

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

Targeted Analysis

**Case Study Report:
Gothenburg**



**Göteborgs
Stad**

A better place to age in

Case Study Report: Gothenburg

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.

Authors

Mats Stjernberg, Nordregio (Sweden)

Advisory Group

Project Support Team: Lisa Holtz, City of Gothenburg

ESPON EGTC: Project manager: Piera Petruzzi, Financial expert: György Alföldy

Information on ESPON and its projects can be found on www.espon.eu.

The web site provides the possibility to download and examine the most recent documents produced by finalised and ongoing ESPON projects.

© ESPON, 2019

Printing, reproduction or quotation is authorised provided the source is acknowledged and a copy is forwarded to the ESPON EGTC in Luxembourg.

Contact: info@espon.eu

ISBN: 978-2-919795-37-6

**Case Study Report:
Gothenburg**



**Göteborgs
Stad**

A better place to age in

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

Version 23/03/2020

Table of contents

Foreword.....	1
1 Introduction.....	3
2 Demographic profile	4
3 Policy overview.....	8
3.1 Motivation and goals	8
3.2 Priorities.....	8
3.3 Approach	9
4 Perspectives on policy initiatives.....	11
5 Challenges and opportunities.....	15
6 Policy recommendations	18
6.1 Strategic recommendations.....	18
6.2 Thematic recommendations	18

List of Maps

Map 2.1: Change in older population 2000-2018	5
Map 2.2: Gothenburg: Share of older people 2017	6
Map 2.3: Gothenburg: Change in older population 2001-2017	7

List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Policy Overview	10
-----------------------------------	----

List of Tables

Table 3.1: Priority table.....	9
Table 5.1: Challenges and Opportunities Older people	15
Table 5.2: Challenges and Opportunities Interest groups	16
Table 5.3: Challenges and Opportunities Policy makers.....	17

Abbreviations

EC	European Commission
ESPON	European Territorial Observatory Network
ESPON EGTC	ESPON European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
WHO	World Health Organization

Foreword

The City of Gothenburg is aiming to become a better place to age in. Every göteborgare, should look forward to growing old in the city. For us, an age-friendly city strives for having inclusive and accessible social and physical environments that promote health, participation and security for all people, and especially for older people.

In the journey to become a more age-friendly city, the participation of seniors and their diverse needs, experiences, knowledge and ideas must be at the centre of all planning, decision-making, organisation and development. In short, a city cannot become a better place to age in without the participation of seniors in the process. In using the knowledge of older persons today, our aim is to set the structures for a more inclusive and accessible community to age in for the next generations.

This report is a result from the ESPON ACPA study, which was initiated by eight different European Cities involved in the EUROCITIES working group for Urban Ageing who had a common interest in studying the consequences of population ageing in cities, and how we can develop effective policies with a focus on social and health inequalities that better meet the needs of the heterogenous group of seniors alongside other on-going urban challenges. The report gives the reader a comprehensive insight on how Gothenburg, one of the eight European Cities involved in the study, is working to become more age friendly. It provides an overview of research, findings, statistics, reflections and good practices on how to adapt, design and to bring citizens, policymakers, researchers and businesses together to collaborate.

In Gothenburg, the reader gets an opportunity to learn about different good practices and how to introduce new technology to seniors in a creative way that enhances knowledge on how to create more accessible neighbourhoods through the method Life Filming. An example of how to enhance participation in society among seniors is Flexlinjen, a special accessible transport service, which seniors can use for free with the senior card. Furthermore, the report presents an example of how the existing housing stock can be adapted with small adjustments to become more accessible while also promoting social capital among neighbours through the model of Safety Homes (Trygghetslägenheter). These examples represent the three most important domains for seniors in Gothenburg: social participation and inclusion, mobility and housing.

One of the challenges that remains is how we can become better at working in a cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary way to ensure that we are adapting all aspects of society to an ageing population.

In Gothenburg, we strongly believe in the idea of sharing good practices and learnings, as a way to inspire each other to become better at creating age-friendly social and physical environments that promote health, participation and security for all.

Lisa Holtz

Process Manager, Urban Planning, City of Gothenburg

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 Gothenburg and portrays the state of affairs in Gothenburg in terms of:

