

Foreword

As we reflect on 2025, this year has demonstrated, once again, that when we truly listen to people and place their lived experience at the heart of innovation, we don't just talk about or imagine a better future - we actively build it.

At NICA+Voice this is our purpose, and we are extremely grateful to the Voice community for their incredible generosity in shaping this journey with us.

To every Voice member who has contributed this year: thank you. Your honesty, your willingness to share your experiences, insights, ideas have shaped research that asks better questions, designs that work in real homes, and innovations that genuinely improve daily life. You have sat on advisory boards, tested prototypes in your kitchens, shared deeply personal stories, challenged global corporations to rethink their approach, and opened doors we didn't even know existed. Your impact ripples far beyond what these pages can capture. From Newcastle to Taiwan, from university laboratories to multinational boardrooms, your voices are changing how the world understands and now responds to longer lives.

To the NICA+Voice team: your dedication, creativity and unwavering commitment to keeping people at the centre of everything we do has been nothing short of extraordinary. You have built bridges between citizens and researchers, between local

communities and global businesses, between aspiration and action. Thank you for your tireless work in making Voice not just a community, but a movement for a healthier more purposeful longevity society.

This report celebrates what we've achieved together this year. People need more conversations about ageing – to better understand what we need and want. We also need tangible innovations that improve everyday lives, right now. We need homes that adapt to changing needs, technologies that empower rather than exclude, and health, care and financial systems that proactively support longer, fuller lives.

At NICA+Voice, we've never been content with simply talking about the future. We're about action – we always have been. The conversations we facilitate, the insights we gather, and the partnerships we forge give us the confidence to drive this meaningful change at pace. When Voice members tell us what matters, we don't file it away – we act on it. We connect their wisdom directly to the researchers, designers and businesses who can turn this valuable insight into positive, meaningful innovation and deliver change.

As we look toward 2026, the urgency has never been greater, and neither has the opportunity. This is a pivotal year for NICA+Voice – a year in which

we're committed to radically accelerating innovation for people of all ages. We're streamlining how Voice works so that your contributions translate into action even faster. We're expanding our reach so that more voices shape the innovations that will define the coming decades. We're deepening our partnerships with organisations ready to move from consultation to co-creation, from prototypes to products that make that real difference.

The future we need won't wait, and neither will we. Every day that passes without innovation responsive to real needs is a day someone struggles with a service they can't access, or a system that doesn't see them. We can change that – together. Please stay with us as we accelerate. If you're considering joining our Voice community, now is the time. If you're a researcher, a business, or an organisation wondering how to innovate responsibly and effectively, partner with us. Shape the future with us.

2026 will be a year of radical acceleration. It will be a year where conversations become solutions, where insights become innovations, and where the voices of citizens drive change at a scale we've never seen before.

The future of healthy longevity isn't something that happens to us. It's something we actively build, create together, with urgency, and with purpose.

Let's make 2026 the year we deliver even more and thank you to all our Voice community and collaborators for your ongoing partnership!

Lynne and Nic

Professor Lynne Corner - Director of Voice®, Deputy Director of NICA+Voice

Professor Nic Palmarini - Director of NICA+Voice



Introduction

Welcome to the NICA+Voice 2025 Annual Report – particular focus here on the Voice community, and a celebration of the people, partnerships and possibilities that continue to shape our shared journey towards healthier, happier and longer lives.

At the heart of Voice is a powerful mission: placing people's lived experience at the centre of research, design and innovation. Voice is a global community of people who generously share their experience, insights, stories, ideas, wisdom and expertise to ensure that the products, services and systems shaping our future truly work for those they're meant to serve.

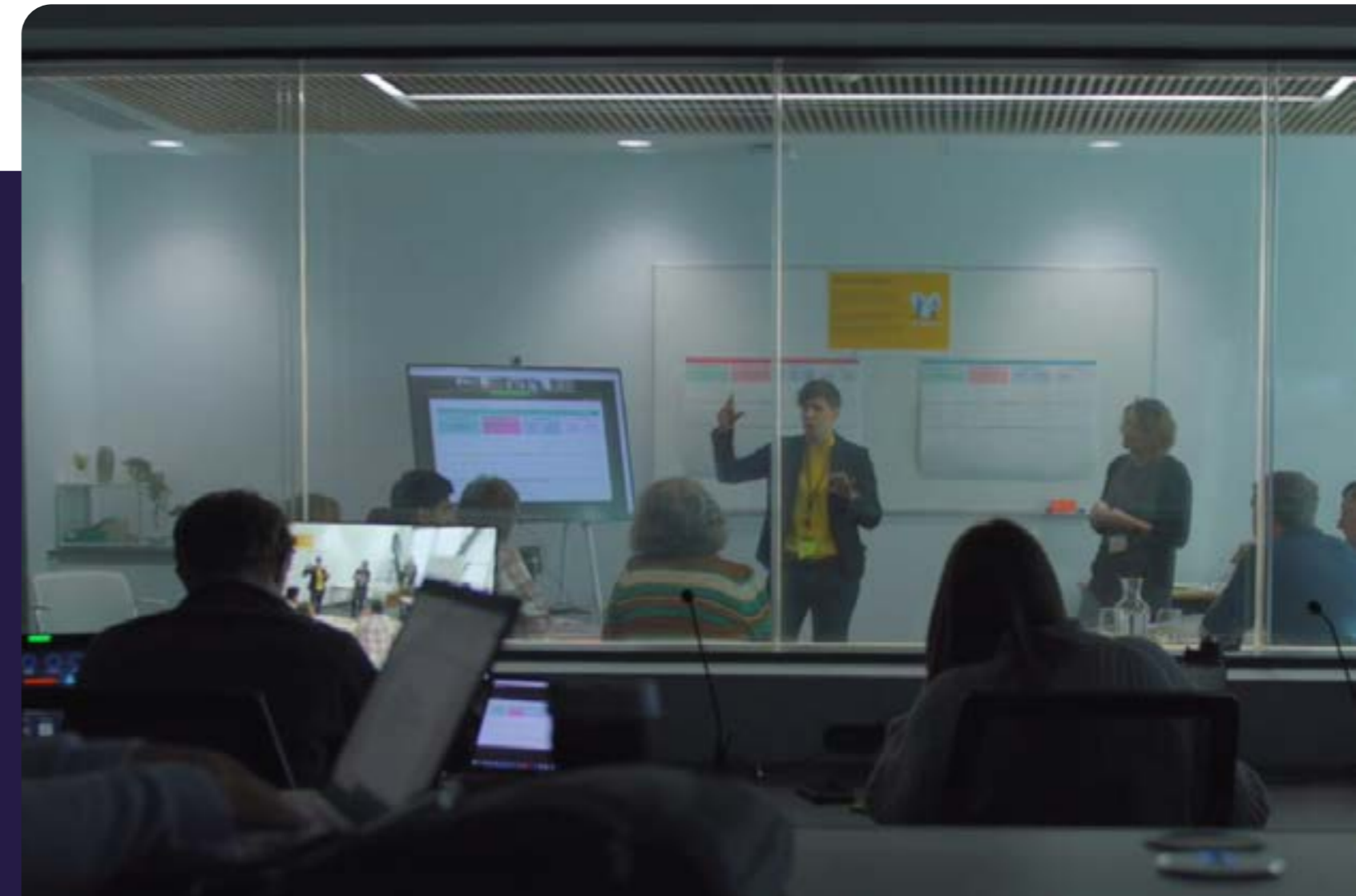
Whether contributing to university research, testing early-stage prototypes, advising global businesses or sharing personal experiences and stories, Voice members influence decisions that matter every single day.

NICA+Voice brings together humans and machines. We merge data and evidence, with deep insights from people. Voice sits with the UK National Innovation Centre for Ageing (NICA), a UK

Government funded centre based at Newcastle University. Together, we form a unique partnership where evidence and data-led world-leading research and innovation are grounded in real life experience, needs and aspirations. NICA brings scientific, commercial and analytical expertise to help organisations navigate the immense opportunities for healthy longevity, while Voice ensures that every idea, or new approach is strengthened by the insight, curiosity and lived experience of citizens. At NICA+Voice, this strong combination – evidence and experience – is what enables us to help de-risk innovation, and together shape a future where people thrive and flourish, across all life stages and all ages.

At NICA+Voice, people are at the centre of everything we do. We capture the experiences, skills and insights of our international Voice community – people from all backgrounds and all ages. Together, we co-design and co-develop the products, services and experiences people both need and aspire to have, transforming company strategy, shaping markets and delivering actionable insights for new commercial opportunities.

NICA's Ageing Intelligence® approach combines data-driven research with continuous mapping of technological innovations, business models and social trends to generate insights that support faster, better-informed decision-making.



83%

Increase in UK Voice Membership

Membership & Impact

A Year of Action and Impact for our community

This year's report reflects the breadth of Voice member contributions and the richness of their impact. Across research, design and business innovation, Voice members have influenced how ideas are formed, tested and brought to life. In research, we help ensure studies firmly focus on our priorities, ask the right questions and are shaped by the realities of people's lives. In design, we challenge assumptions and draw attention to details that affect daily living. In innovation, we help shape solutions for healthcare, housing, technology, finance and beyond – turning concepts into products, systems and services that really work in the real world and have every chance of success.

What follows offers a glimpse of how our individual and collective contributions have continued to strengthen thinking across sectors, from universities and public services to regional organisations and local and global businesses.

This year, membership grew across the UK and internationally, with more people than ever choosing to add their voices to our community.

Voice Explores offered thousands of members new ways to share perspectives on aspects of daily life, helping us to keep our focus and our understanding

of members' perspectives current and relevant. As our international Chapters continue to grow, and our global community expands, we have also begun our Global Conversations – an initiative for listening to each other and sharing experiences across and between different countries. It opens with a shared exploration of connection, togetherness and friendship – perhaps the most important foundation for a truly thriving longevity society. Global Conversations will fully launch this coming year.

Throughout all these developments, the Voice Member Advisory Group continues to guide and challenge our thinking, ensuring our community remains central to all decisions as NICA+Voice rapidly evolves.



Thank You

To every Voice member in our global community, who has taken part this year: thank you. Your honesty, generosity and commitment continue to shape a global community and movement that's influencing researchers, businesses and policymakers across the world. As you read the pages ahead, we hope you feel extremely proud of what you've helped create and continue to contribute to. This report is your story – the story of a growing global community, actively influencing the future by showing what becomes possible when every voice is heard.

Looking Forward

When we asked what members would change, one third told us they wouldn't change anything about their experience. One quarter mentioned they'd like to see even more opportunities - whether online, in person, or within their local area. We are working on this!

Voice is currently in a growth phase as we continue to expand both our membership and the opportunities available through new and strengthened partnerships. While it can be

challenging to grow these areas at the same pace, ensuring everyone can take part in as many opportunities as possible remains a priority.

To support this, we're introducing a number of new initiatives to help ensure that both current and new members enjoy an excellent experience with Voice. Your feedback plays a vital role in shaping these developments, helping us make sure that Voice Community continues to be a welcoming and meaningful community for everyone involved.

3205

Number of Voice members regularly involved

6185

Number of Voice member applications

157

Number of Opportunities

What Our Members Say

In our 2025 Member Survey, we asked what people value most about being part of Voice, the top 3 responses were:

The value of making a contribution

The variety of topics covered

The chance to learn new things

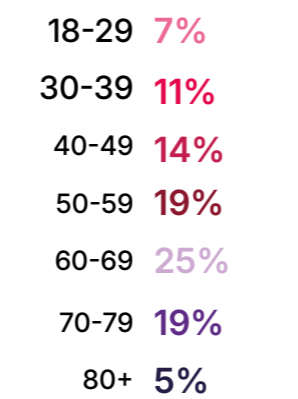
Understanding what members find most engaging helps us prioritise our efforts and build on what's working well. As we look ahead to 2026, improving member experience remains at the heart of everything we do.

