

# ACPA – Adapting European Cities to Population Ageing: Policy challenges and best practices

Targeted Analysis

**Case Study Report:  
Oslo**



Oslo

*A greener, warmer and more inclusive city*

# Case Study Report: Oslo

This Case Study is part of the ESPON Targeted Analysis ACPA, which is conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme.

The ESPON EGTC is the Single Beneficiary of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. The Single Operation within the programme is implemented by the ESPON EGTC and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

This delivery does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the members of the ESPON 2020 Monitoring Committee.

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Contact: [info@espon.eu](mailto:info@espon.eu)

ISBN: 978-2-919795-37-6

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ACPA – Adapting European Cities  
to Population Ageing: Policy  
challenges and best practices

Version 23/04/2020

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## Abbreviations

EC	European Commission
ESPON	European Territorial Observatory Network
ESPON EGTC	ESPON European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
WHO	World Health Organization

## Foreword

The aim of Oslo Municipality is to become a greener, warmer and a more creative city with room for all. The city is to be a good environment to grow up in and to grow old in. The goal is that the inhabitants, regardless of their age, have the opportunity to live free and meaningful lives where they experience belonging, achievement and security.

We are proud to be the first age-friendly city in Norway. The guiding material from the WHO has been very important. The material provided us with useful information and guidance when we started our work and it guided us in the development of Oslo Municipality's Action Plan for an Age-friendly City. Together with the Plan for a Safe and Diverse Elderly Care and the Strategic Housing plan for Older People with Needs, Oslo Municipality's plan for an age-friendly city is creating an excellent framework for furthering the work regarding older people in Oslo.

The dialogue with the seniors has been prioritised by Oslo Municipality, and it has been important both when developing the action plan and for its subsequent implementation. Older citizens have given us input on necessary actions and how these could be implemented. In this way, we have secured that the measures we put in place are corresponding to the needs of older people in the city.

Participating in Eurocities and its network of age-friendly cities has given us opportunities to exchange experiences, challenges and solutions with other countries. The decision to undertake an analysis of the ongoing work in eight European cities is very positive. There is little or no research on Oslo's work on age-friendly city policies and actions, which makes this report important.

The report on Oslo does not address the measures undertaken within healthcare services to a great extent. This is due to the scope of the framework for Oslo's approach to an age-friendly city, which is primarily focused and defined in line with preventative work. Therefore, it is not the main focus of the report.

In the report you will read what the researchers perceive to be the municipality's challenges and opportunities. We also get a few recommendations to take with us in furthering the work on age-friendly city. The Handbook encompass good examples from across all eight cities considered for this research project. This provides us with an international benchmarking opportunity that teaches us good practices from other cities, but it also gives us the opportunity to share our most successful measures.

**Monica Enge Eriksen**

Oslo kommune

# 1 Introduction

Many countries in Europe are facing a demographic transition which also entails an increasing number of older people. This trend is usually most apparent in rural areas. However, in urban areas this phenomenon is starting to become visible as well. The cities of Amsterdam, Barcelona, Gothenburg, Hengelo, Greater Manchester, Nantes, Oslo and Zaragoza belong to a group of cities that are either already facing relatively high percentages of older people in their populations, or expect such high percentages in the near future. During the last years, these cities have undertaken action to improve quality of life for older people. Still, they have a knowledge need related to the following questions:

- How do older people experience the daily life in the cities?
- What do older people view as benefits and constraints associated with urban living?
- How are the eight stakeholder cities responding to population ageing?
- Which policies have been the most effective in developing age-friendly cities and how have they been implemented and which are the success factors?

ESPON ACPA has resulted in good practices and policy recommendations based on case study research in the eight stakeholder cities. These insights have been combined in the ACPA synthesis report, main report and policy handbook. While those reports offer valuable information in aggregated form, it is also valuable to look at the situation in each of the eight stakeholder cities in more detail.

Therefore, eight city reports are available that provide a closer look at each stakeholder city. The present report focuses on Oslo and portrays the state of affairs in Oslo in terms of:

- Demographic trends and developments related to population ageing within the city;
- The strategy and policies that the urban authorities, professionals and other stakeholders in Oslo pursue to cope with population ageing;
- A selection of inspiring examples of how the ageing policy has been implemented;
- Challenges and opportunities from the perspective of older people, interest groups and policy makers;
- Policy recommendations for the city of Oslo based on the insights that have emerged from ACPA.



## 2 Demographic profile

In recent decades, the demographic trend in the Nordic Region is showing to an upward shift in the population age structure (Stjernberg, 2020 p. 52). In other words, the Nordic Region is seeing a steady increase of an ageing population. Norway is no exception to the rule, and in 2019 the number of children and old people were almost the same (Stjernberg, 2020). According to the Norwegian Statistical Bureau's (SSB) report presenting the population projections made for Norway in 2018, the Norwegian population is expected to grow if the mortality trends between 1990 -2017 continue as they have (Leknes et al., 2018). Looking towards 2060, the SSB predict a rise in the life expectancy from 81 years for men and 84 years for women, to 88 and 90 years, respectively. The report also points to the regional differences in life expectancy and mortality, showing that Akershus and Sogn- og Fjordane counties have the highest life expectancy and Finnmark have the lowest at birth (approximately 3 years difference)<sup>1</sup> (Leknes et al., 2018). These differences are reduced somewhat when reaching age 70, but Sogn- og Fjordane remains on top of the list and Finnmark at the bottom. Map 2.1 shows that life expectancy after the age of 65 is the lowest for men in regions such as Finnmark and Oppland, Vest-Agder and Østfold, and that women in Sogn- og Fjordane has a markedly higher life expectancy than their peers across the country.

As is clear in both Map 2.1 and Map 2.2 it is the predominantly rural and peripheral regions, such as e.g. Finnmark that are facing the greatest challenges with an ageing population. These regions are also expected to face the greatest challenges when it comes to old age dependency ratios in Norway over the next 20 years (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2018). Looking at Map 2.2, the change in the older population between 2000-2018 is most evident in the municipalities surrounding Oslo, the south-western and south eastern parts of Norway, the municipalities surrounding the city of Trondheim and most protrudingly in the county of Troms and Finnmark. This may be partly due to the inflow of young adults into larger cities and the capital (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, 2018).

