Age friendly Wales
Our plan for getting older

We want to know what you think

This document was written by Welsh Government. It is an easy read version of ‘Age Friendly Wales: Our Strategy for an Ageing Society’.

December 2020
How to use this document

This is an easy read version. The words and their meaning are easy to read and understand.

You may need support to read and understand this document. Ask someone you know to help you.

Some words may be hard to understand. They are in bold blue writing. They have been explained in a box below the word.

If the hard word is used again it is in normal blue writing. You can check what they mean in Hard words on page 33.

Where the document says we, this means Welsh Government.

This document was made into easy read by Easy Read Wales using Photosymbols.
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About this document

This is a plan about how to make Wales a better place to live for older people.

This plan was last updated in 2013. We were supposed to update it again in 2023.

But there have been a lot of changes over the last few years to things like how care is delivered, the law and funding.

So, we decided that we need to update some of the plan now.

We were due to publish the new plan earlier this year. But there has been a delay because of coronavirus.
Coronavirus has had a huge effect on how we all live. And it has really affected older people.

We want to find out what people think of this plan. Please read this plan then answer the questions in the response form.
Introduction

We have more and more people over the age of 60 in our society.

This is a good thing because many older people help others or are still working.

But many people in this age group live alone. And many have a serious health condition.

We want to make sure that people can live well and happily.
Things to think about

In Wales we have an Older People’s Commissioner. This is a person whose job is to speak up for the rights of older people.

In our new plan we don’t want to say what ages are ‘older age’. People are different and feel differently.

We have less money now than when the plan first came out. So we have to think differently about how to best support people.

We must make sure the UK government gives enough funding to Wales after Brexit. This is when the UK leaves the European Union.
What we would like to happen

We would like to see:

▪ people of all ages in Wales working together

▪ people in Wales looking forward to getting older

▪ people taking care of their own health and well-being. And knowing how to get the right support when they need it

▪ everyone get the services they need. No matter what age they are

▪ age being celebrated.
To help make this happen we have 4 aims:

1. Improve well-being

2. Improve services and where we live

3. Support people to stay independent

4. Make sure people are not poor when they are older
The UK Age Index

An index is a list of things that can be looked at to see how people are doing.

The UK Age Index looks at things like quality of life and well-being of older people, to see how well they are doing in each country of the UK.

Research shows that there is a lot we are doing well in Wales to support older people. But there is a lot more we need to do.
1. Improving people’s well-being

We are trying to improve our health and care system to make sure the needs of older people are met.

We want people to know how to take care of their health and well-being. And to know they can easily get support if they need it.

We have plans to help make sure:

- People can stay well.

- People can manage their health and well-being.

- People can be more independent.
- We use more technology - like equipment.

- Health and care services work together more.

We are putting money into projects to help older people with things like:

- Reducing loneliness and isolation.

Isolation is when people feel separated from others. This might be because of where they live or because they have difficulty getting out and meeting people.

- Keeping people out of hospital or care homes unless needed.
Providing care at home or closer to home.

The main things we want to do on this are:

1. Support unpaid carers

Most care in Wales is unpaid. It is provided by family and friends.

As the number of older people in Wales grows, we will need more carers.

Some carers have health conditions themselves.

We are writing a new plan. It will say how we can all work together to make life better for carers.
2. Make it easier to use health and social care services

We can do this by making sure:

- care and treatment are provided as close to home as possible

- services are based on what people need and what is important to them

- people only go into hospital when they need to. And only stay for the time they need to

- there are more services in the community.
3. Improve access to mental health services

We have a plan called *Together for Mental Health* to help with this. It came out in 2012.

It talks about the importance of improving mental health and well-being for everyone.

It also talks about making sure people with mental health issues get the support they need.
2. Improving services and where we live

Things like housing and transport can affect how we live and grow old.

Housing

The right housing is important for everyone. We need to think more about the housing needs of older people.

Many older people live in houses that are not right for their needs.

Poor housing can affect people’s health.

The main things we want to do on this are:

1. Make sure the right types of houses are built to help people grow old well
2. Work together to improve housing

We want:

▪ health
▪ social care
▪ and housing

to work together to help make sure the best housing is created for people.

3. Support older people when they move house

Most older people live in their own home for as long as they can.

They need to think about whether their home needs to be changed, to help meet their needs.

Or whether they need support to move somewhere else.
We have been told it might be helpful for people to get support from an **advocate** when moving.

An **advocate** is someone who speaks up on behalf of someone else.

**Care & Repair Cymru** are trying out a new project in Bridgend and Carmarthenshire. It is called **Help to Move**.

It gives people support to look at their housing needs and options.

We need to find out how helpful this service turns out to be.

