



Professor Peter Lloyd-Sherlock

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Expert addresses United Nations panel on improving care for older people worldwide

A leading expert in health and social care for older people from Northumbria University has shared his views on what could be done to improve care for older people at a special event at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

[Peter Lloyd Sherlock](#), Professor of Gerontology and Global Health is a leading authority on public policy for older people in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

Having previously held positions at the World Health Organization and the UK Department for International Development, he was invited to speak at the United Nations at an event bringing together experts to discuss policies, legislations and practices that strengthen care and support systems for older people worldwide.

Professor Lloyd-Sherlock used his presentation to stress the urgency for societies and governments to start taking robust and concerted measures to meet older people's health and care needs, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

Highlighting the issues individuals, families and healthcare systems face as society ages, Professor Lloyd-Sherlock called on governments worldwide to act quickly to address the issue.

He explained: "In many low and middle-income countries the numbers of older people will nearly treble over the next generation. As somebody from a high-income country, I'm often told these families will continue to provide for the health and care needs of all their old and young, but this cannot be an excuse for government inaction.

"Growing numbers of family carers, mainly women, are left to shoulder ever growing burdens of care responsibility without support from the state. Governments must stop denying that this is just a family issue; a private responsibility without any need for public action on a grand scale."

He called on governments and the private sector to do more to promote healthy ageing.

"I am keen to avoid language around the "problem" of ageing as this can promote ageism and negative attitudes towards later life, but on the other hand, the danger of complacency is very great," he said.

"Generally, the health of older populations is not improving, especially for the poor, yet there are many simple and affordable things that could be implemented now which could make a big difference in averting unnecessary suffering and increasingly overwhelmed health and social care systems. We must not deny the massive scale of the consequences of not taking action now."

Professor Lloyd-Sherlock, who is based in Northumbria's [Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Health](#), travelled to the United Nations event direct from Brazil, where he has been evaluating a pioneering community-based care programme which has had a significant impact on individuals.

[Programa Maior Cuidado](#) provides trained family care support to people living in the country's poorest and most vulnerable neighbourhoods.

Initially launched in the city of Belo Horizonte, the programme has proven to be highly effective, with strong evidence that it improves the quality of life for older people and their family carers and also reduces unnecessary hospital stays. The results have been so positive that politicians have announced that the scheme is being scaled up across Brazil.

He praised the impact of the scheme, saying: "there are many things we can do which are often quite simple and affordable, but they can make a big difference. Inspiring actions already being taken by some countries, as we see in Brazil, for example, provide evidence and guidance about what can and, perhaps more importantly, must be done on a far greater scale.

"If proper action is not taken soon enough then achieving health for all will remain an impossible dream, as will many of the other UN SDG targets," he warned.

The full United Nations [Ageing with Dignity: The Importance of Strengthening Care and Support Systems for Older Persons Worldwide](#) event is [available to view on UN Web TV](#). Professor Lloyd-Sherlock's presentation can be viewed from just after two hours into the session at 02:01:15.

Northumbria University is dedicated to reducing health and social inequalities, contributing to the regional and national workforce and improving social, economic and health outcomes for the most marginalised in society. Through its new [Centre for Health and Social Equity](#), known as CHASE, the University will bring together researchers who are working to deliver world-leading health and social equity research and creating innovative, evidence-based policies and data-driven solutions to bring impactful change across the region, the UK and globally.

Its aim is to develop and harness Northumbria's research, education and

knowledge exchange expertise to help meet the health and social needs of multiple stakeholders and communities in the city, region and beyond.

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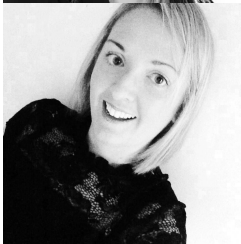


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