

# AGEING WITHOUT CHILDREN



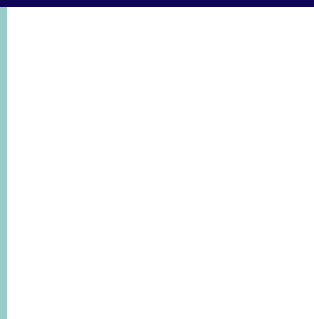
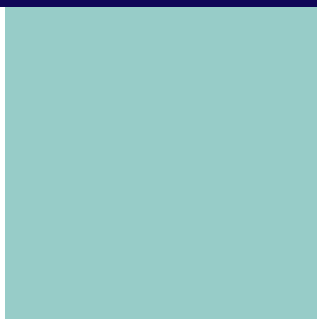
Working with the invisible million

A Toolkit for  
organisations



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## The National Care Forum is delighted to launch this toolkit in partnership with Ageing Without Children.

It has been clear over recent years just how important a better understanding of the increasing numbers of people who are ageing without children is for both the country as a whole and for the care and support sector. The National Care Forum has been working closely with Kirsty Woodard founder of AWOC to raise awareness of this group of people whose life experiences and care and support needs are often not well considered in the design and operation of care and support options.

We know that, as a sector, social care must always keep innovating and adapting to make sure that we offer the best quality and range of care and support to our current and future customers. The NCF is delighted to be leading the way with AWOC in developing this unique toolkit.

We have worked closely with Kirsty Woodard and a number of NCF members to help organisations understand what is meant by ageing without children, what impact it has on individuals throughout their lives and what it means for service design and delivery.

Special thanks also go to the PRAMA Foundation, whose early pioneering work in this field inspired the development of this toolkit together with The Salvation Army, Leicester Ageing Together, Age Exchange, Housing 21 and Keychange Charity who helped bring it to life.

The toolkit was written by Kirsty Woodard who can be contacted for further information and training at [info@awoc.org.uk](mailto:info@awoc.org.uk)

Vic Rayner  
Chief Executive National Care Forum

As a care provider, primarily to older people, but including many of different ages and both physical and mental capacities, we all have the responsibility of recognising the often unspoken thoughts, attitudes - and, sometimes deep sadness - of those who were unable to either conceive children or, for many and varied reasons, be parents. Prama considers Ageing Without Children to be an “unprotected characteristic”, one which around 1 in 5 of our clients can relate to. And this number is growing. Prama is delighted to have participated in the preparation of this toolkit and encourages all care providers to take advantage of the resources it contains.

*Steve Robinson,  
Chief Executive Officer, Prama*

People ageing without children have often been largely invisible in the past – to policy makers, those commissioning services and organisations delivering care. This toolkit is a huge step forward as it will enable organisations to really address how they recognise and support those ageing without children. It will be a vital tool in making sure the support and care they receive is appropriate and sensitive to their needs, and we look forward to supporting it being rolled out within the care sector”

*Paul Goulden, AWOC*

# INTRODUCTION

## The purpose of this toolkit is to help organisations understand

- What is meant by ageing without children,
- The impact it has on individuals,
- What it means for their service delivery and planning and
- How they can raise awareness both internally and externally

## The toolkit will

- Set out the context within which organisations deliver services and support
- Outline specific actions that organisations can take
- Provide tools for organisations to help them implement being **AWOC (AGEING WITHOUT CHILDREN)** Confident and measuring their progress. Building an AWOC Confident organisation will enable people ageing without children to live a good later life and help reduce the stigma associated with ageing without children. Systems and services that work for people ageing without children will improve the lives of all older people.

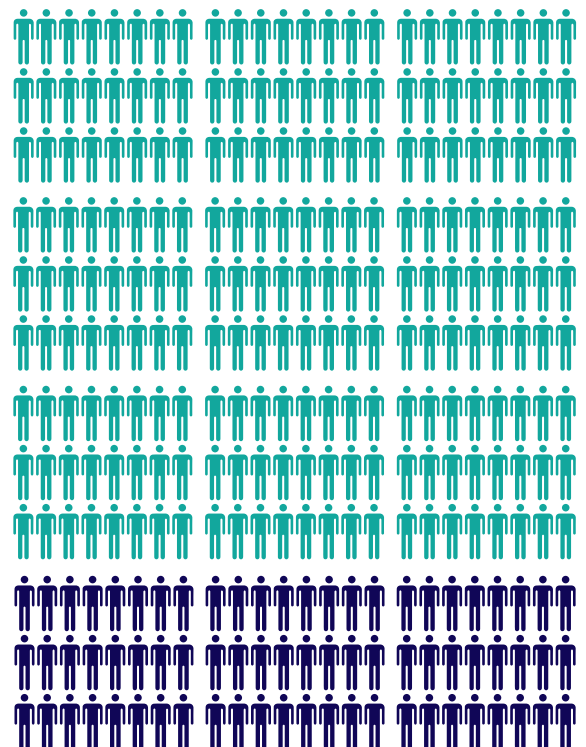
## Who is it for?