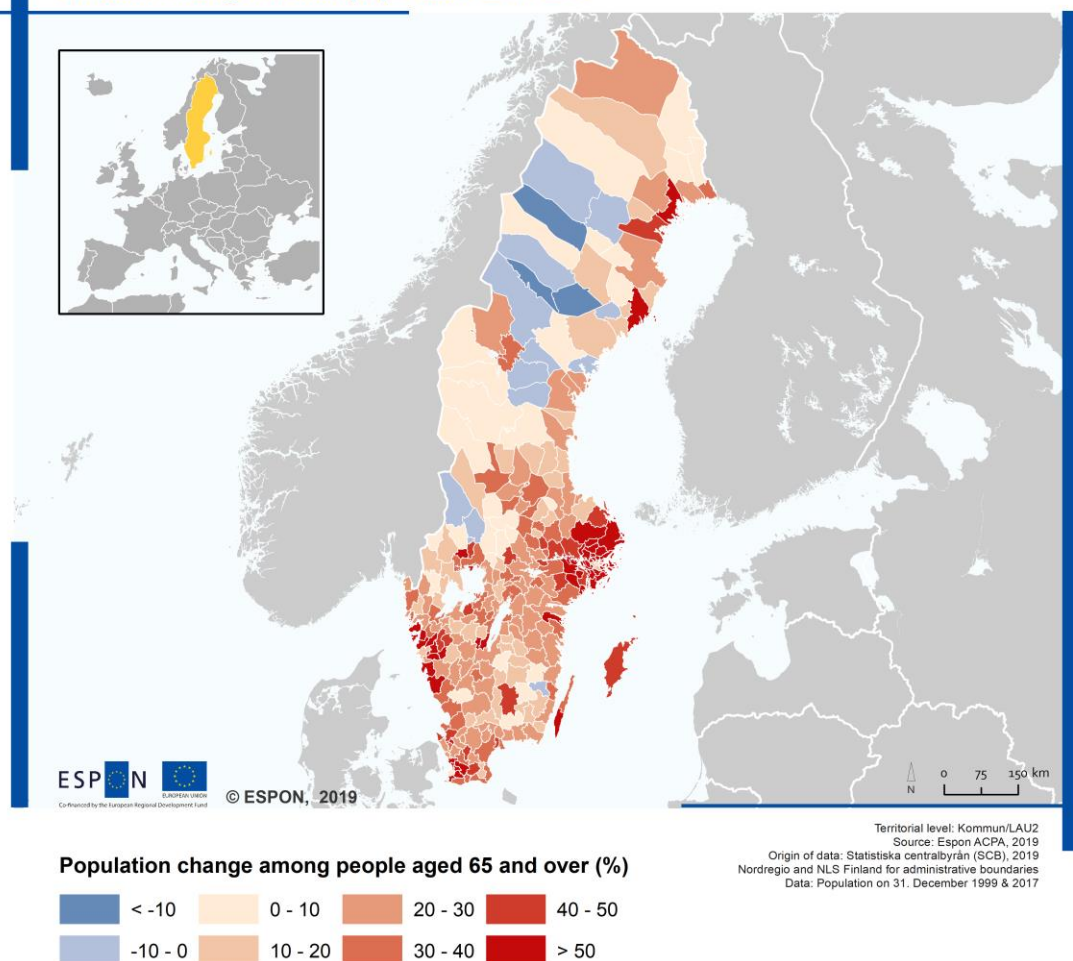
- Demographic trends and developments related to population ageing within the city;
- The strategy and policies that the urban authorities, professionals and other stakeholders in Gothenburg pursue to cope with population ageing;
- A selection of inspiring examples of how the ageing policy has been implemented;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

2 Demographic profile

Population ageing is one of the major demographic developments in Sweden, and projections indicate that Gothenburg will undergo significant population ageing during the decades to come. While approximately 15% of the city's current population is aged 65 and over, this proportion is projected to be 25% by 2050 (Nordic Welfare Center 2018). Despite this development, population ageing has been less expressed in Gothenburg compared to many other parts of Sweden, and Gothenburg currently has a younger population structure compared to Sweden overall. Among all of Sweden's 290 municipalities, Gothenburg had the 12th youngest average structure, which reflects the general situation that cities, and especially larger cities, usually tend to have younger age structures than rural areas (e.g. Sánchez Gassen & Heleniak 2019). In Sweden, the municipalities with the highest shares of older people can be found particularly in the sparsely populated northern parts of the country. However, while population ageing is not as significant in the municipality of Gothenburg when compared to many other parts of the country, the surrounding municipalities in the Gothenburg region have in contrast seen substantial population increase in the age group 65 and over (see map 2.1). This illustrates that in the wider Gothenburg region, an ageing of the population structure has been significantly more pronounced than in the city itself.

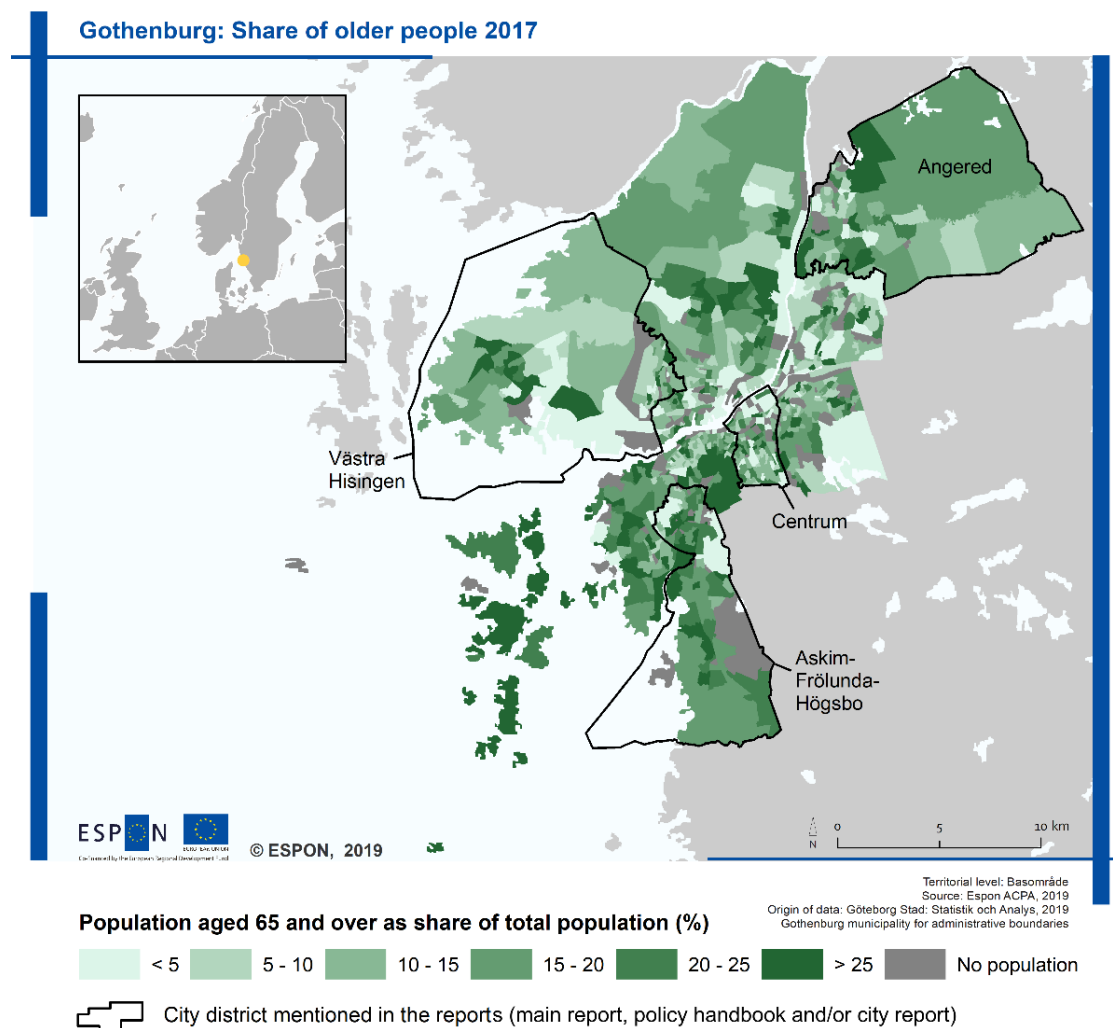
Map 2.1: Change in older population 2000-2018

