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CEO Sam Mauger speaks about the importance of well-designed, multigenerational neighbourhoods for older adults at Reimagining our Neighbourhoods of the Future forum

Putting people and the planet first must be the priority when creating neighbourhoods – that is the message from an innovate conference looking at how to develop age-friendly housing in socially supportive, multigenerational neighbourhoods.

Sam Mauger, the CEO of u3a, was one of the keynote speakers at Reimagining our Neighbourhoods of the Future, in London on 26 October.

Experts on agile ageing looked at how to tackle loneliness when creating 'smart' neighbourhoods so that it no longer has such a serious impact on older people's physical and mental health, quality of life, and longevity.

Sam explained how u3a members do not see themselves as being defined by age, which bears no relation to what they can do and the opportunities available to them.

And they are not afraid of technology. In fact, there was a significant rise in the number of older members who got to grips with the internet and Zoom during lockdown.

She added: "Well-designed homes and neighbourhoods, combined with enabling technologies, will empower older adults and promote mobility.

"This will lead to a better quality of life, health and wellbeing, together with cost savings to individuals and governments alike. A multigenerational neighbourhood embodies equality of opportunity and talent.

"It ensures that older adults are seen as contributors and consumers in the same way that every other working adult or younger person should be. And mixed generational communities ensure that no age group is set apart or treated differently and this approach celebrates the value of lived experience."

u3a is working closely with the [Agile Ageing Alliance](#) and other organisations to develop a standard to promote the development of age-friendly housing in 'smart' socially supportive multigenerational neighbourhoods.

Read more about u3a's ongoing anti-ageism work on the movement's [Social Impact page](#).

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