

Outline of the Guideline of Measures for Ageing Society

(decided upon by the Cabinet on September 13, 2024)

Purpose and Basic Principles

1. Purpose of Guideline

- “Measures for the ageing society” encompass initiatives not only to support the elderly, but also to build a sustainable society as their proportion continues to grow.
- Japan’s population is ageing at a rate unparalleled in the world and will continue to advance further (percentage of the elderly: 29.1% in 2023 => 38.7% in 2070). With changes in the demographic composition and social structure, there are growing concerns about various impacts and challenges that stem from a shortage of people who play active roles in economic society (with the working-age population projected to decline by around 12 million by 2040), a shrinking in the size of the economy, lifestyle changes including an increase of the elderly living alone, and a rise in the number of people with declining cognitive functions.
- On the other hand, life expectancy at birth in Japan is among the highest in the world and the need to promote physical vitality among the elderly has also been recognized. The number of people in employment aged 65 and over continues to increase, and their motivation remains high.
⇒It is essential to foster a society where people of all ages can be both "providers" and "recipients" of support according to their own circumstances and to create a hopeful future for all generations as members of a "super-aged" society.

2. Basic Principles

- (1) Establish an economic society where people of all ages can continue to play an active part according to their own wishes
- (2) Establish a society where multiple generations can live together in peace of mind by appropriately responding to changing circumstances, such as the growing number of the elderly living alone.
- (3) Develop comprehensive measures and social systems that respond to changes in age-related physical and cognitive functions

Develop environments for lifelong engagement in society

1. Expand opportunities for age-neutral activities

Background

- The proportion of workers aged 20 and above who have engaged in self-education activities declines with age, dropping to around 20% among those aged 60 and over.
- About 40% of people aged 60 and over who currently have a job with income responded that they wish to work “Forever as long as I can.” When combined with those who want to continue working “Until about 70 years of age” or longer, the total reaches about 90%.
- Regarding lifelong learning initiatives the government should focus on, the most common response among those in their 40s and 50s was "Enhancing online learning" (around 50%), while among those aged 60 and over, it was "Increasing facilities for learning, such as opening community centers, etc." (around 40%).
- Regarding measures that would be effective in promoting social participation activities in the community, around 40% of respondents cited "A system that allows easy access to social participation activities," while around 30% mentioned "Dissemination and publicity of the social participation activities being implemented."

2. Raise awareness of the ageing society among all generations

Background

- Internet usage rate declines with age (60s: 90.2%, 70s: 67.0%, 80s and over:36.4%)
- 73.5% of respondents in their 20s answered that they are "Not at all" or "Not very interested" in the social security system. In addition, only 13.9% of those aged 18-29 and 5.4% for those aged 60-79 have received financial education at school, etc.

Basic measures included in the Guideline

- Support for upskilling and re-skilling with a view toward old age (Employment and Income)
- Develop an environment to improve the quality of employment; experience- and skill-based job placement in companies, expert advice on performance-based evaluation and treatment, etc. (Employment and Income)
- Support entrepreneurship for the elderly and provide various employment opportunities that meet their needs through enhancing job-matching capabilities of Hello Work (Public Employment Security Offices)(Employment and Income)
- Establish a platform for addressing community challenges through coordination among various entities; Build a mosaic-style job-matching system that aligns community work and activities with individual circumstances to secure active community participants (Learning and Social Participation)
- Enhance learning opportunities at familiar community locations, such as welfare centers for the elderly and through online platforms (Learning and Social Participation) Etc.

Basic measures included in the Guideline

- Raise awareness of ageing across generations (Learning and Social Participation)
- Address the digital divide among the elderly by enhancing digital and tech literacy through workshops at mobile phone stores, community centers, etc. (Learning and Social Participation)
- Promote social security education from an early age as well as financial and economic education according to life stages (Learning and Social Participation) Etc.