A Deep Dive into the UK Voice Community

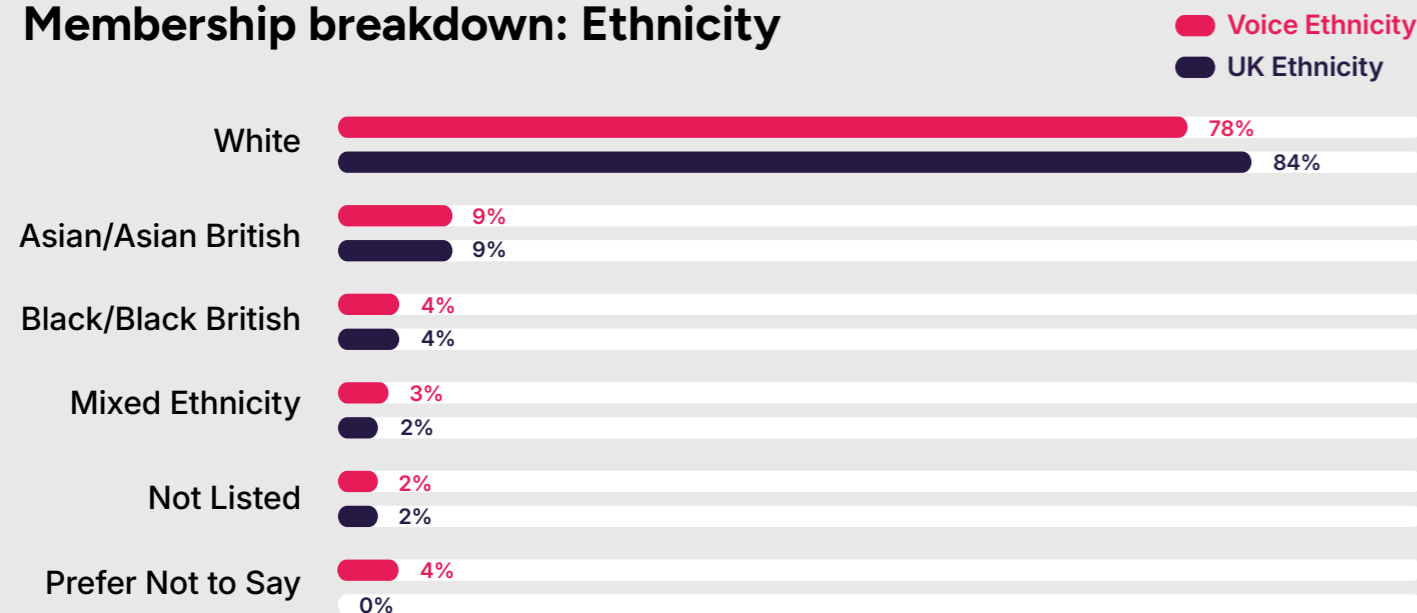
Membership breakdown: Age



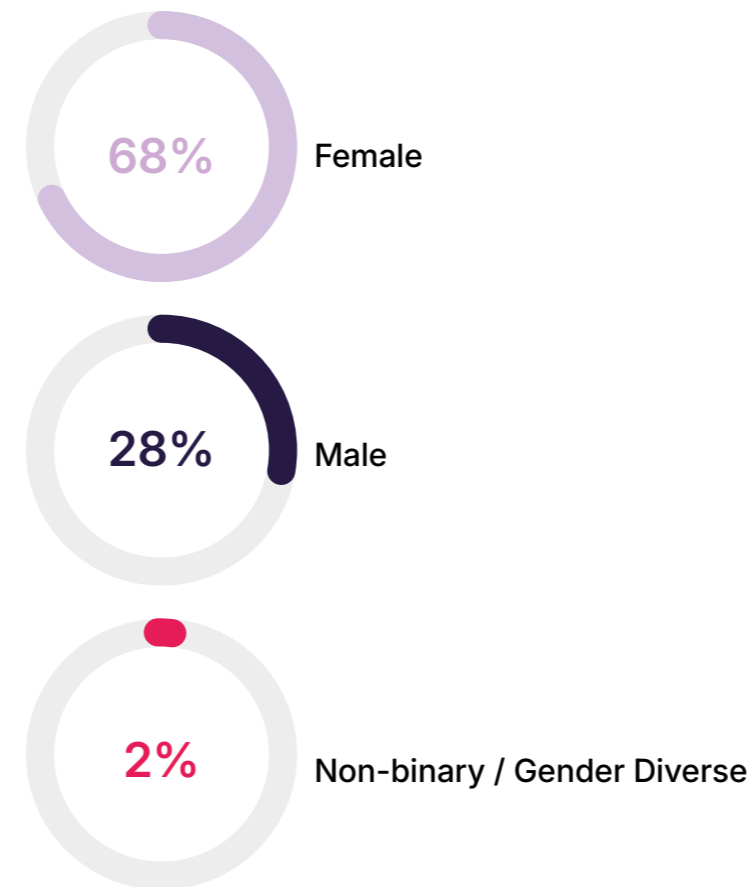
Last Years Member Age Breakdown



Membership breakdown: Ethnicity

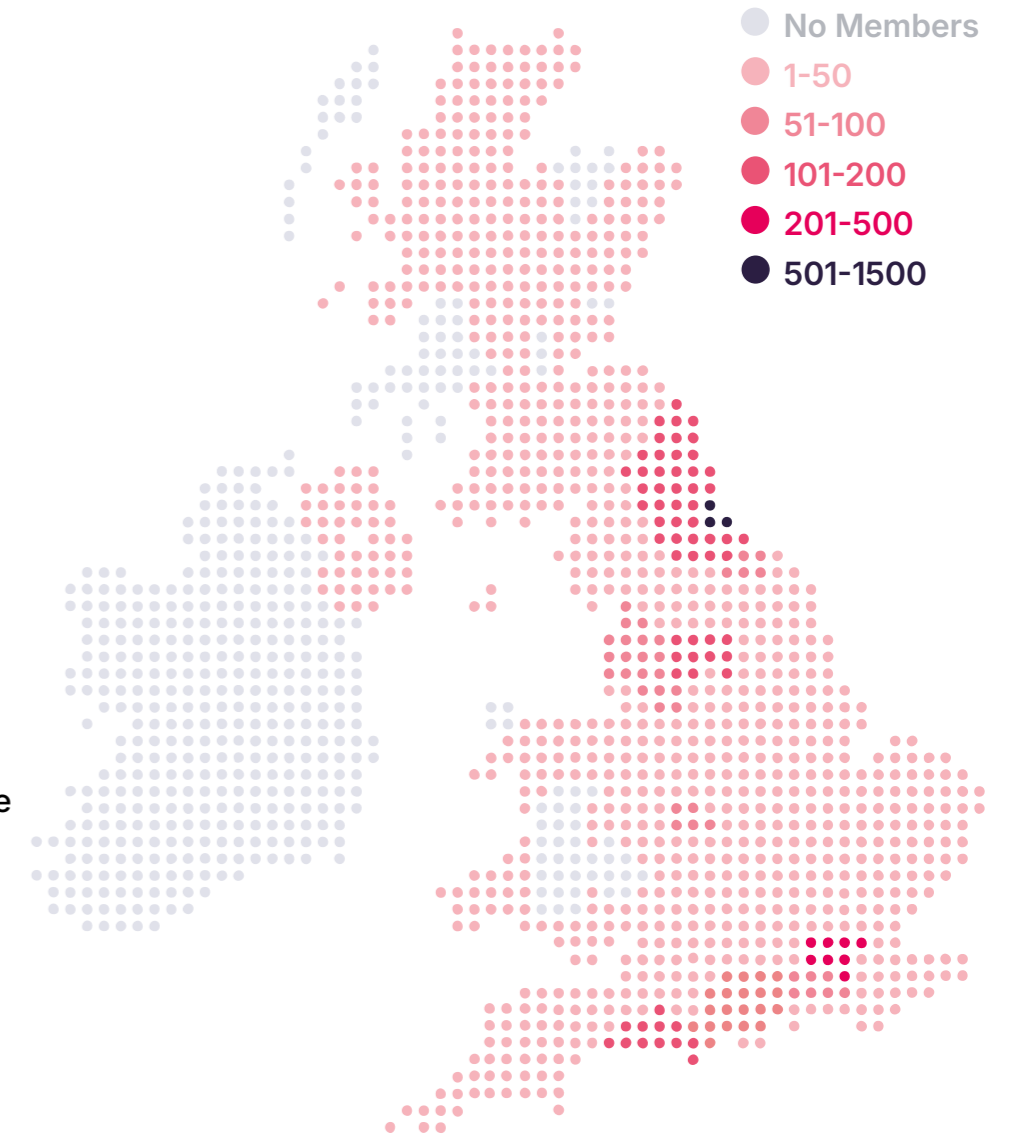


Membership breakdown: Gender



2% Prefer not to answer
Less than 1% say their gender is not listed

Members in every corner of the UK



Insight to Action

Research, Design and Innovation

Research, design and innovation form a continuous and interdependent cycle: research uncovers fresh insights and asks important questions; design translates those insights into tangible solutions; and innovation puts those solutions into practice in ways that generate real and lasting change.

Responsible research and innovation must not only produce new knowledge but also anticipate societal and ethical impacts, engage stakeholders and act on insights in responsible and inclusive ways. Design offers the creative mindset and methods to test, refine and shape ideas – moving from discovery through prototyping to delivery, always centred on people and their lived experience. Innovation then draws on both research and design to bring about meaningful improvements in products, services or systems, transforming how things are done.

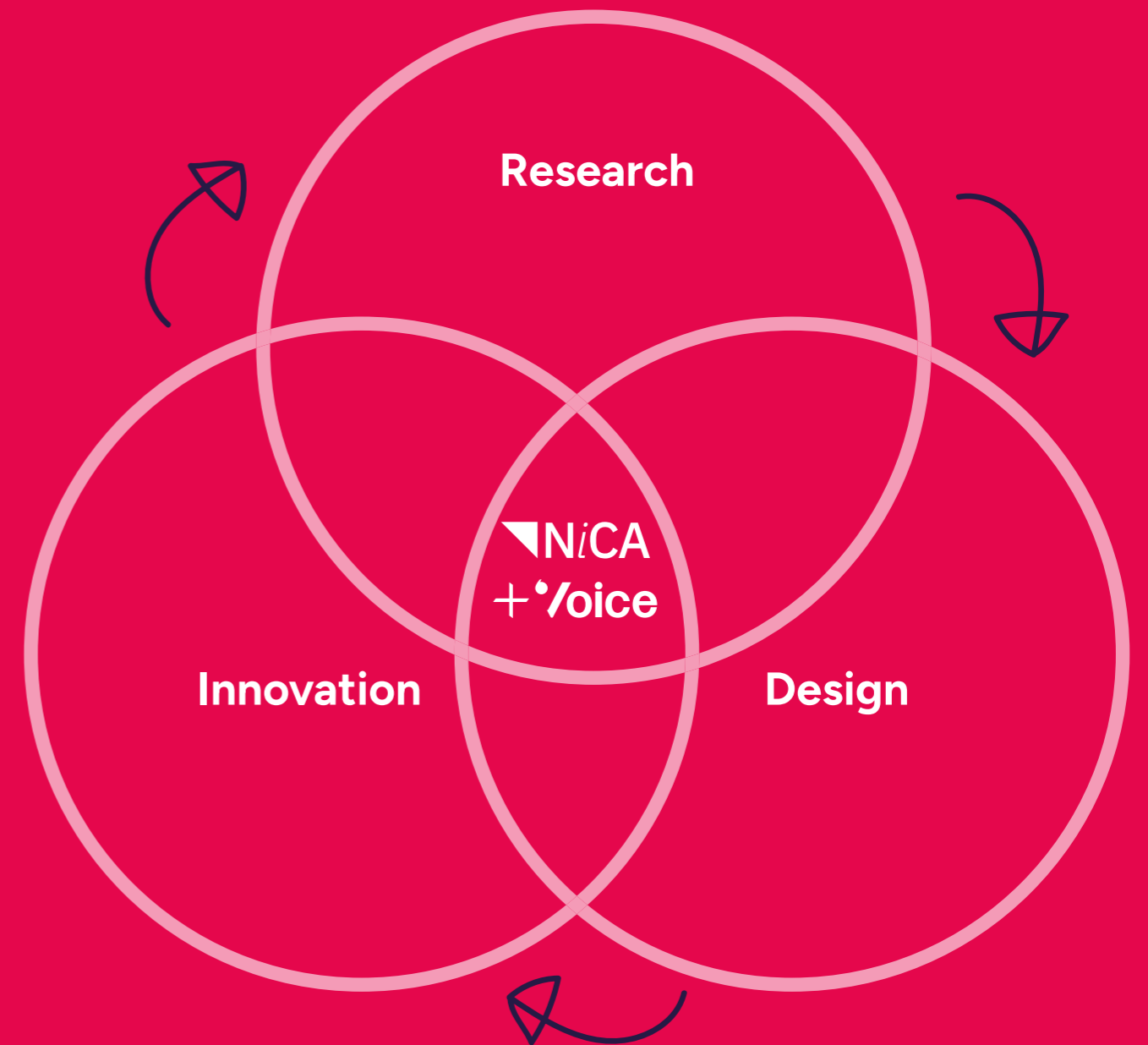
Why Involving Voice Community Matters

Involving the Voice community throughout this cycle ensures that researchers, designers and businesses are asking relevant questions from the very beginning.

For Voice members, participation means being part of research that asks the right questions from the outset, being actively involved in co-designing solutions that reflect our experience, and helping those solutions be implemented. This involvement helps ensure relevance and usability, builds confidence that our perspectives matter, and we also develop new skills as we move across research, design and innovation phases.

For organisations, our community involvement strengthens trust, reduces the risk for innovation – helping to minimise unintended consequences – and accelerates adoption of innovations that actually work for people and are wanted and needed.

The advantage is clear: by weaving people into the full innovation cycle, we co-create outcomes that are not only technically sound but socially meaningful and long-lasting.



Influencing **Conversation**



Influencing Conversation on What's Needed for Healthy Longer Lives

The story we tell about healthy ageing is rarely straightforward. It moves through moments of progress and also more difficult times, changing and shifting as often and quickly as people do. The language we use shapes public attitudes just as powerfully as it shapes personal identity. Through interviews, discussions and lived accounts, the Voice community continues to show that ageing is not a single storyline but a wide landscape and a personal journey, shaped by real experiences rather than convenient assumptions and stereotypes.

