

As this year's UN International Day of Older Persons (1st October) celebrates the 'Journey to Age Equality', we are coming together to show our commitment to ending the outdated attitudes that prevent too many of us from making the most of our longer lives.

2019 marks 50 years since the term 'ageism' was coined by Robert Butler in 1969. And yet research shows that today, later life is still strongly associated with being frail, lonely and sad.

Like all forms of prejudice and discrimination, even seemingly casual ageism is deeply damaging both to individuals and to our communities, with [recent research suggesting](#) that a quarter of people over 50 have felt discriminated against whilst doing everyday tasks or accessing services. Even seemingly positive phrases like 'you look young for your age' can reinforce damaging stereotypes.

So today, as leaders from across the UK who have committed to making our communities great places to grow old in, we are pledging to change the way we talk about ageing.

Many of us are living for longer, so it's vital we are all able to make the most of these extra years – and that must start with thinking and talking differently about ageing. From the greater self-confidence many feel in later life to the wealth of experience older workers bring to their workplaces, it's time we recognised the many opportunities of later life – and began to speak in a way that reflects them.

If we are to make real progress towards age equality, we must all work to root out ageism in our own communities and organisations. We will challenge ageism wherever we see it, whether it's in public or in private, and ensure that the voices of older people are at the heart of our local decision-making.

As well as making this commitment, we're asking everyone to join us: we can all re-think our own prejudices, think more carefully about the impact our words can have on others, and be part of a movement to end ageism once and for all.

This letter has been co-ordinated by the UK Network of Age-Friendly Communities, part of a WHO Global network of over 900 places committed to fostering healthy and active ageing. You can show your support and join the movement on social media using #AgeProud.