This tool kit is aimed at organisations responsible for managing and providing services for older people in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.

## Covid-19

Whilst this toolkit was being written, the Covid-19 pandemic began and at the time of writing is still continuing. The pandemic has thrown into sharp relief how much older people do rely on their adult children for both practical help and emotional support. It has taken an army of local and national volunteers to replace what adult children usually provide. The appetite to help has been extremely positive and brought communities and neighbourhoods together but as yet we do not know if it will continue once the outbreak is over. Similarly, the pandemic has also shown the gulf between older people who are online and those who are not.

Research by the Office for National Statistics indicates that by **2045** there will be **3x** as many people over **80** without children



# Definition of an AWOC Confident organisation

An organisation where people ageing without children are understood, included and supported. In an AWOC Confident organisation, staff and volunteers will be aware of and understand the issues affecting people ageing without children and ensure they feel included and confident to access support, participate in activities and the community and able to raise concerns without fear of judgement and exclusion.

## Being AWOC Confident centres around 3 key principles:

1

### People ageing without children are understood

- People ageing without children encompass a broad range of experiences and diversity and are treated as unique individuals

#### **Aim**

- Equality – people ageing without children are treated equally and have the same opportunities to access information, care and services as those with family support

2

### People ageing without children are included

- People ageing without children can face additional barriers in later life and our organisation works to break those down

#### **Aim**

- Participation – people ageing without children will be actively included in activities and communities

3

### People ageing without children are supported

- People ageing without children have contributed to society and deserve equal access to support

#### **Aims**

- Independence – people ageing without children will be supported and enabled to live an independent later life
- Care – people ageing without children will be supported to access the care and support they need
- Self-fulfilment – people ageing without children will actively be enabled to access cultural, leisure and spiritual opportunities
- Dignity – people ageing without children can live safely and with dignity and free of physical or mental abuse

# Definitions

## What do we mean by ageing without children?

Ageing without children covers a wide range of older people who cannot consistently rely on support from their adult children who are the most common source of help in later life. People ageing without children may also be ageing without a partner as well.

### People ageing without children includes:

- People who have no children at all through infertility, choice or circumstance or because they may have outlived their children
- People whose children are unable to offer help or support e.g. they live at a great distance, or have care needs of their own
- People whose children are unwilling to offer help and support e.g. they may have become estranged and have no contact

Although ageing without children covers a wider range than just those who have never been parents, it is also useful to be aware of other terminology used in discussions around people without children.

### Childfree

People who have **chosen never to have children** are often described as 'childfree'. While it is more common for younger people to actively choose not to become parents, it is estimated that around only 10% of women over 50 actively chose not to have children. This means that for the vast majority of older people, not being a parent was not an active choice.

### Childless

People who **wanted children but were unable to achieve that for a variety of reasons** are often called 'childless'. The reasons people are childless are many and varied. For some the reasons are medical, but the majority are childless by circumstance. People who are childless by circumstance include those who:

- Have never met "the right person" whom they wanted and were able, to share having a child with
- Have a relationship with someone who is infertile
- Have a partner who does not wish to have children
- Have felt unable to afford to have a child
- Have not wished to have children who might inherit a hereditary condition
- Have experienced discrimination e.g. LGBTQ people who would have liked to have children, but were unable to do so because of the numerous legal obstacles, as well as the high level of discrimination by wider society, that LGBTQ people encounter.

For people who have wanted to become parents but have been unable to, the added grief and emotional trauma may make ageing without children even harder.

# Part 1: Why should organisations be AWOC Confident?

## Innovative

Organisations who are AWOC Confident, especially early adopters, will be leaders in the field demonstrating a commitment to innovative person centred support.

## Growing reliance on paid for care

There are many more people ageing without children than before and they are more likely to need paid for care services than those with family support.

## Meeting future needs

Formal care services whether in the statutory, private or voluntary sectors will need to both understand more about the issues affecting people ageing without children so they can design services to meet those needs (including access and communication systems that do not rely on family), and provide more of them to meet the increased demand. Organisations that are able to do this will be more attractive to people ageing without children and also to the 30% of carers who are ageing without children and caring for their own parents.

## Challenging myths and stereotypes

People ageing without children are often subject to myths and stereotypes e.g.

- Women who don't have children actively chose to prioritise their career over a family
- People who don't have children do not know what it is like to feel real love
- People who are ageing without children have no need to worry about old age as they will have lots of money from not having brought up a family
- Men without children have had a "lucky escape" from the pressure of being a father
- People ageing without children do not care about the future of society; they have no stake in it because they have no children
- People without children are selfish even though research shows that people ageing without children are more likely to be volunteers and leave money to charity.