Too often, ageing is discussed as though everyone shares the same expectations or motivations. But they don't. Assumptions take the place of real

stories. Changing that means engaging directly with lived experience and recognising that perspectives vary across generations, communities, cultures and time. As more people describe what ageing actually feels like across the course of life, the picture becomes richer, more detailed and more truthful. That insight is essential for designing environments and systems that reflect how people live, not how society imagines they do. Any attempt to shape a future that works for more people must begin with listening.

Why This Matters

Long-standing stereotypes are giving way to a clearer and more inclusive narrative. This matters for more than just cultural accuracy – it influences how products are designed, how services are structured and how policy responds to people whose needs and experiences evolve throughout life. These perspectives are the foundation for better decisions and for shaping a world where longer lives are supported with dignity, creativity and connection.



Driving a Global Conversation

With the pilot of Voice's Global Conversation series, we're exploring in depth people's experiences of ageing not only within communities but across borders. Chapters in the UK, Taiwan, Italy, Canada and Australia are contributing local perspectives to a shared global picture, starting with the theme of connection, togetherness and friendship. Through surveys, digital storytelling and polls, this work is creating an exchange of experiences and ideas that help us understand what supports wellbeing, identity and resilience across different cultures.

This global listening is vital. It reflects what's needed for healthy ageing worldwide, what connects us and what works in different contexts. Longer lives demand approaches that are co-designed and co-created with the people who live them, informed by the nuances of place, culture and community. By learning from what works globally, we can exchange different ideas, build better systems, better policies and better designs that support and nurture people to live well for longer.

Hazell Jacobs

At 91, Hazell Jacobs is full of life, curiosity and an unstoppable passion for learning. Living in Richmond, London, by the river, she has embraced ageing with an infectious enthusiasm that inspires everyone around her. From working as a Samaritan in San Francisco to learning Italian and chess in her nineties, Hazell's life has been anything but ordinary.

Hazell first discovered Voice through an event in Richmond.

"They put out a notice about an all-day seminar at the Business Design Centre. It was quite an adventure – I'd never been inside one of those big office buildings before, with all the security and badge checks. I must have been in my eighties at the time. I was just this little old lady sitting at a table with the head of Lambeth Council, a doctor and all these professionals. And there I was, representing the everyday person. That

was ten years ago, and I've been involved ever since."

"A lot of the young people running these projects are incredibly knowledgeable in their fields, but they don't always have life experience,"

Hazell explains. She recalls a discussion about the NHS where a young man suggested going completely paperless.

"He didn't seem to realise that many older people don't have computers or smartphones to access their appointments online. It made me so angry - he was completely out of touch!"

Her message to those considering joining Voice?

"There's always so much to learn. And that's why I'm a happy person."



Voice Explores: Listening, Learning and Staying Connected

This year, we launched Voice Explores – an engagement programme designed to understand what matters most to Voice members while sharing insights more quickly and collaboratively. Developed to draw on both the lived and professional experience within our community, the programme helps ensure our knowledge of what members think, feel and prioritise, remains up to date. Voice Explores also connects international chapters – the first time we delivered the same research across several international Chapters, allowing

us to compare themes and experiences between countries.

Across four themes – Food and Drink, Home and Housing, Work, and Pets – we used surveys, interviews and events to explore different aspects of longevity. Unlike traditional research, which can take longer to deliver findings, Voice Explores was created to share emerging insights in a timely and accessible way while keeping members informed and involved throughout.

4300

people engaged with Voice Explores across the Voice platform

600

people completed surveys which provide rich accounts of members' experiences

1000

Responses to polls, offering snapshots of broader trends

500,000

people reached via Voice Explores, with Longevity news, updates on opportunities and findings shaped directly by Voice member contributions

What We Learned

Involving the Voice community throughout this cycle ensures that researchers, designers and businesses are asking relevant questions from the very beginning.

Members described a noticeable shift towards less processed foods, with many actively reducing salt, sugar and alcohol. In response, the Voice team organised a myth-busting event with human nutrition expert Professor John Mathers.

Members shared that workplace support during health struggles often lacked compassion and understanding, particularly around mental health.

Only 22% of members felt confident that their homes would meet their future health needs, highlighting the challenges of housing rarely designed with changing needs in mind.

Despite rising visibility of robot pets, most members said they would not use them for support, with three in five noting they would not turn to artificial intelligence for emotional reassurance.

Together, these insights show how Voice Explores is already shaping meaningful understanding to inform action for the future, strengthening how we listen, learn and respond as a community.

Voice Member Advisory Group: Keeping Our Growing Community at the Centre

As Voice continues to grow, with members now contributing from across the world, staying close to the insights, perspectives and aspirations of our community and how this shapes our thinking has never been more important. The Voice Member Advisory Group (VMAG) plays a vital role in helping us remain truly member led. Their insights help ensure that as the organisation evolves, our decisions, priorities and community experience continue to reflect different needs and expectations of the people who make Voice.

“Working with Voice members to shape membership growth and engagement over the past year has been fantastic! I love being challenged to make the best decisions for us all. The VMAG are such an amazing group to workshop ideas with, and I can always count on them to point out at least a few tweaks to our plans or even suggest we change something dramatically - always for the better. Being member-led in lots of our key decisions makes Voice an inclusive and exciting community to be a part of.”

— Alys Arnold, Voice Community Manager



This Year's Impact

This year's VMAG included Abdul, Cathy, Clement, Jeremy, Samina, Sead, Sharon, Suki and Sylvia. Their contributions have shaped a wide range of work:

1

Reviewing key communications and policies, ensuring members feel informed, confident and supported when using the platform and opportunities continue to meet the high standards expected by our community.

2

Co-writing approaches to communicating with members, helping make processes clearer and more supportive. Work is now underway to personalise messages further, based on their recommendations.

3

VMAG members have been central to innovation and testing, trialling new ideas and offering practical insights that strengthened projects before wider rollout.

4

Shaping the Voice Member Engagement Strategy, ensuring that as the community expands, meaningful involvement remains at the heart of Voice.

5

Shape this annual report, sharing ideas and feedback to ensure content is clear, accessible and reflective of our diverse community.

Thanks to their dedication, Voice continues to grow in ways that keep members at the centre. As the group reaches the end of their term in April, we'll soon be inviting new members to apply to join the VMAG and help guide the next phase of Voice's development. Keep an eye out for the opportunity in the coming months.

Not Just Silver: How Voice Brought Intersectionality to the Silver Marketing

Across the UK, the gap between how older people live and how they're represented in marketing remains striking.

These patterns reinforce limiting stereotypes and contribute to a culture where age is treated as a single identity rather than a complex and diverse experience. It's a challenge that affects visibility, dignity and the sense of belonging.

This year, Voice took that challenge directly to the Silver Marketing Association Summit in London,

bringing an essential and often overlooked perspective to an audience of more than 150 marketers, strategists and business leaders. Our session, Not Just Silver: Marketing and Intersectionality, invited the industry to question entrenched assumptions and listen directly to the people whose stories are often excluded.

At Voice, we believe that those most affected by a message should be involved in shaping it – and that principle sat at the heart of the session.

Real Voices, Real Impact

Chaired by George Lee, Head of Narrative at the National Innovation Centre for Ageing, the panel featured three Voice members; Suzanne, Rashmi and Cynthia, whose lived experiences reflect the true diversity of ageing.

The impact of bringing these perspectives into a room of marketing professionals was significant. Debbie Marshall, Managing Director of the Silver Marketing Association, described it as an authentic and powerful discussion that pulled no punches about the importance of including minority groups.

By engaging directly with professionals responsible for shaping national campaigns, the panel helped plant the seeds for tangible change. Shifting the thinking of 150 industry decision-makers represents a meaningful step towards reducing ageist marketing, challenging outdated narratives and opening the door to more respectful, accurate and representative portrayals of later life.

By placing lived experience at the centre, Voice demonstrated how real stories can reshape an entire sector. It's another example of how the Voice community is helping industries beyond health and research to rethink how they represent, understand and engage an increasingly diverse ageing population.

[Read more here](#)

Nearly half of the public (49%) say adverts using humour at the expense of older people are likely to cause offence, and 44% believe older people are underrepresented or not represented at all - particularly in fashion, beauty, technology and household goods¹



Voice Canada and the Power of Lived Experience

Professor Parminder Raina, one of the world's leading scientists specialising in ageing and the driving force behind Voice Canada, is helping reshape how the country understands longevity. His work reflects a lifelong curiosity about why people age differently and how factors beyond biology shape later life. Drawing on insights from epidemiology, family history and decades of research, he sees ageing as a complex, interconnected landscape of social, psychological and environmental influences - and a privilege made possible by public health progress.

Addressing Two Major Challenges

Within Voice Canada, Professor Raina is addressing two major challenges that shape the national conversation: widespread social isolation and deeply ingrained ageism. He's particularly concerned about disconnection across generations and the ways assumptions about older adults can distort policy, care and public attitudes. His belief in intergenerational connection guides much of his thinking, from ideas about community living to imagining new policies that bring younger and older people together in everyday life.

By bringing Voice into Canadian research, Professor Raina is widening who is heard, and how. He emphasises that data must reflect diverse lived experiences or it will produce answers that "miss a large proportion of people". Working with Voice helps reach beyond familiar participants to involve people across communities, ensuring research begins with real stories rather than assumptions.

For Voice members, this creates a meaningful opportunity to shape studies from the start, contribute experiences that broaden national understanding, and know that research reflects the realities of those it aims to serve.

Professor Raina's leadership shows how local voices can influence a global conversation - proving that the future of ageing is built not only through science but through people.

[Read more here](#)





Voice Italia: From Listening to Lasting Impact

Across Europe, countries are navigating how to support longer lives in ways that feel meaningful, connected and grounded in everyday experience. Voice Italia offers an important perspective on this challenge, showing how listening deeply to people can guide practical action and strengthen community wellbeing.

Now in its second year, Voice Italia has continued to grow through an approach built on trust, care and a holistic understanding of people. Workshops and community activities throughout 2025 highlighted that people engage most openly when conversations centre on values such as friendship, love, belonging and connection. These themes echoed across generations and reinforced that longevity is shaped as much by emotional experience as by practical needs.

Creating spaces where people feel safe to speak honestly has been central to Voice Italia's work. Voice Italia recognised that some participants were unsure whether their contributions would lead to visible change. This challenge shaped next steps and activity. The Infuriating Objects workshop, first created by NICA in Newcastle, enabled members to redesign everyday frustrations, with ideas now progressing into 3D-printed prototypes. Informal

gatherings in local cafés led directly to small but meaningful changes, including community book-sharing initiatives that strengthened local connection.

With members aged from 23 to 96, Voice Italia is truly intergenerational, and shows how listening, inclusion and visible follow-through can build trust and momentum. Looking ahead, the team is extending its work into early life, supporting the design of a new nursery shaped by longevity thinking. This project, beginning in 2026, explores how early environments influence health and wellbeing across the life course.

Read the full interview on [This Curious Life](#)

[Read more here](#)

Voice Taiwan: A Life Library in Motion

Across Voice’s international network and the wider longevity dialogue, the same questions appear time and again: how do we live longer lives with meaning, connection and purpose? Voice Taiwan offers a compelling example of how these questions can be translated into action within a rapidly ageing society.

Led by Lynn Li, Voice Taiwan and the Taiwan Innovation Centre for Ageing (TICA) have grown to more than 1000 members in just one year. Their approach begins with people, their personalities, lived experience and wish to continue contributing. As Lynn observes, she has seen a hundred different ways of ageing. The real challenge is not age itself, but whether people retain purpose, structure and connection once traditional work comes to an end.

Voice Taiwan creates space for curiosity, contribution and global exchange. Members join not only to learn about health, housing or longevity, but share wisdom, explore new ideas and feel part of something larger than themselves. One 83 year old member captured this shift by reflecting that for 30 years he had not realised he could still help others – and was delighted to do so!

Taiwan mirrors challenges seen across many countries, including rising loneliness, emotional strain and communities not yet designed for longer lives. In response, Voice Taiwan’s most in-demand work focuses on fundamentals such as food and nutrition, movement, housing and mental wellbeing, the everyday infrastructure of ageing well.

