



INTERSECTIONAL STIGMA OF PLACE-BASED AGEING (ISPA)

PROJECT SUMMARY

Introduction

The ISPA project is an ambitious 5-year participatory mixed method study that will explore and understand how the stigma attached to where people live can intersect with experiences of disability and ageing. This will provide nuanced insights into the structures and systems that drive exclusion and allow us to tackle the inequalities experienced by older disabled adults. We have a [video here](#) if you wish to see a bit of an overview.

We aim to develop interventions related to home and environmental modifications which encourage interventions for inclusive approaches that support people to age well within homes and communities across England, Scotland, and Wales. The project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and runs from September 2022 to September 2027.

The partners

The Intersectional Stigma of Place-Based Ageing (ISPA) Project is a collaboration between the University of Stirling and the University of St Andrews, Newcastle University and University of Bristol. We are also partnered with the Housing Learning and Improvement Network (Housing LIN) and Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)



The Inclusive Living Alliance

We are beginning to build an Inclusive Living Alliance, with partners including the Digital Health & Care Innovation Centre (DHI), Foundations, Public Health Scotland, Link Housing association, Horizon Housing Association, Stonewater Housing Association, Springfield Properties plc, Care & Repair Scotland, Care & Repair Cymru, Motionspot, Artlink Central and the Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities (SCLD).

Aims and Objectives

The themes under investigation by this research are unique in nature. Stigma can lead to increased barriers to services, exclusion, and negative experiences, yet little is known about the lived experiences of people impacted by several dimensions of stigma (intersectional stigma). This project will co-produce solutions and interventions with older disabled adults that break down the barriers to access and inclusion created by stigma in key services. The over-arching aim of ISPA is two-fold:

- Investigate the lived realities of disabled adults with sensory and mobility impairments, identifying how different types of stigma (related to age, disability and place) converge to produce added barriers to living inclusively.
- Co-produce an innovative Inclusive Living Toolkit to include the experiences of older disabled adults and use it to facilitate organisational change that supports accessible and inclusive practice in homes and neighbourhoods.

Furthermore, the project has six main objectives to be achieved by its five work packages.

1. Understand the lived experiences and contextual effects of intersectional stigma for disabled adults, specifically with mobility and sensory impairments via qualitative and quantitative secondary analysis and a new qualitative longitudinal dataset.
2. Use the above information to help generate understandings of the ways in which 'ageing-in-place' and place-based practical solutions in housing practice may hold potential for tackling intersectional stigma and inequality via accessible homes and communities.
3. Build research capacity through establishing a group of older (65+) disabled community peer-researchers who will research the lived experiences of disabled people and their experiences of intersectional stigma.
4. Develop an existing Inclusive Living Toolkit to integrate lived experience of disabled older adults to tackle inequalities related to accessibility via home and neighbourhood modifications and support ageing-in-place.
5. Facilitate organisational change via a newly developed Inclusive Living Toolkit to deliver practical interventions that support accessible home and neighbourhood modifications.

6. Monitor and evaluate change and tangible impact instigated from 03-5 to determine the extent to which home and neighbourhood modifications can reduce stigma related to perceptions around adaptations, ageing, place and disability and how these impact on inclusion.

Project Purpose

We believe this is going to be a ground-breaking project where lived experiences, as well as analysis of existing quantitative and qualitative data sets will inform our evidence-base. At the heart of this work is the development and implementation of a new Inclusive Living Toolkit with a focus on not only understanding how stigma intersects with age, place and disability but then recommends and works with organisations to make real home and environmental changes that can create positive change. We plan to establish an Inclusive Living Alliance, which will comprise of organisations willing to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the new Inclusive Living Toolkit in relation to their service provision/practices.

We also aim to examine inequalities and stigma to develop interventions related to home and environmental modifications that encourage inclusive approaches which support people to age well within homes and communities across England, Scotland and Wales.

Research Method

The ISPA project adopts a co-production approach. Overall direction and guidance is provided by a Project Advisory Board (PAB), made up of approximately ten members. These members represent different disciplines and expertise such as health, housing, the independent living movement, and gerontology. The PAB will feedback on our formal governance plan, project management, project recruitment, risk register and ethical processes.

Given that the lived experience of disablement of older individuals is central to our objectives, self-identifying disabled older peer researchers will be recruited and trained to carry out reflective diaries of their neighbourhoods. In total, we aim to create a peer researcher network of fifty individuals based across Scotland, England, and Wales. The Peer Researchers will be supported and trained by the Research Fellow (Dr Dianne Theakstone, University of Stirling) and the ISPA Project Coordinator (Julia Lawrence, University of Stirling).

The lived experiences gathered throughout the project, along with quantitative/qualitative analysis of existing data sets, will inform the development of a new Inclusive Living Toolkit. An action research approach will utilise an Inclusive Alliance to help with the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of this Inclusive Living Toolkit. The Inclusive Alliance, for example, comprises of organisations willing to explore alternative approaches to service provision/practices to enable positive change. Fully accessible reports outlining our findings from the study will be available for all research outputs.

Contact Details



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Dr Dianne Theakstone, University of Stirling



Dr Dianne Theakstone is the full time Research Fellow supporting all the work on the ISPA Project but with special focus on the co-production and building a UK-wide group of Community Peer-Researchers that includes a diverse range of disabled adults to ensure lived experience is at the heart of the ISPA project.

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