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Consultation Document

Age Friendly Wales: Our Strategy for an Ageing Society

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Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Overview This consultation is about our plans to make Wales an age friendly nation.

How to respond You can respond by completing the online response form or by downloading the response form.

Further information and related documents Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

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Also available in Welsh at: <https://llyw.cymru/strategaeth-ar-gyfer-cymdeithas-syn-heneiddio-cymru-o-blaid-pobl-hyn>

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Age Friendly Wales: Our Strategy for an Ageing Society

Preface: Covid-19

Following extensive engagement with older people and stakeholders from a range of sectors, this consultation document was scheduled for publication in March 2020 just as the far reaching impact of Covid-19 on individuals and communities across Wales was becoming clear. Consequently, plans for publication were put on hold as Welsh Government focused all its efforts on protecting people from the virus.

The pandemic has touched everyone's lives in some way but many older people have had their confidence shaken to its core. The unprecedented public health restrictions took older people away from their families, friends, volunteering roles, jobs and communities and we know that many are nervous about a return normality. This reticence will undoubtedly impact negatively on older individuals, but also on the families, friends and communities they support.

The pandemic has also uncovered some positives about life in Wales. For example, the capacity of communities to come together and support each other, the third sector's ability to flex and adapt its services to meet individual need and the commitment and resilience of professionals who care for the most vulnerable members of our society. It has also sharpened our focus on the issues that matter most to older people, such as access to health services, loneliness and isolation, abuse and digital inclusion.

During August and September 2020, we funded Age Cymru, Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA), Welsh Senate of Older People, Active Wales, National Pensioners Convention Wales, and Pensioners Forum Wales to gather [the experiences of people aged 50 or over in Wales during the first national lockdown](#). The survey received over 1100 responses and highlighted a range of issues which we will consider as we progress our plans for recovery.

There is no doubt that the pandemic has changed the way we live and re shaped the services we access. Although life in Wales has changed considerably over recent months, the focus and vision of this new Strategy for an Ageing Society remains relevant. Creating an age friendly Wales that upholds older people's rights and promotes intergenerational solidarity is more pertinent today than ever before. We have therefore updated sections of this document to reflect policy changes in response to Covid-19, but the core elements of the strategy remain unchanged.

Following a three month consultation period, we will work with stakeholders to publish an action plan that will guide the implementation of this strategy.

For further details on Welsh Government's direct response to the pandemic and additional funding allocated, please access the following documents:

[Covid-19 reconstruction: challenges and priorities](#)

[Winter protection plan for health and social care 2020 to 2021](#)

[Care home action plan](#)

Contents

Ministerial Foreword - Making Wales an Age Friendly Nation - p3

1. Purpose and Long-term Vision - p4

- The opportunity and the challenge
- One vision
- Four aims
- Three cross-cutting themes
- Where we are now? Benchmarking the situation of older people in Wales
- A coproduced strategy intended for further engagement

2. Enhancing well-being - p12

3. Improving local services and environments – p17

- Housing
- Open spaces and buildings
- Transport

4. Building and retaining people's own capability – p24

- Community participation
- Ending abuse of older people
- Planning for the future
- Civic engagement
- Older workers
- Lifelong learning

5. Tackling age-related poverty – p33

6. How we will monitor progress – p35

Ministerial Foreword

75 years ago the NHS was founded in Wales. Since that time, free universal health care and ground breaking developments in medicine and technology have led to unprecedented increases in longevity. The Office for National Statistics shows that since 1948, across England and Wales, life expectancy has increased by 14 years for men and 13 years for women. This is one of our society's greatest achievements.

Our ageing society should be celebrated.

Although many of us are working longer than before, providing more unpaid care and spending more time contributing to our local communities, older people are often depicted as a drain on society. We need to change the way we think and feel about ageing. Older people are tax payers, consumers, local councillors and business owners. By acknowledging and valuing the contributions of all older people in Wales, we can reject ageism and work across generations to create an age friendly Wales. It is important to remember that people should not be judged by their economic worth alone – everyone has the capacity to make a difference.

Age Friendly Wales: Our Strategy for an Ageing Society, sets out the action we will take to ensure Wales can reap the benefits of growing numbers of older people in our communities. This, in turn, will enable us to better support people living in challenging circumstances. To reflect the multi-dimensional nature of ageing, we have worked across government departments to address the range of factors that influence how we age – from our health and transport systems to the way we socialise, work and care for others.

This strategy has been co-produced with older people and their representatives. This engagement has highlighted that, alongside the positive aspects of demographic change, there are challenges for our public services that must be acknowledged and acted on. For example:

- Our integrated health and social care system will need to prioritise prevention at a time when more older people are living with complex conditions;
- our transport system will need to be responsive to the needs of older people living in areas where services have been reduced; and
- we must tackle the impact of loneliness at a time when social media is changing the way people interact.

We cannot achieve our vision of an age friendly Wales alone - it is in everyone's interest to plan ahead. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act aims to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. There is no place for ageist stereotypes that create tension between generations. I am keen to explore how we can bring people of all ages together – by taking action to support older people today, we can create a better future for everyone.

I am proud that this strategy adopts a rights based approach that promotes equality and social justice across a range of policy areas and places the older people's voice at the core of Welsh Government policy making. The United Nations Principles for Older Persons have informed the development of this document and will guide its implementation. Age does not diminish an individual's right to fair treatment. By rejecting ageism and age discrimination, we aim to create a more equal society that enables people of all ages to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.

1. Purpose and Long-term Vision

Introduction – the opportunity and the challenge

Thanks to ground breaking developments in healthcare and technology, the global population of people aged over sixty is growing faster than any other age group. In 2019, across the globe, there were 143 million people aged over 80 and this figure is expected to triple by 2050 (United Nations World Population Prospects 2019).

In Wales, the central demographic projects that **in 20 years (by 2038) 1 in 4 of the population will be over 65**. The population aged over 75 in Wales is also projected to increase from 9.3% of the population in 2018 to 13.7% in 2038 (Office for National Statistics 2019). It is worth noting that despite these predictions, improvements in life expectancies have stalled since around 2011 and there has been little change in recent years. Equally, around a third of adults in Wales reported a limiting longstanding illness in 2018-19, with little change in recent years.

However, there have been some stark societal shifts over recent years. For example, the estimated number of people living alone has been increasing steadily over the last decade. Today, people aged 65 and over make up 45% of single person households. Statistics from Alzheimer's Research UK show that from 2006/07 to 2015/16, the number of people on the dementia register rose from 9,550 to 13,617, an increase of 43%. The numbers of unpaid carers in Wales is also increasing and people aged 65 and over are the fastest growing group. The most recent census shows that between 2001 and 2011, the total number of carers aged over 65 rose by 35%.