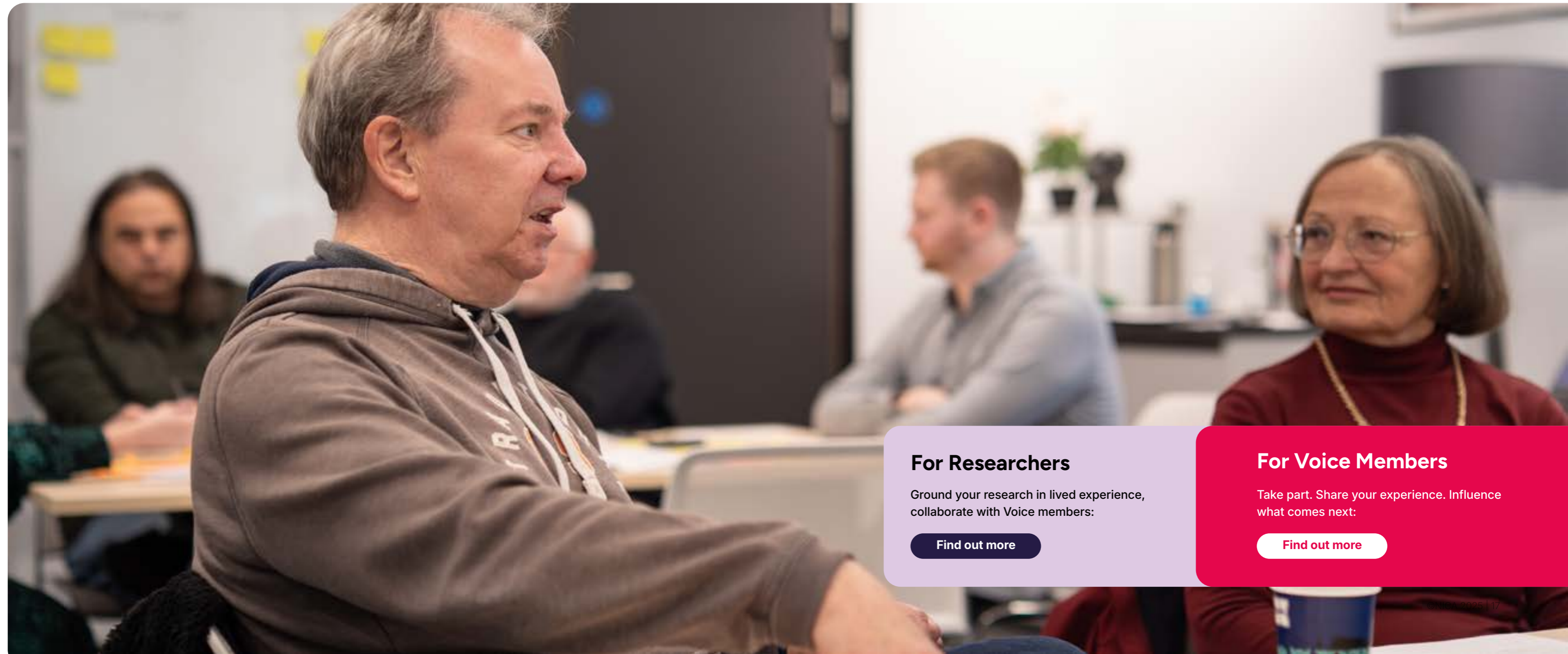
As with the wider community, Voice Taiwan is a life library, where every person is a book of lived experience. For the wider Voice community, Taiwan demonstrates what becomes possible when these libraries are activated locally and connected globally. By sharing insights across our different international chapters, delivering opportunities for purposeful longer lives.

Read the full interview on This Curious Life:

[Read more here](#)



Influencing Research



For Researchers

Ground your research in lived experience, collaborate with Voice members:

[Find out more](#)

For Voice Members

Take part. Share your experience. Influence what comes next:

[Find out more](#)

Influencing Research

Research is not only a way of generating evidence - it's how we understand people, their experiences and the realities that shape daily life.

With the UK Government investing £86 billion² in research and development over the next four years, it's more important than ever that this investment leads to outcomes that genuinely improve lives. That can only happen when research is shaped by the people it's intended to serve.

This is why involving lived experience through the Voice community matters. Lived experience

strengthens research priorities from the very beginning, helping to refine the questions that are asked, challenge assumptions that might otherwise go untested and ensure that findings reflect the true diversity of people's lives. It also supports a necessary shift in narrative. Instead of relying on long-standing assumptions about ageing, health or public need, research becomes guided by real stories, grounded perspectives and the human detail that transforms insight into action.

Our Mission

Since the beginning, connecting researchers with the people whose experience can deepen, strengthen and redirect their work has been central to Voice's mission. Every year, more studies are shared with the community, and Voice members continue to influence research across disciplines, from early-stage design to testing, refinement and dissemination. The Voice Collaboration Network has expanded this reach further by bringing together partners committed to embedding meaningful public involvement across all stages of research.

The case studies in this section offer just a snapshot of the amazing contributions made over the past year from our wonderful partners, and capture just a fraction of the insights, time and care that the Voice community contribute to research on a wide range of topics right across the UK.



Looking Ahead

This work is not without its challenges. One of the most significant challenges is ensuring a more even geographical spread of opportunities so that members across all regions can participate fully. This remains an area where we know we need to work, and we're actively exploring ways to make involvement more accessible, representative and equitable.

What follows celebrates the breadth and impact of Voice member involvement this year. Their insight has shaped research questions, strengthened methodologies and ensured that studies reflect the realities of people's lives. Their contribution continues to transform research into something more inclusive, more human and more capable of building a healthier future for everyone.

David Black

A lifelong resident of Newcastle upon Tyne, David has navigated diverse career paths – from dental technician to legal caseworker – before stepping away from full-time work to care for his mother. That experience opened his eyes to the complexities of healthcare and social services, leading him to speak up for change. David's involvement with Voice began as a way to channel his frustration with the healthcare system into something constructive.

"After battling for my mum's care, I realised I could either stay angry or do something useful with that energy."

Through Voice, he found an outlet where his personal experiences mattered.

"I love that it's not just about talking, we actually get to influence projects and policies. It's great to see our input being taken seriously."

One of David's most fulfilling experiences was joining the Voice Research Support Group, where he provided feedback on studies and presentations. Initially one of the youngest members, he found support from retired professionals who helped him grow in confidence.

Through Voice, David has gone from being a passionate advocate to a hospital governor, a charity trustee and even a co-author on academic papers.

"It's a springboard. One opportunity leads to another, and before you know it, you're making real change."

"It was incredible. I learned how to communicate my thoughts in ways that researchers, from professors to early-career scientists, would find useful. It made me realise how much we can all learn from each other."



“Being part of the Research Workforce Partnership has shown the real power of collaboration between researchers and communities, where lived experience helps drive meaningful change. Seeing our voices valued and translated into action has been both affirming and inspiring.”

John - Voice member

Newcastle University: Supporting NHS Workforce Sustainability

Workforce sustainability is one of the most pressing challenges facing UK health and social care services, with 106,432 unfilled posts³ in hospitals and specialist clinics and 131,000 vacancies in the social care sector⁴. These gaps place significant pressure on staff, services and patients, particularly in underserved areas where retaining healthcare workers is vital to ensuring accessible, high-quality care.

Against this backdrop, the NHS Workforce Voices is a £5 million, 5 year NIHR-funded collaboration across Newcastle, London and Birmingham, focused on improving recruitment and retention of healthcare staff in underserved areas across the UK – from coastal and rural regions to inner-city communities. Now in its first year, the research aims to build a clear understanding of the challenges staff face and will then develop practical solutions to help them remain in roles that are vital to delivering high-quality care for patients.

Voice Members at the Heart

From the very start, Voice members played a central role. Two members were recruited as co-applicants during the pre-application stage to shape the proposal itself – influencing early ideas about what

questions mattered most to staff and patients and helping design the programme’s governance and public-involvement structures. Their experience guided the creation of clear, ethical frameworks for involvement, ensuring meaningful participation throughout the project. They also brought insights and experiences from diverse backgrounds and ensured the research questions for the project took these into consideration.

Voice members have since helped shape multiple aspects of the research. This year, a Patient and Public Involvement Panel has been created to advise on research priorities and collaborate with the whole research project team to ensure diverse perspectives are included in decision-making. So far, their experience of navigating general practice in primary care and other healthcare services has been integral to the emerging projects within the research, such as one looking into the retention of GP receptionists.

Voice member involvement is ensuring that real experience remains at the heart of NHS workforce innovation.

[Read More](#)

Imperial College London: Supporting End-of-Life Care at Home

Supporting people at the end of life depends not only on clinical expertise but on the family members and friends who provide most of the care in their final months. The need for better support is clear: during their last three months of life, 62% of people spend most of their time in their own home or the home of a relative or friend⁵. Yet timely pain relief can be difficult to access, particularly when travel times or delays prevent rapid clinical response.

Imperial College London is exploring an important and sensitive question: how can we better support family members and friends caring for someone at the end of life? The research, funded by the Oak Foundation, focuses on whether friends and family who are carers can be safely trained to prepare and administer top-up pain relief at home. With many people wishing to die at home, and long travel times or delays often preventing timely symptom relief, this work aims to improve dignity, comfort and choice during a profoundly vulnerable time.

How Voice Members Contributed


Voice members were involved firstly through online interviews that explored their views on the acceptability of this practice. Secondly, Voice members carried out in-person user-testing sessions at St Mary's Hospital in London. Members were

given one of three types of training on assembling the equipment and drawing up medication (using water for testing). After at least two weeks, they returned to repeat the task without training, allowing the team to observe which approach was most intuitive and where additional support was needed.

Voice members' contributions shaped several aspects of the project. During the interviews, the diverse experience of Voice members ensured researchers included emotional considerations involved when caring for someone who is dying. They also highlighted a gap in research: when the family or friend passes away, the support for carers who gave the palliative care can be lacking. During user testing, Voice members highlighted practical challenges, such as difficulty snapping glass ampoules or forgetting to remove the needle before administration, which has helped the team identify areas where instructions or training need to be clearer.

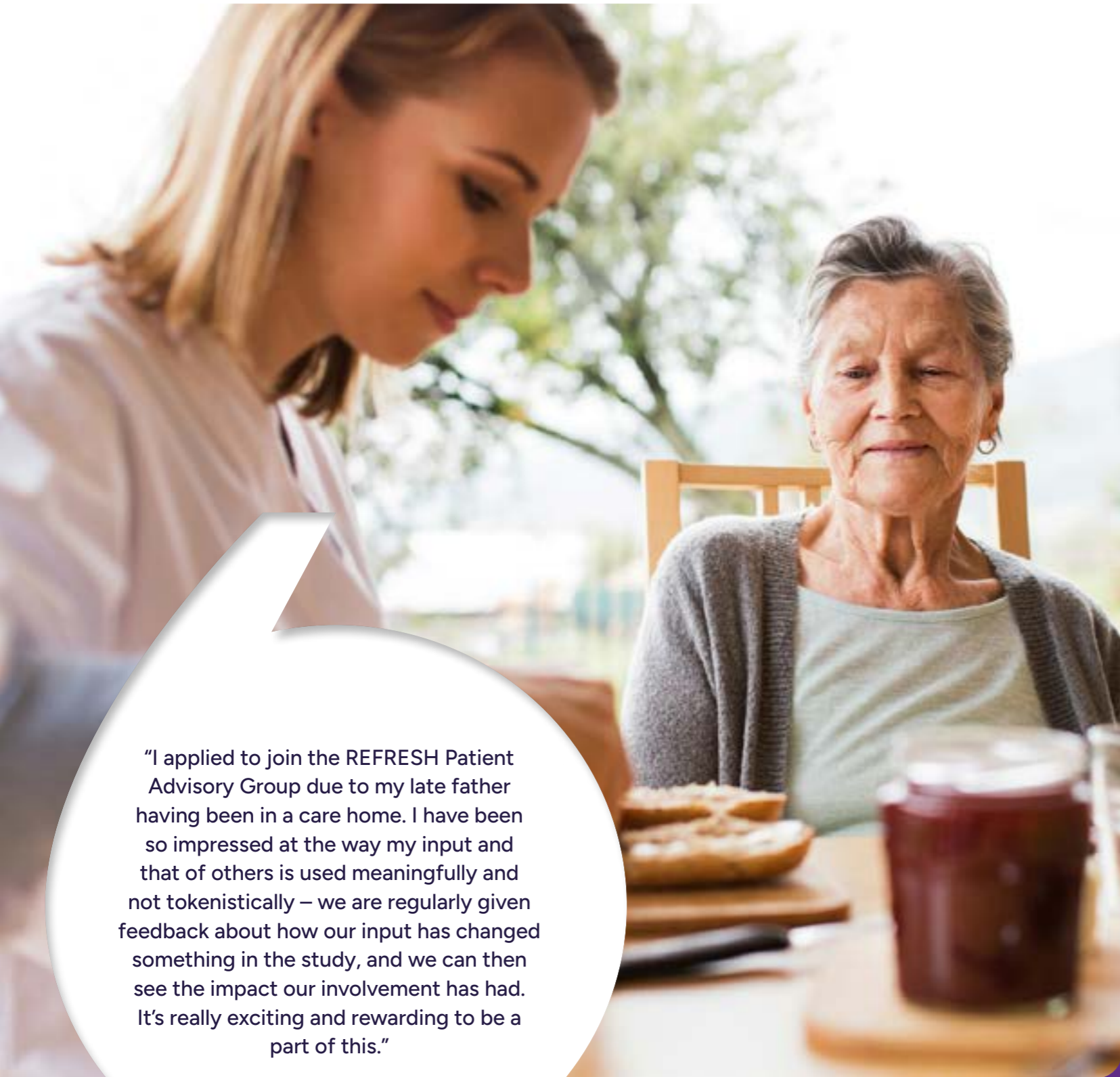
Voice member insight continues to guide the research team, helping ensure future care pathways are shaped not only by clinical expertise but by those with lived experience.