Sweden: Change in older population 2000-2018



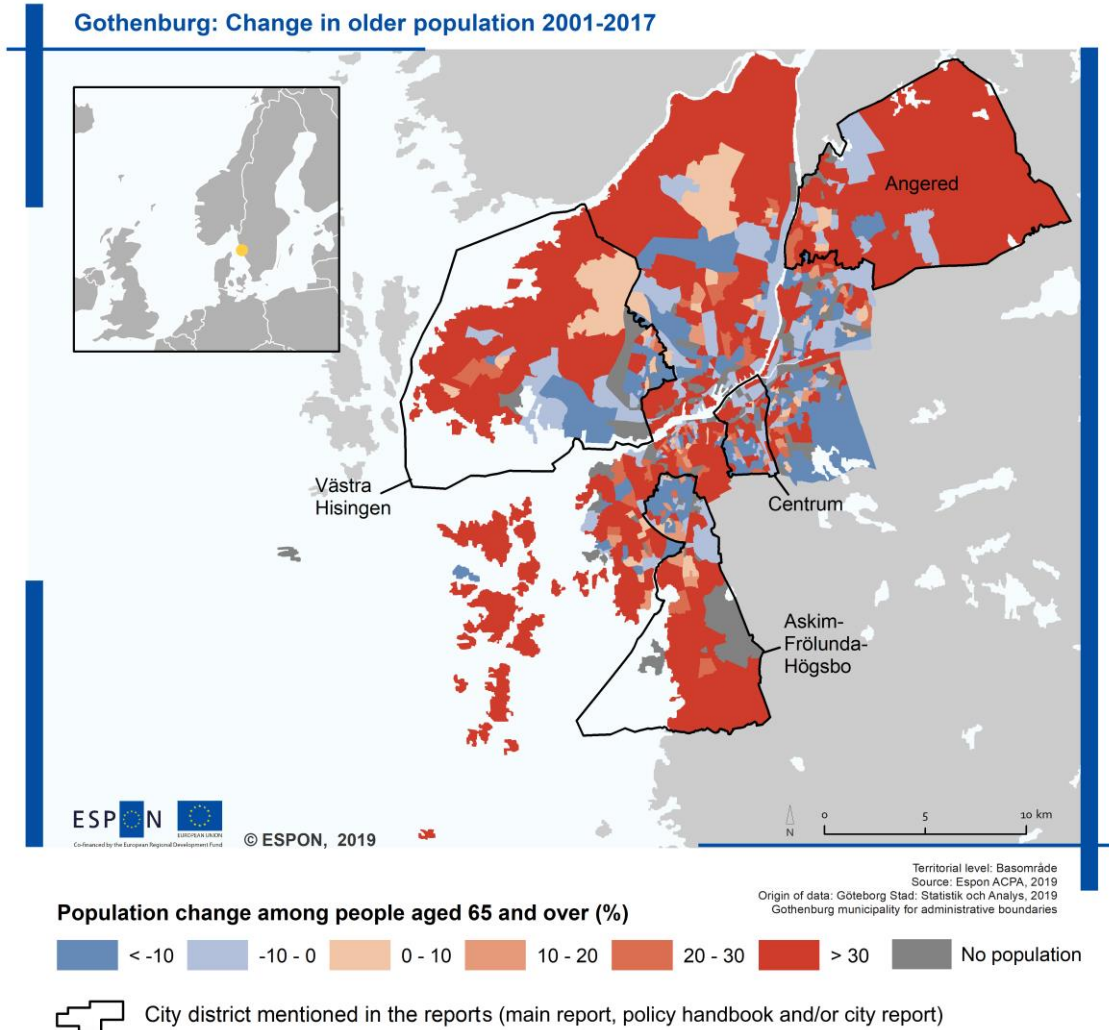
A closer look at the population aged 65 and over in Gothenburg shows that the share of women (55.3%) was somewhat higher than the share of men (44.7%), which reflects the more general situation in Sweden, where there is a slight overrepresentation of women (53.7%) compared to men (46.3%) in this age group. This could be related to the fact that as women generally live longer, they therefore also constitute a higher number among the total senior population. In Gothenburg, the average life expectancy among men is 79 years compared to 83 years for women (Senior Göteborg 2019). Another noticeable difference that can be seen between older men and women is in household structure. In 2017, approximately 50% of older women lived alone compared to roughly 30% of older men in Gothenburg. This corresponds to the more general situation in Sweden, where older women who live alone clearly outnumber men. Older people are a far from homogenous group, which can be seen also in the noticeable share of the older people with an immigrant background. In Gothenburg, the share of foreign-born persons among those aged 65 or over was 22%, compared to 13% nationally in 2017.