Longer lives inevitably mean more years spent in retirement and for many, retirement offers the opportunity to try new things and live the life we chose. The 2018 National Survey for Wales shows some positive results for older people. For example, 69% of people aged over 75 said they have sense of community compared to only 51% of people aged 46 – 64. 35% of people aged 64-75 volunteer. 90% of older people feel in control of their lives and 80% feel they can do what matters to them.

In 2018, the report, [Living Well for Longer: The economic argument for investing in the health and well-being of older people in Wales](#), found that the economic value of the contribution made by older people in Wales was estimated to be £2.19billion per annum. However, an ageing population does bring new challenges for governments, communities and individuals. The impact of deep rooted social and economic inequality, austerity and the rising numbers of older people living with complex conditions cannot be ignored. By taking action now, we can address the barriers that prevent some older people from living well and maximise the potential of our ageing society.

The Welsh Government's commitment to older people is longstanding. Wales has a proud and notable history of working with and for older people. We published our first Strategy for Older People in 2003 which challenged traditional stereotypes of older people and encouraged local and national government to view ageing as a positive concept.

The first Strategy for Older People recognised that governments can lead a cultural shift towards a society that values and celebrates its older citizens. That is why, in 2008, we established the world's first Older People's Commissioner to be an independent voice and champion for older people across Wales. We were also the first part of the UK to introduce a nationwide concessionary fare scheme in 2002.

Phase 3 of the Strategy for Older People was launched in 2013 and was designed to span a ten year period to 2023. However since 2013, new legislation, policy and funding streams have been introduced that have transformed the way care is delivered in Wales and placed new duties on local authorities. Consequently, we have responded to calls to develop a new Strategy for an Ageing Society that builds on Phase 3 of the Strategy for Older People but that better reflects Wales' changing policy and legislative landscape.

Our new Strategy for an Ageing Society is broader in scope than our previous strategies for older people. We have purposely not defined the age at which we become 'an older person' – we want people of all ages to engage with this work. This strategy also acknowledges that the life experiences and daily reality vary greatly for people in their 50s to those in their 80s and over. Consequently, this strategy spans a broad range of policy areas from health and social care for older people living with complex needs to support for working age carers and the foundational economy.

It is important to note that today's economic and political context is significantly different from 2003 when the Older People's Strategy was first launched. Due to reductions in the budget Welsh Government receives from Westminster, Welsh councils experienced an average reduction of around 12% in service spending between 2009-10 and 2016-17 - a fall of £918.5m (Wales Centre of Public Policy, 2019). In 2020/21, we are investing an above-inflation increase of more than £400m in health and social care, bringing our total investment next year to more than £8.7bn. This is alongside almost £4.5bn for local government, with £200m extra delivered through the local government revenue and capital settlement. An additional £40 million has been allocated to support adult social care services during the pandemic – helping meet the increased costs of PPE, food, staffing costs and ICT.

We know that closures of community venues, cuts to local transport services and third sector led groups can seriously limit older people's ability to manage their own well-being. In order to mitigate the impact of austerity, local authorities are considering new ways of working. This includes redesigning frontline services; developing new partnerships with citizens and focusing more keenly on preventative measures. With no foreseeable return to past levels of funding, it is vital that both national and local governments lead difficult conversations about the changing responsibilities between statutory bodies and citizens. Covid-19 has brought these issues to the forefront of public attention. The pandemic has encouraged individuals to re-imagine their role in their communities and required all sectors to adapt and develop new ways of working.

As Wales is a significant beneficiary of EU funding which is vital for our agriculture, businesses, higher education and the regeneration of disadvantaged communities across Wales, we will keep the pressure on the UK Government to end austerity and keep its promise that Wales will not be left worse off by the withdrawal of EU funding following Brexit.

In planning for an ageing society, we must consider how technology is changing the way care is delivered, how we live and how we interact with others. Across this document, we provide examples of how technology is changing, or has the capacity to improve lives for older people in Wales. We are currently investing £50 million in digital health and care services.

The Minister for Health and Social Services has already commissioned four strategic reviews of digital health and care in Wales, which will lead to the publication next year of

an all Wales Digital Infrastructure Plan, a Digital Workforce Plan, a Commercial Strategy and a Communication Strategy.

One vision

In any collective endeavour clarity of purpose is key. Harnessing the opportunities and responding to the challenges of an ageing society requires everyone to pull in the same direction. That intended direction is set out below.

Our Vision is an age friendly Wales that supports people of all ages to live and age well.

We want to create a Wales where everyone looks forward to growing older.

A Wales where individuals can take responsibility for their own health and well-being whilst feeling confident that support will be available and easily accessible if needed.

A Wales where ageism does not limit potential or affect the quality of services older people receive.

Ultimately, we want to be a nation that celebrates age and, in line with the UN Principles for Older Persons, a nation that upholds the independence, participation, care, self fulfilment and dignity of older people at all times.

This national vision for an age friendly Wales encompasses the places where people work, their rights and entitlements, their relationships within their families and local communities and with governments. It also encompasses the relationships we have across the generations and aims to challenge and change the way we think about ageing.

Four aims

To drive progress towards this vision, we have set four national aims. It is these aims that are the focus of the strategy, and by which the extent of its success will ultimately be judged. The aims align with the four domains of the UK Age Watch Index which has been specifically commissioned to support the implementation of this strategy (See p10).

- **Enhancing well-being**
- **Improving local services and environments**
- **Building and retaining people's own capability**
- **Tackling age-related poverty**

By focusing on these aims, we aim to support people to live the life they chose free from abuse, neglect or the erosive impact of ageism and age discrimination. The aims contribute to our commitment in the Well-being of Future Generations Act to 'create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future' by placing a specific focus on ageing. We want all sectors of Welsh society, individuals and communities to join us in considering the steps they should take to both plan for their own futures and to support us to achieve our national vision of an age friendly Wales.

We plan to benchmark our progress against these aims. In the section 'Where are we now?' (p13) analysis from the internationally respected Swansea University's Centre for Innovative Ageing reveals Wales' standing against the other 3 UK nations and provides a basis for monitoring the progress of this strategy in the years ahead.

Three cross-cutting themes

The following three themes do not fit within one specific section as their relevance spans across the entire document.