[Read More](#)



“The Palliate project has been a rewarding experience. Contributing my perspective on what families need when caring for someone at home during end-of-life care felt significant, and it was clear that my input was valued. It’s reassuring to see research that places patient and carer voices at the heart of developing practical solutions.”

Warren - Voice member



“I applied to join the REFRESH Patient Advisory Group due to my late father having been in a care home. I have been so impressed at the way my input and that of others is used meaningfully and not tokenistically – we are regularly given feedback about how our input has changed something in the study, and we can then see the impact our involvement has had. It’s really exciting and rewarding to be a part of this.”

Voice member

Bournemouth University: Tackling Malnutrition in Care Homes

Malnutrition is a significant and costly challenge within the UK care sector, with 55% of care-home residents at risk⁶ and treatment estimated to cost over £19.6 billion each year across health and social care⁷. Improving nutrition in later life is therefore essential for preventing avoidable harms – from increased falls to higher infection rates – and for supporting people in care homes to live with better health and dignity.

The REFRESH trial is a multi-partner NIHR-funded study led by the University of Plymouth, with Bournemouth University leading on public involvement in the project, and it is exploring how to improve nutrition for people living in care homes. Malnutrition in care homes not only harms resident’s health but also increases the risk of falls and infections. The REFRESH trial aims to test how to best treat malnutrition in older care-home residents. REFRESH will recruit 90 care homes, with each one being given one of three approaches to treat malnutrition.

Shaping the Study

To ensure the study reflected real experiences, extensive public involvement was carried out before the project was funded, including time spent in care

homes speaking directly with residents, carers and staff. Once funded, the team partnered with Voice to widen involvement and bring in more diverse perspectives. Voice members joined both the Trial Steering Committee and the Patient Advisory Group.

Voice members have been involved in reviewing all resident-, carer- and care-home-facing documents, including easy-read versions and visual layouts. Their feedback has shaped not only the content but also how information is shared – ensuring materials are sent in accessible formats, offered in advance and introduced through conversation in the care home rather than delivered without context.

They’ve also contributed to the development of a new recipe book for care-home chefs, providing insight on cultural relevance, dietary needs and what older people are likely to eat. Voice members further influenced the project’s ethics process, using their experience to help determine how conversations about the research should take place within care homes.

Their input continues to shape recruitment plans, care-home engagement and future discussions with the wider research team.

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University of Southampton: Improving GP Conversations About Menstrual Problems

Many women and girls continue to face significant barriers when seeking help for menstrual problems in primary care. Over 52% of women report not feeling taken seriously by a healthcare professional, and among those who sought support, 67% felt they could have been better supported. The reasons are consistent and concerning: 50% felt their symptoms weren't taken seriously, 42% said appointments felt rushed, and 28% felt they weren't given enough information⁸. These gaps in communication affect both confidence and care, making it crucial to strengthen how practitioners listen, respond and provide reassurance during appointments.

In response to these challenges, the Patients' Views about Primary Care Practitioners' Communication about Menstrual Problems project forms part of a wider programme aimed at improving how primary care practitioners communicate empathy and realistic optimism during appointments. Research shows that many women feel unheard or dismissed when seeking help for heavy periods or period pain. Empathetic communication – through careful questioning, active listening and responding to patients' needs – alongside realistic optimism about treatment outcomes, has been shown to improve patient experience and health.

Building on the University of Southampton's Empathico e-learning intervention, this NIHR-funded PhD project is developing a new, condition-specific module to support GPs in conversations about menstrual problems. The aim is to help patients feel more heard, better understood and more confident in their care when presenting with menstrual concerns in primary care.

Voice Members' Influence

To ensure the training is shaped by real experiences, the research team involved Voice members through semi-structured interviews. In the interviews, they read short scenarios of GP consultations about painful or heavy periods and reflected on what they liked, what felt unhelpful and why. They also shared their own experiences of seeking care for menstrual problems.

Voice members influenced several aspects of the developing intervention. Their feedback helped narrow and prioritise the content included in the training, highlighting what matters most to patients during appointments – such as clear explanations, being taken seriously and understanding the reasons behind referrals or investigations. They also raised issues practitioners didn't always identify

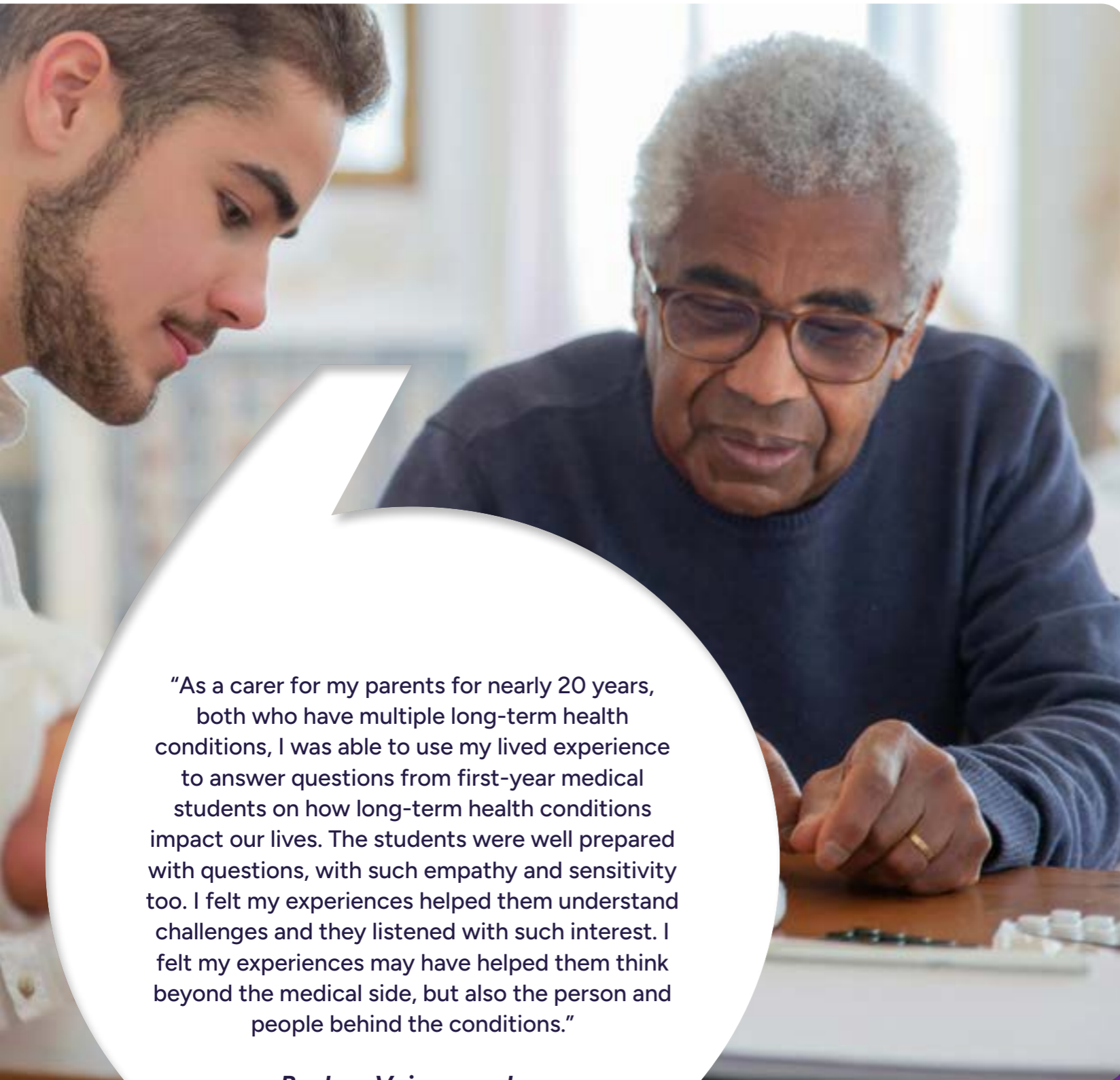
themselves, including hesitancy around certain treatment options. This broadened the scope of the training to better reflect what patients want and need from GP conversations about menstrual problems. Voice members' diverse backgrounds also strengthened the research by ensuring varied experiences across ages, regions and healthcare contexts were represented.

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"I have always felt incredibly alone and also dismissed by doctors I have visited. Now I feel more confident in speaking out for my needs and able to express how I am struggling. I hope this new training system/course will help GPs understand how hard it is to live with regular period pain, weird symptoms and heavy bleeding and to allow us to come away from appointments feeling listened to."

Sarah - Voice member





“As a carer for my parents for nearly 20 years, both who have multiple long-term health conditions, I was able to use my lived experience to answer questions from first-year medical students on how long-term health conditions impact our lives. The students were well prepared with questions, with such empathy and sensitivity too. I felt my experiences helped them understand challenges and they listened with such interest. I felt my experiences may have helped them think beyond the medical side, but also the person and people behind the conditions.”

Becky - Voice member

University of Leeds: Embedding Lived Experience at the Heart of Medical Education

Across England, an estimated 25 million people are now living with a long-term condition, and 13.4 million of them live with two or more⁹. This growing complexity places increasing pressure on health services and highlights the importance of training future doctors to understand not only clinical needs but the lived reality of managing long-term conditions.

The University of Leeds is reshaping how future doctors learn by grounding first-year training in real experiences of long-term health conditions. As part of an integrated core unit, students explore the psychological and social factors that shape health and wellbeing. Alongside lectures, they take part in small-group sessions designed to deepen their understanding of the realities of living with long-term conditions. This commitment to embedding lived experience into medical education is not only a strength of the University of Leeds but across universities in the UK that recognise the value of involving people directly in shaping our future healthcare professionals.

Real Conversations, Real Learning

Voice members play a central role. Each year, around 300 students are paired in twos or threes with

volunteers – many from Voice – who share their lived experience of managing a long-term condition or caring for someone who does. These conversations help students connect classroom learning with the day-to-day challenges people face.

The impact is clear. Students frequently return from meetings surprised by details they’d never considered, such as the difficulty of remembering medication and the wider effects certain medications have on people’s lives, including the worry this creates – showing that supporting someone’s health is never as simple as prescribing treatment. Many are struck by the positivity and resilience individuals show regarding their complex conditions, and by recognising that a diagnosis doesn’t define a person. These insights challenge assumptions, humanise clinical learning and help students understand the person behind the diagnosis. Strong engagement and attendance show how meaningful this element of the course is and strengthen the case for its continuation as the curriculum evolves.

By bringing lived experience into medical education, Voice members help shape future practitioners who are grounded in empathy with a deeper understanding of the people they’ll support.

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Influencing **Design**



Influencing Design

Product, service and environmental design shapes daily life in ways that are easy to miss. It often becomes visible only when something doesn't work as it should. Good design removes obstacles and supports how people move, live and interact. Poor design does the opposite – it adds friction, creates stress and makes everyday tasks harder than they need to be. This is true not only for products but for the services and systems people rely on every day. Evidence-based design shows that meaningful solutions must be grounded in real behaviours, real environments and the real diversity of human experience.

Most issues can be avoided by paying closer

attention to how people of all ages navigate the world. Insights from ageing improve design for everyone, not only older adults.

This principle sits at the core of our work. Speaking directly to users reveals the obstacles they face and the design choices that either support or restrict them. This commitment underpins NICA's Internet of Caring Things® (IoCT™) programme, which brings together innovators, researchers and citizens to explore technologies that genuinely enhance healthy longevity. IoCT focuses on supporting the creation of products, services and connected systems that respond to what people say they need, rather than what designers assume they might.

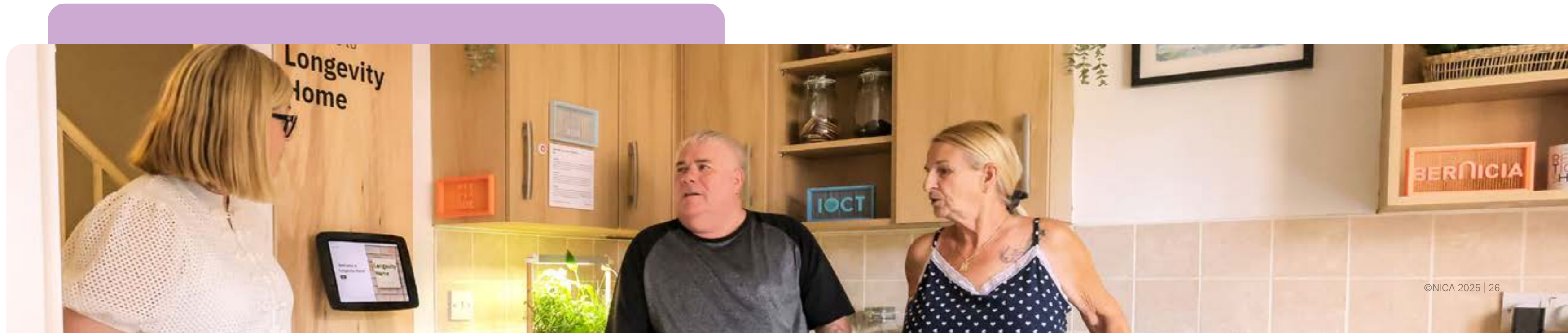
Two Flagship Initiatives

Two flagship IoCT initiatives bring this approach to life. Infuriating Objects highlights how everyday design failures are far more widespread and more limiting than many assume. These seemingly small frustrations can erode independence and dignity, revealing the consequences of design that doesn't reflect real experience. Alongside this, the Longevity Home provides a real-world setting where people can explore, test and challenge a wide range of technologies designed to support later life.

