Looking at loneliness

STORY
Hold the base of this cup against the coloured spot on the back wall to amplify the voice.

RUNNING TIME 1.36 MINUTES
A story about evolving families
Hold the base of this cup against the coloured spot on the back wall to amplify the voice.
The age of love
Hold the base of this cup against the coloured spot on the back wall to amplify the voice.
Home alone
1 in 3 people over 65 live alone.

70% of whom are women.
Staying connected
Older people with weaker connections to friends and community have a 50% higher risk of mortality than those who are more socially connected.
Speak soon?
12% of over 65s surveyed said they never spent time with their family.
Loneliness is as harmful as...
15 cigarettes a day.
Alright pet?
Nearly 50% of older people say that television or pets are their main form of company.
You might be surprised to know...
Studies have found that young adults report higher levels of *loneliness* than 65-74 year olds.
A problem in isolation
Rates of loneliness reach much higher levels over the age of 80, where 22% report that they are often lonely.
Time to help?
31% of UK 65-74 year olds have taken part in voluntary work at least once in the past month.
When can we hang out together?
Peak shopping time for people aged 65+ is late morning, while for younger people it is early afternoon.
How will we live in the future?
Research is showing a trend towards supported independence at home, rather than care homes or sheltered accommodation.
Will we care for our parent’s generation the way they cared for us as children?
75\% of people with adult children expect them to provide informal care if needed.
Cost of care
There are 6.4 million ‘informal carers’ in the UK who save the country £119bn a year.
Who cares for who?
Nearly 50% of informal carers are over 50.
How much do you care?
2 in 10 carers are over 80 and spend more than 35 hours a week providing care.
Do you care?
Is it okay that informal and unpaid care currently props up our increasing need for care as we live for longer?
What is the potential of inter-generational action?
Can increased intergenerational exchange become part of the solution to social, health and housing issues?
Should we be building more bridges?
“While our society does not provide many opportunities for candid intergenerational conversations about age, this is precisely what is needed.

So that all of us, regardless of our positioning along the life course, can build bridges between not only ourselves and others, but our own older and younger selves.”

PROFESSOR MOLLY ANDREWS
How multi-generational is your space?
“Ageing is an intergenerational enterprise which takes place in an intergenerational space. This space is negotiated, and the experiences of each age-group need to inform that negotiation.”
Close but not too close?
“Wherever the elderly have had the financial means, they have chosen what social scientists have called ‘intimacy at a distance.’”
Off the hook
Not having friends is a big predictor of loneliness in old age.

However, you don’t need see friends face-to-face to combat loneliness. Telephone contact also works to keep people connected.
Can you repeat that?
More than 70% of over 70s have some form of hearing loss.
Getting smarter
36% of UK adults aged 65-74 now own a smartphone, along with 20% of those aged 75+.
Fastest and smartest
Smartphone ownership is now growing most rapidly among the over 75s.
You have a new friend request
50% of internet users aged over 55 have a social media account.
Staying connected
32% of internet users over 65 say that email and/or social media is their main means of keeping in touch with extended family.
Swipe right
8% of UK over-60s have used an online dating service.
Passions that burn as bright as ever
Remove the shoe from the shelf to play the story.

Replace the shoe heel to wall to reset the audio.
Making it over the line
Remove the shoe from the shelf to play the story.

Replace the shoe heel to wall to reset the audio.
A story about freedom
Remove the shoe from the shelf to play the story.

Replace the shoe heel to wall to reset the audio.
Step by step
Remove the shoe from the shelf to play the story.

Replace the shoe heel to wall to reset the audio.
How far will you go?
The average 35-44 year old travels 167 miles per week. This declines to 87 miles for those aged 70+.
Are you in the passenger seat?
We need more help getting around as we age. Over 50% of the journeys made by those aged 80+ are as a passenger in a car or on public transport.
Going the distance
Over 70s with a mobility problem make only 50% the number of trips out than those without a mobility problem.
How local is your life?
In our 30s, shopping and local services account for 18% of the places we go.