Theme 1: Creating an age friendly Wales

The global response to the world's ageing population has been a move towards age friendly communities and cities. The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that '*an age-friendly world enables people of all ages to actively participate in community activities and treats everyone with respect, regardless of their age.*' The organisation's 2018 report '[The Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities](#)' elaborates:

By making cities and communities age-friendly, we ensure that cities and communities are inclusive and equitable places that leave no one behind – especially the most vulnerable older people. Equitable societies, in turn, have benefits for everyone.

In 2010, WHO launched its Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities. To become a member of the Network, local leaders must commit to and implement the four steps:

- Engage with and understand stakeholders including older people;
- plan strategically to enable all stakeholders to develop a shared vision;
- implement an action plan; and
- measure the progress of the age-friendly approach as well as its impact on people's lives.

These steps align with and can support public bodies to embed the Well-being of Future Generation's Act's five ways of working and a rights based approach. They provide a framework for Welsh Government and local authorities to broker new relationships with citizens and drive a cultural shift towards a more co productive way of designing and delivering services.

We want Wales to be part of this global movement towards age friendly communities and plan to work with the Older People's Commissioner to encourage and support age friendly communities to be established throughout Wales. United and consistent progress at a local level will sum up to significant progress nationally.

Theme 2: Prioritising prevention

Increases in life expectancies in Wales have stalled in recent years along with 'healthy life expectancies.' There is currently a difference of around 18 years in healthy life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas. If we are to achieve our aim of supporting all older people in Wales to live and age well, we must prioritise prevention, not just in traditional health and social care settings, but across every determinant of well-being.

Prevention and early intervention can stop problems occurring in the first instance. They can also support people living in challenging circumstances to cope better. The age friendly initiative is a preventative intervention. The programme supports local communities to take control and become more involved in shaping their local environment to better suit their lifestyles. It also supports policy makers to identify where they need to prioritise resources in order to design services that keep people well for longer. At a time when public budgets are so tightly constrained, the public sector

cannot afford to ignore the key factors that make a difference to the quality of people's lives and matter most to them.

By building communities, homes, transport systems and outdoor spaces that enable people to age well, we aim to support the population of Wales to live healthy and fulfilled lives for as long as possible. Prevention and early intervention can also equip people with the skills and knowledge to take responsibility for their own health and well-being. The movement towards an age friendly Wales can also play a key role in empowering individuals to take control of how they live and ultimately how well they age.

This focus on prevention and collective action aligns closely with the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the requirement it places on public bodies to '*to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.*'

Theme 3: A rights based approach

Human Rights are universal and recognised rights for everyone as set out in the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998. The Act came into force in the UK in 2000. Human rights are distinct from but closely aligned to the well-being agenda and represent a clear benchmark about the unacceptable nature of humiliating and degrading treatment to any of us. The HRA places an obligation on public authorities, including the Welsh Government, to treat people with fairness, equality, dignity, respect and autonomy.

Age is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 which means that people cannot be treated differently because of their age. The Public Sector Equality Duty is part of the Equality Act. It aims to ensure that public bodies, including the Welsh Government, consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society. The duty drives sound decision-making. It encourages public bodies to understand how different groups of people with particular protected characteristics will be affected by their policies and services.

Raising awareness of rights can also empower people to take control and recognise when their rights are being compromised. Defining human rights in simple terms can empower older people to challenge and change the way services are designed and delivered in Wales, but it is equally important to raise awareness of rights amongst professionals.

A rights based approach is informed and guided by the legal framework outlined above and can transform people's lives. The United Nations Principles for Older Persons have also informed the development of this strategy and will guide its implementation. The Principles for Older Persons were adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1991 and although the principles do not create new legal obligations, governments are encouraged to incorporate them into their national programmes wherever possible. The 2016 report '[Making Human Rights Real for Older People](#)' drafted by Professor Simon Hoffman, provides an overarching framework for older people's human rights in public services. The OPRA principles are:

- Embedding older people's human rights;
- Empowering older people;
- Non-discrimination and equality;
- Participation; and
- Accountability.

Each of these elements feature strongly across this document – we aim to demonstrate how we will uphold a rights based approach by empowering older people to have choice and control over how they travel, where they live and work, their incomes and ultimately the choices they make when planning for later life.

Welsh Government has commissioned research to explore how we can further strengthen and advance equality and human rights in Wales. Options could include the possible incorporation of United Nations conventions and treaties into Welsh law. The research will also determine whether there is a need for fresh legislation, such as a Human Rights Act for Wales. We are mindful that there is currently a set of UN Principles for Older Persons rather than a legally binding convention, however, Welsh Government is clear that this will not weaken older people’s rights within any new policy or legislation. The final report will be available by end of February 2021.

To further uphold and protect older people’s rights, we are embedding feminist principles across Welsh Government policies and programmes via the Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Plan and reviewing our strategic equality objectives.

Our engagement with older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) and black and minority ethnic (BAME) people revealed that individuals from both groups are feeling increasingly concerned about the changing attitudes towards marginalised groups due to Brexit, the fallout from the Windrush scandal and the rise of far right groups across Europe.

To address the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on BAME people, we established the First Minister’s BAME Covid-19 Advisory Group and launched the Race Equality Action Plan and the risk assessment tool in health, care and other settings.

Action on Disability: the Right to Independent Living focuses on what the Welsh Government is doing to achieve greater equality in Wales. Underlying the whole framework is the ‘Social Model of Disability’, which recognises the need for society to be transformed by removing barriers so that disabled people are able to participate fully. Although not all older people are disabled, the chance of having a functional impairment increases with age. Therefore older people with a disability will also benefit from this wider approach to independent living.

Making rights real in health and social care

We are already undertaking a series of actions to ‘make rights real for older people.’ In November 2019 we launched a national campaign to make older people and carers aware of their rights under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

We have worked with Social Care Wales to co produce practical guidance demonstrating how local authorities can have due regard to the UN Principles for Older Persons as required by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. A version has also been produced aimed at older people. Swansea University has produced recommendations for an update of the Guidance on Raising Concerns on Closures of Care Homes.

Recent months have highlighted the critical role of human rights for policy makers tasked with balancing the rights of citizens with the need to protect them from Covid-19.

Throughout the pandemic, we have worked with the Older People’s Commissioner and EHRC Cymru to monitor its impact on older people and take appropriate action. We have shared details of the scientific data and engagement that informed decisions

relating to older people living in care homes and will continue this working relationship to ensure older people's rights are strengthened as we plan for the future.

