

Ageless Creativity

**Guidelines for representing
ageing and older people
in the creative industries**

Ageism is the most widespread form of discrimination in the UK (EHRC, 2018), affecting work, healthcare and how we live our lives. It is often perpetuated by what we see and hear in culture.

A 2025 study from the **Advertising Standards Authority** found that the UK public feels that older people are more likely than other groups to be stereotyped in advertising.

The **Age Without Limits** campaign developed the following guidelines to ensure that people of all ages are represented authentically, for the benefit of us all as we grow older.





Recognise

How to recognise ageism:

- When you feature older people in adverts, is it only for age-related products (e.g. stairlifts, funeral plans)?
- Are older people routinely the subject of jokes?
- Is your default position to portray older age groups as inactive and disengaged from society?
- Does this directly contrast with how younger people are represented - leading vibrant and active lives?
- Could you be inadvertently stoking intergenerational conflict?

1% of people featured in global ads were over the age of 60
CreativeX, 2025



Represent

How to better represent ageing and older people:

- Portray older people as well-rounded individuals with diverse interests, engaging in a range of activities, not just clichés (e.g. playing bridge, lawn bowling, cruises).
- Look out for harmful 'doddery but dear' portrayals that focus on older people as warm and kind but frail and vulnerable.
- Don't rely solely on 'super ager' tropes (e.g. ultra marathon runners).
- Celebrate ageing - because self-expression, style, and joy don't diminish with age.

88% of over-55s say they feel unhappy about the way advertising treats them
Mullenlowe Group, 2022



Recruit and Retain

Older voices are dramatically underrepresented in creative agencies and research:

- Are you doing enough to recruit and retain older talent? Find out how to do more [here](#).
- Is there age diversity in your creative team?
- Do you and your clients conduct market research on products and campaigns with older audiences?
- Do you rely on one age bracket (e.g. 50+ or 65+) to capture all older audiences?
- Could you do more to co-create with older audiences to gain authentic insights?

8% of UK ad agency employees are over the age of 51
IPA, 2024