



Have your voice heard

On May 5, voters in Northern Ireland will go to the polls to choose the MLAs (Members of Legislative Assembly) who will represent them in the next Assembly. We want NI to be a great place to grow older. It is vital that once elected, our MLAs **#Act4Age** on the issues that affect older people today and tomorrow.

Make the election count. Get involved! Ask candidates in your constituency to listen to the views of older people and become an Age Champion in the new NI Assembly.

We want our MLAs to become Age Champions so that they can work with us to:

- raise awareness of issues affecting older people in the NI Assembly and with Ministers by asking questions, speaking in debates, and by being a member of the All Party Group on Ageing and Older People
- visit Age NI networks and local groups supporting older people to find out about the issues in your area and how best to support them

Get involved in #Act4Age. Visit www.ageni.org/act4age for more information and hear the voices of local people who want a better future for older people.



Our Priorities for Action

- 1 Staying well, feeling good** - older people enjoying good health for longer, remaining as independent as possible and receiving the best care
- 2 Tackling pensioner poverty** - older people having enough money to live comfortably and participate fully in society
- 3 Equal and engaged citizens** - older people valued for their contribution and experience, their rights and dignity respected and protected
- 4 Ageing at the heart of government policy and action** - older people having their voices heard, ensuring government departments work together to deliver better outcomes for older people now and in the future



Cut out this badge and display it on your door or window where candidates will see it

1 *Staying well, feeling good*

Why this matters: Although people are living longer, many are spending a significant part of their later life unwell, or living with a disability or long term health condition that affects their quality of life. Being able to remain in good health and independent for as long as possible makes sense for the individual and our already stretched health and social care services.

We want the Assembly to:

- address concerns about the quality and availability of health and social care and the safeguards in place to protect older people
- be clear on the social care that people are entitled to receive
- make sure that practical, low level services which provide care at home and prevent deterioration of well being are adequately funded
- hold a public debate on how we fund and sustain social care services

Questions for candidates:

- How will you ensure that older people receive the care and support they need to help them remain as independent as possible?
- What steps will you take to ensure that the rights, dignity and choice of older people are at the heart of our health and social care services?

2 *Tackling pensioner poverty*

Why this matters: Poverty in later life means a miserable existence which can lead to ill-health and isolation. Older people tell us about their struggles to make ends meet. The positive news that the overall level of pensioner poverty has reduced is welcomed but masks the fact that the poorest pensioners have seen no real improvement in their income. Having access to expert financial advice and guidance is vital as people approach retirement and at key times in later life. Scams and financial abuse are a major threat to the financial security, health and well being of older people.

We want the Assembly to:

- tackle pensioner poverty and ensure every older person receives the financial help they are entitled to
- put in place effective, targeted measures to address fuel poverty experienced by older people
- ensure flexible working practices and opportunities are in place for older people to enter, return or remain in work
- ensure there is a coordinated approach to tackling scams, fraud and financial abuse

Questions for candidates:

- What will you do to ensure that pensioner poverty is tackled effectively?
- How will you ensure expert advice and guidance is available to help people prepare and plan for their future?

3 Equal and engaged citizens

Why this matters: Older people contribute to the economy through work, caring and volunteering but face a number of barriers to being treated as valued and equal citizens. This includes outdated, ageist perceptions of older age; discrimination in accessing health and financial services; poor transport links particularly in rural areas; and digital exclusion which prevent many from having a fulfilling, independent later life. There is still no legislation in place to protect older people from being discriminated against in the provision of goods, facilities and services. The creation of Age Friendly Communities provide opportunities to develop 'good' places to age, connecting older people to each other and their local community.

We want the Assembly to:

- introduce legislation extending age discrimination to goods, facilities and services
- involve older people and the age sector in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the government's Active Ageing Strategy
- carry out an age discrimination review of all aspects of health and social care
- ensure the active involvement of older people and the age sector in the development of Age Friendly Communities across Northern Ireland

Questions for candidates:

- What steps will you take to ensure that the rights of older people are protected and that they do not experience discrimination when accessing goods, facilities and services?
- How will you ensure that the creation of Age Friendly Communities is adequately resourced and coordinated?

4 Ageing at the heart of government policy and action

Why this matters: Our ageing population represents many opportunities and challenges for our society - for employers, the economy, as well as the welfare, housing, health and social care systems currently in place. The development of a new Programme for Government, setting out the NI Executive's priorities over the next 5 years, provides an opportunity to place planning and preparing for an ageing population at the heart of government policy and action. Looking at new ways to join up government will be important if we are to respond effectively to complex, cross-cutting issues in a coordinated way and improve outcomes for older people.

We want the Assembly to:

- make ageing a cross cutting theme in the next Programme for Government (PfG)
- identify clear outcomes in the PfG which will improve the lives of older people
- actively engage with older people in shaping and improving how service delivery is designed and delivered
- ensure that older people are involved in monitoring the impact of the PfG

Questions for candidates:

- What steps will you take to ensure that ageing is at the heart of government policy?
- How will you ensure that the voice of older people informs and shapes government policy?



4 things you can do

Tell your candidates about the issues that matter to you and that are important to older people you know. Ask candidates to listen to the views of older people and become an Age Champion in the new NI Assembly. They can visit our website and register their support www.ageni.org/act4age

- ## 1 *Go online, send a letter or make a phone call*

You don't have to wait for candidates to call to your house. Find out who your local candidates are at www.ageni.org/act4age and ask them to become an Age Champion in the new NI Assembly. Share your own stories about the issues that matter to you by visiting our social media pages and using **#Act4Age**. Or you can get in touch directly with the candidates through their constituency office by phone, letter, email, or call into their office in person. Don't forget that many candidates will be using social media to connect to people, so use this to your advantage and tell them about the things that matter to you.
- ## 2 *On your doorstep*

Have this leaflet ready for candidates and canvassers when they come to your door. Cut out and display the **#Act4Age** badge on the front of this leaflet somewhere they can see it.
- ## 3 *Attend or hold an event*

Are candidates speaking or answering questions at any public events in your area? You can usually find details of events like this in your local newspaper. Or organise your own event, bringing together older people and the wider community and candidates together. It's a chance to get to know the candidates and enable them to understand local issues and meet people in their area who are interested in improving the lives of older people. You should invite all candidates in your area to attend and ask them to confirm if they are coming to your event.
- ## 4 *Make the news*

Your group might want to issue a press release or letter to the editor as a way of letting your local paper and radio stations know what you think. Go to www.ageni.org/act4age for a template. You can also text, phone, email or tweet your comments into radio or television programmes where candidates are debating their election issues.