## Equality and diversity

To effectively reach people ageing without children and provide them with good care, it is important to understand that they are, like people who have children, a very diverse group of people. Some marginalised groups are more likely to be ageing without children e.g. an estimated 90% of LGBTQ people are ageing without children, approximately 85% of people with disabilities will not have children. The experiences of men ageing without children are often very different to those of women. Bearing this diversity in mind will help organisations meet people's needs.

It can be helpful to think of it in a similar way to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/4](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/4).

"Equally Outstanding" published by the CQC [www.cqc.org.uk/publications/equally-outstanding-equality-human-rights-good-practice-resource-november-2018](http://www.cqc.org.uk/publications/equally-outstanding-equality-human-rights-good-practice-resource-november-2018) outlines why a focus on equality and human rights improves care by ensuring people get the outcomes they want. It also recognises the importance of having a diverse workforce and how it links to quality of care.

The impact of inequalities on ageing and the adverse effect of being isolated with poor support networks, loneliness, poor health and a low income has been well documented. People ageing without children are disproportionately represented in many of these groups.



## Part 2: Context

**There are 1.2 million people over 65 without children in the UK which will increase to 2 million by 2030**

While many people enjoy a long and happy later life, older people often need care and support to help maintain their independence. The role of family carers is critical in helping older people to live independently for as long as possible. 92% of all unpaid care is provided by family and 20% of people over 85 rely solely on their adult children for care. However, family and society in the UK have changed completely over the last 50 years. One of the most significant changes has been the doubling of the numbers of people who have not become parents, going from 9% of those born in the 1940s to 20% of those born in the 1960s. This means that in the UK there are already 1.2 million people over the age of 65 who have not become parents and by 2030 this will double to over 2 million. Research by the Office for National Statistics indicates that by 2045 there will be 3 times as many people over 80 without children. Added to this are the numbers of older people estranged from their children, those whose children have predeceased them and those whose children live too far away to offer practical support or who are unable to offer support for other reasons. We will all know someone who is ageing without children.

**“A wholesale repairing of the social contract so that children see their parents giving wonderful care to grandparents – and recognise that in time that will be their responsibility too” Jeremy Hunt MP**

The change in demographics as well as societal changes mean that in the future, many of the oldest old will not be able to turn to adult children for help. It also needs to be considered that not only are more people ageing without children, but the numbers of people living alone is also increasing: Single people ageing without children will find it much harder to access unpaid care.

**30% of people over 65 without children expect to have to use formal care services compared to 22% of those with children**

The increase in the numbers of people ageing without children has also led to the rise of the so-called ‘bean pole family’. This occurs when a family has more generations with living members but fewer members in each generation. The impact of this is that more people will grow old, not only without children, but also without siblings, nephews or nieces, plus members of the younger generation will be supporting more older relatives

### Why are there more people ageing without children?

The numbers of people ageing without children is increasing for a variety of reasons

- Changes to society including
  - Widespread access to contraception
  - More women going to university and working full time
  - Changing gender expectations and roles
  - Delaying parenthood
  - Difficulty in meeting the right person
  - Economic uncertainty
- Infertility
- Longer life spans meaning that it is becoming more common for people to outlive their children
- Family breakdown and estrangement
- More people moving away from where they grew up to pursue education or job opportunities



## Health and social care policy

Social care has been a problematic issue for successive governments and despite a plethora of reports and papers, there has yet to be any significant change of national policy around the issue. This, coupled with difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff in both health and social care along with the austerity programme of reduced public spending, has resulted in fewer people receiving social care. At a national level, the assumption that all older people have family and that they will be able to provide care and support remains embedded in policy and planning on ageing.

There is no current evidence to suggest that the criteria to access social care will be loosened and while we await the Government's intentions on the long term funding of care, it is likely that there will be a continued drive for family and community to do more to support older people who need help and care.

## Access to unpaid care

Research has shown that people ageing without children are less likely to have unpaid care support when their health deteriorates; extended family e.g. siblings, nephews/nieces, cousins, friends and neighbours do not make up the care deficit if one does not have a nuclear family. Essentially, the more support a person needs, the less robust their support network is in being able to meet their needs

## Access to formal care

The lack of unpaid care has an inevitable knock-on effect to paid for formal care; evidence shows that older people without children and especially those who are widowed are more likely to need formal care services. People ageing without children are 25% more likely to enter residential care or use paid for care, which given the growing numbers of people ageing without children means that the UK is currently undersupplied with care home places, and the domiciliary care sector is struggling to employ enough care workers to meet demand.

# Ageing without children



People ageing without children are **25% more likely to go into a care home**

**1.2m**

people over **65** are not parents. By 2030 this will be **2 million**

**92%**

of all unpaid care is provided by family



Older people with disabilities who live alone and have no children will increase by **80% to 860,000** by **2032**

**90%**

of **LGBTQ people** are estimated to be ageing without children



People ageing without children are **30% more likely to be carers for their own parents**

## Part 3: Impact of ageing without children on individuals and services

### Individuals

The impact of ageing without children on individuals is both emotional and practical. People ageing without children have many of the same worries as older people with children;

- What happens if I become chronically ill?
- Will I have enough money to do the things I want?
- Can I stay living at home if that is my choice?

