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***'Planning now will pay off later': Age Concern's response to the Government's ageing strategy opportunity age***

**Gordon Lishman, Age Concern's Director-General, said:**

"By 2021 there will be almost 25 million over 50s, an increasingly diverse with high expectations of retirement.

"The Government's choice is to face the challenge of the ageing population head-on with a planned approach or muddle through and hope for the best. The latter option would have disastrous consequences for all of us.

"There are already unacceptably high levels of pensioner poverty and without changes to the pensions system, future generations will be worse off. Our social care system is collapsing through chronic under-funding and thousands of older people are unemployed and marginalised by society because of deeply-rooted ageism.

"This strategy has the potential to make a real difference to people's lives. It will only work in practice if there is a joined up approach by Government at national and local level.

"This strategy is a 'route map' that shows what government needs to do – it must now rise to the challenge and follow the map it has laid out."

Ends