Tackling ageism and age discrimination

Fundamental to an age friendly Wales and a rights based approach is the elimination of ageism and age discrimination. Global awareness of the impact of ageism on individuals and societies is growing. In 2020 the WHO commissioned a report as part of their Global Campaign to Combat Ageism. The report: [Global reach of ageism on older persons' health: A systematic review](#) found that ageism harms the health of older people in 45 countries and across 5 continents. The study had over 7 million participants.

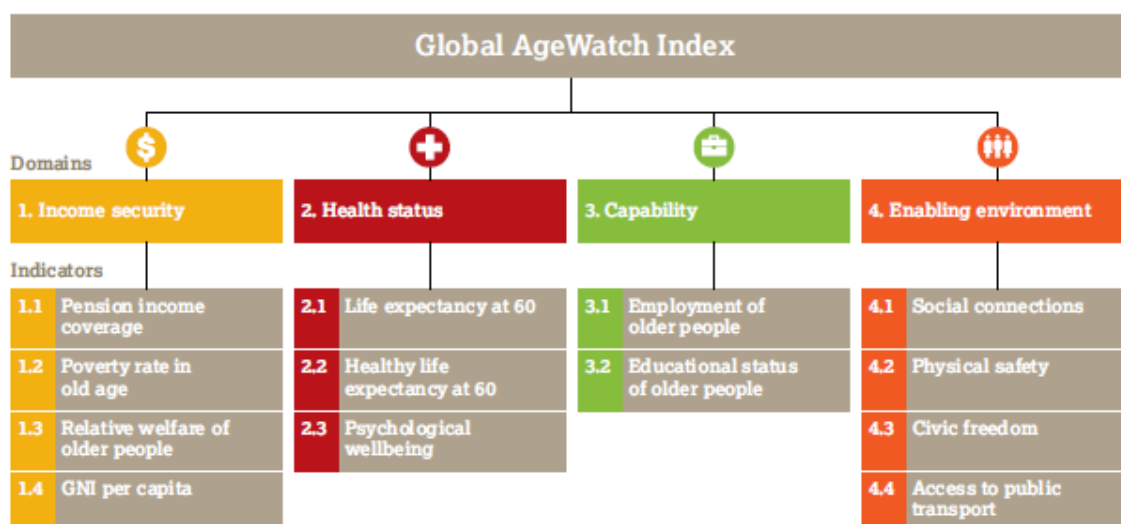
The 2018 report *That Age Old Question: How attitudes to ageing affect our health and wellbeing* by the Royal Society for Public Health has linked ageism to a negative attitude to growing older. As with other forms of discrimination, ageism has deep roots in our society's cultural norms and practices, including in the language we use. During the pandemic, older people have voiced their fears that ageist narratives have become embedded in public dialogue and that negative ageist stereotyping, of both younger and older age groups, are contributing to an intergenerational divide.

We cannot allow this pandemic to embed stereotypical notions that link age to vulnerability and decline and ultimately make it easier for older people's rights to be overlooked. Therefore, we welcome the work of the Older People's Commissioner and Age Cymru to place a specific focus on ageism and will work with them to better understand its causes and impact in order to realise our aim of a more equal Wales.

We also aim to identify ageist and age discrimination via our policy assessment process. All Welsh Government policies are subject to a full Integrated Impact Assessment, which gives full consideration to their impact on all members of society. We are reviewing our integrated assessment tool and will engage with Commissioners, policy makers and stakeholders.

Where are we now? Benchmarking the situation of older people in Wales

The [Global AgeWatch Index](#) uses a combination of measures to ensure the situation of older people can be compared against internationally recognised standards. The aim of the Index is both to capture the multidimensional nature of the quality of life and well-being of older people, and to provide a means by which to measure performance and promote improvements. The Index uses 13 different indicators for the four key domains of Income security, Health status, Capability, and Enabling environment. (See below).



The latest version of the Index has data on 96 countries, covering 91 per cent of the world's population aged 60 and over and ranks **UK 10th**, however there is no index ranking the 4 UK nations individually.

The UK Age Index

In 2019, the internationally recognised Centre for Innovative Ageing (CIA) at Swansea University was commissioned by Welsh Government to use this measure to benchmark the situation of older people in Wales against the other 3 UK nations – Northern Ireland, Scotland and England.

CIA used a range of measures to create a UK Age Index (UKAI). The results for the overall UKAI show that **Wales was ranked 1st**, with the highest overall score, followed by Scotland (2nd), England (3rd) and finally Northern Ireland (4th). This shows that there is much that we are doing well and we should feel proud that our commitment to support older people is clearly evidenced.

For ease of reference, the four domains of the UK Age Index reflect this strategy's four aims (p6). If we focus on Wales, we can see that it is not ranked as 1st for any of the individual domains. Wales is 2nd for Income security, 2nd for Health status, 3rd for Capability and 2nd for Enabling environments. So, although Wales does well overall there is still work that can be done to improve how well Wales performs against each of these individual domains. We know there is still a huge amount to do to prepare for the opportunity and challenge of our ageing society.

The numbers in the table below relate to each nations' ranking within the UK Age Index from 1 to 4.

	Tackling age related poverty (Income security)	Enhancing people's well-being (Health Status)	Empowering people and communities (Capability)	Improving local services and environments (Enabling environments)
England	4	1	1	3
Wales	2	2	3	2
Scotland	3	3	2	1
Northern Ireland	1	4	4	4

A coproduced strategy intended for further engagement

The Strategy for an Ageing Society has been co-produced with older people and their representatives. This means older people have been involved in creating this document from the onset – they have informed its design and development and ultimately will be involved in its delivery.

Initial work was led by the Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing (MAFA) whose membership is 50% older people. In 2018 the forum convened five working groups to focus on the key areas that members felt we must get right in planning for an ageing population; transport; participation; housing; making rights real and planning for the future. Members of the working groups included older people, leading academics, and representatives from the public, voluntary and private sectors. The Older People's Commissioner was also represented on all groups.

To build on the work initiated by MAFA, over the past year we engaged over 1000 older people in a conversation about ageing. We visited national groups and local forums and older people also took part in community engagement events led by Age Cymru. We also commissioned Age Cymru to hold focus groups with older people from minority groups.

In summer 2020, Age Cymru worked with national older people's organisations to carry out a survey of older people's experiences during the pandemic and their views on recovery. The survey received over 1100 responses and will inform the implementation of this strategy.

This strategy focuses the macro and the micro - the system-level changes that we are making, for example to our health and transport services, but also the smaller things that older people tell us make a difference to their daily lives such as variable access to GP appointments, hospital transport and the availability of public toilets.