Map 2.2: Gothenburg: Share of older people 2017



The diversity of Gothenburg can be noticed also when comparing the age structure and dynamics of population ageing in the different city districts. In Gothenburg, the districts where older people constitute more than 25% of the total population are mainly located in the southern and southwestern suburbs of the city, whereas the districts in the inner city generally have proportionately much younger age structures (map 2.2). When examining changes in the number older people in different parts of Gothenburg, map 2.3 shows that the clear majority of neighbourhoods have seen a rather substantial increase in the number of older people between 2001 and 2017. Nevertheless, there are also districts where the older population has decreased. Gothenburg is a city that is undergoing rapid population growing, and one central reason for the shrinking share of older people in some districts could be related to an influx of younger age groups into these neighbourhoods, for instance due to new construction, which could explain why there are proportionately fewer older residents in these neighbourhoods than before. This illustrates that although population ageing is a major demographic development in Gothenburg, the magnitude of ageing differs considerably from one city district to another.

Map 2.3: Gothenburg: Change in older population 2001-2017



Gothenburg has become increasingly segregated both socio-economically and ethnically during recent decades (e.g. Andersson, 2009) and addressing inequalities and segregation have thus gained political focus in the city. These questions have been magnified especially as socio-economic status and country of origin are closely linked to health status and quality of life. There are noticeable differences between different neighbourhoods within the city, in terms of life expectancy and these differences are connected to socio-economic status. For instance, differences in life expectancy between the neighbourhoods that have the highest and lowest average life expectancy is 9 years among men and 6 years among women (Senior Göteborg, 2019). Life expectancy is the lowest in neighbourhoods that are characterised by low income and educational levels and a high share of foreign-born residents. These lower socio-economic neighbourhoods with lower average life expectancy are primarily suburban districts in northern Gothenburg, whereas higher status neighbourhoods with higher life expectancy are mainly located in the city centre or in the city's southern and western suburbs.

3 Policy overview

3.1 Motivation and goals

The main reason for why ageing has been placed on the political agenda in Gothenburg is that the population is ageing, and as people now live longer and remain active for longer than before, it is considered vital that the growing number of seniors can live a good and worthy life. Age-friendly Gothenburg (*Åldersvänliga Göteborg*) is the name of the policy initiative appointed by the municipal board that seeks to make the city a better place for people of all ages. The slogan “**Gothenburg: A better place to age in**” could be used as a motto for this programme, where one of the main aims is to improve older people’s living conditions by strengthening self-determination and evening out differences in health and well-being (WHO, 2019). The goal of becoming age-friendlier is tied to other initiatives that have been launched in the city to promote social sustainability, inclusion, human rights, public health and equal life opportunities. The aim is to create more accessible and inclusive social and physical living environments that are supportive of better health and quality of life.

In striving to become a more age-friendly city, the main target group that the city seeks to address are people aged 65 and over. Many age-friendly policies are designed with this target group in mind, but city officials do not view the age-friendly city as a place that is merely a good place for older people, but one where people of all ages and abilities can live a good life. There is also certain emphasis on different sub-groups and minorities within the older age groups. For example, older men tend to be more difficult to reach than women, and there have been efforts to increase the social participation of men by organising activities that are more specifically aimed at men at the city’s meeting points. Another perspective concerning the city’s efforts to address minorities is a pilot model for a norm-conscious way of working that has been developed by the city to ensure that its employees are more equipped to meet different individuals and especially older LGBT persons. There is also emphasis on reaching language minorities, such as the city’s sizeable Finnish language population.

3.2 Priorities

The table below shows how different policy areas are prioritized in the Age-friendly Gothenburg programme. It should be noted that these priority areas do not necessarily reflect those of the City of Gothenburg at large, but how the different WHO age-friendly domains are emphasized in this specific age-friendly programme. Age-friendly Gothenburg consists of the six areas of emphasis that are based on, but slightly adapted from the eight WHO domains, and in certain cases named and grouped differently. These areas are urban environment, mobility, housing, social participation and inclusion, community support and service and information and communication (Senior Gothenburg 2019).

Table 3.1: Priority table

Priority areas in Age-friendly Gothenburg (Åldersvänliga Göteborg) (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	4
Domain 2: Transport and mobility	5
Domain 3: Housing	5
Domain 4: Social participation	5
Domain 5: Social inclusion and non-discrimination	5
Domain 6: Civic engagement and employment ¹	3
Domain 7: Communication and information	3
Domain 8: Community support and health services ²	2

3.3 Approach

Within the Age-friendly Gothenburg programme, several measures have been taken to enhance the city's age-friendliness. As a member of the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities, the city is engaged in assessing the age-friendliness of the city, in the dissemination of good practices and experiences, and in developing an action plan for becoming more age-friendly. The main responsibility for producing this action plan is held by Senior Gothenburg (Senior Göteborg), the city's development center for senior citizens, that has been commissioned by the municipal board for this task. As part of Age-friendly Gothenburg, a baseline assessment was published in the spring of 2019, based on the perspectives of 630 seniors and how they view the city. This report will be used as a basis for the action plan that will be developed in 2020 to define the more concrete steps that are to be taken.

