

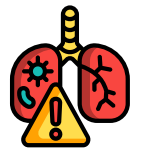
Introduction



The UK's ageing population is increasing demand for personalised care.



12.5 million UK residents are aged 65+, making up 18.3% of the population (Barton, Sturge and Harker, 2024).



Around 4 million older people have a limiting illness or disability.



About 930,000 older people often or always feel lonely (MHA | Live Later Life Well, 2021).

This poster critically examines how policies, theories, community services and innovation can promote older people's dignity, independence, functional ability and wellbeing. It also considers barriers that may prevent empowerment in practice



Care, Empowerment and Support for Older People

- **Care:** Support should promote independence (NHS, 2023).
- **Empowerment:** Respect choice, dignity and control (NHS England, 2025; Skills for Health, 2025).
- **Support:** Rehabilitation and social contact improve wellbeing (Abdi et al., 2019; Elhag et al., 2025).

UK Policies Supporting Older People's Independence



Policy 1: Care Act 2014

Positive

- Promotes wellbeing and prevention.
- Supports choice and control.
- Requires individual needs assessments.
- Encourages independence

Negative

- Limited funding can reduce support.
- Staff shortages affect service quality.
- Support may differ between local authorities.

(Department of Health and Social Care, 2016)



Policy 2: Ageing Well Programme

Positive

- Provides proactive community support.
- Supports older people with frailty.
- May reduce hospital admissions.

Negative

- Depends on multidisciplinary teams.
- Requires early assessment.
- Needs sufficient community resources.

(NHS, n.d.)



Key Theories Supporting Independence in Later Life



Theory 1: Activity Theory

Positive

- Promotes social, physical and mental activity.
- Supports identity and wellbeing.
- Encourages independence in later life.

Negative

- May overemphasise being active.
- May not reflect severe frailty or disability.
- Access to community services may be limited.

(Elhag et al., 2025)



Theory 2: Person-Centred Care Theory

Positive

- Promotes personhood and dignity.
- Respects individual identity.
- Values relationships.
- Involves older people in decisions.

Negative

- Staff shortages may limit practice.
- Time pressures can reduce involvement.
- Task-focused routines may affect personalised care.

(Skills for Health, 2025)

Challenges to Independence and Daily Living



Long-term conditions may increase care needs.



Daily activities may become more difficult (Age UK, 2024).



Loneliness can reduce confidence and wellbeing (MHA, 2021).

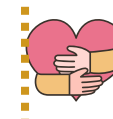


Limited community support can reduce social participation (Elhag et al., 2025).



Service pressures may delay care and adaptations (The King's Fund, 2024).

Recommendations for Empowering Older People



Involve older people in care decisions (Department of Health and Social Care, 2022).



Increase community activities (Elhag et al., 2025).



Provide falls and mobility support (British Geriatrics Society, 2024).



Improve home adaptations and technology (The King's Fund, 2024).



Strengthen coordination between services and families (Department of Health and Social Care, 2022).

Conclusion

Empowering older people means protecting dignity, independence and wellbeing. Person-centred care, prevention, community involvement and technology can help. However, real empowerment requires accessible services, enough resources and genuine choice. Care should build on strengths, not create dependence.

END

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