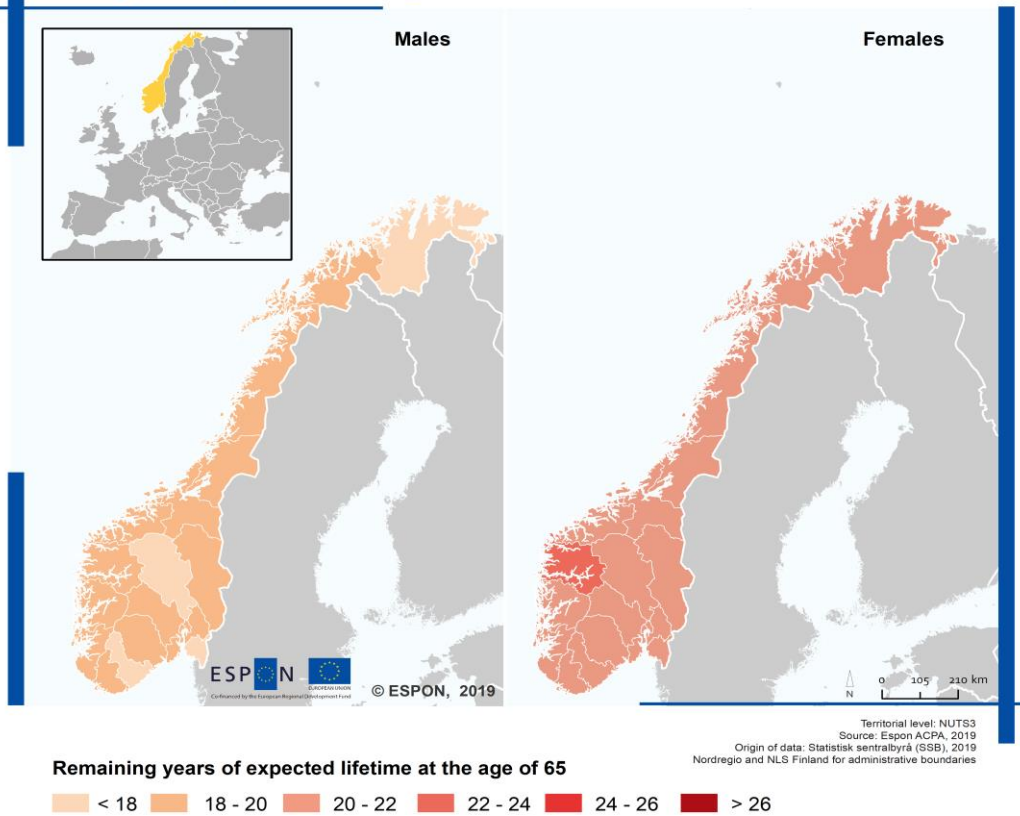
Regions and municipalities are acutely aware of the changing age structure across the country, and staying ahead of the curve, the city of Trondheim signed up to the WHO network in 2015 on age-friendly cities, after Oslo joining the network in 2014. Levangen municipality in Trøndelag signed up in 2016, and several other municipalities, such as the city of Bergen, have been in contact with Oslo to learn from their processes of becoming an age-friendly city or municipality. This is a clear indication of the awareness of the changing demography in the coming year across the country.

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<sup>1</sup> Akershus, Sogn – og Fjordane and Finnmark merged with other counties on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2020, and are now known as *Viken*, *Vestland*, and *Troms og Finnmark*.

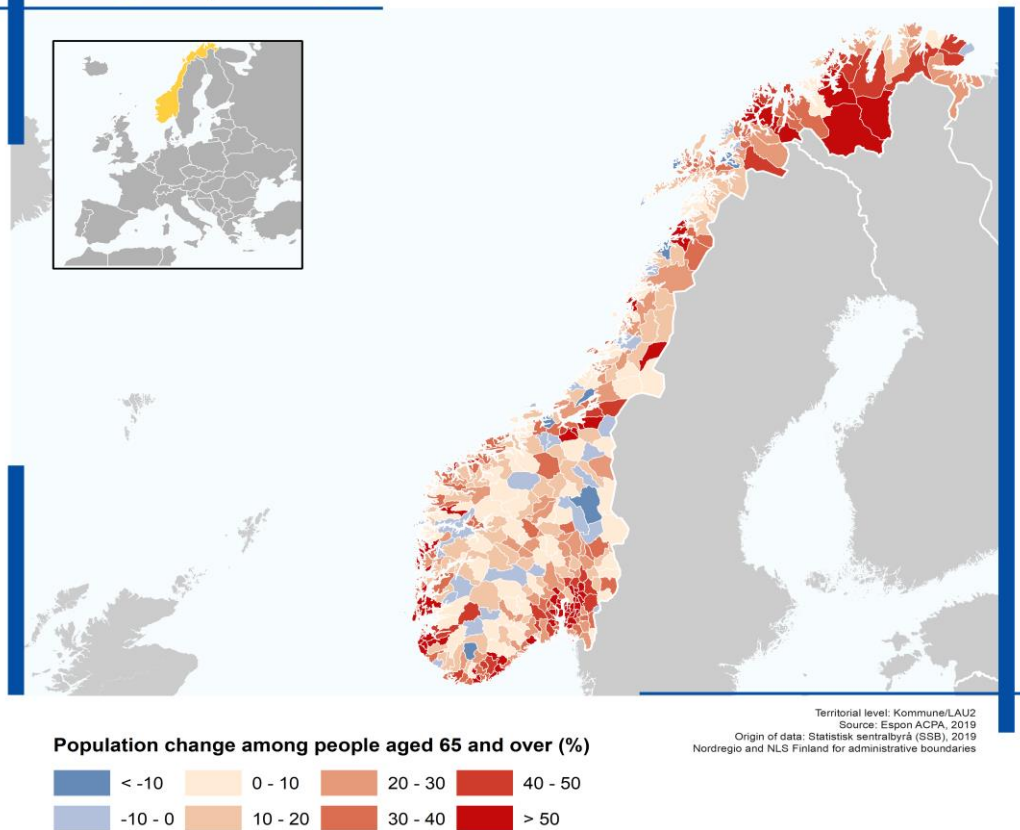
Map 2.1: Life expectancy at the age of 65 in Norway at NUTS 3 level, in 2011-2015

Norway: Life expectation at the age of 65 in 2011-2015



Map 2.2: Change in older population in Norway at the municipal level, 2000-2018 (in %)