However by our late 70s, shopping and local services account for more than 50% of the places we go.
Getting on with it
Happiness is closely related to the performance of a wide range of activities. This confirms the view that wellbeing in later life significantly depends on the types of daily activity undertaken by older adults.
Variety is the spice of life
Living in an area with a good mix of local amenities like parks, shops, cafés and libraries is associated with a reduced chance of dementia of around 60%.
UK libraries closed in 2017. Local community spaces are critical to keeping older people connected.
Cheers!
Local community spaces are critical to keeping older people connected. 29 pubs a week are closing in the UK. Since 2001 Britain has lost more than a quarter of its pubs.
What if you can’t get there?
In the UK, 11% of those aged 65+ say they find it difficult to access a corner shop.
Need a break?
People in **middle age** (45-54) take the **least** number of **holidays** per year – an average of 2.6. **Holiday** making **rises** to 2.9 for those aged 65+. 

ABTA 2014
Driving force
Driving remains the most common form of transport for older people in the UK – a rate of 68% in households where someone is aged 70+. This is particularly important for those living in rural areas with poor public transport.
Home sweet home
Over 65s are estimated to spend an average of 80% of their time in the home.
Are you home?
Over 85s are estimated to spend an average of 90% of their time in the home.
Are you sitting down?
56% of people aged 75-84 spend six or more hours of their waking day sitting down, compared to 15% of people aged 35-44.
Getting the measure of your life
“Shall we measure life in meters or kilometers or months? How far since you were born? How long must you wander until like all men instead of walking on its surface we rest below the earth?”
Catch of the day
“Now, time, I roll you up, I deposit you in my bait box and I am off to fish with your long line the fishes of the dawn!”

PABLO NERUDA
ODE TO AGE
Walk in my shoes?
“Efforts to visualise our own old age – across the life span – will also help up as a society to reimagine how to meet the needs of the older population.”

PROFESSOR MOLLY ANDREWS
Where are you going?
“While people often worry about ‘growing older’, they do not spend time actually imagining their own old age... and if we do not know where we are going, we cannot know where we are or where we have been.

A sense of our future selves not only provides us with a ‘blueprint for living’ but also an anchoring in the present.”

PROFESSOR MOLLY ANDREWS
What new places will you create and journey to?
While our physical worlds may shrink as we get older, we have an opportunity to create rich and expansive worlds within our imagination. What can you be doing now to nurture this interior landscape so it’s abundant in later life?
What seeds are you sowing?
The role and presence of a local community becomes crucial as someone’s “life space” starts to shrink – is your local area suited to supporting this and if not, how does it need to change? What seeds can you sow around you now to reap later in life?
What do you want to explore and discover?
Curiosity has no age limit. Older age gives many people the chance to journey to new and undiscovered place. How will you stay curious? And where will you go?
What is purpose?
Take the book out of the shelf and place it on the lectern to play the story.

Please replace the book back on the shelf when you are finished.
It all adds up
Take the book out of the shelf and place it on the lectern to play the story.

Please replace the book back on the shelf when you are finished.
Who’s responsible?
Take the book out of the shelf and place it on the lectern to play the story.

Please replace the book back on the shelf when you are finished.
We are all libraries
Take the book out of the shelf and place it on the lectern to play the story.

Please replace the book back on the shelf when you are finished.
Savouring the small things
Take the book out of the shelf and place it on the lectern to play the story.

Please replace the book back on the shelf when you are finished.
A late blossoming
Take the book out of the shelf and place it on the lectern to play the story.

Please replace the book back on the shelf when you are finished.
The art of reminiscing
Take the book out of the shelf and place it on the lectern to play the story.

Please replace the book back on the shelf when you are finished.
Always a student
Take the book out of the shelf and place it on the lectern to play the story.

Please replace the book back on the shelf when you are finished.
Being a bad archivist
Take the book out of the shelf and place it on the lectern to play the story.

Please replace the book back on the shelf when you are finished.
A self-determining state

STORY
Take the book out of the shelf and place it on the lectern to play the story.

Please replace the book back on the shelf when you are finished.
The habits of a strong man
Take the book out of the shelf and place it on the lectern to play the story.

Please replace the book back on the shelf when you are finished.
Creating a vivid interior life

STORY
Take the book out of the shelf and place it on the lectern to play the story.