However, for people ageing without children there is the added level of concern that they do not or will not have an advocate when they need one or have access to everyday low- level help to help them retain their independence.

Moreover, there are still strong taboos associated with being an adult without children, with assumptions made about how this came about, and judgements made about their life choices. This also feeds into worries about how they will be treated in care settings; the issues surrounding ageing without children are about far more than who will provide help and care to those without children.

People ageing without children report feeling invisible, marginalised, ignored in discussions on ageing, and lacking a place in a family-orientated society. Many worry about being disconnected from younger generations, and that their stories will go unheard, especially if they develop dementia in later life. It is as important to tackle these feelings of exclusion and prejudice as it is to solve the practical problems of support and care.

Of course, not all people ageing without children will be without support or experience all the emotions outlined above, but many will.

### Practical

- need for advocacy
- emergency point of contact
- help with everyday practical tasks

### Emotional

- feelings of grief & loss
- a feeling of invisibility
- varying experiences of different groups e.g. men, LGBTQ
- feeling isolated & excluded

## Implications for planning and provision of services for older people

People ageing without children have historically been an invisible demographic within ageing. Consequently, the issues that affect them have been overlooked in policy and planning on ageing but over the next 10 – 20 years there will be unprecedented numbers of people without children reaching oldest old age. Policy and planning focused on older people being supported by their children/ grandchildren in later life will not meet this need and risks leaving individuals ageing without children dangerously unsupported.

Research has shown that people ageing without children are less likely to have informal care support when their health deteriorates and need to rely on paid for care services.

### Organisations will have to consider how they will:

#### Understand

- Be sensitive to the emotional issues surrounding ageing without children if it was not a choice and understand the effect of cumulative loss

#### Include

- Ensure that appropriate language and imagery is used to include people ageing without children
- Recognise that people ageing without children overlap with other groups in danger of being excluded e.g. with LGBTQ older people, people with disabilities

#### Support

- Consider how people ageing without children find out about, and access housing, care and support services; research indicates that it is often the family of older people especially adult children who research available services, look up information and make enquiries.
- Ensure that assessments of people ageing without children take into account the additional issues that can come from ageing without children especially if the person is also single/ widowed e.g. their legal next of kin maybe someone they rarely see as well as the practicalities of having no family for legal and health decisions
- The need for support with financial planning
- The need for increased advocacy support
- Recognising that ageing without children might limit people's choices e.g. no one to top up care fees
- That their own staff may well be ageing without children and may need additional support especially as people ageing without children are more likely to be carers for their own parents

# Part 4: Being AWOC Confident

To help organisations with the implementation of becoming AWOC Confident, activities are linked to CQC standards “Regulations for service providers and managers” which sets out our guidance for providers on meeting two groups of regulations:

- Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
- Care Quality Commission (Registration) Regulations 2009 (Part 4)

[www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/regulations-enforcement/regulations-service-providers-managers](http://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/regulations-enforcement/regulations-service-providers-managers)

The toolkit is linked to these standards because they outline the standards expected of service providers, and will enable organisations to strive for continuous improvement in care helping them move from good to outstanding or maintain their outstanding rating.

## 1 Person-centred care



*“The intention of this regulation is to make sure that people using a service have care or treatment that is personalised specifically for them. This regulation describes the action that providers must take to make sure that each person receives appropriate person-centred care and treatment that is based on an assessment of their needs and preferences.*

*Providers must work in partnership with the person, make any reasonable adjustments and provide support to help them understand and make informed decisions about their care and treatment options, including the extent to which they may wish to manage these options themselves.*

*Providers must make sure that they take into account people’s capacity and ability to consent, and that either they, or a person lawfully acting on their behalf, must be involved in the planning, management and review of their care and treatment. Providers must make sure that decisions are made by those with the legal authority or responsibility to do so, but they must work within the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, which includes the duty to consult others such as carers, families and/or advocates where appropriate”*



### An AWOC Confident organisation

- ✓ Recognises that not all older people have close family to support them through the assessment process.
- ✓ Ensures that the information it provides is in clear and everyday language and does not rely on someone having access to the internet to find out all the information available about services
- ✓ Feels able to discuss with the older person who they would like to support them through the assessment process and arrange for advocacy if there is no one to offer support.
- ✓ Understands that “next of kin” for people who have no close family can be a difficult issue and that people may respond with their nearest biological relative even if they have little or no personal relationship with them. An AWOC Confident organisation empowers staff to explore this and to identify someone more appropriate even if they are not a relative.
- ✓ Will be able to show through their literature, website, and interactions that they understand not all older people have family support. People ageing without children will feel able to discuss their life story safe in the knowledge that they will be listened to and understood.
- ✓ Understands that people ageing without children may need additional support to access alternative care and support e.g. from another provider
- ✓ Ensures that an older person with no close family has an advocate or similar, to help them understand their care and treatment, risks, benefits, and choices open to them
- ✓ Actively seeks ways to encourage people ageing without children to participate in making decisions about their care recognising that without close family support this may take longer or require more resources

