



Universal health coverage

How to make sure older people are included

From now until September 2019 we have the biggest opportunity to secure commitment from governments to include older people in universal health coverage (UHC) efforts.

On 23 September heads of state will be attending the [UN High-Level Meeting on UHC](#) to agree a political declaration

that will set out governments' responsibilities for providing universal access to affordable and quality health services for all.

Current efforts on UHC have failed to address the specific barriers older people face in accessing health and care services, and protect them from financial hardship. We must ensure older people are not left behind.

This guide will give you the tools you need to engage with your government and support the UHC global online campaign.

Why UHC?

UHC ensures all people, everywhere, can access quality essential health services with financial protection.

Because affordable, accessible, quality health services unlock people's potential, UHC is one of the smartest investments countries can make. Nearly all countries, including low-income countries, have the capacity to mobilise the resources required to achieve UHC. Achieving UHC is essential for inclusive development, prosperity, gender equality and fairness.

However, progress on UHC efforts for older people remains unequal and limited. We must ensure governments include older people in UHC efforts.

Key messages

UHC must be fit for an ageing world.

By 2020 more than 1 billion people will be aged 60 and over. This is a triumph of development! But as people get older, their health and care needs are likely to become increasingly complex. To ensure health and care systems are ready, UHC efforts must be inclusive of older people. Current proposals fail to address the specific barriers older people face in accessing health and care services, and protect them from financial hardship.

The momentum behind efforts to achieve UHC can help address these challenges. Together, we can create a fairer world for older people. This is what we need to ensure older people are not left behind:

Target your government

The journey to UHC can be complex and each country must find its own way. This starts with commitment from your government, investing in the right resources and putting systems in place.

We're calling on heads of state to attend the High-Level Meeting on UHC on 23 September and commit to supporting the inclusion of older people in UHC efforts. Health service packages must address the specific barriers

older people face prioritising an integrated, holistic and people-centred approach that includes accessible health services and long-term care.

Target UN agencies

We're calling on the international community to ensure older people are included in UHC efforts, and they have technical guidance to address the specific health and care barriers older people experience. It is crucial UN agencies secure concrete commitments from governments to UHC that are inclusive of older people, and remove upper age caps from data sources helping to monitor UHC.



Useful downloads

- [HelpAge's recommendations](#) to the zero draft of the Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on UHC.
- [Healthy lives and wellbeing for all at all ages](#): this briefing outlines the challenges faced by older people and provides recommendations for change.

Let's have a say

As governments engage in negotiations, now is the time to influence the debate and make sure older people are included. So what can we do in the lead up to the High-Level Meeting?

Ask the head of state in your government to attend the High-Level Meeting and commit to UHC and the inclusion of older people in the efforts to achieve it.

- 1.** Contact your national health civil society network to identify the best way to influence policy-makers in government, UN agencies and donors. These are the actors we want to target as they will have a say in the final political declaration. If you don't have a national health civil society network, contact policy-makers in the ministry of health and ministry of finance, and share your key messages with them.
- 2.** Use the key messages and resources in this toolkit to explain the need for your government to act.
- 3.** Negotiations on the political declaration are happening now. Please share our [response to the zero draft political declaration](#) with your Ministers of Health and Finance and, where possible, your country's UN mission in New York.

Join the online campaign on UHC. UN agencies are calling on political leaders to increase their commitment to UHC and make it a reality. They are encouraging NGOs and civil society to use online platforms and helping them campaign for a strong political declaration on UHC. This means they are being active online and we have a unique opportunity to have our voice heard.

- 1.** Follow [this list](#) on Twitter to track the conversations on UHC and older people. Please retweet each other so that we can all get as much exposure as possible!
- 2.** Post quotes from older people in your country. For example, what are the barriers for older people to accessing health services?
- 3.** Use the example tweets below or customise them to suit your context.

You can let others know what you are doing by tagging other accounts and using hashtags when you post to Twitter. Key hashtags and handles:

#HealthForAll #HLMUHC
@UHC2030 @CSOs4UHC @HelpAge

Example tweets

We encourage you to come up with tweets that suit your local context, but here are some examples to get you started.

Copy the text in the left column to Twitter and upload it with the corresponding image in the right column. DO NOT copy-and-paste the image across from this document.

Please [download the images from here or click the link underneath each image](#).

Copy	Image
<p>Millions of older people around the world struggle to access health and care services as population ageing transforms societies. To ensure health systems adapt, universal health coverage efforts must be inclusive of older people. #HealthForAll #HLMUHC</p>	 Download image

Health and care systems must adapt to new disease patterns to ensure #HealthForAll, at all ages and with financial protection.

75% of deaths from non-communicable diseases in low- and middle-income countries are of people aged 60 and over

[Download image](#)

Progress on universal health coverage efforts for older people remains unequal. Current proposals must address the specific health and care barriers that older people experience. #HealthForAll #HLMUHC



[Download image](#)

You are never too old for treatment. Health workers' #ageism leads to older people being denied care based on age. To eliminate discrimination, governments must train health workers to see people, not stereotypes. #HealthForAll #HLMUHC



[Download image](#)

<p>Older people are invisible in universal health coverage data. Upper age caps must be removed from data sources that help monitor UHC.</p> <p>#HealthForAll #HLMUHC</p>	<p>In Africa, 34 of 40 countries that have conducted the WHO STEPS survey on non-communicable diseases have not included anyone over the age of 64.</p> <p>Download image</p>



You can find all assets in this folder:

<http://bit.ly/2MvWnn5>

Other useful downloads:

- [HelpAge's recommendations](#) to the zero draft of the Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on UHC.
- [Healthy lives and wellbeing for all at all ages](#): this briefing outlines the challenges faced by older people and provides recommendations for change.
- [Global AgeWatch Insights](#) explores health and ageing trends in 12 countries.

If you need any support with the toolkit or would like more information, please get in touch with HelpAge health and care advisory team:

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