Please replace the book back on the shelf when you are finished.
A story about discovery
Take the book out of the shelf and place it on the lectern to play the story.

Please replace the book back on the shelf when you are finished.
Living longer but are we living better?
Although we will be living longer overall, we will also be living longer with multiple health conditions that will need to be managed.
Looking at the life course
Material poverty in childhood is associated with worse health in older age, reflected in lower walking speed, poorer memory and a higher incidence of depression.
When did you learn to read?
How you perform in a reading test at age 7 can help predict what your ageing experience will be like at age 70.

This is because it influences your education and your work-life, both of which are big predictors of how you will age.
The whole story
The disability-free life expectancy gap between the most and least deprived parts of the UK is 19 years.
How does your childhood impact on your ageing?
People from lower socioeconomic groups have poorer health outcomes than those from higher socioeconomic groups, and this early life experience continues to impact health outcomes in later life.

However, this is malleable and there is evidence that disadvantage in early life can be lessened if one’s socioeconomic status improves through the life course.
How you age is an accumulation of your entire life course
Inequalities observed in later life are a result of disadvantages experienced across an individual’s life. In other words they accumulate over the whole life course...
How do we compare?
Britain is the only country in Europe with a declining life expectancy.
Overlapping inequalities
Inequalities overlap and combine. For instance, women may face financial disadvantages due to lower retirement age and part-time work. And people from BME groups may also experience systemic income disadvantages.
Well treated?
The least wealthy people aged 50+ are less likely to receive a diagnosis of, or treatment for, their condition than the most-wealthy.
How does where you live affect your life expectancy?
While average life expectancies for men and women have increased over time, area-based inequalities in life expectancy have not reduced significantly. People from less advantaged groups live shorter lives in worse health.
The cost of inequality?
Inpatient hospital admissions reflect the steep social gradient between the most and least deprived areas in the UK. In 2012 researchers estimated the total cost of inequality to be £4.8 billion.
Too little, too late?
Lifetime costs of health care are also higher in more deprived communities, even though life expectancy of men and women in such communities is lower. Research suggests a focus on early interventions to reduce inequalities in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
Money matters
Current cohorts of older women are identified as being particularly vulnerable to poverty, due to a reduced likelihood of accessing a private pension throughout their working life.
Two sides of the same coin
For the wealthiest groups, there is relatively little change in trajectories of frailty over time. By contrast, substantial differences exist in the least wealthy group. Suggesting that poorer older people are spending longer periods of later life in a frail state than had previously been the case.
Imagine it's 2040...
By 2040, nearly 1 in 4 people in the UK (24.2%) will be aged 65 or over.
Will you live to 100?

RESEARCH
Currently, nearly 1 in 3 people in the UK will live to see their 100th birthday.
When is middle age?
In mid-2014, the average age of people in the UK exceeded 40 for the first time.
Working it out
Doing more intellectually challenging work over your lifetime will improve brain function at age 70 by 5%.

DR DANIEL DAVIS, CONSULTANT GERIATRICIAN, UCLH
When did you learn to read?
Children who perform well in reading tests in school would be expected to experience 20% less cognitive ageing by age 70.

DR DANIEL DAVIS, CONSULTANT GERIATRICIAN, UCLH
How does the social impact on the physical?
The combination of your parents’ education and your own education are two of the biggest factors that determine age-related brain function at 70.

DR DANIEL DAVIS, CONSULTANT GERIATRICIAN, UCLH
Older and wiser?
Psychological studies on wisdom generally show little relationship to age. But it has also suggested that the 20% of people with the highest ‘moral reasoning’ ability DO become significantly wiser with increasing age.
Say what?
Most research on vocabulary finds that it peaks in later life – while basic vocabulary may peak in our 30s, advanced vocabulary peaks later (c.50-60) and does not significantly decline until after age 70.
Huh?
Performance in tests that measure how well you understand language peaks at around age 50.
Did you know?
General knowledge performance peaks in our mid 50s
Book worms
88% of over 75s read for pleasure at least once a week, compared to only 74% of 25-44 year olds.
Do you read me?
16% of 55-65 year olds have a low literacy level, at which it may be difficult to read food packaging or household bills.
What can you do?
People from lower socioeconomic groups are more likely than those in higher socioeconomic groups to feel that age prevents them from doing the things they would like to; that old age is a time of ill health and a time of loneliness; and that old people do not get respect in society. They are also more likely to worry that their own health will get worse as they get older.
Me time
“I am more myself than ever.”
“I don’t believe in ageing...”
“I believe in forever altering one’s aspect to the sun.”