While Senior Gothenburg has the most overarching perspective on questions concerning ageing, there are several departments within the city that are centrally involved in making the city age-friendlier. Cross-sectoral cooperation is central in the city's approach, but the degree of cooperation varies from sector to sector. From a multi-level governance perspective, the role of cooperation within the city also entails collaboration between the different city districts, that according to one interviewee are almost like municipalities of their own. Overall, the city of Gothenburg has a large and complex organisational structure, which was mentioned as something that can make cross-sector cooperation difficult at times. Regional cooperation was also highlighted by several of the interviewees, but also to a varying degree depending

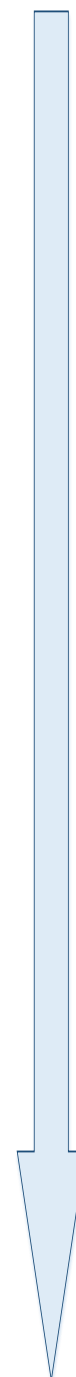
¹ Of the WHO policy domains, domain number 6 is only partly addressed in Age-friendly Gothenburg, as civic engagement is an area of focus, whereas employment is not explicitly included and primarily addressed within policies concerning labour market and adult education. Nevertheless, in the forthcoming action plan for Age-Friendly Gothenburg, one central element will be to make better use of the resources of older people in volunteer work.

² Older care and home care are not explicitly included in the Age-Friendly Gothenburg programme.

on the sector. Figure 2.1 presents an overview of the policy action that has been undertaken and is planned to make Gothenburg an age-friendly city.

Figure 3.1: Policy Overview

<p>Policy goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Gothenburg a better place to age in and strengthening the living conditions of older people so that they can live a good and worthy life. • Becoming an age-friendlier city is closely tied to other policy goals such as becoming a more equal, inclusive and accessible city and promoting healthy ageing and life-long learning.
<p>Areas of excellence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gothenburg is especially advanced in working with accessibility issues. • Efforts to improve physical accessibility are supportive of active and healthy ageing and they are also connected to several of the WHO policy domains, in particular outdoor spaces, transport and housing. • Innovative transport solutions.
<p>Governance principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Senior Gothenburg</i> has the most overarching focus on ageing, but several departments within the city organisation are centrally involved in promoting age-friendliness, and cross-sectoral cooperation is central. • Within the city, there is also collaboration between the different city districts. • To a varying degree, there is also cooperation with other municipalities in the city region, elsewhere in Sweden and abroad through different networks. • There is contact with seniors through pensioner’s councils and organisations as well as more directly.
<p>Policies and measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the framework of <i>Age-friendly Gothenburg</i>, the city is developing an action plan for becoming age-friendlier based on six themes: 1) urban environment, 2) mobility, 3) housing, 4) social participation and inclusion, 5) community support and service, 6) information and communication. • Numerous measures have already been carried out in Gothenburg, that have not been linked to this program but have contributed to making the city more age-friendly. These include efforts to make the city more physically accessible, developing age-friendly housing and public transport solutions and activities to promote participation and counteract loneliness.
<p>Planned outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of <i>Age-friendly Gothenburg</i>, a baseline assessment was published in the spring of 2019, based on the perspectives of 630 seniors and how they view the city in terms of age-friendliness and needs of improvement. • An action plan will be developed in 2020 based on this assessment in order to define the more concrete steps to further enhance age-friendliness. As part of this work, activity meetings are being planned, where representatives from different sectors within the city administration and older people together will elaborate what types of measures and more specific objectives will be defined for the program.



4 Perspectives on policy initiatives

This part presents a selection of successful policy initiatives that have been launched in Gothenburg to make the city more age-friendly. The initiatives discussed in the following include an age-form public transport system known as *Flexlinjen*, the principle of free public transport for older citizens, an age-friendly form of housing known as *Safety homes* and a method known as *Life Filming* where digital tools are used to enhance social inclusion and participation. This part presents how these initiatives have been organised, discusses the innovativeness and effectiveness and also reflects on the possibilities of replicating this initiatives in other cities and contexts.

Flexlinjen (Flex line)

Content and organisation

- *Flexlinjen* is a form of age-friendly public transport consisting of fully accessible minibuses that operate on 29 different flex lines and covers all districts in Gothenburg.
- It can be used by anyone, but the main target group consists of those who find it difficult to use ordinary public transport, in particular, many seniors.
- The minibuses are accessible, and suitable for bringing along pets, luggage or strollers, and the passengers are guaranteed a place to sit, which is possible due to mandatory registration.
- *Flexlinjen* is operated by a specific section of the City of Gothenburg's Traffic Office that is tasked with arranging assisted transport in the city.

Effectiveness

- An early version of *flexlinjen* was introduced in the mid-1990s, and the city has continuously been working to develop the system.
- *Flexlinjen* was mentioned as a success in most of the interviews conducted in Gothenburg.

Innovativeness

- One of the key rationales behind *flexlinjen* was to develop a new form of public transportation that is so accessible that it can be used also by people who have difficulties using ordinary public transportation.
- *Flexlinjen* could be viewed as a hybrid between public transportation and a taxi service and one the intentions was to develop a cost-efficient but good transportation good service.
- *Flexlinjen* also serves a social function, as many passengers have expressed that they enjoy the social aspect of travelling together.

