



SILVER VOICES

MANIFESTO | 2024

As the country moves towards a General Election in 2024, the Silver Manifesto has been published, setting out solutions to the challenges faced by the older generations in the UK today.

Older people have been hit the hardest by the cost-of-living crisis as energy and food costs form a greater percentage of our weekly budgets than other groups.

Senior citizens are also more likely to have first-hand experience of the health and social care crisis, and the impact of under-investment in other vital public services. Age discrimination and ageism are unfortunately endemic features of UK society, exacerbated by the largely unregulated drive by businesses and the public sector to exploit new technology, without providing safeguards against digital exclusion.



The only UK-wide membership and campaign organisation for the over 60s, *Silver Voices*, after consulting our 6000 members, has agreed the following priorities for the General Election campaign.

We have campaigned on all these issues over the last five years.

It is a long list, but this reflects how little consideration we feel politicians have given to the challenges facing older people in modern society. But we are finding our voice and there are 12.5 million older votes to be won or lost!

We hope these proposals will inform the manifestos of the political parties in the run-up to the General Election.



- 👁️ Pensions and Benefits
- 👁️ Health and Social Care
- 👁️ Age Discrimination
- 👁️ Retirement Housing
- 👁️ Other Policies

Pensions and Benefits

- Protection of the Triple Lock (preferably by legislation)
- A minimum state pension of half average earnings (currently £320 per week) which would end the differentials between the old and new state pensions
- Continuing support for the 1950s women (WASPI) in their fight for speedy and fair compensation for the unfair implementation of the rises in their state pension age
- No further rises in the State Pension Age until life expectancy rises significantly and stronger age discrimination legislation is introduced in employment
- End the scandal of frozen pensions for those UK citizens who moved abroad after retirement
- Retain free prescriptions for the over 60s (England)
- Restore free TV licences for the over 75s while the current licence system is in operation

- Improve the carer's allowance and apply to those over state pension age
- Retain free bus passes and extend to all forms of local public transport
- Winter Fuel Payment: retain the universal WFP and update it each year in line with energy prices inflation

Health & Social Care

- Introduce free social care on the same basis as NHS services (to stop the scandal of free care for those with cancer but paid for care for those living with dementia)
- Adequate funding for social care so that all moderate and critical social care needs are met in a timely fashion in the community, which will relieve pressure on hospital beds
- Proper wages, training and career structures for social care workers, on a par with those working in jobs with similar responsibilities in the NHS
- Rebuild public service provision in residential care, and stricter regulations in the private sector on quality of service and ownership by hedge funds and investment companies

- Improve face to face access with GPs, at least back to pre-pandemic levels, by providing a legal right to timely face to face appointments
- Reduce NHS waiting lists to 2009 levels (2.9 million in England, from 7.6 million now)
- Enforce acceptable waiting times for ambulances and in A & E units
- NHS dentistry must be available throughout the UK and the trend towards private treatment as the only option must be ended
- Investment in Dementia: implement the broken promise to double dementia research funding and expand the provision of dementia-friendly environments.

Age Discrimination

- A Public Inquiry into age discrimination and ageism in the UK and opposition to all forms of age discrimination by businesses and public services
- Legislation to ensure there is always an alternative to payment by digital banking and smartphone apps
- Proper protection for access to cash, with accessible banking facilities in every locality
- Prevent further bank branch closures
- Halt the mass closure of railway ticket offices.

Retirement Housing

- Target of 50,000 age-appropriate homes to be built each year (instead of current annual rate of 7000) as recommended by the Mayhew Review
- Develop the concept of advanced community villages, providing a range of care options but also facilities for the local communities.

Other Policies

- Restore local funding to improve community services, day care, libraries, highway and pavement maintenance, street lighting, community transport and counteract the widespread closures of public conveniences
- Restore recent cuts to bus routes
- Urgent governmental action and advice on the Climate Emergency
- Ensure the future of Freeview TV and aerial radio at least until the 2040s and prevent terrestrial broadcasting being squeezed out by the internet giants
- Safeguards for older people in the roll out of Digital Voice, and delay the target date for all copper wire landlines to be scrapped by at least five years
- Funerals: stronger regulation of the funerals industry to mitigate soaring costs and the exploitation of the newly bereaved.

Briefings for politicians on any aspect of this policy compendium can be obtained by contacting the *Silver Voices* Director, Dennis Reed:
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Further information on *Silver Voices*, and how to join, is available on the website: www.silvervoices.co.uk

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