

Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP  
Minister for Development & Africa  
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office  
King Charles Street  
London  
SW1A 2AH

Dear Minister,

Every country in the world is experiencing growth in both the number and proportion of people aged 60 years and older in the population. By 2030, persons aged 60 years and older, globally, are projected to be double the number of children under five.

Population ageing is causing significant changes in the health landscape. For example, growing numbers of people are living with chronic diseases, which make up 74% of all deaths globally and account for most years lived with disability. Despite this, policies and funding are not meeting the basic needs of older people.

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) offers huge opportunities to respond to population ageing and improve access to basic healthcare. And for UHC to be truly universal, health systems need to meet the health and care needs of all ages. Healthy ageing can be fostered by creating community-driven, age-friendly primary health care systems; ensuring access to long-term care for older people who need it; and changing how we think, feel and act towards age and ageing.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office recognised the need to plan for population ageing in its December 2021 Health Systems Strengthening Position Paper. The UK Government made strong commitments to UHC, including investment in primary health care, working with and for communities, and promoting health equity.

At the last High-Level Meeting on UHC in 2019, commitments were made to scaling up the promotion of healthy and active ageing, maintaining, and improving quality of life of older persons and responding to the needs of the rapidly ageing population. But further action is needed, as older people still face multiple barriers to enjoying their right to health. By 2050, 1 in 5 people living in low and middle-income countries will be over 60, and health systems must be prepared for this.

Please use the UK's voice and leadership to ensure older people are included in commitments and the final agreement made at the UN High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage in September.

Yours sincerely,



Alison Marshall CEO Age International

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## **Co-signatories; charity organisations, community leaders, health experts and politicians**

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- Ann Keeling, Chair, Age International
- Peter Lloyd-Sherlock, Professor in Social Policy and International Development, University of East Anglia
- Ben Simms, CEO, Tropical Health and Education Trust
- David Sinclair, CEO, International Longevity Centre UK
- Martin Drewry, CEO, Health Poverty Action
- The Rt Hon. the Lord Foulkes of Cumnock, current member of the House of Lords
- Hélène Herklots CBE, Older People's Commissioner for Wales
- Professor Sir Myles Wickstead, KCMG CBE, Kings College London
- Caroline Abrahams, Charity Director, Age UK
- Sarah Champion MP, Labour
- Andrew Larpent, Chairman, CommonAge
- Justin Derbyshire, CEO, HelpAge International
- Baron Rennard, of Wavertree in the County of Merseyside, current member of the House of Lords
- Dr Philippa Whitford, Scottish National Party MP for Central Ayrshire, currently undertaking the role of Shadow SNP Spokesperson (Scotland)
- Waseem Ahmad, CEO, Islamic Relief Worldwide
- Danny Harvey, Executive Director, Concern Worldwide