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u3a members have joined forces with the Centre for Ageing Better to challenge ageism

u3a members across the country are joining forces with the Centre for Ageing Better on the first ever annual u3a day to call for an end to negative and damaging views of later life, shifting the focus to positive, more realistic depictions instead.

A survey of u3a members found that nearly 40% had heard ageist language used about their age group. Terms most commonly described by members as offensive included 'wrinkly' and 'past it'. 63% of members had heard their age group described as 'frail' and 53% had heard their age group described as 'geriatric'. A fifth (20%) of surveyed u3a members in their sixties said they had been described as 'elderly' despite nearly two fifths (37%) of them finding the term offensive. The results contrasted strongly with how members saw themselves, with common responses in the survey including 'friendly', 'curious', 'intelligent' and 'independent'.

To support u3a members to challenge ageism, u3a and the Centre for Ageing Better have produced a toolkit which includes information and resources on how to challenge ageism including a 'Top Tips' guide.

Sam Mauger, CEO of the Third Age Trust, said: "u3a represents a diverse and enthusiastic group of members who are wonderful examples of what it means to age well. Our members all approach later life in different ways and we want to see this reflected in the way we talk about and think about ageing.

"We want to shift the narrative around ageing to reflect the positive and realistic experiences of older adults which is why we have partnered with Ageing Better on a toolkit to combat ageism."

Louise Ansari, Director of Communications and Influencing, Centre for Ageing Better, said:

"Ageism affects us all, limiting our perceptions of what we can do as we get older, and leading to discrimination against those in later life. With all of us living longer, it's vital that we work together across society to combat harmful stereotypes so we can all make the most of our later years.

The final version along with the resources, including the press release outline, are available on resource space here:

<https://ageingbetter.resourcespace.com/pages/search.php?search=%21collection2061049&k=bdcd772e5>