Transferability

- *Flexlinjen* has been replicated in Sweden in a few other municipalities, where similar transportation solutions have been introduced, and one example includes the *Rosa busser* transportation system in Oslo that has been inspired by *flexlinjen*.

- Developing similar types of public transport solutions in other cities would be fully possible.

Anmäl hinder (report obstacles)

Content and organisation

- The *Anmäl hinder* (report obstacles) app was launched in 2017 by the city of Gothenburg's Housing Office (*Fastighetskontoret*) as part of its work to improve the accessibility of the city.
- The app allows the user to take a picture of a place that would require attention and to describe and categorise the obstacle while including a geotag of its location.
- The app is not specifically aimed at a certain user group, but for all citizens who can contribute to making the city more accessible, and thus also to making Gothenburg more age-friendly.

Effectiveness

- The impact of the *Anmäl hinder* app can be seen in the number of obstacles that have been reported. The app was launched in March 2017, and during 2017 and 2018 a total of 378 reports were sent to the city. This is significantly higher than the number of reports from the ten-year period preceding the launch of the app (2006–2016), when only 156 reports were made.

Innovativeness

- In 2018, the app was awarded the Swedish eGovernment Award by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions for the most innovative digital solution in public administration.
- One of the innovative features of this app is the open source code, which means that the app could easily be transferred to other places.

Transferability

- As the app uses an open source code, *Anmäl hinder* could easily be replicated elsewhere in Sweden and abroad.

Safety homes (trygghetsboende)

Content and organisation

- Safety homes (*trygghetsboende*) provide a new way to live where safety and community are key elements, and in Gothenburg, safety homes are targeted at people aged 70 and over.
- This type of housing has been developed with consideration to the ambition that people typically want to avoid moving from their homes as they age, and it is based on the idea that certain small adjustments in the dwellings can make them safer and more comfortable.

- Not only apartments should have good physical accessibility, but the building entrance and exterior should also be accessible and there should be a common space adjoined to the safety homes, where residents can meet a safety host and participate in activities with other residents.

Effectiveness

- The number of safety homes has increased in Gothenburg during recent years.
- There were in total 830 safety homes in Gothenburg in the beginning of 2019, and these dwellings were found in most parts of the city.

Innovativeness

- Most safety homes in Gothenburg have been established in the existing housing stock, and the main innovativeness of safety homes could be considered to be the basic idea that by making relatively small adjustments, regular apartments can become safer and more convenient.
- As people typically want to live in their own apartments for as long as possible, safety homes can help make this possible. Essentially, safety homes could be viewed as a hybrid between regular housing and assisted senior housing.
- Safety homes are an example that relatively small investments can have positive effects and improve the housing situation and comfort of living of seniors.

Transferability

- Safety homes are not exclusively found in Gothenburg, but there were more than 11,000 safety homes in more than half of Sweden's municipalities.
- There is no obvious reason for why the basic idea, i.e. the notion that small adjustments can make regular apartments more age-friendly, could not be transferred elsewhere.

Life Filming

Content and organisation

- *Life Filming* is a method that has been used in Gothenburg to introduce modern technology to seniors while also allowing them to share their experiences, needs, memories and knowledge.
- The method focuses on content and form, using images and videos as a point of departure.
- Employing this method, seniors have used tablets to make their own films, for instance, about what is good in their local area and what kind of improvements are needed.
- The purpose has been to increase participation and provide a better understanding of how older people experience the urban environment while also introducing new technology to seniors.
- *Life Filming* began as a joint project between the Health Promotion and Prevention Unit at the City of Gothenburg, city district Centrum, and the Centre of Culture and Health at the University of Gothenburg.

Effectiveness

- Following the first Life Filming workshop that was held in 2014, more than 120 participants have created films and images with energy and a sense of community.
- Among the positive aspects and advantages mentioned in the evaluation of the method is that it has made participants more conscious about their surrounding environments, and that it promotes exchange between different generations.
- Practitioners found the method to be a new way of engaging in citizen dialogues and gaining the perspectives of different age groups that can be used to support urban planning.

Innovativeness

- The main innovation of the Life Filming method could be considered its basic idea of introducing new digital technology to older people, who are not always comfortable using modern technology, while at the same time enhancing participation.
- Digital exclusion is a major challenge that especially older age groups are facing, and *Life Filming* can help seniors improve their digital skills.
- As the method relies on producing outputs in visual form, these outputs can be useful for practitioners and help them gain new knowledge about the perspective and needs of seniors.

Transferability

- The method is not dependent on specific conditions and could easily be transferred elsewhere.

Free public transport for seniors

The City of Gothenburg was one of the first cities in Sweden to introduce free public transportation for people aged 65 and over.

For seniors, public transport is free during weekends and weekdays, except for during rush hour. All means of public transport are included, also boats and ferries that provide access to the city's archipelago. Free public transport is valued highly by older people in Gothenburg, and practitioners see many long-term benefits. This has made many seniors more active and outgoing and city officials believed that it will have positive affects as people are more active and healthier and also make it easier for them to manage their everyday life chores.

5 Challenges and opportunities

Although the previous section has shown successful examples of initiatives for older people, interviews with various groups of stakeholders in Gothenburg have resulted in the insight that in certain policy domains, there are still improvements possible. The following overview indicates this from the viewpoint of older people in Gothenburg, the interest groups representing them and policymakers in the city, and what types of challenges and opportunities they see in terms of transforming Gothenburg into a more age-friendly city.