VIRGINIA WOOLF
Measuring time
“let us not apply the measure of a time that may be something else, a mineral mantle, a solar bird, a flower, something, maybe, but not a measure.”
“When more time stretches behind than stretches before one...”
“some assessments... begin to be made. Between what one wished to become and what one has become there is a momentous gap.... Some of us are compelled, around the middle of our lives, to make a study of this baffling geography.”

JAMES BALDWIN, 1967
What is the life you hope to be able to look back on?
“If we were to routinely ask ourselves what is the life we hope to be able to look back on, we would increase the likelihood that our ultimate life review would bring us deeper satisfaction.”

PROFESSOR MOLLY ANDREWS
Where are you?
“People don't just wake up at 70 and become old and frail. Where you are at 70 is as much as a factor from where you were at 50, at 15, or 5 years old and all of these things carry forward across your life.”
Living longer, Living better?
“We know we are living longer, but are we doing so with a more independent and healthy experience? How would you feel about living to 100 but spending the last decade in a care home?”

DR DANIEL DAVIS, CONSULTANT GERIATRICIAN, UCLH
We all need to ask ourselves...
“What do you want your older age to look like?”
How much care are you willing to provide?
“How much care are you expecting to receive and who do you expect to pay for that?”
I don’t want to think about it!
“If people generally fear and devalue old age, it is perhaps not surprising if they don’t want to put themselves in the category ‘old person’ even in their imagination.”

PROFESSOR MOLLY ANDREWS
A living library
“Surviving into old age was uncommon, and those who did survive served a special purpose as guardians of tradition, knowledge and history.”
Coming to terms
“With age comes a growing thoughtfulness: what was it all for? What have we made of our lives, what have we known of love, what have we enjoyed of beauty and how do we come to terms with our going?”

JOAN BAKEWELL
Do you live in the present?
“Because the old know they are closer to death they grow better at living for the present.”

JOHN BARRYMORE
What is your story?
“Stories create imagination of how the past might have gone differently and the future is open to any possibility...”
Are you prepared?
“Many people enter later life unprepared – what happens when you need to make decisions about your health and life when conditions like dementia affect your ability to do that?”

DR DANIEL DAVIS, CONSULTANT GERIATRICIAN, UCLH
Race of life
A person aged 71 with the most wealth has an average walking speed of 0.91 metres per second compared to 0.75 metres per second for someone with the least wealth.
Walk with me
Higher education alone offers an advantage in walking speed, and its associated benefits for mobility and potential for living independently in later life of up to 15 years for men and 10 years for women.
Staying strong
A fit 80 year old is as strong as a sedentary 30 year old.
A change of pace
From the age of 40, adults lose 8% of their muscle mass per decade.
Generation gym?
The proportion of over 45s meeting government guidelines for **physical activity** has more than **doubled** since 2003.
Feel the burn
The group with the biggest recent rise in exercise participation is women aged 75+ – from 3% in 2003 to 17% by 2016.
Bad landing
Falls are the most common cause of injury related deaths in people over the age of 75.
Work outs
work out
Maintaining regular exercise is one of the only proven ways to reduce the chance of developing dementia.

DR DANIEL DAVIS, CONSULTANT GERIATRICIAN, UCLH
Take care
Many people have an uneventful ageing, for others a simple fall at the wrong time can completely change the course of their lives.