Developing products in isolation and 'pushing them onto people' is no longer a credible approach.

Ideally, co-design is built in from the start, guided by their experience and insight and shaped through genuine collaboration.

Through this collaborative approach, we've worked with scores of designers and creators to ensure that spaces, products and technologies reflect real needs and values. What follows shows how the community is not only contributing to better design and shifting expectations of what good design should be. Ageing informs creativity rather than limits it, and involving people directly leads to solutions that are smarter, human centred and support a longer, more fulfilling life.





Sead Masic

At 67, Sead Masic has lived a life defined by resilience, service and curiosity. A former vet from Bosnia, a survivor of war and a dedicated charity worker, Sead has spent decades improving the lives of others. He first joined Voice four years ago. Since then, he's contributed to numerous projects, from improving housing for older adults to raising awareness about bowel cancer screening.

"I'd compare it to voting. Many people don't vote and then suffer the consequences of poor leadership. It's the same with engagement – getting involved now can shape a better future. You might think, 'What can I contribute?' But everyone has valuable experiences. Even if you're not a professional, your voice still matters."

One project that stood out to him was Newcastle University's initiative to design smart homes for ageing residents.

"They wanted real input from people who

would actually live in these homes. It's so important for businesses and researchers to engage with real people – otherwise, they risk designing something that doesn't work in practice."

He also emphasises the importance of lifelong learning and curiosity.

"One of the best projects I was involved in was Infuriating Objects by the Internet of Caring Things programme. Between two workshops, we had to come up with an innovative idea. I designed a spice rack with traffic-light indicators to show freshness. The next time we met, we presented our inventions, and some of them were even 3D printed! That kind of creativity is inside everyone – it just needs to be encouraged."



Infuriating Objects: Reimagining Everyday Design Through Lived Experience

Everyday design frustrations are far more widespread than many people realise. For example, opening a jar proves difficult for half of all consumers¹⁰, showing how small design flaws can interrupt routines, challenge independence and add unnecessary stress. Many of the frustrations people encounter each day come not from dramatic failures in technology but from the overlooked objects that never quite work as they should.

Infuriating Objects set out to confront this problem directly, asking what happens when we invite real people to transform the everyday objects that drive them up the wall. Led by the IoCT team, the project brought together creativity, experimentation and lived experience to rethink how the simplest designs could better support people throughout life.

From Frustration to Innovation

Sixteen Voice members joined the mission, beginning with a survey exploring the objects that consistently frustrate people across daily life. Their comments revealed patterns that designers often miss. "If it's childproof, it's also granny-proof," one participant noted, while another shared, "Automatic taps in public loos – I just can't get them to work without a lot of wafting!" These insights helped identify the deeper themes behind everyday design challenges and set the foundation for what followed.

Participants then took part in two hands-on workshops supported by a 'homework' challenge. Each Voice member was asked to bring back everyday items that frustrated them but still had potential – objects they could improve, hack or entirely reimagine. The workshops unlocked genuine creativity, and Voice members arrived armed with sixteen inventive concepts, clever hacks and early prototypes inspired directly by their own daily experiences.

From these ideas, the IoCT team developed 3D models that brought each concept to life with playful new identities. 'Poppa Pill' offered a more intuitive way to sort and dispense medication. 'Get a Grip' tackled the universal battle with stubborn bottle tops. 'Neuro D Bowl' proposed a fresh approach to preventing cereal from turning instantly soggy. Each design demonstrated how involving people directly in the creative process leads to solutions that are practical, imaginative and shaped by real needs.

Cross-Generational Collaboration

A multi-generational element strengthened the project further when students from the School

of Engineering joined the making process. They contributed their own ideas, with student Lottie reimagining the 'Pull a Plug' concept – an innovation that quickly became one of the most popular solutions in the mission. This cross-generational collaboration highlighted the value of shared perspectives and the role curiosity plays in driving better design.

The project culminated in a week-long, family-friendly exhibition at the Farrell Centre in February 2025, named after Newcastle University alumnus and leading architect and innovator Sir Terry Farrell. Nearly 700 visitors interacted with the exhibition, explored the prototypes, took part in challenges, shared feedback and even proposed their own solutions to infuriating objects they encountered daily.

Although the exhibition has ended, the work continues, including with Voice Italia. The legacy of Infuriating Objects is an expanding ideas bank that will inform designers and influence the next generation of everyday objects. It reinforces a simple truth: when real people are involved in design, even the most ordinary items can become opportunities for innovation, dignity and joy.

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Longevity Home: An Open House for Inquisitive Ideas and Innovations

The Longevity Home began with a clear and pressing challenge: as more people live longer, the gap is widening between what individuals need to age well at home and what current housing and technologies provide. There are now 22 million people aged over 50 in England, equivalent to two in five of the total population. Age UK estimates that 2 million people aged 65 and over have unmet needs for care and support¹¹. As more people live longer, the gap between what individuals need to remain well at home and what current housing and technologies provide is widening. If we want homes and everyday technologies to genuinely support people to age well in place, then the people who will live in these homes and use these technologies must help shape the ideas from the very beginning.

Real life is rarely neat or predictable, and too often innovation overlooks the everyday realities people face. The Longevity Home set out to change that by creating a space where real experiences, rather than assumptions, guide the design of future living.

A Partnership Built on Shared Values

The project was built on a partnership between the IoCT programme at the National Innovation

Centre for Ageing (NICA) and Bernicia Living, an age-inclusive independent living provider in the North East of England. Both organisations share a strong commitment to supporting people to live well, with joy, and to remain independent for as long as possible. By combining Bernicia Living’s housing and care expertise with the IoCT programme’s innovation capability, the partnership created the conditions for meaningful, practice-grounded innovation. This alignment of purpose enabled the rapid development of a fully functioning Longevity Home in just six months, demonstrating the strength and effectiveness of the collaboration.

Co-Creation in Action

Voice members and Bernicia residents played an essential role from the outset. As co-creators, they tested devices in a real home setting, questioned design choices that didn’t reflect everyday life, and highlighted practical details such as ease of use, visibility, placement and comfort. Their role wasn’t simply to review technologies, but define what good looks like in a home designed to support dignity, independence, connection and happiness at home.

Through this co-design approach, the Longevity Home became a welcoming space where anyone

could explore a curated range of technologies already on the market alongside early prototypes from North East based companies, being developed with support from the IoCT programme. This eclectic blend allowed visitors to test innovations in a real home environment and share their feedback in context. Every innovation in the space had been chosen for its potential to support quality of life, and the combined strengths of Bernicia Living, NICA and citizen insight created a unique blend of operational experience, ageing intelligence and shared learning.

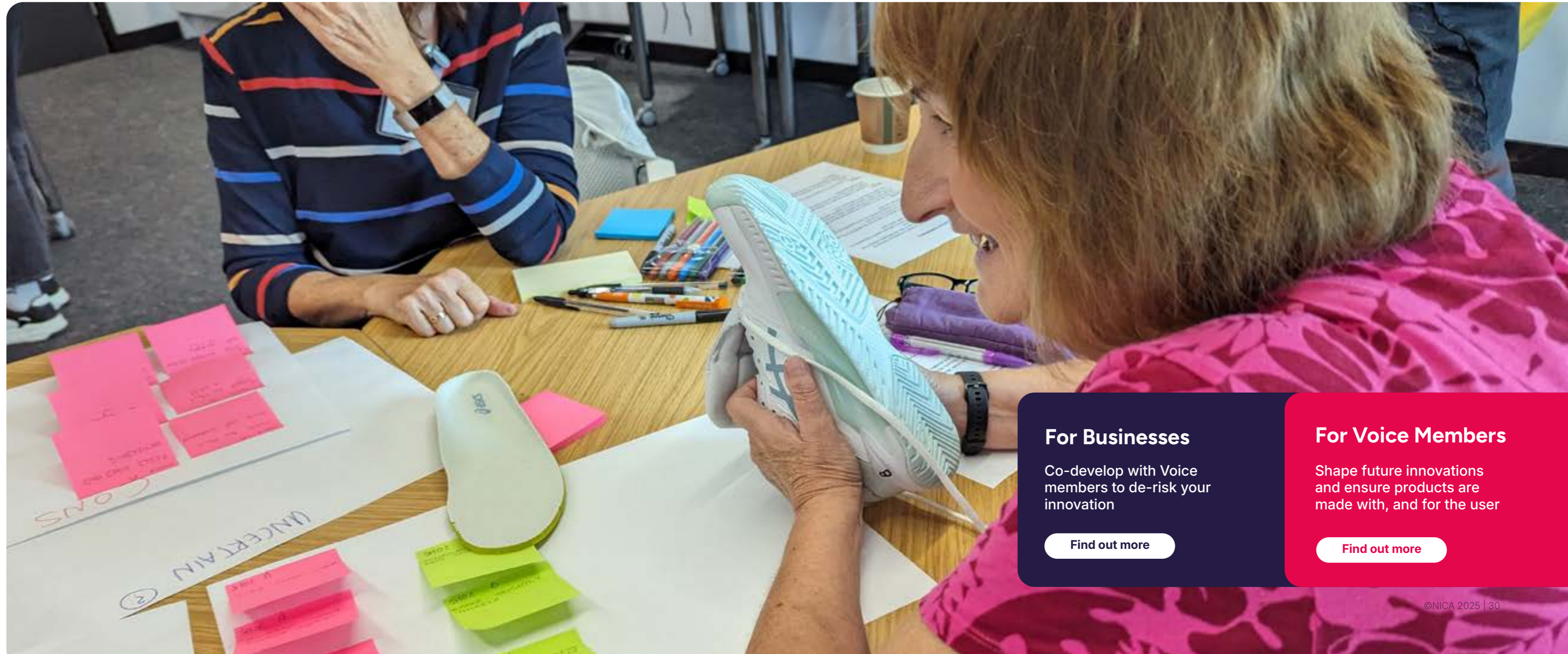
Real Impact

Since opening its doors in August 2025 for an eight-week tenure, the Longevity Home has welcomed over 200 visitors, including Voice members, Bernicia residents, housing providers, policymakers, occupational therapists and others. Its influence is already visible. Bernicia is bringing the Longevity Home exhibit to its 2026 staff conference to embed this mindset throughout the organisation. It will also install some of the more playful technologies – such as Tovertafel, an interactive games projector, and Mii Box Live – into communal areas to encourage fun and connection between residents and their families.

Insights from the Longevity Home are also feeding directly into NICA’s Internet of Caring Things programme, shaping the next generation of products and services designed for healthy longevity. At its heart, the Longevity Home demonstrates that when people are placed at the centre of innovation, they do far more than comment on the future – they actively influence the design of products that will shape how we live and age well.



Influencing **Business**



For Businesses

Co-develop with Voice members to de-risk your innovation

[Find out more](#)

For Voice Members

Shape future innovations and ensure products are made with, and for the user

[Find out more](#)

Influencing Business

Around the world, people are living longer than at any other point in human history. The longevity economy encompasses the economic activity, opportunities and challenges arising from people living longer, healthier lives, and has already taken shape as a major global force. In 2020, people aged 50 and over contributed \$45 trillion to global GDP, representing 34% of the total¹², according to AARP's Global Longevity Economy Outlook, and this contribution is projected to more than double to \$118 trillion (39% of GDP) by 2050¹³, making this demographic one of the world's most significant economic opportunities

To thrive within this changing landscape, businesses need a deeper understanding of people's real experiences, preferences and aspirations across life stages, ensuring their products and services both tap into the longevity economy and help people live healthier for longer.

NICA+Voice: Bridging Business and Lived Experience

NICA+Voice was established to help organisations meet this challenge. By combining NICA's strategic, data-driven approach harnesses the lived experience and insight of the international Voice community, NICA+Voice supports companies to innovate with clarity, confidence and purpose - de-

















risking decisions by ensuring they're grounded in real experience. By applying a longevity lens it allows us to understand how longer lives shape needs, behaviours and markets across life stages – translating emerging opportunities for business.

We work with organisations from local enterprises to global institutions such as UniCredit and Fidelity, as well as with partners like Pfizer. This work also involves growing collaborations with North East businesses developing innovations in women's health and culture, demonstrating that longevity-driven insight is reshaping sectors far beyond traditional health and care.

Together, NICA+Voice help organisations anticipate future trends, adapt to shifting behaviours and design products, services and strategies that reflect how people actually live.

Businesses of every size, from single-location start-ups to multinational corporations, rely on understanding people if they want to stay relevant. Many still struggle to grasp the realities of day-to-day life across generations. The Voice community fills this gap by providing direct access to lived experience that cuts through assumptions and shows how people use products, services and systems. It also exposes where the real barriers sit, highlighting that meaningful innovation doesn't only take place in large corporations but across the full spectrum of local and regional businesses.