Table 5.1: Challenges and Opportunities | Older people

	Challenges	Opportunities
Older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handling challenges related to digitalisation is central. • The conditions for pensioners' organisations to truly influence should be improved, and the experiences and knowledge of seniors should be better used to support the formulation of policies. • Better communication from the city is needed. • Loneliness is one a major challenge that many older people are confronted with. • There is a need for more age-friendly benches, public water points and public toilets. • Housing is a major challenge in many ways. For example, new housing is very expensive, and many are stuck in overly large apartments, as it can be more expensive to move into a newer smaller apartment. • Concerns about an increasing number of poor seniors, especially among those who have recently immigrated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pensioners' card that allows seniors access to various activities either free of cost or at reduced prices is appreciated. • In general, public transportation is considered to be of good quality in Gothenburg, and free public transportation, has made many seniors more active. • There are ways to get aid and support in using digital tools; e.g. libraries and different organisations offer courses in using computers and tablets. • Safety homes (Trygghetsboende) have improved the housing situation for some seniors. • Voluntary groups that seniors can be part of and "work" well into retirement is perceived positively as this can allow seniors to stay active while also provide support to both other seniors and other age groups. • An initiative that was mentioned in relation to preventing and combating loneliness is that there are local authority staff who carry out home-visits.

Table 5.2: Challenges and Opportunities | Interest groups

	Challenges	Opportunities
Interest groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having activities that encourage the participation of seniors is important for combatting loneliness. • Digitalisation can lead to loneliness and exclusion. There should be more aid for people who are not comfortable using computers and other devices. • Housing is a major dilemma, that the state and municipality should address. • Interest groups perceive long queues to get a place in the nursing homes. • Gothenburg is segregated and feelings of unsafety are widespread, and it was mentioned that many seniors do not feel safe being outdoors when it is dark. The role of the media was cited here, and news reports about "how dangerous the city is" is something that has further increased feelings of unsafety among older people in particular. • Having staff with sufficient language skills in older care is important, especially for those with dementia. • Women tend to be more active than men, and special emphasis is placed on considering how to reach men more effectively in the pensioner's organisations. Quite few members with immigrant backgrounds actively participate in their meetings. • In political decision-making, impact assessment is central, but a senior perspective is usually missing. • It is more difficult to have an influence on larger and more complex issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gothenburg is becoming a more age-friendly city and the situation has improved during recent years, which points to the success of actions that have been carried out thus far. • A positive initiative mentioned was the senior card that gives seniors access to various activities, including free public transportation. • The level of cultural services and activities is considered to be good in Gothenburg. • There are senior camps where seniors can go on vacation, where food and different activities are provided at reasonable prices. • Initiatives to make the city more age-friendly should be seen as long-term investments rather than costs. E.g. free public transportation benefits the city and wider society, as people are more active and healthier. • Measures that are not very costly can also have a positive impact on the quality of life of seniors. • Pensioners' organisations are in close contact with the local district politicians and they generally feel that they can influence and get their perspectives and opinions heard and taken into consideration, albeit to a varying degree depending on the type of issue.

Table 5.3: Challenges and Opportunities | Policy makers

<p style="text-align: center;">Policy makers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When planning for becoming a more age-friendly city, a key question is how to incorporate the perspectives of older people into the day-to-day work. • It is vital that staff working with implementing ageing policies have the right competences. This is fundamentally important for instance in older care. • One challenge is that ageing is still often perceived negatively by the general public. • Certain sectors face a constant threat that funding will be cut, which brings uncertainty. • Considering accessibility, the question of how to infuse a universal design and accessibility perspective into land allocation agreements is a key challenge. This is important as it less costly to make the right choices in the design and construction phase. • The City of Gothenburg has a large and complex organisational structure. There are more than 55,000 employees working for the city and a vast number of other stakeholders and citizens, who should be brought together around a common set of goals. Different departments within the city can have different individual goals that can sometimes make it difficult to find synergies. Also, the ten city districts were described as being almost like separate municipalities, with their own councils, economies and budgets, and in some cases quite different priorities. It has been decided that there will be organisational reforms, which will mean that the city districts will be abolished and instead three new committees and administrations will be established. While there are hopes that this will make the city organisation more agile, there are also concerns that this can possibly lead to greater distance between different organisations within the city. • The fact that Gothenburg is a diverse and segregated city was mentioned as a challenge in many ways. For instance, as some groups are more vocal than others, it is easier for them to have their voice heard, and people in disadvantage positions are also less likely to use services that are available for them. The political aim to become a better environment to age in, is closely connected to the objectives of and counteracting segregation and inequalities in the city. • Digital exclusion, especially among people older than 75, is another major challenge. Access to information is important, and it was a mistake to remove traditional sources of information, such as printed information materials, without having a clear plan for how to redirect people to the digital alternatives. • There are still cases where unnecessary obstacles are being built in new construction. Accessibility should be truly integrated and not a separate question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gothenburg is already an age-friendly city, even though there is undoubtedly room for improvement. • When aiming to create an accessible city for all, the realistic objective is about finding solutions that are as good as possible for as many as possible. E.g. pedestrian crossings should be designed so that they are as well-suited as possible both for people in wheelchairs and those who are visually impaired. • Digitalisation also brings new opportunities. Welfare technology can support the independence of seniors, and digital tools like the <i>Anmäl hinder</i> app and the <i>Life Filming</i> method can support participation. • It is important for older people to have access to information about what type of services and activities exist. There is emphasis on spreading information about transportation solutions and housing alternatives available for seniors, through events, printed materials and digitally. The city also has a contact centre that seniors can call with questions.. • Including specific criteria concerning age-friendly environments in public procurements could create incentives for actors to pursue age-friendliness, so that it would become the norm rather than the exception. • There would be potential for finding closer synergies between different sectors in the city working with different but connected issues. • Check lists can be a useful aid for ensuring that measures are carried out in a systematic manner. • Besides check lists, there should be clearly specified requirements e.g. concerning accessibility criteria that are to be met in new construction. They should be clearly stated in contracts to ensure that they are fully addressed and also include sanctions if they are not. • Safety homes exemplify of how relatively small investments can positive effects and improve the housing situation and comfort of living of seniors. • Good public transportation, including free travels for seniors, and measures to make the city more physically accessible are investments that city officials believe will have positive long-term effects. • There are meeting places for seniors in all city districts, which is important for promoting inclusion and for counteracting loneliness. • In Gothenburg, as in most Swedish municipalities, pensioners' councils play an important role in representing older people. These councils are composed of politicians and representatives of pensioners' organisations. There is a central council for the whole city and local councils in all ten city districts. However, as these councils do not fully represent the diversity of the older population, different employees within the city have come together to engage older people who are less active in organisations, to ensure better representation among the city's diverse older population.
---	--	---