Norway: Change in older population 2000-2018

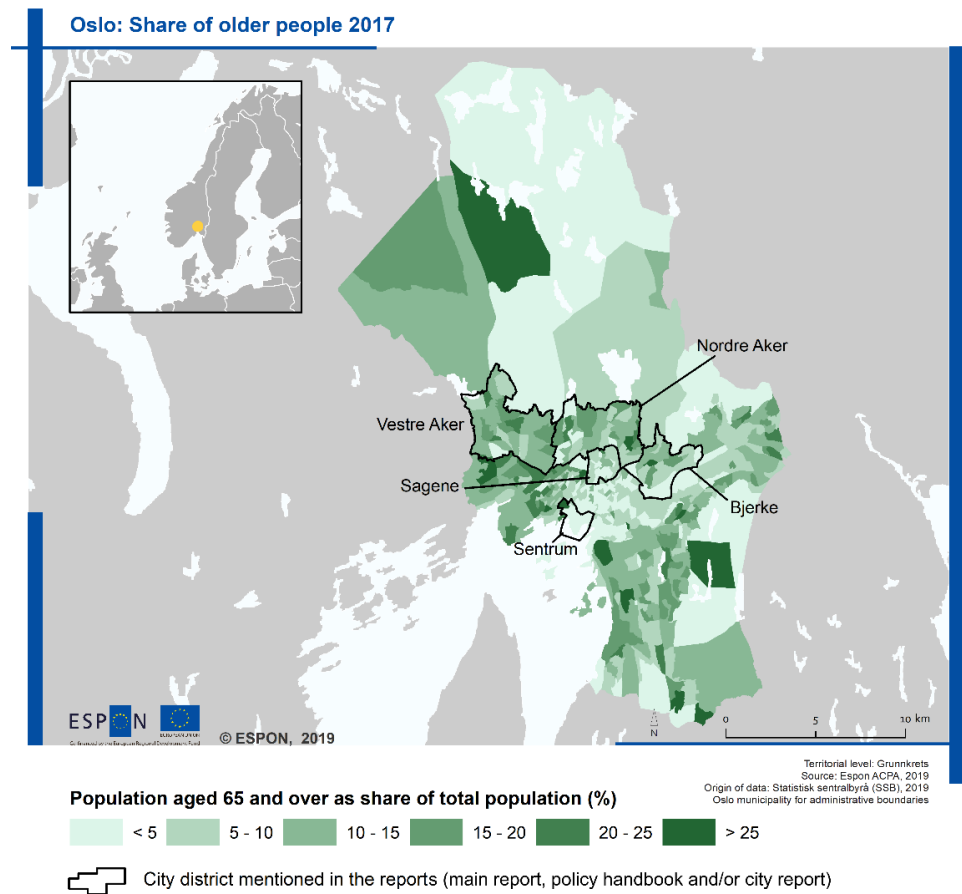


By 2040, Oslo will be home to an additional 50.000 older people in need of appropriate care and services – but also 50.000 people that need to be reconsidered as a societal resource rather than a ‘burden’. Oslo municipality has, throughout their strategies and plans, carefully considered their approach to older people from a positive perspective in their policy-making for an age-friendly city (Oslo municipality 2017a). This is evident in that civic participation and engagement with older citizen are increasingly being utilised to inform a change of policies.

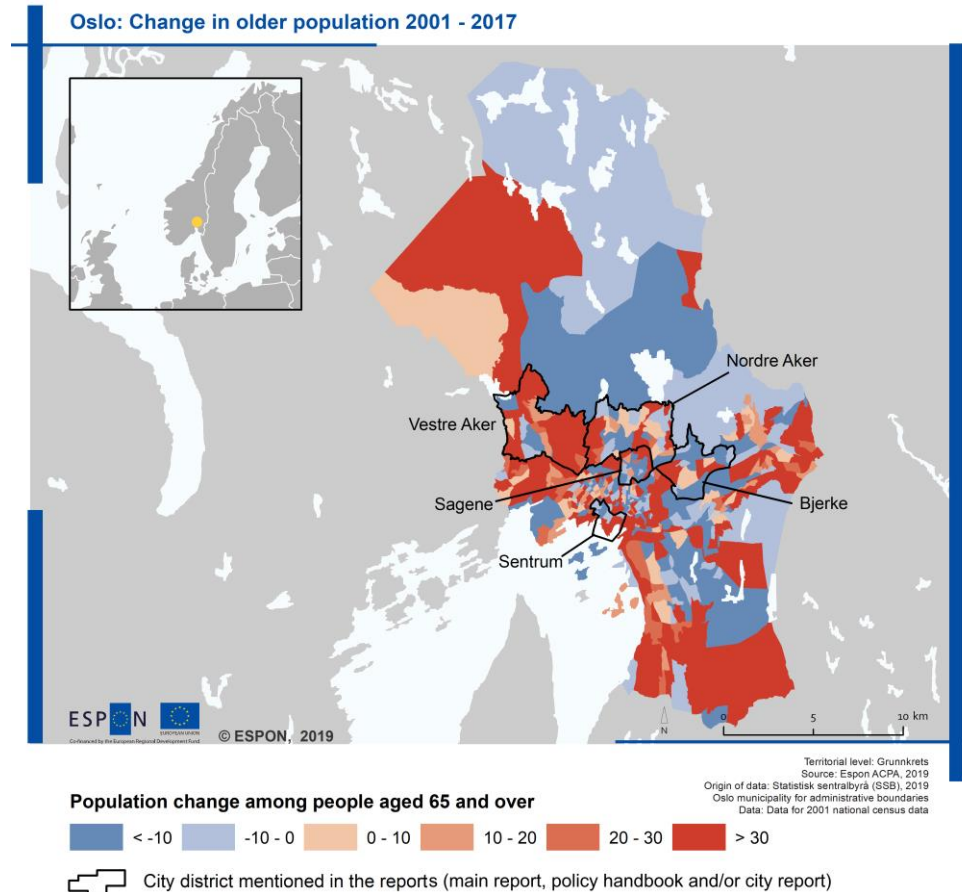
Thus far, Oslo municipality has conducted one pilot case project in the city district of Nordre Aker, alongside two trailing pilots in Sagene and Frogner. Since then other city districts, such as Ullern and Vestre Aker, have followed, and the aim of 2019 is to have all 15 districts involved in age-friendly initiatives. Of the 15 districts, 14 have been granted funding towards developing age-friendly policies in their districts. The idea is to use the pilot district Nordre Aker as a mentor district, backed by Frogner, Sagene, Ullern and Vestre Aker in helping and guiding the remaining city districts in age-friendly policy thinking. Following the preliminary pilot case in Nordre Aker, Oslo municipality organised and executed several community meetings, workshops, inspection walks (‘Seniortråkk’), dialogue meetings, debate evenings and a citizen participation conference (2016) to ensure that the voice of older people were considered and heard, and to capture important input into the work on adapting the city to an ageing population (Oslo municipality n.d; Oslo municipality 2016).

As Map 2.3 indicates, the city districts are not homogenous and the base circuits of the city are more indicative of the concentrations within the administrative city districts themselves. It is also interesting to note that the life expectancy varies across the city, with the largest gap being between Vestre Aker and Sagene, where the life expectancy for men and women varies with 7.9 years (Folkehelseinstituttet, 2020).

Map 2.3: Share of older people in Oslo per neighbourhood, 2017



Map 2.4: Change in older population in Oslo per neighbourhood, 2001 – 2017



## 3 Policy overview

### 3.1 Motivation and goals

Oslo is to be a greener, warmer and more creative city with room for all people of all ages. This paints the backdrop and strategically positions age-friendly policymaking as a horizontal objective demanding cross-sectoral collaboration. The overall vision of the work follows the WHO's overarching definition of creating 'an age-friendly city that is inclusive, with an available and accessible urban environment that promotes active ageing' (Oslo Kommune, n.d.) Part of this is to ensure that the older people were able to retain their independence, whilst staying active in safe environments (Oslo Kommune, 2014). This requires a greater focus on the individual, and a holistic approach to city-wide adaptation. An important component of Oslo's work is necessarily the need to think interdisciplinarily in their planning processes, as the realities of the increasing population of older people; as an increasingly fitter, healthier and more diverse group, requires a more adaptive and varied approach.