- ✓ Has a good understanding of and relationships with organisations in the community who may be able to offer support to people ageing without children
- ✓ Proactively seeks the feedback of people ageing without children
- ✓ Recognises that financial issues can be a challenge for people with no close family. This includes managing money on a day-to-day basis as well as paying for care and treatment and the potential impact of third party top-up if required
- ✓ Will feel able to discuss with the individual if they need to create a Lasting Power of Attorney and to help them do so. They will also feel able to arrange for the individual to discuss financial issues with an independent third party such as an advocate or advice provider such as Citizens Advice or Age UK.
- ✓ Will feel able to discuss end of life issues with people ageing without children and help them make a plan for their own end of life including making a will if needed. They will also be aware of the services of End of Life Doula and how to contact them if asked to.

## 2 Dignity and respect

*“The intention of this regulation is to make sure that people using the service are treated with respect and dignity at all times while they are receiving care and treatment. To meet this regulation, providers must make sure that they provide care and treatment in a way that ensures people’s dignity and treats them with respect at all times. This includes making sure that people have privacy when they need and want it, treating them as equals and providing any support they might need to be autonomous, independent, and involved in their local community. Providers must have due regard to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010”*

### An AWOC confident organisation

- ✓ Recognises that people ageing without children may have faced stigma, prejudice, or exclusion in their lives
- ✓ Recognises that not all older people have close family and therefore do not experience later life in the same way as those that do for example not becoming grandparents
- ✓ Recognises that certain transitions in later life e.g. death of a partner can be harder for those who are ageing without children
- ✓ Understands that certain days such as Mother’s Day or Father’s Day can be difficult for people ageing without children and takes steps to ensure staff and volunteers are aware of any sensitivities
- ✓ Is sensitive to the fact that intergenerational activities e.g. inviting children into a care home could trigger an emotional reaction in people ageing without children and takes steps to mitigate this
- ✓ Recognises that for people ageing without children, maintaining relationships with friends is important. It also understands that as friends are likely to be similar in age (not change), additional support and encouragement to continue friendships may be needed
- ✓ Has a good understanding of and relationships with organisations in the community who may be able to offer support to people ageing without children
- ✓ Will be aware that 90 per cent of LGBTQ people are estimated to be ageing without children while, of the 11.9 million people with disabilities in the UK, only 1.7 million are parents, which means that an estimated 85 percent of people with disabilities have no children.
- ✓ Will also understand the stigma within some cultures and communities about being an adult without children
- ✓ Is open to the development of groups for people ageing without children
- ✓ Will recognise and value different people’s world view and experiences

### 3 Need for consent

*“The intention of this regulation is to make sure that all people using the service, and those lawfully acting on their behalf, have given consent before any care or treatment is provided. Providers must make sure that they obtain the consent lawfully and that the person who obtains the consent has the necessary knowledge and understanding of the care and/or treatment that they are asking consent for.”*

*Consent is an important aspect of providing care and treatment, but in some cases, acting strictly in accordance with consent will mean that some of the other regulations cannot be met. For example, this might apply with regard to nutrition and person-centred care. However, providers must not provide unsafe or inappropriate care just because someone has consented to care or treatment that would be unsafe”*

#### An AWOC Confident organisation

- ✓ Recognises that people ageing without children or close family may be more likely to need an advocate
- ✓ Helps people ageing without children understand the options available to them under the Mental Health Act 2005, encourages them to make plans in the event they lose capacity and supports them to access services that can help with this

### 4 Safeguarding service users from abuse and improper treatment

*“The intention of this regulation is to safeguard people who use services from suffering any form of abuse or improper treatment while receiving care and treatment. Improper treatment includes discrimination or unlawful restraint, which includes inappropriate deprivation of liberty under the terms of the Mental Capacity Act 2005.”*

*To meet the requirements of this regulation, providers must have a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, unlawful discrimination, and restraint. This includes:*

- Neglect
- Subjecting people to degrading treatment
- Unnecessary or disproportionate restraint
- Deprivation of liberty.