DR DANIEL DAVIS, CONSULTANT GERIATRICIAN, UCLH
The local areas in the UK with the **highest** average **ages** are West Somerset, North Norfolk and Rother.
Where are the youngest parts of the UK?
The UK’s **youngest average ages** are found in Manchester (30.1 years), Oxford (30.2), Nottingham and Tower Hamlets (30.4)
How healthy is your street?
Where you live affects how you age: In general, older people who live in socially disadvantaged communities have poorer physical and mental health than those who live in more advantaged communities.
Home comforts
Most older people don’t live in retirement communities or care homes – over 90% are in regular homes and wish to stay there.
Who’s at home?
59% of the care home population is aged over 85.
Are more people living in care?
Despite big increases in the older population, the number of people living in care homes has remained almost the same. More people are being supported at home.
Where do you live?
Where you live has a big impact on your life expectancy. In 2016 life expectancy fell in Torridge, Hartlepool and Amber Valley for example.
It’s hard to believe but...
Life expectancy for men in Glasgow is 53.9 years vs. Iraq (67.49), the Gaza Strip (70.5), North Korea (71.3).
Where do women live longest?
There is a big **gap** in healthy **life expectancies** around the UK. A woman of 65 in Kingston-upon-Thames can expect to spend **62%** of her remaining life in **good health**, compared to just **35%** of remaining life for a woman in Manchester.
Where do men live longest?
For men aged 65, the highest life expectancy is in Kensington and Chelsea, London, where the average man lives for another 21.4 years. The lowest is in Manchester, where the average man lives for another 15.8 years.
North or South?
The north experiences 20% more premature deaths before the age of 75 years than the south.
We're better together
Older people who live in neighbourhoods with a greater mix of house prices have a lower risk of depression than those who live in neighbourhoods with more equal house prices.
Who do you hang out with?
“In our age segregated society, some people simply don’t know any old people.”
Seeing things differently

STORY
Lift the lid of the binocular case to hear the story.
In awe
Lift the lid of the binocular case to hear the story.
Discrimination nation?
In England

37% of over-65s feel they have personally experienced age discrimination.
I’m not old!
The older people are, the less likely they are to say that they consider themselves old. Nearly 80% of people in their 50s consider themselves old, compared to just over 60% of those in their 60s.
Doing what you want to do?
Only 10% of respondents felt that age often prevents them from doing the things they would like to do and 56% of people felt that age never or not often prevents them from doing the things they would like to do.
When are you old?
In the UK, we think old age starts at 59 years old. This is the second youngest in the whole of Europe – in Greece, old age is perceived to start at 68.
Will I develop dementia?
Less than 20% of over-85s suffer from dementia.
Is dementia inevitable?
40% of millennials believe that dementia is an inevitable outcome of ageing. In fact, only 7% of all over 65s suffer from dementia.
Too old to try something new?
There are **health benefits** in doing **new things**. However, although research shows that **children** in the UK take up a new hobby or activity **every 6 months**, for the **over-50s**, the average is once every **9 years**.
My time now
Retired people in the UK have 7.3 hours per day of ‘leisure time’ 92% more than those in full-time employment.
Calmer sutra
1% of married people aged 70+ in the US report having sex four times per week or more, 21% report sex more often than once a month.
Are you game?
In the UK ‘Taking Part’ Survey

17% of over 75s took part in sport during the month before interview.
Losing sight
35% of people aged 75+ have sight loss which affects their daily life. This increases to 50% for 90+.
Poor vision?
Your **income** has an impact on your **vision**. The less wealthy are more likely to have problems with their eyesight than those who earn more.
Keep on singing
Over 65s participate more than any other age group in singing, crafts and reading for pleasure.

They are also more likely than any other age group to attend museums and galleries, opera and ballet, and classical and jazz music.
Are you radical?
“In an ageist world, to acknowledge and even embrace our ageing – to challenge its representation as decline alone – is a radical act.”
Will you still want to get to the top?
The oldest person to climb Everest is Yuichiro Miura who summited in 2013 at the age of 80.
Will living longer change when we decide to have children?
Daljinder Kaur gave birth in 2016, after nearly five decades of marriage and two unsuccessful IVF tries – at age 72.
What will you be doing at 100?
In 2013, Fauja Singh completed the Hong Kong Marathon at the age of 102.
What do you want to look back on?
“If we were to routinely ask ourselves what is the life we hope to be able to look back on, we would increase the likelihood that our ultimate life review would bring us deeper satisfaction.”

