

To what extent do Manchester's shopping centres facilitate wellbeing in later life as sites for social inclusion?

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Shopping activity is often overlooked as an area for the promotion of health and wellbeing in later life. Yet, shopping can provide both social activity and physical activity as well as enable people to maintain independence, all factors that contribute to ageing well. To be age friendly a city should encourage active ageing through providing opportunities for older adults to participate in society. But in terms of social inclusion, opportunities to participate need to go beyond aspects of the built environment. Exploring both the social and physical environments of Manchester city centre shopping areas will determine the social interactions that make Manchester age friendly and the extent to which the city is socially inclusive.

This study aims to develop a tool to assess how socially inclusive shopping areas are in terms of their physical and social environments. By working closely with older adults, we will explore the experiences and attitudes of people as they shop in Manchester city centre to establish the barriers and facilitators to social inclusion in these settings. Thus, the tool will be based on factors that are meaningful to older people themselves.

The results of this research will be of benefit to older people who use Manchester shopping areas and will inform key stakeholders such as Manchester City Council.