An age-friendly city should arguably be founded on a strong and changed narrative. This will help sustain and support new innovation and practices in the social, technological and service field, which will be based on an understanding of the importance of personal achievement, opportunities life-long learning and being a valuable asset to greater society. The foreword in the *Action Plan for an Age-friendly Oslo* opens by stating that 'older people are a resource that Oslo has not been utilising' (Oslo Kommune, 2017). It also emphasises that people should be able to continue to be who they are regardless of age, and not be expected to fit into a homogenised category of the generally perceived ideas based on the structurally ingrained attitudes of ageism.

### 3.2 Priorities

The action plan for an 'age-friendly' city devised by the City Government in 2017 has six domains. Whereas the WHO differentiates between social participation, social inclusion and non-discrimination, and civic engagement and employment, Oslo's City Government made the decision to capture these through the overall umbrella of 'social participation'. This is because of the broad notion of social participation covering 'a range of social activities, culture and working life, political engagement and organisational work' (Oslo Kommune, 2017a:13). In order to realise the Action Plan envisioned by Oslo municipality (2017a) existing plans such as the white paper on Senior Citizens, the Plan for a Safe and Diverse Care of Older people, the People's Health Plan, and the Strategic Building Plan for Older Citizens in need of assistance, must be considered and grounded in a common platform and vision.

Table 3.1: Priority table

<b>Priority areas<sup>2</sup> in Age-friendly Oslo (Aldersvennlig by)</b> (scores range from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates a very low priority and 5 a very high priority)	
Domain 1: Outdoor spaces and built environment	5
Domain 2: Transport and mobility	5
Domain 3: Housing <sup>3</sup>	3*
Domain 4: Social participation	5
Domain 5: Social inclusion and non-discrimination	5
Domain 6: Civic engagement and employment	5
Domain 7: Communication and information	5
Domain 8: Community support and health services <sup>4</sup>	3**

### **Domain 1: Outdoor spaces and built environment**

Outdoor spaces and the built environment are key to enabling an active lifestyle amongst people of all ages in Oslo. Marka, the city's green lungs and forestry area, is frequented by a large part of the population, and so are the 69 parks across the cityscape. To ensure continued use of the city, the Department for older people, health and employment matched the urban environment agency and the planning and building services with older people in so-called 'Seniortr kk' – an inspection round of the city's public areas alongside older people. Actively engaging the public in mapping areas in need of benches, lights, vegetation, accessibility and toilets have been useful in the planning activities in both municipal agencies and has prompted them to include the age-friendly perspective in their policies surrounding social infrastructure and accessibility.

### **Domain 2: Transport and mobility**

Improving the city's transport services is one of the initiatives that have made an immediate impact on the lives of older people. Despite being in a testing phase in the city districts of Nordre Aker, Vestre Aker and Sagene, the concept is already very popular amongst its users. In addition to an increased sense of safety with a door-to-door service and a bus driver trained to help older people, the bus has a tremendous social benefit for those using it. It enables people to stay active, meet new people and prevent social isolation on a daily basis. The price is the same as for other concessionary ticketing in public transport. Increased mobility efforts have also taken shape in the form of sandbag and spikes for shoes, provided by the city districts at their local senior centres. Citizens over 67 years of age living in private houses are eligible to receive a pair of grips for their shoes and a sandbag in order to be active outside their homes.

<sup>2</sup> Oslo has merged domain 4, 5 and 6 due to feedback from consultations with stakeholders

<sup>3</sup> Housing is a major priority for the city council with a score of 5. As housing is covered extensively by other plans and strategies it has not been prioritized within the age-friendly policy framework.

<sup>4</sup> Domain 8: Community support and health services has its own strategies in Oslo. Age-friendly city has thus not focused on this area.

### **Domain 3: Housing**

The most concrete targets set by Oslo municipality are set out in the strategic building plan for older people in need of assistance. This relates not only to the renovation and creation of new, and appropriate homes, but also to the ownership structures, bringing onboard an increased number of non-profit organisations. The municipality has set an ambitious target of having 2000 adapted and age-friendly flats (so-called Care+ housing, Omsorg+) by 2026. In 2019, this number is 716 flats (Oslo kommune, 2017). The Omsorg+ housing units are apartments for those that require some help in their daily lives but does not require nursing home placement. The houses have available staff around the clock. There are always some form of activities and opportunities for socialising, dinner service and common rooms. Some of the Omsorg+ housing units also include hairdressers and pedicure salons (Oslo kommune, 2019). In certain areas, the Omsorg+ houses are situated alongside the senior centres and houses. The city has also recently introduced user representatives in order to meet the needs of those living in the houses, ensuring quick responses and targeted changes. Housing is a major priority for the city council with a score of 5, thus it has not been a major focus area within the age friendly policy-program. However, one important development that has happened through Oslo municipality's age-friendly policy objectives, is the development of Pastor Fangens vei 22 Seniorhus. Pastor Fangens vei 22 Seniorhus is a housing and activity centre for older people with 29 apartments, a common room and kitchen. Although this house is an open meeting place for all, people with lighter degrees of dementia have the possibility to live in one of the 7 apartments that have been developed for the purpose of enabling independent lives for longer (Oslo Municipality, n.d.). Recently, students have moved into the housing and activity centre, enabling a more natural intergenerational meeting place. This is a truly innovative initiative.

### **Domain 4: Social participation and inclusion (employment, volunteering and culture)**

Social participation, inclusion and civic engagement are all important aspects for the age-friendly policy objective in Oslo as it contributes towards the prevention of isolation and improves cognitive health. Social participation is thus a horizontal objective that flows through the domains. It is encouraging the development of spaces with an agenda, where people can come because of something and be social whilst doing their errands; it inspires the co-use space such as nursing homes by establishing cafés and bars (in private and public nursing homes) which integrates the nursing home into the local area; cultural ambassadors work to inform older people of cultural happenings through the Department of older people, health and employment's collaboration with the Norwegian Opera and Ballet, the Oslo Concert Hall and the museums; and collaboration with local schools for facilitating *Generation Games*.

## **Domain 5: Communication and information**

It sits high on the agenda and is considered the main vehicle for enabling the policy to move forward. Engaging older citizens in conversations about what an age-friendly city means in Oslo has been carrying and anchoring the development of the age-friendly policy action plan. This is felt both by the policy-makers, whose work in increasingly relying on input from older people in order to create more accessible green spaces and city centre and city nodes, and older people themselves. Inspection rounds have resulted in more and more frequent benches, and through a collaboration between the Department for Older people, Health and Employment and the cultural institutions in Oslo has enabled a more targeted age-friendly cultural activities by communicating through appointed cultural ambassadors. The Department for older people, health and employment has actively been engaging their target group through different channels and methods, such as social media, online and frequently updated but print-friendly media outlets, through senior centres, local newspapers and volunteering association and organisations. Communication for enabling a more age-friendly city also depends on the amount of communication that happens at a cross-sectoral level, to enable and support the horizontal policy objective of being an age-friendly city. This has occurred through internal meetings, conferences and presentations with policy and decision-makers, specific agencies, services and departments. In its political term 2015-2019, the city of Oslo has aimed to become an age-friendly city that facilitates ageing in place and enhances outdoor spaces, transport and activities in order to enable active ageing.