PROFESSOR MOLLY ANDREWS
Imagining ageing
“Imagination is the mechanism which allows us to engage in a study of our own becoming, across the life cycle, to review the lives we have lived... and to construct in our minds’ eye a sense of what the future might hold...”
What’s on your horizon?
Lifelong learning and discovery mean our horizons can always be expanding... What do you want to learn, do and discover?
What kind of 80 year old do you want to be?
“And what’s within your power to change?”
What can you do?
Research has shown that older employees were the least likely to receive training in employment.
Are you ageist?
Research has found that employers discriminated both **positively** (“older workers are more reliable”) and **negatively** (“older workers can’t learn new skills”) based on age.
Work to live
A recent study showed that 52% of all workers aged 50+ were working primarily for financial reasons, while 40% were more motivated by satisfaction and fulfilment.
Live to work
A recent study showed for those working at age 70+ just 28% were financially motivated and 66% motivated by fulfilment.
When are we happiest at work?
The odds of low mental wellbeing were greatest in the 35-54 age group. By contrast, the odds of high mental wellbeing were greatest in the over 55s.
Don’t stop till you drop?
11% of workers aged 50+ expect to retire after age 70, and a further 13% expect that they will never stop working.
Who's the boss?
There are now 1.4 million people in the UK who have ‘become their own boss’ after the age of 50.
Opportunity knocks
People from poorer backgrounds typically have access to fewer opportunities throughout the life course, leaving them unable to access the type of employment that would otherwise allow them to save for retirement.
Show me the money
In 2014, only 36% of women were able to claim the full state pension, because most did not have enough years of National Insurance contributions.
When will your earnings peak?
In both the UK and the US, women’s earnings peak around ten years earlier than those of men – at around age 40, vs. around age 50 for men.
Getting by
29% of older people in Great Britain say they are living comfortably, whereas 26% are ‘just about getting by’.
The impact of a gendered pension system
Due to the gendered pension system, women, who are more likely to be in part-time work or take career breaks, are restricted in their ability to accumulate personal and pension wealth to sustain them in later life.
I’m worth it
Recent research shows 42% of men feel confident about asking for a pay rise, compared to 22% of women.
Ask Siri
“At one time, we might have turned to an old-timer to explain the world. Now we consult Google, and if we have any trouble with the computer we ask a teenager.”
How old are you...really?
“People have always lied about how old they are. Demographers call the phenomenon ‘age heaping’ and have devised complex quantitative contortions to correct for all the lying in censuses.”
Have you ever lied about your age?
“In the past, so much respect accrued to the elderly that people used to pretend to be older than they were, not younger, when giving their age.”
How might we reimagine the workplace?

ENQUIRY
“The emerging ‘aged society’ demands the (re)imagining not only of individuals, but of the whole of society – ‘a new sociological imagination is needed for a new world order.’”

PROFESSOR MOLLY ANDREWS
What will you do?
If you knew you were going to live to 100, how would that change your perspective on work and purpose?
Changing relationships
Pull out the drawers and rummage through the clothes to hear the voices buried within.
What will you call me?
Pull out the drawers and rummage through the clothes to hear the voices buried within.
Being who you are supposed to be
Pull out the drawers and rummage through the clothes to hear the voices buried within.
Arrival
Pull out the drawers and rummage through the clothes to hear the voices buried within.

Replace the drawer to play the next instalment.
Rough days
Pull out the drawers and rummage through the clothes to hear the voices buried within.

Replace the drawer to play the next instalment.
See change
Pull out the drawers and rummage through the clothes to hear the voices buried within.

Replace the drawer to play the next instalment.
The future is diverse
Britain’s older population is more diverse than ever before. The number of black and minority ethnic people aged 70+ is projected to rise from 170,000 in 2006 to 1.9 million in 2051 – an 11-fold increase.
Good times ahead!
According to recent RSPH research, those from a black ethnic background had an attitude to ageing nearly 3 times more positive than the average.
Are we changing more than ever before?
Data on jobs, house moves and relationship changes, suggests that while the generation born before 1930 saw very few major life changes after age 40, each successive generation has seen more major life changes post-40.
Will we live longer together?
While overall UK divorce rates have been stable in recent years, divorce rates among the over 65s have increased significantly.
A world of difference
0.7% of over 65s in the UK self-identify as being LGBTQ+. This compares to 4.1% of 16-24 year olds.
Who’s in charge?
Research shows that perceived **control** – a measure that reflects individuals’ sense of control over their lives is closely **associated** with a **life satisfaction** in older age.
Are you prejudiced?
“Ageism is prejudice against our own future selves.”
How would you like to be treated?
“We should consider carefully how we think about and treat older people. Because ‘Old’ is the one minority group that we will all one day be a part of.”