All these issues are referenced in this document and we will continue to engage with our stakeholders over the next year and beyond to ensure we get our actions right. Work to produce this strategy has also involved Ministers and officials from across government portfolios. The process has sharpened our focus on ageing and we will maintain and build on this momentum to secure the realisation of our long term vision to be an age friendly nation.

We will also continue our regular meetings with local authority staff leading on policy for older people. This will allow us to monitor progress towards an age friendly Wales at a local level.

2: Enhancing people's well-being

Our health and care system is changing and improving to meet the changing needs of our increasing and ageing population. In line with our ambition to be an age friendly nation that upholds and protects people's rights, we are working to create a fully integrated health and social care system that supports people to take responsibility for their own health and well-being whilst feeling confident that support will be available and easily accessible if needed.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, launched in 2016, is embedding a rights based approach by legislating for citizens to be an equal partner in their care and support. 'A Healthier Wales,' published in 2018, sets out the Welsh Government's long

term vision for a 'whole system approach to health and social care'. It promotes a greater emphasis on preventing illness, on supporting people to manage their own health and well-being, and on enabling people to live independently for as long as possible, supported by new technologies and by integrated health and social care services which are delivered closer to home.

We have invested significant financial resources into prevention and early intervention via the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) since its establishment in 2014-15. This year we are investing a further £89 million in the ICF; £40 million of which is to directly support older people. Our continued investment to this important fund is enabling a wide range of projects and services to be developed to support older people; many of which are aimed at reducing loneliness and isolation and keeping people out of hospital or residential care. Through new ways of working, care is often provided at, or close to home, so that people can stay living at home independently and remain part of the community.

As a Programme for Government commitment the ICF was due to come to an end in March 2020. However, the ICF (and Transformation Fund) have both been extended until March 2022 to allow time for a new regional funding programme to be developed. This extension will enable older people across Wales to continue to benefit from seamless, integrated health and social care services.

Key players in achieving our aim of an age friendly Wales are third sector organisations. The third sector delivers preventative services to some of the most marginalised older people in our communities. Their services can be flexible and responsive to individual need and can empower older people to take control of their well-being regardless of their individual circumstance. Phase 2 of Welsh Government's Sustainable Social Services Third Sector Grant, 2020 - 23 supports Welsh Ministers' priorities of an equal relationship between people and practitioners; early intervention and prevention; and transforming the way people's needs for care and support are met. Many of the projects funded will support the delivery of this strategy and some are referenced in this document.

Right now we are enhancing well-being by:

- **Supporting healthy ageing programmes and initiatives** - our Healthy Ageing Programme continues to help people sustain and improve their physical and mental well-being through a variety of activities including tai chi, Nordic walking and supporting participation in cultural events. Via the Healthy and Active Fund, we have committed £5.4 million over three years to projects that support healthy and active lifestyles.

Our [Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales Strategy](#) aims to ensure that the environment enables people to make healthier choices, as well as encouraging opportunities for older people to be healthy and active. The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of the strategy, with poorer outcomes linked to weight and lifestyle choices across our population. We have published a refreshed set of priorities for 2020 and we will refresh the 2020-22 delivery plan early in 2021. A £14 million Sport and Leisure Recovery Fund will support the sector with the ongoing challenges resulting from the pandemic and provide longer-term sustainability.

- **Strengthening social prescribing across Wales** – we are taking a number of actions to strengthen social prescribing practices across Wales, including working with Regional Partnership Boards; developing a national skills and competency

framework for the social prescribing workforce, an online resource portal and an outcomes framework.

- **Targeting interventions at areas of high deprivation and minority groups** - there are groups and individuals who, for a variety of reasons, require targeted support to access health and social care. This includes people living with sensory loss, dementia or a life limiting condition, people from the gypsy and traveller communities, refugees and asylum seekers and people on a low income. Adopting a targeted approach can support us to work towards our vision of a fairer Wales.

We also recognise the needs of our cohort of older prisoners in Wales. Through the (all-age) Partnership Agreement for Prison Health, we have prioritised the development of new standards for mental health services (which includes a focus on dementia), the development of a substance misuse treatment framework, medicines management and the role of the wider prison environment in supporting men in prison to improve their health outcomes.

Via our **Sustainable Social Services Third Sector Grant 2020/23**, we are funding Women Connect First to improve access to preventative services for older BAME women in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. The organisation will work with a range of partners to provide culturally appropriate, co produced activities that support the women to live and age well. It will also pilot delivery in other regions across Wales so a model can be developed for national roll out.

We are also funding the **HOPE project** to support older people and carers to access community based preventative services through a range of **advocacy models** led by peers, volunteer groups and citizens.

We are providing funding for Race Equality First to engage with BAME people of all ages via one-to-one advocacy; drop in coffee mornings and volunteer champions trained in advocacy. The project will also deliver training to social care organisations on the needs of BAME service users.

- **Making it easier for people to access Welsh language services and use Welsh in their everyday lives** - we want to create an environment where everyone will want to use the Welsh language and feel comfortable to do so in all aspects of their lives. This is important for all services, but even more so in health and care as the quality of care can be compromised by the failure to communicate with people in their first language. For many older people the use of the Welsh language is not just a matter of choice but can be a matter of need, especially those suffering from dementia or stroke who may lose their second language.
- **Supporting people living with life limiting and complex conditions** by working with the End of Life Care Board, Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie and Hospice UK in Wales to deliver on our ambition to make Wales a Compassionate Country.
- **Implementing our dementia action plan** to focus on what service users and carers have told us is particularly important to them – for example, timely diagnosis and the provision of person centred support following a diagnosis. We are working to improve diagnosis rates and to develop a ‘team around the individual approach.’ The plan embeds a clear rights based approach and to support its implementation, we committed £10m annually from 2018/19. The plan is subject to review to ensure the actions remain ambitious and relevant.

- **Preventing falls** by supporting a range of activities both nationally and locally to help prevent falls in both care homes, community and hospital settings.
- **Improving care homes by** working with Improvement Cymru to deliver the 'Care Home Cymru programme'. The programme is focusing on three key areas - person and family centred care; safety and reliability and leadership and team working.
- **Recruiting more GPs** by launching the *This is Wales: Train Work Live* marketing campaign, both within the UK and wider afield. The campaign has a specific focus on GPs. The fill rate for GP training has increased significantly each year since the launch of the campaign and this year we have filled 176 places with a further recruitment round taking place later this year.
- Taking forward work in our **Substance Misuse Delivery Plan 2019-22** which highlights the importance of improving access to substance misuse treatment services for all people with protected characteristics. We already have a Substance Misuse Treatment Framework in place on access to substance misuse services for older people and have also worked with "Drink Wise, Age Well" on their Charter for Change.

