

Report on The Older People's Parliament	
Recommendation	Department for Communities Response
<p>Recommendation 16: To provide government support for schemes which encourage older people to engage in social programmes such as local community centres and volunteering opportunities.</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Renewal programme delivers a range of area-based initiatives designed to address spatial concentrations of deprivation. These include the People and Place Strategy (Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund), Small Pockets of Deprivation and Areas at Risk.</p> <p>The programme provides direct support to community-based projects working in the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland and delivering a range of services to support those communities, improve health outcomes, increase community cohesion, promote economic regeneration, and support people, the young and the elderly.</p>
<p>Recommendation 18: The Department for Communities to mount a vigorous campaign to improve the up-take of pensions credit and to monitor closely those not taking up the benefit.</p>	<p>The Department continues to undertake a comprehensive programme of promotional activity to encourage Pension Credit uptake. This includes regular social media activity, an annual targeted mailshot with the NI Housing Executive, and promotion through the Make the Call campaign.</p> <p>Promotional work has driven a significant rise in applications, with approximately 75% of processed applications being successful this year.</p> <p>While it remains challenging to estimate the total number of eligible non-claimants, the Department is progressing work to refresh analytical models to better identify and engage with potentially eligible older people.</p>
<p>Recommendation 21: The Executive to consider ways to increase the budget</p>	<p>In June 2025 the UK Government announced that eligibility would be</p>

<p>through investment and raising funds, with the savings ear-marked to reinstate the winter fuel payments for older people in Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>expanded from winter 2025, to include pensioners with total incomes below or equal to £35,000. This came into effect from 6 April 2025.</p>
<p>Recommendation 28: To ensure that throughout the development, design and implementation of strategies, that we have full participation of older people with lived experiences who can help shape, inform and improve service.</p>	<p>The Executive Housing Supply Strategy (2024) was co-designed with input from a wide range of older people's organisations, ensuring lived-experience voices shaped the Strategy including Age NI and COPNI.</p>
<p>Recommendation 30: When developing housing options for older people, we would appreciate consideration of the following in policies, strategies and action plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of life • Health and well being • Isolation and Loneliness • Actual space and design • Flexibility and adaptability • Positive model of ageing 	<p>The Housing Supply Strategy 2024 – 2039 commits to improving affordable and adaptable housing solutions for older people as a core objective, with delivery planned across its 15-year lifespan.</p> <p>Additionally, Co-Own Over 55s continues to operate as an innovative shared-ownership model, supported by £8m Financial Transactions Capital funding from DfC.</p>
<p>Is an updated Active Ageing Strategy being developed, or being considered by the Department?</p>	<p>The Department has completed extensive engagement with stakeholders to inform future planning. Following this, the Minister agreed to retain the current Strategy while commissioning a new Action Plan based on the existing framework.</p> <p>Work on the Action Plan continues at pace, focused on issues identified by older people's organisations as priorities.</p>