DR DANIEL DAVIS, CONSULTANT GERIATRICIAN, UCLH
How do you think about time?
“Ask an Australian aboriginal when she won the lottery or lost her mother and she might say very recently – even if these events occurred years ago. This would not be untrue because, to her, time is not purely linear; it also moves in circles, radiating outwards from her at the circle’s centre. As a result, the more important an event is, the closer in time it feels.”
Are you blossoming?
“To the man, to the woman who utilized their energies, goodness, strength, anger, love, tenderness, to those who truly alive flowered, and in their sensuality matured, let us not apply the measure of a time”
What is your desire for later life?
Different generations will have different outlooks and expectations from their experience of ageing. Millennials and Digital Natives will want different things to Baby Boomers and those currently in their 80s.
What will your old age look like?
“Efforts to visualise our own old age – across the life span – will also help up as a society to reimagine how to meet the needs of the older population.”

PROFESSOR MOLLY ANDREWS
A very rich tapestry
“If you do not really believe that you will ever be old yourself, it is harder to treat the older people you meet as if they are real and complex individuals like yourself.”
Why is it so hard to think about getting older?
“...Our constructions of the aged are built upon a fundamental ‘othering’ and thus people experience contemplating their own old age as a loss of their ‘true self’.”
Capturing imagination
Put the headphone to your ear to hear the story.
A story about becoming
Hear the toy speak by turning on the button underneath its left arm.
New solutions for age old problems
Lift the receiver to play.

Replace it to hear the next message.
English for the over 80s
Lift the receiver to play.

Replace it to hear the next message.
When are you happiest?
Recent research suggests that happiness peaks at age 23, then declines during middle age, rising again to a second peak at aged around 71.
Who’s more grown up?
According to public perception, the average age at which men are believed to ‘reach maturity’ was found to be 42, whereas for women the average age was 33.
Do you read me?
NART is the national adult reading test. It is used to determine a person’s ‘cognitive ageing’ – or age-related change in brain function.
When are we most empathic?
Performance on the ‘mind in eyes’ test, which measures empathy, has been found to peak at around age 47.
Our first experience of elders
In the UK

78%

of children now have a ‘close’ relationship with at least one grandparent, up from only 60% of children in the 1960s.
Grandparents to the rescue!
Time spent on childcare recorded by grandparents has more than doubled since 1974.
Cycle of care
Many women take career breaks to raise children or care for ageing parents. This cycle of care impacts on women’s financial security later in life.
Holding the baby
As our reliance on grandparents increases, women over 50 do two-thirds more unpaid childcare than men.
What does childhood have to do with old age?
Our childhood experiences lay the foundations for our whole life course and therefore have a huge impact on our ageing experiences.
Childhood experiences that last a lifetime
Suffering from adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) like abuse, neglect or challenges in the home can lay the foundations for a reduced life expectancy.
Breaking cycles
How could positive interventions made in youth impact on the whole life course?
Do you believe in age?
“I don’t believe in age. All old people carry in their eyes, a child, and children, at times observe us with the eyes of wise ancients.”
What do you imagine?
“Imagination requires both a taking apart and a putting together – synthesis and deconstruction.

Imagining old age involves a projection of an earlier self into an altered existence, intermingled with a recognition of the new challenges and possibilities that may await.”
Looking forwards and backwards
“By regarding our older future selves as ‘an other already with us’, late life becomes an opportunity for new imaginings, looking forward and backward, to the lives we have lived and still might live.”

PROFESSOR MOLLY ANDREWS
Where have you been? Where are you going?
“Older age becomes the final result of all the things that have gone before you in life.”