How technology is driving improvement

Improving digital literacy has been shown to have a significant impact on improving health outcomes for patients by supporting them to independently take control of their health and care. Our Digital Communities Wales: Digital Confidence, Health and Well-being programme aims to improve the digital capabilities of citizens and health and social care staff, allowing more people to become active participants in their own health and well-being. The programme will specifically benefit the high number of older people who are digitally excluded by supporting them to take preventative steps to better manage their own health.

Going forward, our three priority areas for action are:

1. Support for unpaid carers

The vast majority of care across the UK is provided by unpaid carers, that is family, friends and sometimes volunteers. This unpaid care is estimated to be worth £8.1 billion to the Welsh economy each year (Carers Wales 2015).

Wales has the highest proportion in the UK of older carers and of carers providing more than 50 hours' care a week. Since the start of the pandemic, more people have taken on a caring role – people have moved homes, left their families or given up work to care for and protect relatives or friends. The legion of unpaid carers has helped key services in Wales to cope with the increased pressure caused by Covid-19.

As our society ages, the number of people living with complex needs is increasing. It is therefore inevitable that more older people will take on a caring role. Most older carers live alone with the cared for person and many also live with life limiting conditions (Carers Wales 2019). Ensuring preventative support is available for carers is not purely an economic imperative. It is a key element of an age friendly Wales which aspires to support all citizens to live and age well.

We will publish a new strategic action plan for carers which addresses the issues outlined above. The plan will clearly set out the actions we will need - and how we can all work together as Welsh Government, statutory authorities, health boards,

commissioners, carers' organisations and others, to deliver real improvements in carers' lives. [A public consultation on the plan](#) was launched in October 2020.

2. Improving access to health and social care services

A growing number of health and well-being services are moving closer to people's homes as we help build *A Healthier Wales*. Whilst, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on the delivery of NHS and social care services and changed how the general public access healthcare, the vision we set out in *A Healthier Wales* remains sound. This means:

- a whole system approach where seamless support, care or treatment is provided as close to home as possible;
- services designed around individuals, based on their unique needs and what matters to them, as well as quality and safety outcomes;
- people only going to hospital when it is essential, with services designed to reduce the time spent in hospital;
- more local services available in community settings to allow people to access a wider range of advice and help more easily. This includes GP surgeries, community pharmacies, dental practices and eye health services such as opticians. People will also be able to access new services via their GP surgeries such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

We will continue to support vulnerable people in their own homes, in hospitals, in care homes, in supported accommodation or other settings, building on new ways of working and innovation where appropriate. For example, the use of technology as a key part of the Covid-19 response helped provide alternatives to face to face consultations, reduced the need for travelling and kept people in touch.

We will further improve access to services by:

- **Acting on the findings of the evaluation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** which began in 2018. Due to the recent pandemic, it was necessary to pause the evaluation temporarily, but work recommenced in September 2020 and will now include an additional strand focusing on the impacts of Covid-19. The final report, including recommendations, will be published in autumn 2022, however, a number of key interim reports will also be published between now and then.
- **Publishing a new Performance and Improvement Framework** to ensure all local authorities in Wales are collecting the same data to demonstrate their compliance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Phase 2 of the framework is due to be launched in April 2021.
- **Improving access to primary care services including GPs** - the Primary Care Model for Wales is informing people to understand how to live longer, healthier and happier lives and to remain independent and at home for as long as possible. Priorities for action include prevention, a 24/7 service, the multi professional workforce, data and digital technology, communication and engagement, cluster working and the reform of the national primary care contracts.

The scope of work in this programme has been influenced by a number of publications including the 2017 report by the Older People's Commissioner: [GP Services in Wales: The Perspective of Older People](#). In March 2019, we

introduced new access standards for GP services, which we expect practices to meet by March 2021. In March 2020, over half of Practices in Wales were achieving every standard.

- **Look to enhance the funding available for social care** by developing innovative funding models to ensure additional funding is available for social care in the longer term. This is part of our wider consideration of the way in which public services are funded in Wales.

3. Improving access to mental health services

Together for Mental Health our 10 year strategy, published in 2012, is an all age strategy. It reinforces the need to promote better mental well-being among the whole population and looks to address the needs of people with mental health problems, ensuring those vulnerable people in most need receive the appropriate priority. It focuses on how to improve the lives of service users and their families using a recovery and enablement approach. This strategy is supported by a series of delivery plans with the final one covering the period 2019-2022.

Why have we chosen these priorities?

These three areas have been identified through consultation with older people and their representatives who have told us that accessing GP appointments (Age Alliance Wales, '[Access to GP services by older people](#)') and travelling to hospital appointments can be challenging. We also know that people can struggle to make that first point of contact with local authority care and support services. In line with our preventative and rights based approach, it is vital that we get these factors right. Both the demographic data and the views of our stakeholders clearly show that improved support for unpaid carers is needed.

The UK Age Index ranks Wales 3rd for psychological well-being hence we have prioritised mental health services whilst recognising that each element of this strategy, if implemented in accordance with its intention, will help to boost well-being.

UN Principles for Older Persons: Care: 10 -14; Dignity 17 and 18

3. Improving local services and environments

Housing, transport systems and the built environment fundamentally affect how well we live and age. Getting these crucial elements of our society right can be the defining factor in how successful we are in achieving our vision of an age friendly Wales. Regardless, of background, health or income status, our homes, buses, trains and local communities can influence how well we live and how well we cope with any challenging circumstances as we age.

This chapter details the actions we are taking and plan to take to make sure we get these critical elements of an age friendly society right.

Housing

Prosperity for All recognises the bedrock of living well, is a good quality affordable home. Suitable housing can become increasingly important as we age, our needs change and we spend more time at home. However, in planning for an ageing population, it is vital to consider the housing needs and aspirations of people of all ages.

The UN Principles state that ‘*Older persons should be able to live in environments that are safe and adaptable to personal preferences and changing capacities.*’ In line with our rights based approach, we are working to ensure housing in Wales supports people to live well at every stage of their life. Given the link between housing and health, good quality affordable housing must be seen as a preventative intervention.

Housing should recognise the diverse range of need across Wales. We want to provide housing in communities which enables older people, whatever their background, financial position or circumstances to fulfil their potential and lead meaningful lives. However, the Welsh Government’s 2019 [Independent Review of Affordable Housing Supply](#) shows that many thousands of older people in Wales live in houses that do not support them to age well and prevent them from living the life they choose. Poor quality housing can create a risk to health and exacerbate long term health conditions and many older people struggle to afford to repair or improve homes they live in.