*Providers must have robust procedures and processes to prevent people using the service from being abused by staff or other people they may have contact with when using the service, including visitors. Abuse and improper treatment include care or treatment that is degrading for people and care or treatment that significantly disregards their needs or that involves inappropriate recourse to restraint. For these purposes, ‘restraint’ includes the use or threat of force, and physical, chemical, or mechanical methods of restricting liberty to overcome a person’s resistance to the treatment in question.*

*Where any form of abuse is suspected, occurs, is discovered, or reported by a third party, the provider must take appropriate action without delay. The action they must take includes investigation and/or referral to the appropriate body. This applies whether the third party reporting an occurrence is internal or external to the provider”*

#### An AWOC confident organisation

- ✓ Recognises that fear of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and improper treatment are one of the biggest concerns of people ageing without children
- ✓ Understands that people ageing without children or close family may find it harder to raise concerns about their care



- ✓ Understands that people ageing without children or close family may need additional support through any investigative process
- ✓ Understands that people ageing without children are over-represented in the protected characteristics of disability and sexual orientation in particular
- ✓ Understands that Authorisation of a deprivation of liberty should be seen as a last resort and less restrictive alternatives that do not amount to deprivation of liberty should be put in place wherever possible. If it is deemed necessary an AWOC Confident organisation will consult anyone named by the individual ageing without children and if there is no one, make a referral for an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA)

## 5 Meeting nutritional and hydration needs

*“The intention of this regulation is to make sure that people who use services have adequate nutrition and hydration to sustain life and good health and reduce the risks of malnutrition and dehydration while they receive care and treatment.*

*To meet this regulation, where it is part of their role, providers must make sure that people have enough to eat and drink to meet their nutrition and hydration needs and receive the support they need to do so”*

- ✓ An AWOC Confident organisation recognises that research has identified people ageing without children are more likely to experience malnourishment and be underweight

## 6 Receiving and acting on complaints

*“The intention of this regulation is to make sure that people can make a complaint about their care and treatment. To meet this regulation providers must have an effective and accessible system for identifying, receiving, handling, and responding to complaints from people using the service, people acting on their behalf or other stakeholders. All complaints must be investigated thoroughly, and any necessary action taken where failures have been identified.*

*When requested to do so, providers must provide CQC with a summary of complaints, responses and other related correspondence or information”*

- ✓ An AWOC Confident organisation recognises that people ageing without children or close family support may find it harder to make complaints and may need additional support through any investigative process

## Part 5: Self-assessment checklist

Self-assessment tool for organisations – this checklist is to enable organisations to make plans towards becoming AWOC Confident.

It covers:

- **Strategy**
- **Information & publicity**
- **Assessment process**
- **Service delivery**
- **Staff training & support**

### Strategy

Statement	Already do	Needs improvement	Action required	Deadline
We have a plan to address how we will ensure we are AWOC aware and monitor our progress				
We have an AWOC champion on our Board and a lead member of staff responsible for driving forward awareness				
We record who is ageing without children as part of our monitoring data				
We record referrals from family and friends separately to ensure we understand where our referrals come from and if we need to reach out more into the community rather than overly relying on family to find information and make referrals				
We know how many people in our area are estimated to be ageing without children and use that as part of a plan to be AWOC Confident				
We keep up to date with research about ageing without children to ensure our policy and practice reflects good practice and current knowledge				

## Information and publicity

Statement	Already do	Needs improvement	Action required	Deadline
We ensure that the information we provide is in clear and everyday language and does not rely on someone having access to the internet to find out all the information available about our services				
We show through our literature, website, and interactions with people that we understand not all older people have family support				
We acknowledge there are people ageing without children by using the phrase “older people and their families and older people who may not have family” in our materials				
We make sure people ageing without children are represented in consultation and service user groups by including them as a characteristic alongside sex, gender reassignment, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, and caring status to give balance				
We do not prefix groups or services with “gran” or “nan” or “grandparents” unless that service is specifically targeted at people who are grandparents				
We work to raise the profile of people ageing without children with other stakeholders and partner organisations				
We advocate for people ageing without children as part of policy or planning discussions in the wider arena				

## Assessment process 1

Statement	Already do	Needs improvement	Action required	Deadline
We recognise that not all older people have close family to support them through the assessment process and take steps to find alternative support if necessary				
We ensure that an older person with no close family has an advocate or similar, to help them understand their care and treatment, risks, benefits, and choices open to them if they need one.				
We understand that “next of kin” for people who have no close family can be a difficult issue and that people may respond with their nearest biological relative even if they have little or no personal relationship with them. We empower our staff to explore this and to identify someone more appropriate in this capacity even if they are not a relative.				
We understand that people ageing without children may need additional support to access alternative care and support e.g. from another provider				
We actively seek ways to encourage people ageing without children to participate in making decisions about their care recognising that without close family support this may take longer or require more resources				

## Assessment process 2

Statement	Already do	Needs improvement	Action required	Deadline
We recognise that financial issues can be a challenge for people with no close family. This includes managing money on a day-to-day basis as well as paying for care and treatment and the potential impact of third party top-up if required				
We feel able to discuss with the individual if they need to create a lasting power of attorney and to help them do so				
We help people understand the options available to them under the Mental Capacity Act 2005, and encourage them to make plans in the event they may lose capacity and support them to access services that can help with this				
We feel able to arrange for the individual to discuss financial issues with an independent third party such as an advocate or advice provider such as Citizens Advice or Age UK				