Industry Sectors NICA+Voice Are Working With

 Health and Wellbeing	 MedTech and Life Sciences	 Pharmaceutical	 Food and Drink
 Smart Homes	 Consumer Electronics	 Built Environment	 Finance
 Fashion / Lifestyle Services	 Entertainment and Leisure	 Work and Education	 Energy and Environment
 Pets / Animals	 IT and Operations	 Business Support Services	 Non-profit and Social Cause



Mike Morgan

At 66 years old, Mike Morgan from Newcastle upon Tyne is definitely not standing still. With a career spanning over three decades in the corporate world, including nearly 25 years at IBM, Mike has transitioned from the fast-paced corporate environment to a role that allows him to shape the future of ageing and amplify the voices of real people.

Over the years, Mike has participated in a wide range of Voice projects, from sharing feedback on healthcare products to offering insights on how businesses can better serve older generations.

“The variety of projects has been incredible,”

“Every one has allowed me to learn something new, meet great people and contribute to something I believe in.”

Mike’s deep passion for Voice stems from his belief

that businesses must listen to real people.

“The best way for businesses to create impactful products and services is by listening to the people who will use them,”

“Voice connects individuals to organisations in a way that ensures the solutions they create are based on real human experiences. It’s not just about designing products - it’s about building trust and understanding.”

He’s confident that businesses who adopt this approach will see the benefits.

“When businesses listen to real people, they create products that truly meet needs. It’s good for society, and it’s good for business too.”

Slow Shopping: Designing Retail Environments That Welcome Everyone

Founded by Katherine Vero, Slow Shopping is an initiative designed to make retail environments more inclusive for everyone who benefits from a calmer, more supported shopping experience. The need is clear. Many people face significant barriers in public spaces: 76% of people living with dementia say their condition negatively affects their ability to carry out everyday tasks independently¹⁴, and nearly 78% of disabled people who experience barriers identify shops and shopping centres as the most difficult places to access¹⁵.

Slow Shopping responds by helping businesses improve signage, lighting, seating and staff awareness. Inspired by caring for her mother, Katherine shaped the concept around changing the environment rather than the person, so everyday activities can be approached with greater dignity and ease.

Voice Members Shape the Work

To deepen this work, Katherine partnered with Voice and NICA's Internet of Caring Things (IoCT) programme to explore how shoppers of all ages and abilities experience public retail spaces. Voice

members first completed a survey and then took part in an in-person workshop at our Being Well Place in Newcastle's Grainger Market.

Their insights had a significant impact on the project. Voice members highlighted practical barriers such as noise, lighting, seating and toilet access, but also drew attention to the emotional experience of shopping - the importance of feeling safe, the hesitation around asking for help and the fear of drawing attention to oneself. These perspectives broadened Katherine's understanding of accessibility as something that's both physical and emotional.

Crucially, Voice members raised issues that hadn't previously been considered, particularly around temporary disability, such as shopping with a broken limb or recovering from surgery. This has shifted Slow Shopping's focus from solely chronic conditions to recognising that accessibility needs can be temporary, fluctuating and universal.

These insights are now helping refine Slow Shopping's model for future retail and community partnerships, ensuring it reflects the full diversity of real shopping experiences.

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“As a near-blind person, the opportunity to have my voice heard in relation to ‘Slow Shopping’ was tremendous. Shopping to a degree equals independence and being in an environment that allows me to shop in comfort is so important. As the project developed, it was terrific to see that people were gaining an awareness and an understanding that not everyone could do simple everyday things like shopping at a hundred miles an hour.”

Clive - Voice member



“It was really interesting being involved in the Know Your Floors in-person workshop, because not only was it interactive and invoked interesting discussion around the subject that I’d never even thought about, we were able to ask direct questions and raise any concerns we had about the prototype app, which I thought was a great concept because it allowed for learning and improvement of the product all round.”

Evette - Voice member

Know Your Floors: Designing Pelvic Health Support with Real People at the Centre

Pelvic floor issues affect millions of women worldwide, and almost 50% experience symptoms within ten years of giving birth¹⁶. Founded by NHS physiotherapist Suzanne Vernazza, Know Your Floors is a not-for-profit initiative improving awareness, confidence and access to pelvic health support. After years of seeing conditions go underdiagnosed and poorly understood, Suzanne set out to build solutions that help people recognise symptoms early and access support with dignity. Her social media education work revealed a clear appetite for trusted guidance, prompting the idea of creating an app informed directly by users themselves.

Shaping the App Together

To ensure the app reflected real needs, Suzanne partnered with Voice and NICA’s Internet of Caring Things programme. Voice members first completed a survey about what they would want from the app, followed by a workshop where ten participants reviewed early designs and imagery. Importantly, members included people with and without lived experience of pelvic health issues, demonstrating that good design benefits from many perspectives and that everyone has something meaningful to contribute.

Voice members made several key contributions. Their feedback validated that pelvic health is an area needing greater investment, giving Suzanne confidence that the innovation was heading in the right direction. They also raised design considerations that will shape future development, including that a more clinical aesthetic may appeal to different demographics and that certain features may attract some users while discouraging others. These insights are helping Suzanne understand who the first version of the app is likely to reach and how the design may need to evolve over time.

By providing unbiased, external perspectives, Voice members helped de-risk the innovation, offering honest reflections that Suzanne couldn’t gather from her social media following alone. Their input has strengthened both the immediate direction of Know Your Floors and its long-term strategy, ensuring the app develops in ways that remain grounded in real experience. This work also reflects NICA+Voice’s wider commitment to improving women’s health, ensuring that innovations designed for women are built with their voices at the heart of every step forward.

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Equal Arts: Expanding Access to Creativity Through Dementia-Friendly Design

With an estimated 982,000 people currently living with dementia in the UK, rising to 1.4 million by 2040, the need for accessible and meaningful cultural experiences has never been greater¹⁷. Research shows that reading can be an effective and enriching activity for people living with dementia¹⁸. This highlights that innovation in ageing isn't only technological – it can be cultural, creative and rooted in community practice. Voice works not only with businesses but also with charities and non-profits like Equal Arts, demonstrating how imagination and design can meaningfully improve later life.

Equal Arts is a creative ageing charity based in Newcastle, supporting older people to use creativity in their daily lives. Their latest project, Open Ended Books, is a dementia-friendly publishing initiative designed to keep reading accessible and enjoyable. The series focuses on the sensory and emotional experience of reading, using shorter text, tactile paper and evocative imagery, with two books published so far on Thomas Bewick and Dorothy Wordsworth.

Voice Members Guide the Way Forward

To further develop Open Ended Books, Equal Arts partnered with Voice and NICA's Internet of

Caring Things (IoCT) programme. The project was presented to the IoCT Voice Advisory Panel, who provided feedback on how the initiative could best reach people and how its communication and branding could be strengthened.

Voice members' feedback led to significant changes to the branding and communications. Equal Arts had originally thought that they should avoid any medical links; however, after listening to Voice members, they realised that seeking NHS backing would improve credibility and have incorporated this into the communications and marketing strategy. Insights from Voice members are also being incorporated into future plans. They identified that Equal Arts are experts in accessible writing, so it's an opportunity for them to apply that in other contexts - something that Equal Arts hadn't given thought to before.

The Thomas Bewick book was showcased in the Longevity Home, which has already prompted local housing providers to place orders for supported living environments.

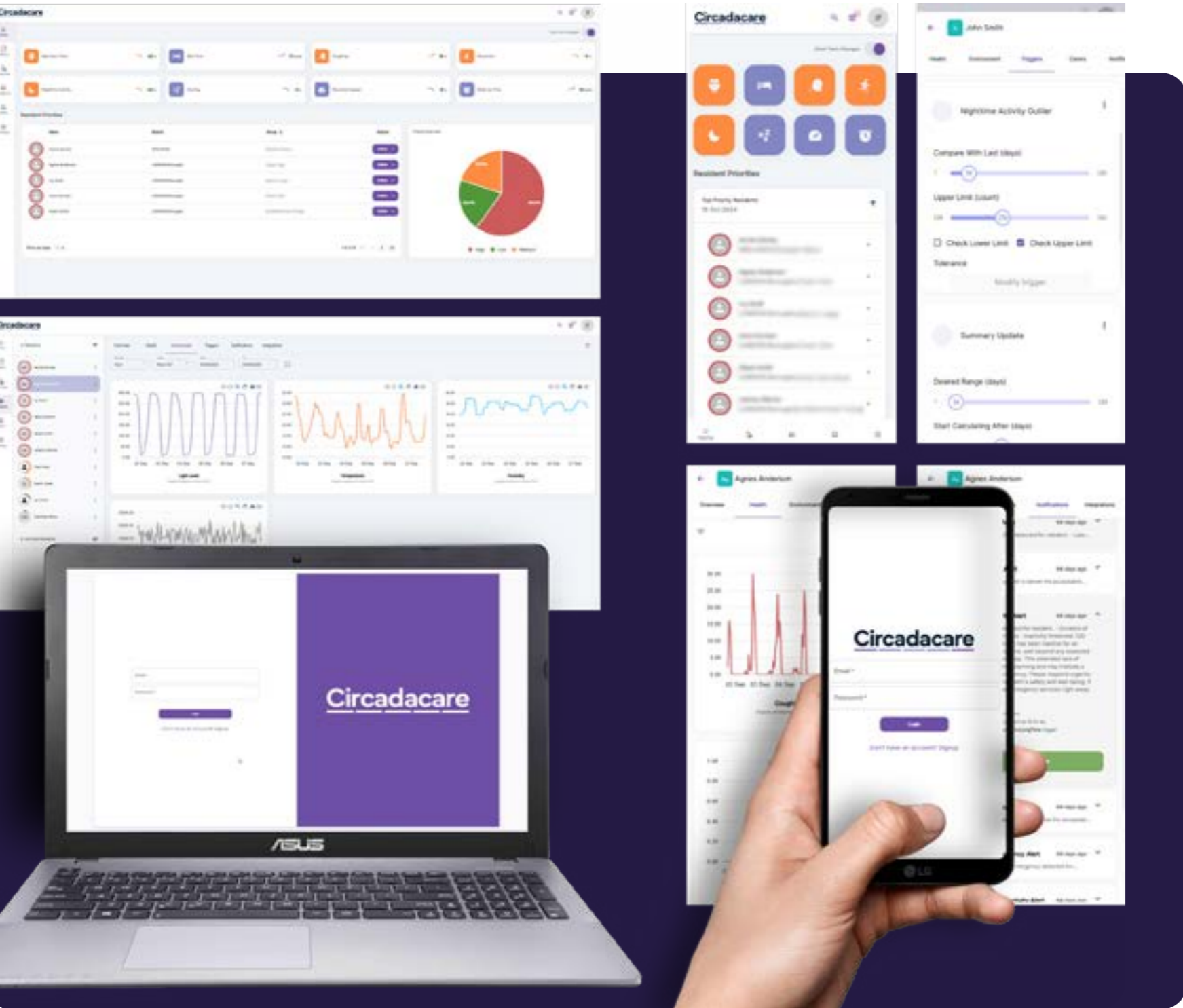
Through this collaboration, Voice members have helped shape a cultural innovation that brings creativity, connection and dignity to people living with dementia.

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"It was really great to meet up with the people from Equal Arts and talk to them to understand what they are trying to achieve and how they are going about it. It's always good to exchange ideas and perhaps give a different perspective. I found them to be receptive and keen to take our thoughts on board, all of which should go towards a positive outcome for their work, which ultimately will help people with this debilitating condition."

Roland - Voice member



Circadacare: Shaping Technology That Supports Daily Life

Across the UK, families increasingly rely on support that helps older people live safely and well at home. Yet 77% of family carers say they need more help, and 92% believe that technology companies must co-design with older people to create solutions that genuinely work. There's also a strong belief in the potential of technology to improve quality of life, but only when it's shaped by the people who will use it¹⁹.

Circadacare designs lighting solutions that replicate natural sunlight to support wellbeing, sleep and daily rhythms. Their innovation centres on a light bulb that shifts from bright morning light to softer evening tones, helping regulate the circadian rhythm. This is particularly valuable for people living with dementia, who often experience disrupted body clocks and symptoms such as sundowning, where confusion and agitation often worsen as sunlight fades in the late afternoon and evening. The bulb also includes discreet in-built monitoring for sound, temperature and humidity, enabling alerts if someone calls out, falls or shows early signs of health issues like chest infections or urinary tract infections.

A Journey of Co-Design

Voice and NICA first connected with Circadacare in 2022 through the IoCT programme and worked

with Voice members through a workshop, where they tested ideas and shared their lived experience. These insights directly shaped the design, particularly the need for the bulb to be unobtrusive, to disguise the monitoring components and to work in a standard light fitting without requiring home adaptations. Members also influenced decisions about which types of monitoring felt acceptable and genuinely useful in home and care-home settings.

The collaboration has continued through the years. Most recently, Circadacare's light bulb featured in NICA's Longevity Home, where public responses placed it in the top three most positively received innovations. Voice members recognised the journey from early workshop discussions to seeing the final product on display and reflected that it's something they would want in their own homes. This collaboration shows how sustained involvement through Voice and the IoCT programme helps innovations move from early ideas to real-world validation, building confidence with users, partners and providers before technologies reach the market.