DR DANIEL DAVIS, CONSULTANT GERIATRICIAN, UCLH
The future calls to us, and we must respond
“Who are you still becoming?”
How old are you feeling today?
“We grow older in relation to our younger selves. We embody different ages as we travel through life.”
What do you imagine?
“Imagination is the mechanism which allows us to engage in a study of our own becoming, across the life cycle, to review the lives we have lived... and to construct in our minds’ eye a sense of what the future might hold...”
Open the umbrella to see how cancer survival rates have changed from 1971 to 2018.
Cancer survival rates
Open the umbrella to see how cancer survival rates have changed from 1971 to 2018.
Part of life
Among people aged 65+, 12% have two and 16% have three or more long-term health conditions.
I’m a survivor
In the past 40 years, the percentage of people who survive (10+ years) after being diagnosed with any form of cancer has more than doubled, from 24% to 50%
New lease of life
In the early 1970’s the median survival time after a cancer diagnosis was only 1 year, by 2011 it was 10 years.
Living with it
By 2030, Cancer Research UK predict that 4 million people in the UK will be living with cancer.
Looking ahead
“Curing the disease appears unlikely. Much more possible is that, along with drugs, vaccines will prolong survival and help to turn cancer into a chronic disease. People may live for years or even decades with cancer... in a few more decades it will be a disease that we live with rather than die from.”
Taking cover
The number of UK adults who have life insurance has fallen since 2011, from 20.4 million to 18.9 million.
Always look on the bright side of life
Despite a high level of physical and mental health impairment over 60% of people age 90+ in their final year of life self-rate their health positively.
Out of sight
out of mind
“Our reluctance to honestly examine the experience of ageing and dying has increased the harm we inflict on people and denied them the basic comforts they most need. Lacking a coherent view of how people might live successfully all the way to their very end, we have allowed our fates to be controlled by imperatives of medicine, technology and strangers.”
How common is dementia?
Only about 2% of people aged between 65 – 69 have dementia. This rises to 20% for those aged between 85 to 89.
Will we develop dementia?
The number of people living with dementia in the UK is expected to double by around the year 2050, from just under 1 million in 2018 to just over 2 million by 2050.
On the up side
Studies in the United States suggest that fear of death declines with age.
I’m here!
A study of representation in the media showed that over 60s make up 25% of the population but occupy only a 5% share of total 'media buzz'.
Who holds the family stories?
66% of UK over-65s agree that they ‘have a responsibility to be guardians of the family history’ (as do 44% of 16-24s).
Life on the line
Travelling eastbound on the Jubilee line from Westminster to Canning Town sees life expectancy drop by 8 years – a year for every tube stop, and new, poorer neighbourhood.
What's the time?
“This sense of limited future time motivates older people to prioritize goals that aim at deriving emotional meaning from life.”
Becoming an elder
Hold the shell up to your ear.
Our many selves

STORY
Remove the top of the largest doll to hear its story.
Am I optimistic?
Place the record on the turnstyle.

Raise the volume to turn on the record player.

Lift the needle and place carefully on the edge of the record to hear the story.
A love story
Place the record on the turnstyle.

Raise the volume to turn on the record player.

Lift the needle and place carefully on the edge of the record to hear the story.
I'd change the lot
Place the record on the turnstyle.

Raise the volume to turn on the record player.

Lift the needle and place carefully on the edge of the record to hear the story.

RUNNING TIME 2.23 MINUTES
A story about empowerment
Place the record on the turnstyle.

Raise the volume to turn on the record player.

Lift the needle and place carefully on the edge of the record to hear the story.
What would you change about society to make the experience of ageing better for everyone?
Take a blank tag and add your insights to the board.
If you knew you were going to live to 100, what would you do or think about differently?
Take a blank tag and add your insights to the board.
Imagine you are much older...

What do you want your old age to look and feel like?

Unclaimed
Take a blank tag and add your insights to the board.
We are all ageing all the time.

Tell us a story or insight you have learned over your life course.
Take a blank tag and add your insights to the board.
How might we reimagine how we think about ageing?
Take a blank tag and add your insights to the board.
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