



**Joining the Fight Against Ageism
by Kayleigh Burr, June 2023**

I started working for Age UK Oxfordshire as a [Home Support Worker](#), helping clients with light housework duties and providing companionship. The job itself is OK, but it's the people who make it for me. They become your extended family and I look forward to my regular visits to see them.

Then I saw a job to work with the [Creative Team](#) pop into my e mail inbox. I thought 'Work from home in my own time?' I'm in! I wasn't expecting much, but I have been taken in by the Creative Team and it feels wonderful to be part of something so important. The team are so passionate about their work and it's an honour to be a part of it.

I have learned so much already in these first few months. I think the one thing that has stuck with me most is Ageism. I am a counselling student and have been for the past 3 years. I feel we touch on all subjects that can affect a person's mental health, however, in my mind I kind of said, 'Well I'm only 30-odd, Ageism doesn't affect me yet' but I was wrong. And it's ok to admit that.

Last month I was involved behind the scenes with an Anti-Ageism workshop called '[Re-imagining \(our\) birthdays](#)' brought to life by Dave Martin, Meg LaPorte and Jordan Evans. It was eye opening, to spend time thinking about the subliminal messages we are giving and receiving with the birthday cards we exchange.

I am a culprit, finding a card that takes the mickey that your friend is getting older, or your dad has reached a certain age where all he wants to do is play golf. I remember on my 30th birthday I had a sea of cards from my family and friends, and they all said: 30, congrats you are 30, you made it you are 30. It was like they were screaming at me: you are old now, 30 is a big number and you are past it, might as well give up now! I threw them all in the bin a day later.

It is really hard to try and teach yourself to not be Ageist, in a society where we don't celebrate our elderly, when we are constantly being told by the media, 'You have to be young and beautiful or you are nothing'. The number of times I have told people 'You look great for your age', when in hindsight I should have just told them they look great. Age is a just number.

I would love to live in a world where everyone is celebrated, where Ageing is celebrated and where crows' feet are celebrated. I wish when someone hears the words, 'You are old', it doesn't come with a thought of, 'That means I'm not good enough anymore'. Ageing is a privilege so many don't get to experience.

I challenge everyone to fight their inner Ageism and become more celebratory about Ageing and the wonderful experiences it brings along with it.

Kayleigh Burr is a member of the Age UK Oxfordshire [Creative Team](#) and the [Home Support Team](#).

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