6 Policy recommendations

The interviews carried out in Gothenburg have provided various insights that could be used as recommendations for planning age-friendly cities. The recommendations outlined in this section have been developed primarily based on the reflections of local authority staff who in their day-to-day work contribute to making the city more age-friendly. The focus is first on more general strategic recommendations, followed by more specific thematic recommendations. The City of Gothenburg is advanced in working with accessibility issues, and most of the thematic recommendations outlined below are related to accessibility, and mainly refer to perhaps most directly to policy domains 1 (outdoor spaces and built environment), 2 (transport and mobility) and 3 (housing) but can also be considered in relation to other domains.

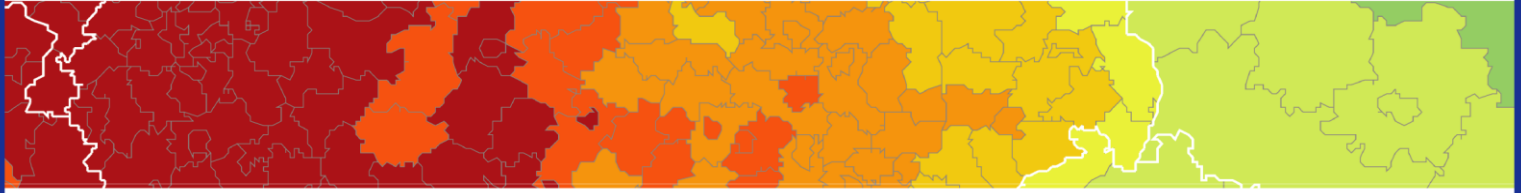
6.1 Strategic recommendations

A central topic that was discussed in the interviews was the question of **what is important for reaching success**. Firstly, **political will** is crucial, but also having **clearly defined roles and responsibilities**. This is especially important in city like Gothenburg that has a large and complex organisational structure. While age-friendly policies should actually be everyone's responsibility, it should also be clear whose role it should be to lead a certain initiative and whose role it should be to support it. Having **sufficient funding** allocated for carrying out age-friendly initiatives is also fundamentally important. Besides **clearly defined objectives**, it is important that practitioners **know how the measures should be carried out** and **what tools are available**. A **well-thought-out and structured way of working** is important for achieving success, as it is not ideal and efficient if every individual needs to find their own solutions. **Doing the right thing should be easy**. It is advantageous to have tools and ways of working that can be easily followed-up, as **evaluation** can help improve and refine practices. It is highly important to get **feedback from residents and other stakeholders**, to ensuring that the policies and implementation are on the right track and for improving ways of implementation. **Age-friendliness should be an integrated part of everything that is done**, and it should also be pursued in-between activities. In an age-friendly city, it is not enough that certain places are planned to be age-friendly, instead, **age-friendliness should be the norm rather than the exception**.

6.2 Thematic recommendations

An age-friendly city is an accessible city for people of all ages and abilities. The concept of **universal design** is central here, where both a senior and disability perspective are intertwined. Hence, when working to improve accessibility, the target group should essentially

be everyone, as having a too specifically defined target group can lead to the interests of one group conflicting with the interests of others. This is especially central in the planning of outdoor spaces and the built environment of the city (domain 1) that should be accessible for all. From a traffic planning perspective (domain 2), an age-friendly city is one where everyone can use the public transportation systems and enjoy a degree of personal mobility. It is not only the means of transportation that is important but also the design of the transportation stops, and the outdoor spaces (domain 1) connecting people's homes (domain 3) to the stops that should be considered as a whole. **Making the city accessible and thereby more age-friendly requires considering these three domains (1, 2 and 3) holistically and in relation to each other.** Having clearly defined and well-thought-out **design standards and checklists** are important and can be valuable aids for ensuring that the city's outdoor and indoor spaces and public transportation are planned in an integrated and consistent manner. This is indeed quite crucial, as it is **more effective and less costly to make the right choices in the design and construction phase**, rather than correcting mistakes afterwards. Laying emphasis on creating a more accessible city should be prioritised, as this is something which benefits all age groups.



ISBN: 978-2-919795-37-6

ESPON 2020 – More information

ESPON EGTC

4 rue Erasme, L-1468 Luxembourg - Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Phone: +352 20 600 280

Email: info@espon.eu

www.espon.eu, [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#)

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.