Develop environments that address the growing number of the elderly living alone

Background

- The population aged 85 and over, whose combined medical care and long-term care (LTC) needs **are increasing**, continues to grow and is projected to reach **around 11.7 million by 2060** (around 6.7 million people in 2023).
- **An additional 570,000 LTC staff are projected to be needed by FY2040.**
- **Each year, around 100,000 people leave their jobs to provide caregiving. Economic losses resulting from this issue are projected to be about 9.2 trillion yen by 2030.**
- The number of people aged 65 and over and living alone is projected to increase by **3.7 million from 2020 to around 10.41 million in 2040.**
- Homeownership rates among people in their 20s to 50s has been declining in recent years. As the number of the elderly living alone increases, the need to secure housing for them will grow. On the other hand, around 70% of landlords are reluctant to rent out property to the elderly. The peak age for change of dwelling is relatively late (75-85 years old), and some do so reluctantly.
- The number of vacant houses with no intended use has **increased 1.8 times to 3.85 million over the past 20 years.**
- The percentage of respondents aged 60 and over who cited "difficulty in mobility" as an anxiety in later life was higher in smaller municipalities, reaching **nearly 70% of municipalities with populations under 50,000.**

Basic measures included in the Guideline

- Further promote the development of a community-based integrated care system, including qualitative/quantitative enhancements to home medical care and LTC (Health and Welfare)
- Promote the recruitment and retention of LTC providers by **improving working conditions and attractiveness of LTC as a profession** (Health and Welfare)
- **Enhance the efficiency of LTC** by utilizing technologies such as long-term care robots and ICT devices (Health and Welfare)
- Promote the development of employment conditions that enable workers to balance their jobs with LTC (Health and Welfare)
- **Enhance support for the elderly without relatives**, such as optimizing operations of lifetime support providers for the elderly and coordinating comprehensive support that combines community-based social resources (Health and Welfare)
- **Enhance residential support** by developing a comprehensive and integrated community-based system in collaboration with stakeholders in housing and welfare (Living Environment)
- **Promote measures to address vacant houses**, including their effective utilization (Living Environment)
- **Ensure community mobility** by accelerating the "redesign" of community public transportation networks and promoting social implementation of automated driving technologies (Living Environment)
- **Promote research and development** of AI technologies that contribute to addressing challenges in an ageing society (Research and Development)
Etc.

Develop environments that take into account changes in physical and cognitive functions

Background

- The number of people aged 65 and over with dementia and mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is expected to increase, reaching **5.842 million (prevalence rate: 14.9%) and 6.128 million (prevalence rate: 15.6%), respectively, in 2040** (4.432 million people with dementia (prevalence rate: 12.3%); 5.585 million people with MCI (prevalence rate: 15.5%) in 2022).
- **Around 80% of special fraud victims are aged 65 and over.**
- **The number of fatal traffic accidents involving drivers aged 75 and over has been increasing** recently, with **384 fatal accidents** occurring in 2023.
- Only 30% of people in their 60s and 70s responded that the promotion of barrier-free environment and the adoption of universal design have "sufficiently progressed" or "fairly progressed."
- Progress in developing an individual evacuation plan for those requiring assistance for evacuation varies across municipalities, with **around 8% of them yet to begin.**

Basic measures included in the Guideline

- **Comprehensively and systematically promote measures based on the Basic Act on Dementia to Promote an Inclusive Society**, including efforts to raise awareness of dementia and strengthen cooperation among relevant organizations for early detection and response (Health and Welfare)
- Promote early screening and regular care for age-related hearing loss, etc., raise awareness of such impairments in the community and workplace, and utilize technologies that augment and substitute sensory functions to develop environments that enable easier lifestyles, regardless of physical or cognitive conditions (Health and Welfare)
- **Strengthen support for people with lower cognitive functions** in financial and economic activities by promoting initiatives that enable them to receive necessary assistance, such as encouraging financial institutions to participate in frameworks like the Local Council for Ensuring the Safety of Consumers, which facilitate the smooth sharing of personal information (Life Environment)
- **Prevent damages to consumers** by promoting the establishment of local councils and improving consultation systems such as the digital transformation (DX) of consumer hotlines, etc. (Living Environment)
- **Promote traffic safety measures according to changes in cognitive functions**, such as creating an environment that facilitates the voluntary return of driver's licenses and encouraging the use of limited driving licenses for safety support cars. (Living Environment)
- Promote information accessibility and barrier-free buildings, etc. (Living Environment)
- Promote disaster and crime prevention measures in consideration of the characteristics of the elderly (Living Environment)
Etc.

In Promoting future measures for the ageing society

- Ensure close coordination and cooperation among relevant administrative agencies, promote sufficient alignment of measures, and establish numerical targets and main reference indicators for each field
- Build systems to implement necessary improvements based on the verification and evaluation of the progress of measures
- Support the development of measures that take advantage of local governments' characteristics through collaboration with local businesses, organizations, NPOs, and other diverse entities