carer or have certain housing costs. Pension Credit could also qualify eligible applicants other support including Winter Fuel Payment, housing costs, help with Council Tax and a free TV licence for those aged 75 and over.

The existing rules mean it is possible to apply for Pension Credit and have the claim backdated by up to 3 months - so long as there is entitlement during that time. This means that the latest date to apply and still qualify for Winter Fuel Payment is 21 December 2024.

The DWP have estimated that up to 850,000 households are still missing out on Pension Credit, and it is worth, on average £3,900 per year. Too many people are missing out. To claim, those eligible (or their family or friends) can either call the toll free number: 0800 99 1234, claim online or fill out a paper claim form, details of which can all be found on GOV.UK.

Various charities and organisations such as Age UK, Independent Age and MoneySavingExpert also offer helpful advice and information, including worked examples.

MORE INFO HERE

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