## **Domain 6: Healthcare services**

Community support and health services have their own strategies in Oslo. Age-friendly city has not focused on this to a great extent, but older people are to receive good help and comprehensive support when they need it, and experience achievements, increased independence and safety in their lives. Encouraging active lives is important from an individual health perspective as it increases the chances of retaining both physical and cognitive functions. Some of these aspects can be achieved in the local area through low-threshold services, adapted housing and home-based health and care services. On the city level, a declaration by the city council in 2015 emphasised the necessity of ensuring a sufficient number of health care providers in the city. It was also in their interest to reconsider the structure of the health care services, in order to meet the demand and needs of an increasingly diverse group of users (Byråd, 2015). The city council also introduced a 'hour account' where the individual was given an additional 30 minutes extra from homecare services to be used towards whatever they wanted. The pilot was inspired by a similar structure in Copenhagen and has been successful. The model is to be expanded to 1 hour, rather than the initial 30 minutes.



## **Target group and minorities**

There has been a conscious decision not to focus on target groups, due to the inclusive nature of the policy objective as being for all. It does however primarily target those who are above the age of 60 and are living independent lives to varying degrees. It is important to note the diversity of the users of the healthcare system and that the needs of older people are as diverse as those of younger generations. In 2018, 33% of the population in Oslo were of a minority background (Directorate of Integration and Diversity, 2019). Increased competences surrounding culture may be needed in the future, as older people may require and expect different approaches. According to interviews with interest groups, policy makers and the focus group, this area is still not adequately addressed and will be key to unlocking the potential of active ageing for the entire population. It is also important to remember in this context that immigrants are not a homogenous group, and expectations and culture varies. According to an interviewee, this includes the role of society as a caretaker of older people, the inclusion of women and the idea of where 'home' is. This is reminiscent of the most important dimension of this work: engaging the citizens in dialogue about their present and their future as the most important tool available for finding solutions that address the most pressing needs in their lives.

## **3.3 Approach**

At the outset, the objective of creating an increasingly age-friendly city was to create an 'Oslo that is greener, warmer and more creative with room for all'. In the action plan for an age-friendly Oslo, the goal stated is centred around the citizens and their ability to live meaningful lives regardless of their age. As previously stated, the interdisciplinary approach has been considered an important dimension in this work. The devised action plan is largely built on input, views and critiques from conferences and community meetings where the citizens were able to participate in order to uncover the real challenges on the ground, but also suggestions for methods of improvement. This systematic use of user involvement is particular to the age-friendly policies devised in the Department for Older people, Health and Employment. The department has been testing a variety of different user involvement and participation methods, depending on the scope and theme of the topic. Public meetings have both an important function and purpose as these meetings are both a method that reaches a wider audience and help highlight the priorities of older people. In their very first public meeting, the older people designed the conference in terms of its location, food, ensuring the right acoustics and accessibility ramps. The conference centred around several thematic areas presented by experts and group discussions. Other methods include the aforementioned inspection rounds in the city districts, the city centre, in the parks and in the outdoor areas; hearings with official councils, such as the council of seniors and the council for immigrant organisations. Group conversations allow for more open and targeted questions, which was used extensively in the beginning of the work with age-friendly policies. There was also

significant inspiration drawn from abroad, both from the greater Manchester area and Gothenburg. The film project in Gothenburg was adopted in Oslo to help uncover the life of a senior in the city, both the negative and the positive aspects. Both the filming projects and the inspection rounds with the seniors were important for enabling visualisation of the problems older people and mobility impaired people might meet.

Age-friendly Oslo rests on three basic pillars: political commitment; user involvement, and cross-sectorial collaboration. In order to enable the work on age-friendly cities, it is important to see the interaction between these aspects in order to build a sustainable and viable policy structure. Introducing the concept to relevant services, agencies and departments connected to the municipality was thus important, albeit not immediately successful. It is simultaneously both one of the primary challenges as well as the key enabler in the work on creating a more age-friendly city. Key to incite engagement for the topic in unassuming sectors in the municipality was to highlight the aspects of their department's key priorities in the years to come and demonstrate the intertwined nature of age-friendliness and their objectives. The programme 'carefree city centre' ('bilfritt byliv') headed by the Planning and Building Services is often applied as a good example in this regard. Already tasked with spatial improvements and social infrastructure for an increasingly greener and more inclusive city, ensuring that enough benches were distributed at a regular interval, sufficient lighting and more accessible green areas were considered were an easy way of demonstrating the added value and relevance of the initiative to age-friendly policies. Creating a car-free city centre that is inviting to people of all ages and mobility is an important leverage in continuing the work on creating a healthier, greener and warmer city. Another initiative by the Planning and Building Services is the 'Green Circle', the future development of a 6.5 km green belt around the centre of what is known as *Hovinbyen* at Økern in the city district of Bjerke, but it will also encompass Grünerløkka, Alna and Gamle Oslo (Oslo Kommune, 2019). After being introduced to age-friendly principles through extensive cooperation with the Department for Older people, Health and Employment, the Planning and Building Services are consciously considering age-friendly adaptations and has included the *Action Plan for an Age-friendly Oslo* as part of their overarching guidelines and framework conditions. Though not exclusively targeted towards older people, the acknowledgement towards the added value of ensuring age-friendliness is evident. This inclusive dimension and cross-sectorial adoption are envisioned to play an important role for the continuation of the age-friendly policy objective in years to come.

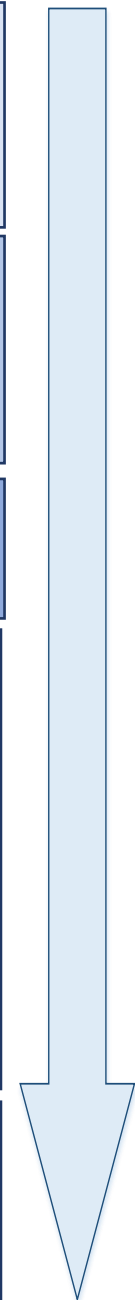
It is also important to note that the city districts are key in the implementation of age-friendly policies. This is both due to their mandate as a self-governing body within the framework condition of larger municipality of Oslo and the aspect of finding appropriate policies that are tailor-made to their city district population. For example, the pilot city district of Nordre Aker developed 23 action points to implement under the heading of Oslo's six domains, including housing and care. Collaborations with city district school and organisations, shops and and

shopping centres and cultural associations assisted in enabling the implementation of a variety of goals, such as 'Rollator Races' and 'Generation Games', activity buddies, staff training in age-friendly principles, and senior centres. Other city districts such as Sagene introduced a pilot project called '*Cycling without age – the right to feel the wind in your hair!*' with 80 registered trips. The volunteer cyclists range from 30 – 80 years old (Oslo kommune, 2017).

Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the policy areas and planned outcomes of Oslo municipalities actions for creating a more age-friendly city that corresponds with their objective of a city that is warmer, greener and more inclusive.

Figure 3.1: Policy overview

<p>Policy goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oslo's age-friendly policy objective is contributing towards creating a city that is <b>greener, warmer and more creative</b>, with <b>room for all people</b> of all ages;</li> <li>The age-friendly policies are aimed to enable older people <b>to continue to be and develop who they are</b> regardless of their age and abilities;</li> <li>The goal is to ensure that people can <b>live at home and be active, feel safe and included</b> in an age-friendly city.</li> </ul>
<p>Areas of excellence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oslo municipality has excelled in the areas of <b>user involvement and participation</b>, and has based their action plan for an age-friendly city on input and comments from older people across the city districts post- public meetings, inspections, meetings and focus groups;</li> <li>The introduction of <b>age-friendly transportation</b> ('Rosa buss') has been very successful and is praised not only by its users, but by doctors and relatives of the users;</li> <li>Liasing with <b>external partners</b> such as the Norwegian Opera and Ballet, the Oslo museums and Oslo Concert Hall for cultural activities has been popular.</li> </ul>
<p>Governance principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oslo's age-friendly policies rest on <b>three pillars</b>: Participation and user involvement; Political anchoring; Cross-sectoral collaboration;</li> <li>City districts are central to the implementation processes in their districts.</li> </ul>
<p>Policies and measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Domain 1: Social inclusion and participation (employment, volunteering and culture)</b>: All citizens have the opportunity to participate in society, engage in public debate and be involved in influencing the development of the city; prevent loneliness; combat ageism. Buddy schemes, volunteering opportunities, inter-generational meeting spaces. Places with an agenda.</li> <li><b>Domain 2: Transport and mobility</b>: Age-friendly transportation, uncovering hindrances, improving access to green areas, free sandbags and spikes for icy conditions.</li> <li><b>Domain 3: Housing</b>: Adapted housing units (Omsorg+) for those that are still able to live at home but require some assistance. Including adapted housing in activity and senior centres.</li> <li><b>Domain 4: Outdoor spaces and physical activity</b>: Improving access to nature reserves, parks and the city by carefully planning bench design and allocation, toilets, lights, signposting etc. Co-use of areas. Rollator Race, Generation Games.</li> <li><b>Domain 5: Communication and involvement</b>: Age-friendly printable newsletter online (easily updated), SoMe and local newspapers, information at senior centres. Involvement: Public meetings, hearings, focus groups, inspection rounds with key departments, group conversations and one-to-one interviews. Increasing digital competences through courses, excellent written material in accessible language (in all languages).</li> <li><b>Domain 6: Healthcare services</b>: Under the age-friendly policy umbrella, healthcare services are part of the preventative measures introduced through active and social living promoting public health, low-threshold healthcare services in their local areas.</li> </ul>
<p>Planned outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working to <b>integrate</b> age-friendly aspects as a horizontal policy domain across all services, agencies and departments;</li> <li>Enabling people to <b>live independent lives for longer</b>;</li> <li><b>Varied</b> activities and <b>life-long learning</b> opportunities for all;</li> <li>A <b>safe</b> and <b>inclusive</b> city that meets the <b>individual needs</b>.</li> </ul>



## 4 Perspectives on policy initiatives

This is a selection of inspiring policy initiatives and organisational structures in Oslo. An in-depth presentation of the city's initiatives can be found in the good practice policy handbook.

### Age-friendly transport ('Rosa busser')

#### *Content and organisation*

- A door-to-door transportation service enabling older people to more easily run errands, meet friends and family, and otherwise do their daily activities within their city districts. It is also a great way to meet new people and, in this way, prevent social isolation and cognitive stagnation. The service targets a user group above the age of 67, has space for rollators and usually has one wheel chair spot per ride.
- The driver is trained to handle older people with mobility or cognitive challenges.
- The service is in a testing phase, but is currently available in the city districts of Nordre Aker (2017), Vestre Aker (2019) and Sagene (2018).
- The concept was developed as a pilot case in Nordre Aker and is a collaboration between the public transportation company Ruter, headed by its subsidiary Konsentra, and the Department of Older people, Health and Employment at Oslo municipality.

#### *Effectiveness*

- One of Oslo's main visions is to enable its senior citizens to feel safe, active and included. Age-friendly transportation is key to ensure its realisation.
- The concessionary ticket price and prospect of socialising are good motivators for getting out and about more often than before.
- In addition to the individual's benefit of the age-friendly transportation service, it also has a more positive environmental footprint than individual taxi services.

Figure 4.1: Rosa Busser



#### *Innovativeness*

- This type of age-friendly transportation is new to Oslo and combines social interaction and user-friendliness.

*'The age-friendly transport service is one of the cleverest initiatives that has happened within the policy domain of older people in the last 20 years. I don't think we'll see anything quite like it, especially when thinking about its effects and its significance for older people'*

– Interviewee from Vestre Aker

### *Transferability*

- The concept has been transferred to the city of Trondheim, which will adopt its own age-friendly transport system in 2020. The service is highly transferrable across cities and rural areas. Distances, whether in an urban setting or a rural setting might be impairing the ability for older people to use the local community to the extent to which it could be. Age-friendly transportation services also help connect peers, and help make older people more visible and a more common sight in the urban/rural setting.

## **User involvement initiatives**

### *Content and organisation*

- Oslo municipality develop an action plan for an age-friendly city based on input from older people using various methods, in order to find prioritised areas and determine which WHO domains to target.
- Oslo municipality and the city districts engaged in implementing age-friendly policy objectives have taken strides to involve older people through public meetings and group consultations, interviews and inspection rounds in public places ('Seniortrakk'). These have e.g. helped to uncover hampering factors in the cityscape for the mobility impaired and helped mapping number of benches needed, as well as their design. The Seniortrakk-initiative was also done in collaboration with other departments in Oslo municipality. This is evident in the development of the Hovseter-area in Vestre Aker, where older people were consulted in the planning of the urban living area (placement of schools and care-homes).
- The user involvement generates a more cross-sectorial working method across the municipality's departments and services in order to cater to the holistic perspective of age-friendliness. It has encouraged collaborations between the Department of Older people, Health and Employment and the Planning and Building Services, and the Urban Environment Agency.
- The target group is broad and concerns all people in Oslo over the age of 67. However, the meeting facilities tend to have an upper capacity limit. The largest conferences had approximately 300 participants and was held by the city district of Nordre Aker at Ullevål stadion and Grefsen/Kjelsås parish house.

### *Effectiveness*

- The impacts of the user involvement are immediately visible with new benches at shorter intervals, as well as discussions surrounding the availability of public toilets and better lighting.
- The feedback from the participants and the stakeholders have been positive. The older people engaged in these initiatives feel like they are being seen and heard.
- Departments in Oslo municipality are

*Figure 4.2: User involvement*



increasingly looking at the city with age-friendly lenses, albeit it being in the starting phase of integrating age-friendliness as a policy consideration throughout the municipality.

