

## **Video 6 'Ageism: Explained', Centre for Ageing Better**

Ever been told to act your age? From the minute we're born, we're judged according to how old we are. And this can lead us to being treated unfairly because of our age. This is ageism. It's the most widespread form of discrimination in the UK and it will impact us all at some point, particularly as we get older.

Ageism affects how society sees older people. They're often reduced to offensive stereotypes, patronised, or treated as a burden. And it even affects how we see ourselves. As the years progress, we start to believe what we read, see, and hear, and come to think that we're past it. Sometimes it's obvious, sometimes it's more hidden.

But ageism is everywhere. The media focuses on frailty and decline and fixates on older people falling prey to things like scams. Journalists can also wrongly portray people in later life as rich baby boomers, despite millions of older people living in poverty. And this false generalisation can give the impression that older people are less worthy of support. Advertising sells us promises of how to defy the ageing process rather than embrace it. When we do see older people in adverts, it's usually to sell products linked to death and decline, like funeral plans. Across every sector and in every corner of society, we're met with negative attitudes towards getting older.

Age discrimination isn't just unfair, it's illegal. Yet ageism is part of everyday life. In the workplace, older employees are often treated as less able, routinely held back from training opportunities or feel shut out of the jobs market entirely. And it can also affect access to healthcare. Studies show that older people are often not consulted about their care preferences and can be discouraged or even restricted in accessing the treatment they need. But the bleak stories we're told and sold about getting older do not reflect reality. In fact, life satisfaction is at its highest in later life, and most of us don't actually think older people benefit at the expense of younger people.

The majority of us recognise that older adults have plenty to contribute to society. Four in five of us believe that we could all benefit from the wealth of experience that older adults have. It's clear that age is not the problem. Ageism is.

To find out more and help end ageism, visit [ageing-better.org.uk/ageism](https://ageing-better.org.uk/ageism).