Prosperity for All also recognises that the way we plan our capital investment can have a big impact by helping different organisations to deliver their services in a single place and minimising the individual’s need to travel. This is especially important when planning housing for an ageing population, particularly in the context of our commitment in *A Healthier Wales* to shift health and care services into communities and away from hospitals.

In 2017, the Welsh Government’s [Expert Group on Housing an Ageing Population](#) produced a report which continues to inform the Welsh Government’s policy approach to housing an ageing population.

In response to the report we have:

- Created a three year £105 million Integrated Care Fund capital programme to support investment in accommodation that is integrated with health and care services;
- mandated for housing representatives to be statutory members of Regional Partnership Boards;
- promoted greater consistency in the provision of Housing Adaptations by publishing a set of service standards for delivery agencies;
- strengthened our data collection to cover all housing adaptations provided across funding streams, an analysis of returns will be published each year; and
- reviewed the effectiveness of Local Market Housing Assessments.

Right now to build housing for an ageing population we are:

- **Reviewing our affordable housing supply** and ensuring all Welsh Government grant funded new housing complies with the Lifetime Homes Standards.
- **Consulting on our new plan to tackle fuel poverty** and expanding our Health Conditions Pilot Nest Scheme to provide more assistance to older people struggling to meet the cost of their home energy needs.
- **Investing £104m in the Warm Homes Programme** between April 2017 and March 2021 to improve up to a further 25,000 homes of people on low incomes or living in the most deprived areas of Wales. Our investment will also lever in up to £24 million of EU funding.
- **Improving access and availability of affordable** homes by building 20,000 new affordable homes by 2021 and working with local authorities to begin council house building at pace and scale for the first time in decades.

- **Ensuring older people have equal access to good quality, timely adaptations** that support their independence, regardless of housing tenure.

Going forward, our three priority areas for housing are:

1. Supporting the growth of new housing models

We will support the growth of new housing models that support people to age well. This will include contemporary sheltered housing and extra care housing.

2. Co-ordinating housing, health and social care capital programmes

We are working closely with the health, social care and housing sectors as well as Regional Partnership Boards to deliver a scalable programme of capital investment to ensure housing plays a significant role in the work of the Boards. We believe there is further scope to extend independent living, maximise the contribution housing interventions can make to improving service delivery whilst also alleviating the pressures on the NHS and social care.

How technology can drive improvement

In 2019, the Centre for Innovative Ageing based at Swansea University, was awarded EU funding to create an innovative and unique research hub which will make Wales a world leader in developing creative industries for an ageing population and allow us to take forward big ideas to benefit our ageing population. The hub will provide a space where businesses and entrepreneurs can work closely with older people to create prototypes for new products and services. It will enable older people to be at the forefront of developing and testing new products, environments and services. It will feature a mock-up of a room that can be changed between living space, dining room and kitchen to develop and test new products. It will also have a virtual reality suite and a break out café lab.

3. Exploring how to help people to move

“They build these extra care places and we all think we’re too young, then you get to 85 and you’re too old to move!” (Attendee at engagement event).

The dominant culture in Wales is for older people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. However people do need to consider whether their accommodation can be adapted to suit their changing needs before crisis hits or their circumstances change and staying put is no longer a viable option. Supporting people who wish to move to do so could also increase the availability of housing stock for younger generations.

Attendees at our focus groups with older people from minority groups recognised that moving home can be a very taxing process and felt that some form of advocate, to assist a person to make a move would be of great help. Group members were careful to add that any decisions regarding a possible move should be made by the residents.

Care & Repair Cymru is currently piloting a ‘Help to Move’ service in Bridgend and Carmarthenshire. The service provides counselling and emotional support which allows people to assess their housing needs and consider different options.

The evaluation of these projects will provide valuable information on the level of need for Help to Move services. They will also help us to understand how the service operates at a community level and whether the service is successful in improving independence, health and well-being.

Why have we chosen these priorities?

We will continue to implement the recommendations of the Expert Group on Housing for an Ageing Population - each of the priorities relate to a recommendation within the report and are supported by our housing working group.

Attendees at our engagement events were generally open to the idea of entering supported housing or a residential care home, should they need to, but would still like to maintain their autonomy (otherwise they envisaged staying at home for as long as possible, with appropriate support and adaptations). Attendees told us that they would like to continue to contribute to society for as long as possible, but housing in poorly chosen locations could prevent people from spending time in and contributing to their local community.

UN Principle for Older Persons: Independence 5 and 6

Open spaces and buildings

To support our rights based approach, the built environment must be conducive and safe for walking for older people and public buildings must be fully accessible to all. Our new framework, “Action on Disability: the Right to Independent Living” sets out how we are addressing social barriers to equality and inclusion so disabled people have access to the same opportunities as everyone else. The framework is accompanied by an action plan which sets out a wide range of actions happening across Welsh Government to tackle some of the key barriers identified by disabled people including transport, employment, housing and access to buildings and places. It is supporting the creation of age friendly communities across Wales and we will align the implementation of this strategy with its actions where appropriate.

Right now, to improve open spaces and buildings, we are:

- **Investing in active travel** by providing funding for local authorities to design and develop routes that support people to walk and cycle to where they want to go.
- **Improving green spaces** so that local residents can benefit from the health and well-being benefits associated with increased exposure to natural environments and improved access to local green spaces (Van den Berg, M. et al, 2015).
- **Involving local people in improving their communities** by continuing to support the Community Land Advisory Service in Wales that enables community groups, local authorities and landowners to help people access, own and improve green spaces in their local areas.

Greener Grangetown is a large scale retrofit sustainable drainage scheme which aimed to make the local area a cleaner, greener place to live. The local community were engaged throughout the design and development of the scheme. The scheme is an innovative £2 million partnership project between Cardiff Council, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and Natural Resources Wales. The project uses the latest sustainable drainage techniques to catch, clean and divert rainwater directly into the River Taff instead of collecting and pumping it eight miles to a treatment works in the Vale of Glamorgan and then discharging it out to sea. This is the first time that these techniques have been retrofitted into an urban environment at this scale. The scheme has resulted in:

- An additional 1,600m² of green space (the equivalent of 4 basketball courts)

- The creation of Wales' first ever 'bicycle street' along one of the busiest sections of the Taff Trail Active Travel route
- 135 new trees and thousands of shrubs and grasses planted
- Creation of a community orchard
- 26 new cycle stands
- **9 new seats and benches**

Going forward, our three priority areas are:

1. Ensuring our built environment is safe and age friendly

We will work to create age friendly neighbourhoods that prioritise people's needs over those of traffic. Our ambition is to reduce the default speed limit in built up areas from 30mph to 20mph as well as creating safer places to cross the road. Older people have told us how pavement parking can seriously restrict their ability to get out and about safely. In response, the Welsh Pavement Parking Taskforce has set out a plan to equip local authorities to fine individuals who park on pavements, which will be implemented from **July 2022**. In July the Senedd also backed proposals for a 20mph default speed limit in residential areas, which the Welsh Government intends to be in force by **April 2023**.