#### *Innovativeness*

- Extensive user involvement is an innovative, dynamic and democratic approach to policy development. It challenges the traditional approach to policy development and allows for a stronger grassroots' voice.

*'You get to celebrate a lot of peculiar things throughout a life-time, and this time I thought to myself: I'm certainly going to go home and celebrate that we have been placing benches on a map today!'*

-Representative of seniors

#### *Transferability*

- Emphasising the bottom-up perspective in developing age-friendly policies is important for the sustainability of the initiatives. It is thus worth considering when launching an age-friendly policy programme in any city.
- Oslo is divided up into smaller city districts which enables a more direct engagement with the public and local communities. Breaking age-friendly policy initiatives down to the city district level has been instrumental for the implementation of age-friendly policies and suggestions coming from user-involvement initiatives.

### **Pastor Fangens vei 22 Seniorhus – Senior Centre**

#### *Content and organisation*

- Pastor Fangensvei 22 Seniorhus is a senior centre located in the city district of Nordre Aker. It is simultaneously a housing complex and an activity centre. These activities include e.g. group work out through dance and intergenerational meetings through activities organised by the Senior centre and local kindergartens and schools.
- The senior centre also includes the inhouse and telephone information services called 'AHANS' and the daily activity and information service 'Pastor'n', which both are important resources for the local community in Nordre Aker.
- The senior centre also includes 29 apartments for older people and in February 2018, two students moved into Pastor Fangens vei 22 Seniorhus.
- The city district of Nordre Aker established the senior centre and is in charge of the coordination. The idea is that volunteers, the community, the family as well as the users themselves are assisting in the running of the centre and its activities.

#### *Effectiveness*

- AHANS (*Alltid Ha Noen å Spørre* – 'always have someone to ask') was developed as a response to a request from older citizens to have somewhere to go to ask for help or guidance to find transportation options, cultural activities or exercise groups. All information is available per phone as well as being available in the Senior centre.

- 'Pastor'n' is a service and meeting place for someone who is becoming forgetful or is in the early stages of dementia.
- Pastor Fangens vei 22 Seniorhus is a one-stop-shop for all older persons that need specific information and it is an excellent example of how to encourage the use of areas and spaces with an agenda, that indirectly becomes a social arena.

#### *Innovativeness*

- Pastor Fangens vei 22 Seniorhus has become a resource centre for the local community, both for those actively using the senior centre and to those that make use of its telephone services. It is embedded in the local community.
- Opening up Pastor Fangens vei 22 Seniorhus to students blurs the lines between it being an activity centre and retirement home to being an intergenerational apartment building. The students live in the housing complex at reduced rent in exchange for a minimum of 30 hours per month spent with the older inhabitants. Activities include cross-country skiing, going for walks and making food.

#### *Transferability*

- The idea is highly transferrable to all city districts and areas outside the city. In a city in need of student housing, including student flats into new retirement homes and activity centres is a great way to open up the idea of what a retirement home or senior activity centre is. However, it needs political commitment and willingness to think innovatively about multipurpose buildings.



## 5 Challenges and opportunities

The sections above have shown the successful initiatives and policy efforts to ensure an increasingly age-friendly Oslo, but there is always room for improvement. The following section draws on interviews with various groups of stakeholders in Oslo, which allowed for further insight into what policy domains and areas that are in need of more attention in order to create a more age-friendly city. The section lists both challenges and opportunities and are divided according to the outcomes from each stakeholder group respectively. These groups are policy makers, interest groups and a focus group representing older people.

Table 5.1: Challenges and Opportunities | Older people

	Challenges	Opportunities
<b>Older people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social isolation is a challenging issue and has not been adequately addressed by the municipality.</li> <li>• Ageism and age discrimination are aspects that are difficult to handle but still felt by older people. This is a systemic and structural issue.</li> <li>• The digital divide: there is a generational gap where old people are often not as capable in tackling new technology. Information and access to support must be available through different platforms and mediums.</li> <li>• Communication is often too bureaucratic to be deciphered by all. There is a need for a more accessible language to reach more people.</li> <li>• Older immigrants might have a harder time finding their place as their definition of 'home' is not straight forward.</li> <li>• Older immigrants are not a homogenous group. This must not be forgotten when developing city-wide policies.</li> <li>• Accessibility to different transport methods to ensure that the city, from parks to public offices, can be accessed by all.</li> <li>• There are not enough public toilets in the city districts and the city centre.</li> <li>• There are not enough street lights in certain city districts, which adds to feeling unsafe and insecure.</li> <li>• The current snow clearing practices in the winter does not adequately take into consideration wheelchairs and mobility scooters.</li> <li>• Age groups are often segregated due to housing prices in those areas where older people live, preventing younger people and families from settling there.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age-friendly transport across the city, and step-free access to buses and trams.</li> <li>• Changing the narratives around old people would help bring down stigma and enable a new view on how to involve older people in various activities.</li> <li>• Generational meeting spaces to help increase activity levels and socialising: more benches around e.g. football fields.</li> <li>• Using older people as mentors and buddies in schools for e.g. professional development purposes by tapping into their experience and knowledge gained throughout their careers. This also helps develop their own skills and competences in inter-generational exchanges.</li> <li>• Immigrants have their own senior centres in some of the city districts, but there needs to be more focus on how to integrate and hearing their voices more clearly in age-friendly policies.</li> <li>• There are several generations of older people that need different types of activities.</li> <li>• Activities during the weekend and outside of people's work days to prevent social isolation.</li> <li>• Communication: information points with human contact which is more distributed across the cityscape; information points at shopping centres, libraries, in the city districts – information providers in the local area.</li> </ul>

Table 5.2: Challenges and Opportunities | Interest groups

<b>Interest groups</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate level of involvement: involvement of different groups need to be more structured and must occur at a more appropriate time. User-involvement needs to have a clearly defined purpose.</li> <li>• Considering earlier inclusion of senior councils, organisations and interest groups in the process of developing age-friendly policies at the appropriate stage, not at the end of the policy development.</li> <li>• Different organisations have different mandates. Involvement would also mean a reconsideration of what role the organisations have – whether they are answering to hearings or are a body able to take initiatives.</li> <li>• It is difficult to hear the voice of those that are socially isolated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater input from the organisations at an earlier stage may help anchor the policy objectives further. This may also play out positively in organisations as it creates a sense of ownership to the issue.</li> <li>• Greater use of councils and organisations as they are knowledgeable about processes and thematic areas at the municipal level, but also know what is currently needed on the grassroots.</li> <li>• Increasing levels of communication out to organisations and other meeting spaces that are both senior-specific, intergenerational and cross-cultural.</li> </ul>

