

Rt Hon David Lammy MP
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Affairs
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

30 September 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

We the undersigned urge the UK Government to champion publicly the creation of a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

The UK Government has a strong track record of promoting human rights globally and our world is ageing. By 2050, over 2 billion people will be aged 60 and over. Today, older people everywhere, including older people with disabilities, face human rights violations and the current international human rights framework is not protecting their rights adequately.

“We have laws talking about children and women but there is none for older people. Older people deserve to be treated better and laws that recognise their rights would help address that.” Jacinta, 69 years old, Kenya.

“Experience and knowledge of ‘life’ is not considered to be of value in our society, so older people are not respected.” Helen, 59 years old, Wales, UK.

“A comprehensive international legal instrument on the human rights of older people...is undoubtedly the most effective pathway to address the significant gaps in both international as well as national legal and policy frameworks.”
Volker Turk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

A UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons would provide a powerful global legal framework to:

1. Combat age discrimination and ageism
2. Ensure access to healthcare, social care, and other essential services
3. Protect older people from violence, abuse and neglect
4. Safeguard the right to work and financial security in older age
5. Promote the active participation of older people in society

The UK can be proud of its history promoting human rights on the global stage. Now, we call on you and the new Government to continue this legacy. You can make history by championing the creation of a UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

The UK will be sending a strong signal worldwide that older people must be valued equally as rights holders in society, with their contributions recognised and their needs supported.

Now is the time to act as members of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva consider their next steps to protect the rights of older persons.

We look forward to your response, and your action on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Alison Marshall'.

Alison Marshall, CEO, Age International

Co-signatories

- Caroline Abrahams, Charity Director, Age UK
- Nadra Ahmed CBE, Executive Co-Chairman, National Care Association
- Paola Barbarino, CEO, Alzheimer's Disease International
- Margaret Batty, Trustee, Age International
- Rhian Bowen-Davies, Older People's Commissioner for Wales
- Fredrick Ouko & Mary Ann Clements, Co-CEO, ADD International
- Andrew Cook, Trustee, Age International
- Sacha Deshmukh, CEO, Amnesty International UK
- Martin Drewry, Director, Health Poverty Action
- Carole Easton, CEO, Centre for Ageing Better
- Joanna Elson CBE, CEO, Independent Age

- George Graham, CEO, Humanity and Inclusion
- Romilly Greenill, CEO, Bond
- Zarin Hainsworth OBE, Chair, Widows Rights International
- Sarah Harper CBE, Professor of Gerontology, Oxford University
- Hélène Herklots, Trustee, Independent Age
- Professor Carol Holland, President, British Society for Gerontology
- Emily Holzhausen CBE, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, Carers UK
- Catherine Johnstone CBE, CEO, Royal Voluntary Service
- Ann Keeling, Chair, Age International
- Andrew Larpent OBE, Chair Emeritus, CommonAge
- Mary Ledgard, Chair, Norfolk Older People's Strategic Partnership
- Victoria Lloyd, CEO, Age Cymru
- Peter Lloyd-Sherlock, Trustee, Age International
- Dr Donald Macaskill, CEO, Scottish Care
- Kate Moger, Trustee, Age International
- Anil Patil, Executive Director, Carers Worldwide
- Bridget Penhale, UK Representative, INPEA
- Jan Shortt, General Secretary, National Pensioners Convention
- Roy Shubhabrata, Trustee, Age International
- Kirsty Smith, CEO, CBM UK (Global Disability Inclusion)
- Sally Tsoukaris, General Secretary, Civil Service Pensioners Alliance
- Clare Twelvetimes, Deputy Chair, Age International
- Professor Emerita Geraldine Van Bueren KC, Chair of the Alliance of Working Class Academics
- Penny Vera-Sanso, Reader Emerita, Development Studies & Social Anthropology, Birkbeck, University of London
- Lauren Watters, Co-CEO, Able Child Africa
- Jenny Willott OBE, CEO, Reengage