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Save the date: York hosts festival dedicated to connection, creativity and ageing well in later life

Thursday 1 October to Sunday 18 October 2026

Celebrating its 21st year, the 50+ Festival is a unique event that brings together a fantastic mix of talks, performances and social events tailored to inspire, entertain and connect.

The festival is being led by YOPA (York Older People's Assembly) and Age UK York, two independent local charities striving to make York a great place to grow older – together they are the voice of older people in the city.

Last year's festival made a real impact, bringing together around 1,500 people across 100 vibrant events that were praised as “wonderfully inclusive” and truly intergenerational. Audiences and partners highlighted the smooth organisation and clear, accessible communications, while reach extended far beyond the events themselves, generating strong media coverage and multiple radio interviews. Add in two fantastic [films](#) and over 22,000 Facebook views, and it's clear the festival didn't just happen - it resonated.

The festival embraces the UN designated International Day of Older People (IDOP) and runs from **Thursday 1 October to Sunday 18 October 2026**, with a Day of Celebration and Central Parade in York on **Saturday 3 October**.

With over 77,000 people aged 50+ in York, we're shining a spotlight on just how vibrant, varied and exciting life beyond 50 really is. People are living longer, juggling more generations than ever, and completely rewriting the rulebook. Twenty years ago, walking football and pickleball weren't even on the radar - now they're just the beginning.

Professor Dianne Willcocks, Vice Chair, YOPA says “While age discrimination remains a reality for many people later in life, York is coming together to celebrate the value, creativity and contribution of people over 50. The 50+ Festival has been shaped by local



people to bring together a vibrant programme of events that inspire, entertain and connect and we'd love you to be part of it."

Simon Holmes, CEO, Age UK York added "Our unique festival aims to highlight York's older residents and celebrate their role in community life, healthy living and wellbeing. We are aiming to help challenge ageism as well as supporting local organisations that encourage older people to join social and cultural activities, helping reduce loneliness and isolation."

Open to anyone looking to learn something new, meet like-minded people, or simply have fun, this festival is all about embracing new experiences and enjoying life to the fullest - whether you're 55, 75 or 95!

Next steps

- Save the dates
 - Thursday 1 October – Festival opening event
 - Saturday 17 October – Festival closing event
 - Saturday 3 October - York 50+ day of celebration with parade from 13.00
- Get involved by:
 - Running an event or taking an advert in the festival [programme](#)
 - Spreading the word
 - Volunteering
 - Sponsorship – [see pack](#) of options
 - Catch up on last year's festival [here](#)

Have a question - Call us on **07965 246193** or email us yorkfiftyplus@gmail.com
Find out more <https://www.yorkassembly.org.uk/50-festival-26/>

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Ends



About YOPA

York Older People's Assembly (YOPA) is an independent local charity which has advocated for, celebrated and supported older people across York and North Yorkshire since 2001. We are an organisation of older people, for older people and we work to achieve full citizenship for diverse older people across and within the wider community.

We aim to:

- Represent the views of older people in York to decision makers locally and nationally.
- Inform older people about services that are available.
- Identify where needs are not being met.
- Work with the local authority and others to make York an age-friendly city

As part of the 50+ Festival, this is the third year in which YOPA has successfully led a city-wide collaborative for International Day of Older People.

About Age UK York

Age UK York is an independent local charity which has been working in the local community to help older people for over 50 years. We have 100 dedicated staff and over 400 volunteers helping us to deliver services and activities for older people in York. Age UK York provides free, confidential and impartial information and advice on a range of issues relating to older people and those who care for and support them.

We offer a wide range of services to older people in York to enable them to live better lives. This includes information and advice, benefits and money advice, befriending services, carer respite service, Day Clubs and Home From Hospital support. All our work is aimed at improving the lives of older people in York. Age UK York encourages older people to speak out about local and national issues. We are here to make more of life in York.

About the International Day of Older People

Each year on October 1, people across the world mark United Nations International Day of Older People to raise awareness of opportunities and challenges faced by ageing populations, and to mobilise the wider community to address challenges faced by older people. The theme for 2025, is the role older people play in creating resilient, sustainable societies.





**Simon Holmes, CEO,
Age UK York**



**Professor Dianne
Willcocks, Vice Chair,
YOPA**