## Service delivery 1

Statement	Already do	Needs improvement	Action required	Deadline
We have a good understanding of other sources of help and strong relationships with other organisations in the community who may be able to offer support to people ageing without children				
We recognise that people ageing without children may have faced stigma, prejudice, or exclusion in their lives				
We recognise that certain cohorts of older people such as those who are LGBTQ and those with disabilities are more likely to be ageing without children				
We recognise that being without children can bring additional stigma in some BAME communities				
We recognise that not all older people have close family and therefore do not experience later life in the same way as those that do for example not becoming grandparents				
We recognise that certain transitions in later life e.g. death of a partner can be harder for those who are ageing without children				



## Service delivery 2

Statement	Already do	Needs improvement	Action required	Deadline
We understand that certain days such as Mother's Day or Father's Day can be difficult for people ageing without children and takes steps to ensure staff and volunteers are aware of any sensitivities				
We are sensitive to the fact that intergenerational activities e.g. inviting children into a care home could trigger an emotional reaction in people ageing without children and takes steps to mitigate this				
We recognise that for people ageing without children, maintaining relationships with friends is crucial. We also understand that as friends are likely to be within the same age bracket, they may need additional support and encouragement to continue friendships				
We are open to the development of groups for people ageing without children				
We understand that people ageing without children or close family may find it harder to raise concerns about their care and may need additional support through any investigative process				
When we need to move someone onto another organisation or service, we ensure that the organisation or service understands that the person is ageing without children and what this means. If they are not an AWOC Confident organisation, we will encourage them to become one				

## Staff training and support

Statement	Already do	Needs improvement	Action required	Deadline
All staff and volunteers receive information on ageing without children as part of their induction				
Training on ageing without children is included in organisational/staff learning, development and training plans and is ongoing				
We recognise that ageing without children can be a sensitive issue for staff and give them space to voice their concerns				
Our equality and diversity policy reflects the fact that staff may be without children and have training in place to ensure they are not <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• subjected to stereotype</li> <li>• unfairly disadvantaged or excluded as a part of their work.</li> </ul>				

## Examples of good practice PRAMA Red Bag

### Dorset based PramaCare introduce charity-funded Red Bags for emergency hospital visits

When a crisis hits many are fortunate to have family and friends to step in and help us sort things out. For those living alone and those ageing without children who don't have family living close by or where others in your household are less mobile, such events can be more challenging, leaving you feeling isolated and unprepared.

The Prama Foundation, a large provider of activities, clubs and home care support for people in Dorset, recognised that a large proportion of the people they cared for did not have anyone to help collect things together and pack a bag if they were taken into hospital in an emergency. Although the ambulance crews did an excellent job of handling the emergency itself, a day or so later in hospital, the individual did not have the personal items that would help them feel more comfortable. They lacked personal contact. Even more importantly they lacked someone who could “know them” in areas that make a difference to their humanity, things like. “My name is Penelope but I prefer to be called Pen”. Things like “I am devoted to my cat, Thomas” or “My favourite TV programme is Coronation St”.

The solution, devised by PramaCare's Client Forum, has been relatively simple – encouraging those people who are at risk to be more prepared.

Members of the local Parkstone Rotary kindly raised the funds to buy bright red holdalls, which are big enough for essentials but small enough to sit in the corner of a room, ready to go when needed, much like a maternity bag for those about to go into labour. The holdalls also have a simple sheet of personal information to help make the

individual a “real person” to clinicians and provide points of conversation and contact. The check-list, kept in the bag, also contains some key information that is helpful for emergency services crews.

At the Prama Foundation, getting to know the individual is an important aspect of the culture of Dignity in Later Life care they provide. This prompted the creation of a second document, created by our support workers with the individual, which helps to give background information such as their family history, hobbies, experiences and challenges so that hospital staff can get to know the person and what is important to them.

The programme has been well received by clients. Sheila says “I have so many hospital visits. It will make things easier for me especially as I have no mobility to complete these things myself”. Another client, Muriel, was surprised and delighted by the offer of the Red Bag – though hoped she would never have to use it!

Neil Stevens, Care Director at PramaCare, says “We are always wanting to go just that little bit further to help our clients live with dignity. It was fantastic to have the support of Parkstone Rotary to make this particular extra step possible. Our emergency services and hospitals do an amazing job of taking care of us in a medical crisis but it is still a little less than dignified when you have to go home from hospital in your nightclothes because that is all you came in with. Having a Red Bag packed with your own toiletries and personal items to get you through a short stay and back home in comfort can make all the difference. We feel this can be rolled out on a national basis and would encourage organisations interested in implementing the scheme to get in touch.”