Table 5.3: Challenges and Opportunities | Policy makers

<b>Policy makers</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-sectoral anchoring: it is challenging to make municipal departments, services and agencies see the added value of incorporating age-friendliness in their policy objectives.</li> <li>• Political leadership and coordination are both person-dependent and party dependent, and the focus on age-friendly policies may thus change quicker than it should.</li> <li>• The size of the municipality slows down policy development and implementation. The city districts are thus instrumental in testing and developing policies fitting their constituencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-sectoral work contributes towards a more systematic and holistic approach to the thematic area of age-friendliness.</li> <li>• Continuity is key, especially considering the apolitical nature of age-friendly city policies.</li> <li>• Anchoring age-friendly policies as a horizontal policy objective much like ‘sustainable development’ ensures a better city for all that is not catering to a particular segment of the population. In turn, this would increase older people’s participation in the city and demonstrate that old people can be active. This might help battle ageism.</li> <li>• Due to the structure of the city, each city district has the opportunity and power to implement policies that suits their demographics and the need of their citizens. This is important for ensuring targeted actions.</li> <li>• Different communication needs: digital and printed and in various languages and fonts.</li> </ul>

## 6 Policy recommendations

Oslo is underway to become a greener, warmer and more inclusive city for all. Framing age-friendly policies in light of its horizontal added value is an important measure to ensure a comprehensive approach to urban and human development. It emphasises the intertwined nature of the spatial, built environment and the human aspect in urban development, whilst uniting aspects of universal design and age-friendly aspects such as shorter distances between benches and better lighting. For a continuous and sustainable age-friendly city policy design, there are certain strategic recommendations and thematic recommendations that should be considered in the future.

### 6.1 Strategic recommendations

Although the **cross-sectoral work** in Oslo has been one of the most important achievements for the work on age-friendly policies, it is clear that the political anchoring needs to be stronger. It may therefore be fruitful to consider including and positioning Oslo's age-friendly policy directly under the city councillor, to ensure political anchoring amongst all departments and agencies in the city government. This type of **vertical placement** is useful for rolling out the policy on a larger scale and integrating the objective as a **horizontal aspect** of all policies pertaining to social and green infrastructure. However, developing age-friendly city initiatives **in the city districts as organic bottom-up policy implementors and as an engine for change** have been crucial for the local anchoring and age-friendly policy activities in the city. Thus, ensuring that there is **scope and space for age-friendly policies in the city council** is important for the focus in the city at large, but the **city districts need significant ownership to the policy area as implementors**.

**User involvement** is an excellent tool that **should be continued in the development and innovation of public services** and will **help the municipality make choices that are consistent with the zeitgeist and needs of its inhabitants**. The type of user involvement and participation in the municipality of Oslo today allows for a more varied approach that responds to a group that is as heterogenous as the younger generations. There should also be a **more active and systematic use** of the **council of seniors**, both centrally and in the city districts in the development of the policies. This is also important when it comes to including **more systematic input from the council of immigrant organisations**.

There should be an **increased focus on** reaching those individuals that are **involuntarily isolated**, by encouraging closer collaborations between cooperative housing units and the local senior centre or low-threshold healthcare services. Such collaborations may also increase a sense of safety amongst all older dwellers in housing cooperatives (*borettslag*). In order to ensure continuity and more targeted goals, it could be suggested that Oslo municipality **develop useful and meaningful indicators as part of a wider monitoring and**

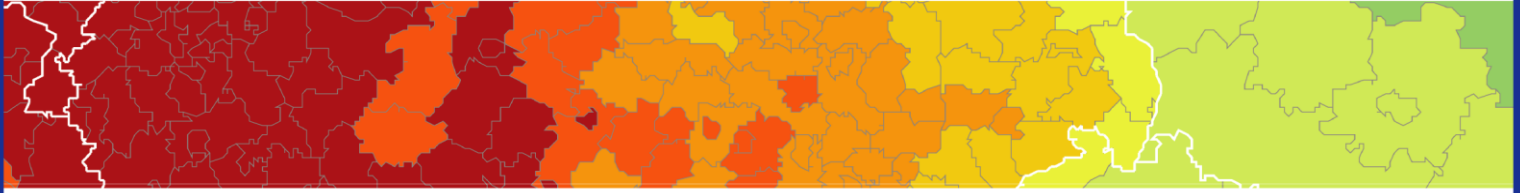
**evaluation scheme.** There are few or no indicators currently available. It is difficult to measure improved life quality, but **qualitative indicators based on the Delphi-system** might serve a purpose.

## 6.2 Thematic recommendations

- **Outdoor spaces and built environment:** Continuing the good practices with sandbags and spiked shoes, as well as a more mindful snow clearing, are enablers of active lives and are preventative measures against isolation as many older people are involuntarily isolated in the winters due to outside conditions. Appropriate snow clearing that takes mobility scooters into account is also an enabling factor, and an increase in the number of available public toilets and benches are always welcome. Continuing to advocate for using age-friendly principles in all aspects of urban planning would be recommended for a more concerted policy approach.
- **Transport and mobility:** Age-friendly transportation is an excellent addition to the existing public transportation system pertaining to older people, and it needs to become a city-wide transportation option. With its more positive environmental footprint and innovative and future-oriented transportation system, it would also be advised that the Department for the Environment and Transportation is increasingly involved in the financing of the age-friendly buses. For the age-friendly bus to become increasingly more popular and available to the general public of older people, a step-free minibus alternative might be pertinent.
- **Housing:** The role of the senior centres as an activity centre and the senior guidance councillors continue to serve as an important structure in the city district's local communities as both an information and resource node, and should be prioritised. The innovative use of Pastor Fangens vei 22 Seniorhus in combining senior and student housing as well as being an activity centre should be an inspiration to other senior centres, and encourage the use of multipurpose-buildings more generally.
- **Social participation; social inclusion and non discrimination; civic engagement and employment:** Continuing the work to prevent social isolation is important, both for the individual person and for public health in general. Age-friendly transportation plays an important part in this, as it is encouraging a way of socialising older people both on the bus and in their local communities. The focus on user involvement is both innovative and excellent, but a more strategic and timely use of certain stakeholder groups may be needed. This is particularly with regards to immigrant stakeholder groups and the use of senior councils representing the city districts. A greater focus on the different needs of different stakeholder groups with regards to their expectations of becoming older is also a matter that needs to be considered. With regards to the variety of stakeholder groups, it

is important to keep in mind that older people are a heterogenous group, and initiatives should reflect this reality.

- **Communication and information:** A continued cautious and timely use of digital tools for communication and service purposes is worth mentioning. The current work is combining methods and news outlets, but there is an increasing digital divided. Despite the few good examples of technology-savvy older people, digitalisation is, and will continue to be, dependent on the human element and requires a mindset change and overcoming the fear of wrongdoing. Digitalisation is not an end-point and is a continuous development. Technology is constantly changing, and solutions that may work today will be outdated within the year. Being mindful of the societal effects of digital exclusion is important when service providers are impatient with the speed of digitalisation.



ISBN: 978-2-919795-37-6

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The ESPON EGTC is the Single Beneficiary of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. The Single Operation within the programme is implemented by the ESPON EGTC and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.