Standards for age-friendly communications

AGE FRIENDLY MANCHESTER

Make your communications age-friendly, and support healthy, positive ageing in Manchester.

Communications can help tackle ageism, and promote positive, inclusive behaviour towards older people in our city.

Good communication standards will help break down barriers and create opportunities for people in middle to later life, including accessing services, employment, events and activities.

These standards give practical, informative and useful advice – some helpful do's and don'ts – to keep our communications age-positive and inclusive.

The issue

People over 50 are often negatively represented in our society. They are frequently ignored, marginalised and ridiculed.

The law

The Equalities Act says 'age' is a protected characteristic. That makes it one of the diversities that Manchester loves to celebrate for its contribution to our city's life.

Inclusion

We're an age-friendly city. People of all ages, especially the over-50s, contribute to the life of the city, but their role can be ignored or forgotten. That's even more reason to tackle ageism and promote inclusion!

How to make your communications age-positive

✔ **INCLUDE** older residents. Show our full diversity. Ensure that people in middle to later life are visible and fairly represented in communications, presentations and campaigns.

✔ **OFFER** the same opportunities to over-50s.

✔ **THINK** equality – one size does not fit all.

✔ **EVERYONE** deserves chances to live well.

✔ **REMEMBER:** age cuts across race, sexuality and gender.

✔ **CONSIDER** your audience: people 50 to 60+ may not see themselves as older, and neither do some people aged 80+.

1. POSITIVE REPRESENTATION

✔ **SHOW** age-positive, diverse people in middle to later life. Reflect their diverse roles and contribution to our city's life.

✔ **BE REAL** – show older people living, working and socialising in Manchester.

Avoid

✘ **GENERALISING** – Older people are a diverse group

✘ **'OTHERING'** words such as 'they' and 'them'. Be specific about ages if relevant.

2. AGEISM

Ageism and age-inequality prevent people accessing services and employment, and preclude people ageing well.

✔ **SUPPORT** positive ageing in your communications.

Avoid

✘ **'COMPASSIONATE AGEISM'** and patronising portrayals of older people as passive and needing sympathy.

✘ **STATING** someone's age, unless it's relevant.

Example

Why say Rachel (86) runs an allotment, when you don't say Dave (28) runs an allotment?

3. LANGUAGE

Avoid stereotypes, words that may discriminate, and jargon:

✔ If age is relevant, use respectful language – a numeral instead of 'elderly'.

✔ Make all content accessible.

✔ Use plain language.

✔ Be positive – older people play a rich role in the city's life.

Examples

✔ **WE USE:**

- » Ageing
- » Older people
- » We or us
- » Valued
- » Experienced
- » 'Children from ages 5 to 15 are welcome.'
- » 'Survey respondents were between ages 60 and 75.'

✘ **WE DON'T USE:**

- » Senior people
- » Old people
- » The elderly
- » Pensioners or OAPs
- » Frail
- » 'Them and us'.

4. IMAGES

✔ **WE SHOW:**

- » Age-positive pictures
- » Diverse, true representations of older people living and working in Manchester.

✔ **KEEP** images realistic.

✔ **REFLECT** lived experience so your communications connect with people. The Centre for Ageing Better has a **free image library** of older people in a positive, nonstereotypical light.

✘ **WE DON'T SHOW:**

- » Wrinkly hands
- » Images of frailty, eg. older person knitting, unless it's in context
- » Unrealistic representations of people: skydiving pensioners etc.

5. ACCESSIBILITY

✔ **MAKE** it easy for people to find good-quality information.

✔ **CHECK** your information is the right information, in the right format, in the right place.

✔ **KEEP** it clear.

✔ **USE** images to support those with lower literacy levels where possible.

✔ **CONSIDER** a variety of formats, including:

- » Online video with subtitles and transcript
- » Text descriptions of all images
- » Print for those not online
- » Braille, easy read, audio, and translations in other languages
- » Clear user journey and navigation on web pages.

6. CHANNELS

✔ **PRIORITISE** older people in deprived neighbourhoods for good-quality information.

✔ **CONSIDER** community outlets and networks to spread messages and materials.

✔ **THINK** about getting the message out through local radio, free newspapers, libraries and GP surgeries to promote the message.

Get your communications working to tackle ageism and support positive ageing.