## Part 6: Measuring progress

Some initial Key Performance Indicators are suggested below to enable organisations to begin measuring success. As organisations progress through their plan to become AWOC Confident, other KPIs that are more appropriate to your organisation can be added.

**“An organisation or public body where people ageing without children are understood included and supported. In an AWOC aware organisation, staff and volunteers will be aware of and understand the issues affecting people ageing without children and ensure they feel included and confident to access support, participate in activities and the community and able to raise concerns without fear of judgement and exclusion.”**

	What does success look like?	KPIs	Measurement
<b>People ageing without children are understood</b>	An AWOC Confident organisation will understand the different reasons why people are ageing without children and why the numbers are increasing. It will understand the effect this can have on people as individuals and how this can impact on their quality of life as they age	The organisation has made a decision to be AWOC Confident  We have a lead member of staff responsible for driving forward awareness  All staff and volunteers receive information on ageing without children as part of their induction  Training on ageing without children is included in organisational/staff training plans and is ongoing	‘An AWOC Confident’ plan is included in organisations strategic planning and review cycle  An increase in staff and volunteers understanding of AWOC  Number of staff and volunteers having training on ageing without children
<b>People ageing without children are included</b>	An AWOC Confident organisations ensures people ageing without children feel included by acknowledging them as a group, using inclusive imagery and language, and allowing them space to talk about their concerns.	The characteristic of people Ageing without Children is included in all relevant organisational policies and procedures  The organisation has a mechanism to identify how many people ageing without children are in their service group  Ageing without Children included on organisations website and in publicity materials  People Ageing without Children are proactively included in internal consultation groups and customer feedback surveys	Policies contain an impact statement to show they have been assessed against its impact on people ageing without children  Number of internal documents referencing Ageing without Children  Number of hits on website section about Ageing without Children  Number of people ageing without children participating in consultation groups and feedback
<b>People ageing without children are supported</b>	An AWOC Confident organisation recognises that people ageing without children may need additional support to both access and use services and is able to facilitate this in particular at times when they are potentially more vulnerable than those with more immediate family (such as hospital stays, or transitions across the life course). Organisations should ensure assumptions are not made about the availability of family support.	Service pathways make specific reference to people ageing without children and how to address the issues that affect them  People ageing without children are pro-actively offered an advocate before assessment	Increased numbers of people ageing without children reporting they find it easier to use organisations services  Numbers of referrals for advocacy

# Additional resources

## Ageing without Children

[www.awoc.org.uk](http://www.awoc.org.uk)

Website further information and resources on ageing without children

## Website of the Ageing without children York

[www.awocyork.org.uk](http://www.awocyork.org.uk)

## Consultancy support on ageing without children

[www.ageingwithoutchildrenconsultancy.com](http://www.ageingwithoutchildrenconsultancy.com)

Private Facebook group for people ageing without children

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1476937045912974>

## Independent Age

Provide information and advice to older people and their families as well as researching issues that affect older people and campaigning for changes to policy around ageing. They have included people ageing without children in research around marginalised groups of older people

<https://www.independentage.org/snapshot-without-children>

## Living longer: implications of childlessness among tomorrow's older population

Report from the Office for National Statistics on the implications of the growing numbers of older people childless women for care services

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/livinglonger/implicationsofchildlessnessamongtomorrowsoolderpopulation#what-are-the-implications-of-higher-levels-of-childlessness-for-future-formal-care-demand>

## The Generation Strain – collective solutions to care in an ageing society

A report from the Institute for Public Policy Research looking at the growing care gap as the numbers of older people outstrips the number of family able to provide care

<https://www.ippr.org/publications/the-generation-strain-collective-solutions-to-care-in-an-ageing-society>

## A growing care gap? The supply of unpaid care for older people by their adult children in England to 2032 Pickard L 2013

This article makes new projections of the supply of intense unpaid care for parents aged 65 and over in England to 2032, and compares these projections with existing projections of demand for unpaid care by older people with disabilities from their children. The results show that the supply of unpaid care to older people with disabilities by their adult children in England is unlikely to keep pace with demand in future.

<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/51955/>

## Current and future challenges of family care in the UK - Future of an ageing population: evidence review Foresight, Government Hoff A 2015

This review was commissioned as part of the UK government's Foresight Future of an Ageing Population project and looks at how Population ageing challenges the ways in which family care to older people is provided.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-of-ageing-family-care-in-the-uk>

## Videos

### BBC Breakfast on Ageing without Children

<https://vimeo.com/134399980>

### Victoria Derbyshire on Ageing without Children

<https://vimeo.com/216632493>

### Jody Day in Conversation with author Donna Ward on ageing without children

<https://gateway-women.com/never-married-over-sixty-and-childless-donna-ward-on-living-and-writing-an-invisible-story/>

### Ageing without children in York

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kVpt8XRho4>

### What does ageing mean for those who do not have children?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-50714401>

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