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Fidelity: Reimagining Financial Futures in a Longer-Living World

Around the world, people are living longer, healthier lives, creating an urgent question for individuals and institutions alike: how will we pay for a longer life? Fidelity International, a global asset manager and retirement savings business, recognised that increased longevity demands new solutions for retirement planning and decumulation. By 2050, an estimated 3.67 million people globally are expected to live to 100, yet seven in ten (74%) say they're unprepared for retirement when measured against a potential 100-year life. This gap isn't only financial, it signals a wider market need for products and services capable of supporting people through extended later life.

Understanding Longevity Readiness

To explore this challenge, Fidelity partnered with NICA and the international Voice community to understand how longevity is reshaping expectations of retirement across 11 key global markets. This work was deeply rooted in the insights and priorities raised by Voice members, whose experiences continually highlight where industry must evolve to better support people living longer.

Together, NICA+Voice and Fidelity designed a global survey capturing over 11,000 responses, complemented by focus groups in the UK, Germany and Singapore to explore pre- and post-retirement hopes, concerns and lived realities.

The insights shaped a major report introducing four interconnected pillars of longevity readiness: financial, physical, emotional and social. Since publication, Fidelity has released a series of narrative pieces reframing how retirement is understood, sparking global debate and attracting media attention across Australia, Taiwan and the UK.

This collaboration demonstrates how the priorities surfaced through the Voice community are now guiding businesses to innovate for the longevity economy, ensuring future financial strategies reflect what people truly need as they live longer lives. The conversation continues to grow, and Voice members can delve deeper into this work by listening to NICA's Director, Nic Palmarini, on the Fidelity Answers podcast, which explores how longevity is reshaping financial futures.

[Watch the podcast here](#)

UniCredit: Understanding the Future Through the Longevity Economy

Across Europe, longer lives are reshaping how people work, spend, plan and participate in society. For financial institutions like UniCredit, this shift brings both complexity and opportunity. With demographic change accelerating and longevity now recognised as a major economic force, UniCredit partnered with NICA+Voice to understand ageing but how longer lives are transforming behaviours, priorities and expectations. The challenge was to look beyond traditional demographic data and uncover the real triggers shaping decision-making in a longevity-driven economy.

Creating Tools for Strategic Thinking

To meet this challenge, NICA created a detailed evidence base analysing the strengths and weaknesses of 30 countries, including UniCredit's core markets. This work resulted in the Longevity Index, a tool that highlights where countries are well-positioned to support longer, healthier lives and where pressures are emerging. Alongside this, NICA produced a series of Horizons reports, using a method that blends analysis with creative thinking to identify early signals of change and explore how they may evolve over the next decade. These reports examine shifts across leisure, lifestyle, work,

the built environment, technology and personal finance, offering a structured, forward-looking framework for confident decision-making.

The insights that shape this work draw on the issues and priorities consistently raised by the Voice community. Their lived experience provides essential grounding, ensuring future strategies reflect how people are genuinely navigating longer lives.

UniCredit launched the Longevity Index at the Longevity Economic Forum in Milan in 2025, positioning it as a strategic resource for businesses, policymakers and investors. With all Horizons reports now published through UniCredit's Longevity Knowledge Hub, this collaboration is helping shape the longevity economy and inspiring organisations across Europe to plan for futures defined not by age but by possibility.

[Read the reports here](#)



City of *Longevity*





City of Longevity: Building Communities Where Everyone Thrives

Cities are where most of us will age. By 2050, nearly 70% of the world's population will live in urban areas²⁰, and the question of how we design cities that support healthy, connected and fulfilling lives has never been more pressing. The City of Longevity is NICA's ambitious initiative to reimagine urban living for longer lives – not by creating spaces for older people, but by building environments where people of all life stages and ages can thrive together. The City of Longevity provides a structured, evidence-based policy design and delivery framework that brings health, sustainability and prevention together, supported by data and AI to turn existing knowledge into action, test and add (proven) interventions, and reduce duplication.

The City of Longevity brings together local government, businesses, researchers, urban planners and, crucially, citizens themselves to co-design, test and implement the infrastructure, services and systems that will shape how we live, work and connect in the decades ahead. It's about more than accessible pavements or age-friendly housing – though of course those matter deeply. It's about creating environments and cities that proactively plan ahead, foster purpose, combat isolation and inequalities, support connection

and togetherness, nurture wellbeing and ensure that longer lives are lived with dignity, joy and opportunity.

Voice members are integral to this vision. Their lived experience of navigating cities – from public transport and healthcare access to green spaces and community connection – provides the essential foundations that ensures urban innovation reflects reality for longer lives, not outdated assumptions.

Recognition on the Global Stage

This year, the City of Longevity received international recognition when it won the Dubai Foresight Award at the Dubai Future Forum, one of the world's most prestigious platforms for future-focused foresight and innovation. Competing against initiatives from across the globe, the City of Longevity stood out for its people-centred approach, its commitment to co-design, and its potential to create scalable, replicable models for age-inclusive urban living.

The win at Dubai wasn't just an accolade – it was validation that the world is ready for a new model for healthy longevity, for urban development, one that doesn't treat ageing as a problem to be

managed but as an opportunity to build better cities and lives for everyone. It has opened doors to new partnerships, amplified our reach, and strengthened the case for investing in longevity as a lens for urban transformation.

As the City of Longevity continues to develop, Voice members will remain at its heart – shaping the conversation, testing the ideas, and ensuring that the cities of tomorrow are built with the creativity and wisdom of those who will live in them.

[Find out more here](#)

Meet the *Team*



Professor Nic Palmarini Director of NICA

Professor Nic Palmarini is the Director of the UK's National Innovation Centre for Ageing (NICA), the co-founder of the Edelman Longevity Lab, the CEO of Voice® Italia and an affiliate of the Harvard Meta Lab. Before joining NICA, Nic was a research manager at the MIT-IBM Watson AI Lab, a \$250 million academic-industry partnership focused on the responsible advancement of artificial intelligence, and from 2015 served as Head of AI for Healthy Ageing at IBM Research in Cambridge, USA. He has also held roles as Director of the Human Centric Innovation Centre in Paris and as a Smart City Subject Matter Expert.

Trained in social and political studies, Nic has deep

expertise in leading multidisciplinary teams and translating research into real-world applications that create both community and business impact. He has a decade of experience in applied research on ageing and healthy longevity and has created several first-of-a-kind programmes, including Living Safer, the Internet of Caring Things and the City of Longevity. His teams' work has received numerous international awards.

Nic is also a professor of practice at Newcastle University, the co-founder of Talent Garden's Innovation School, an author, a TEDx and keynote speaker and a member of multiple international boards.



Professor Lynne Corner Deputy Director of NICA and Director of Voice®

Professor Lynne Corner is Deputy Director of the UK National Innovation Centre for Ageing (NICA), Director of Voice® and co-founder of The Longevity Lab with Edelman. Voice® is our international citizen community established to harness the immense insights, experience, skills and wisdom of the public and to drive cross-generational dialogue on healthy longevity, co-developing products and services with businesses.

NICA and Voice® are expanding the Voice® community across key global geographies including Singapore, the US and Taiwan, with further chapters established in Italy, Australia and Canada. Lynne has wide experience across all aspects of healthy ageing and brain capital, with a particular interest in consumer insights, trends, big data and behaviour change in the context of healthy longevity. She is a Trustee of the Lewy Body Society.



Kiri Backhouse
Strategic Partnership
Manager

Kiri is Voice’s Strategic Partnerships Manager and responsible for forging meaningful, cross-sector partnerships and driving impactful collaborations for Voice, that harnesses the immense lived experiences in our communities. Kiri manages the Voice Collaboration Network in the UK to bring you new opportunities from our university partners and the expansion of Voice to our new Chapters around the world.



Alys Arnold
Community
Manager

As Community Manager, Alys focuses on creating a strong and engaged national Voice community. Alys manages the growth, engagement, and experience of Voice’s members, driving the organisation’s mission to harness cross-generational insights to inform research and innovation. Her dedication helps build a vibrant community committed to shaping the future of healthy ageing.



Lauren Chaffey
Voice®
Coordinator

Lauren is responsible for supporting the coordination of Voice’s day-to-day activities, as well as the running of the Voice® digital platform. She supports Voice members to get involved in research and innovation and aids researchers on how to best involve members. With a background in community development and public involvement, Lauren ensures that community voices are central to research and innovation.



Catherine Butcher
Community
Manager (IoCT)

Catherine is the Community Manager for NICA’s North of Tyne Combined Authority Internet of Caring Things programme, working with Voice members within the North East. Catherine leads a diverse portfolio of projects, focusing on leveraging citizen insights and experience to shape innovative solutions, ensuring that lived experiences drive the next generation of products and services.



George Lee
Head of
Communications

George Lee is the Head of Communications and Engagement at NICA + Voice, driving the organisation’s efforts to innovate through cross-generational storytelling. George has been recognised globally for her work in challenging age stereotypes. She leads initiatives that amplify NICA + Voice’s impact, including being the Editor of This Curious Life, the official online magazine from NICA + Voice; exploring the evolving narratives around age and life transitions.



Robyn Challans
Digital Communications
Specialist

Robyn Challans is the Digital Communications Specialist for NICA + Voice, responsible for managing and enhancing Voice’s social media presence. Robyn brings over five years of experience in social media management, content creation, and influencer marketing. Her expertise in digital communications supports NICA + Voice’s mission to engage audiences creatively and effectively.

**Meet the extended team at
NICA+Voice**

Looking Ahead

The next year is exciting for NICA+Voice – with plans to further expand our global activities in South East Asia, China and beyond, reflecting the critical importance of Healthy Ageing to all regions. The demographic landscape across these regions is transforming at an unprecedented pace: Southeast Asia was home to 77.4 million people aged 60 years and over in 2020. China's demographic shift is even more dramatic, with 323 million people already over age 60 in 2025, representing 23% of the entire population, and projections indicating this will surpass 400 million around 2035. These demographic changes present both profound challenges and significant opportunities.

NICA in China

Following the successful conclusion of the China-UK Healthy Ageing Programme, our citizen engagement community - Jishe shifted into a light-touch operational mode. During this period, we continued to publish WeChat articles on healthy longevity related topics, tracking emerging trends such as the rise of the silver economy and growing interest in food-as-medicine. These themes resonated with NICA industry briefings and aligned closely with topics explored by This Curious Life. We have also conducted insight activities in China as part of our global research, gathering perspectives on healthy living and fashion, and we are now exploring how to expand the "Voice Global Conversation" in China.

Jishe plans to gradually resume its regular operations and broaden its footprint across China. We are also aiming to expand this to major cities such as Shanghai and Guangzhou, developing partnerships with a wider range of local academic and commercial organisations. This will strengthen our contribution to the field of healthy longevity and help us capture the lived experiences and wisdom of people from many diverse backgrounds.



Shape the Future

2026: Conversation to Action

This report celebrates the extraordinary contributions of Voice members who have shaped research, design and innovation with NICA+Voice throughout 2025. Thank you for being part of our journey.

This report tells a story of impact. Voice members shaped and influenced research that informs policy, influenced designs that are in our homes, and guided businesses to develop strategies, products and approaches that will address healthy longevity and serve millions of people, across the UK and internationally. It's a story of people being heard, of expertise being recognised, and of lived experience effectively harnessed and driving meaningful change across sectors and generations.

Stories alone don't change lives. Action does.

Every interview, every workshop, every survey, every collaboration has been building toward something bigger. NICA+Voice has always been about more than consultation. It's about the power of citizens to shape the innovations that affect their lives, and redirect entire industries. In action, the

power of Ageing Intelligence and collective wisdom to accelerate solutions for healthy longer lives that the world urgently needs.

As we move into 2026, that power is about to multiply. This is the year we radically accelerate our journey from insights to impact, from prototype to product, from conversation to visible change. Voice is streamlining - becoming faster, sharper, more responsive - so that when you share what matters, organisations act on it, without delay. The urgency is real. Right now, someone is struggling with technology that excludes them. Someone is living in a home that no longer meets their needs. Someone is navigating a health and care system that is not fit for purpose. Someone is realising they do not have enough money. These aren't abstract problems - they're daily realities for millions of people, and they demand solutions, not symposiums.

NICA+Voice's strength has always been its people. Your honesty cuts through corporate assumptions. Your curiosity challenges people to ask better questions. Your generosity opens doors for innovations that will outlive us all. In 2026, we're channelling that strength with greater focus and velocity than ever before.

Our purpose is clear: to ensure that every voice shapes the future, that every innovation serves real needs, and that the longevity revolution benefits everyone, not just the few. We will continue to connect citizen insight with the researchers, designers and businesses who can turn insight into action. We will continue to champion co-design over consultation, partnership over patronage, and delivery over discussion.

The future doesn't arrive fully formed - it's built by the choices we make today. The Voice community has been building that future for decades, one conversation, one project at a time. Now, in 2026, those conversations become blueprints. Those insights become innovations. Those voices become the foundation of a world where longer lives are better, more joyful lives.

**Shape the future with us.
Together, we imagine what's possible - and we build and deliver it.**



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Influencing the future

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