**Open spaces and buildings**

Buildings and outdoor areas must be safe and **accessible** for older people.

**Accessible** means something that can be used by everyone, even if they have different needs.
The main things we want to do on this are:

1. Make sure our buildings and roads are safe and can be used by older people.

People are more important than traffic.

We want to lower the speed limit of traffic in busy places and housing areas.

We want to make sure there are more safe places to cross the road.

We want to fine drivers who park on pavements.
2. Improve access to public toilets

We asked all local authorities to make a plan about their public toilets in 2019.

Lots of public toilets have been closed because of coronavirus.

We gave advice to local authorities on the safest ways for them to be open.

 Older people have told us that a lot more could be done to get shops and café’s to open their toilets up to the public.
3. Improve town centres

We want our towns to be places people want to be.

Towns can be important to people of all ages. But for many older people, speaking to someone in a shop might be the only contact they have all day.

Transport

Older people have told us that accessible public transport is a really important issue for them.

It has been a very difficult year for public transport because of coronavirus.
The main things we want to do on this are:

1. Develop more public transport services that people need

Community transport is important to people of all ages and communities.

We are carrying out trials across Wales to see how public transport and community transport services can work together more. For example, using school minibuses during the day for community activities.

2. Improve bus services

We are spending a lot of money to improve bus services.
Transport for Wales are finding out what bus services different communities need.

We are going to use buses that run on green energy. This means they will be better for the environment.

And we are going to provide buses with things like Wi-Fi and charging points.

3. Support people to plan their journeys from door to door

We are making a new system where all types of transport can be booked together.

We are trying a new system where people can book seats on a bus service that runs across Wales, called TrawsCymru.
3. Supporting people to stay independent

Community participation

Community participation is when a person gets involved with activities that may help them, or their community.

It is important to help people know they can make a difference.

But in poorer communities there may not be many opportunities or services.

It can be hard for older people to get involved if they don’t have confidence. Or if they find it difficult to access services.
The main things we want to do to improve this are:

1. Deal with loneliness and isolation

Some of the issues that cause loneliness and isolation often happen later in life. For example, retirement from work or someone you love dying.

We want to help people feel part of their communities by:

- making sure people get the care they need
- making sure people get the housing they need
- improving travel services.
2. Make sure there are enough places for people to meet

We will work with local authorities to help make sure public buildings can be used more by community groups.

3. Help people of all ages get together

We have a plan called *Strategy for Loneliness* to help with this.

We want all health board areas in Wales to think about how people of all ages can work together.
End abuse of older people

Welsh Government are very clear that abuse of older people is **not** ok.

Older people are more at risk of **scams**. A scam is when someone tricks you to get money from you.

We will work with other organisations to write a plan to help stop abuse towards older people.

Planning for the future

Many people are working later in life for different reasons.

People have different situations and have to think about what is important to them.

It is important we can all enjoy life in our older years.
The main things we want to do on this are:

1. Ask people to think about all the things that can help them age well

2. Ask employers to have reviews for people

The **Age at Work Programme** is helping make work and society more age friendly.

**Involving older people with town planning**

It is important to listen to the views and experiences of older people when planning.

We want to make sure local authorities involve older people in planning.
Older workers

Many people are working to an older age.

This can be good for people’s finances.

It can also help people stay healthy for longer.

The main things we want to do on this are:

1. Support older people to get the skills they need for work

2. Support employers to provide age friendly workplaces

3. Use our Employability Plan to improve employment in Wales
Lifelong learning

We believe people of all ages have the right to learn.

And learning can be important for your well-being.

The main things we want to do on this are:

1. Make sure everyone in Wales has the chance to learn throughout their lives

2. Make more opportunities for learning

3. Make sure more people know how to use computers and the internet
4. Make sure people are not poor when they are older

Many older people do not have enough money to live on.

The main things we want to do to improve this are:

1. The socio-economic duty

This is a new law coming out in Wales. It says public bodies must make sure people are not badly affected by their plans.

2. Make sure more people get pension credit

Many people do not claim money they have a right to get from pension credit or housing benefit.

3. Spend more money on the goods and services everyone needs in Wales

We believe doing this will make our communities stronger. And help people who really need it.
How we will know our plans are working

We will use the **UK Age Index** to measure how the plans are working.

This is a tool that helps us to check the overall health and well-being of older people in Wales.

It will help show us what things we need to improve.

And help show us where we need more information.
Hard words

**Accessible**
This means something that can be used by everyone, even if they have different needs.

**Advocate**
An advocate is someone who speaks up on behalf of someone else.

**Isolation**
Isolation is when people feel separated from others. This might be because of where they live or because they have difficulty getting out and meeting people.