Ageing Better - It All Depends…

The Centre for Ageing Better has released its annual State of Ageing 2023/24 Report that can be viewed on the NPC website at: [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org/) including the introduction below:
“For many people today, living longer is not just a hope but an expectation. Gains in life expectancy in past decades mean that millions more of us are living into our 70s, 80s, 90s and beyond, with record numbers of centenarians recorded this year.
But at the same time, there is a growing divide in experiences of ageing, with the poorest people living shorter lives and spending many more years in bad health. People from minority ethnic backgrounds experience some of the greatest inequalities.
And with increasing diversity among our older population, we are likely to see inequality grow. Disadvantage accumulates across the life course. The gaps in health and wealth between the richest and poorest become greater with age and are actually larger within older age groups than they are between generations.
Since 2012-13, the number of pensioners living in poverty has steadily increased. But the situation is even worse for those just below state pension age. Contrary to stereotypes about ‘wealthy baby boomers’, people aged 60-64 have the highest poverty rates among adults of any age. Even when this group reaches state pension age, several trends explored in this report suggest that millions will continue to struggle:
• More people are living with major illnesses and disabilities as they get older. For many, especially the poorest people, this is exacerbated by living in homes that pose a serious threat to their health and wellbeing.
• The number of older private renters is at an all-time high, meaning more people will need to cover the cost of rent while living on fixed, and often meagre, incomes.
• Workers in their 50s and 60s are struggling to stay in or return to work, resulting in pensioner poverty and financial insecurity in old age.
• There’s no doubt that the pandemic and the cost- of-living crisis have exacerbated inequality, but the roots of this crisis are much deeper and stretch back decades. As a society, we have been far too slow to adapt to our ageing population, and now we are playing catch-up. This has manifested in huge inequalities and worsening circumstances for millions of older people.
Everyone loses out when older people are prevented from bringing their talents, expertise and experience to workplaces and communities because of avoidable ill health, poverty and discrimination.
We need a clear government plan, backed up by concrete policies, to reduce disparities in ageing. Inaction is ruining lives, putting pressure on public services, and damaging our economy.
We also need a shift in social attitudes so that negative and distorted views of ageing do not undermine efforts to reduce stark inequalities, and to ensure we properly value the contributions of older people to our society.”