2. Improving availability of public toilets

We introduced a requirement for all local authorities to deliver a strategic approach to the provision of toilets across Wales. Each local authority in Wales was required to produce and publicise a local toilets strategy by 31 May 2019. The initial publication of local toilet strategies is the starting point rather than the finish point as local authorities are required to publish regular statements of progress and to formally review their strategies. We have also worked with local authorities to map the toilets identified within the local toilets strategies, and [this is available online](#).

Toilets for public use have largely been closed during the course of the Covid-19, however we are aware of the difficulties that lack of access to a toilet can present. Once we have met the significant challenges presented by this pandemic during the forthcoming winter we will revisit our approach to the provision of public toilets to assess the most effective and safest way forward. Some toilet providers (including local authorities) have decided that they wish to reopen their facilities in line with wider services that have reopened. We have therefore published [guidance](#) on how they may safely open and manage toilets for public use in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and in compliance with the Coronavirus Restrictions Regulations.

Through the age friendly communities programme and our support for older people's groups and forums, we will actively encourage older people to have their voices heard when local authorities are planning key services, such as public toilets. For example, older people have told us that far more could be done to encourage businesses such as shops and cafés to open up their toilets to the general public.

3. Re invigorating our town centres

We will reshape and relaunch all existing regeneration capital programmes from 2021 as a single Transforming Towns Fund.

Through our Transforming Towns agenda we want to create town centres that provide jobs, homes, leisure and services, but that also look great, feel safe and are easily accessible and vibrant. Town centres in Wales should instill a sense of pride and celebrate their individual heritage. We want to create an experience, to make towns places where people want to be.

Along with partners in local government, we have adopted a Town Centre First Principle. The principle means that we will put the health and vibrancy of our town centres as the starting point when it comes to making decisions around location investment and strategies.

A vibrant, exciting town centre can attract people of all ages, however, for older people, especially those living alone, face to face contact in shops and post offices can be the only conversation they have all day. Post offices, banks and shops can also limit the impact of our digital world on people who do not use the internet.

Why have we chosen these priorities?

The availability of public toilets is a constant concern for many older people - numerous people at our engagement events and meetings, noted that toilets are a significant factor in whether people chose to leave their home or use public transport. One person explained that “without access to public toilets people find it increasingly difficult to leave the home and integrate with village life.” Evidence shows the importance of making our streets and pavements safer and more age friendly. For example, people over the age of 60 make up [20% of the population](#) of the UK, around 8% of pedestrian activity, yet account for [41.5% of all pedestrian fatalities](#) (Musselwhite C.B.A. 2018). Poorly maintained pavements, poor crossing facilities and poor lighting among other things can contribute to this figure (Musselwhite C.B.A. 2018). In addition, Wales ranked third out of the four UK nations in the Global Age Watch Index on physical safety which is defined as how safe people feel when going out at night.

UN Principle for Older Persons: Independence 5

Transport

Accessible public and community transport can be a lifeline for people of all ages and is frequently cited as a priority issue by older people’s groups and individuals.

It is imperative that we create an age friendly transport system that is accessible to all older people. Public transport services support the economic, social and cultural development of local communities and can allow older people to realise their human right to independence, participation, care and self fulfilment. However, cuts to local bus services and a lack of co-ordination between bus and rail networks can make even short journeys difficult for older people. Poor quality signage, seating and public toilets can also make older people feel less confident about using public transport.

Covid-19 has had a huge impact on travel demand. This, coupled with on-going Welsh Government advice that people should work from home wherever possible and only use public transport when no other means of travel is available, has meant prioritising our funding to support our bus industry through this difficult period and has made forward planning extremely challenging. However, our long-term vision for integrated transport remains to:

- Provide an integrated public transport network that is safe, reliable, punctual, environmentally sustainable and accessible, and that meets the needs of the travelling public.

Right now, to build an integrated public travel network, we are:

- **Improving accessibility** - Transport for Wales is investing £200 million across all rail stations in Wales for step-free access, better waiting rooms, shelters, toilets, lighting and seating. Transport for Wales is also improving the services it offers to people in

need of assistance on their journeys. We are also investing £25 million to improve provision of bus services and accessibility on buses in Wales by promoting the adoption of the Welsh Voluntary Quality Standards (WVQS). Transport for Wales have also partnered with InterpreterNow to make communication easier for people who use sign language.

- **Introducing new legislation in relation to Public Transport** that will provide local authorities with the tools to respond flexibly to local public transport needs.
- **Reshaping Wales' bus network in response to Covid-19** - We are working with Transport for Wales, local authorities and bus operators to reshape Wales' bus network and ensure efficient services in the short, medium, and long term to help people access shops, education, work and leisure.
- We will shortly be consulting on our new **Wales Transport Strategy** that will set out our long-term objectives and priorities for our transport system in Wales.

Going forward our three priority areas for transport are:

1. Developing more demand responsive transport

The availability of community transport can be the deciding factor in whether an individual can continue to live the life they chose or whether they become socially isolated and at risk of loneliness. It provides a key preventative service and is a core element of any age friendly community. The need for community transport can be particularly acute in rural areas, but even in towns and cities, older people can struggle to get to groups and health services without transport.

We want to explore how we can integrate community transport with public transport services to support people to get to work and vital health appointments. To achieve this, we are funding new pilot projects. The Valleys Taskforce is working closely with Transport for Wales (TFW) to determine what the pilots will look like and explore the viability of further pilots in this area. TFW are also planning to consider how to make better use of mini buses that are unused for large parts of the day, such as school transport services.

Transport for Wales is piloting a “fflecsi” community transport initiative across Wales in both rural and urban settings. Currently these are running or planned for Newport, Pembrokeshire, Blaenau Gwent and Conwy Valley. All of the pilots will help Transport for Wales to understand where Fflecsi and demand responsive travel fit in as part of the suite of measures to achieve an integrated transport network across Wales going forward.

2. Improving bus services

We have set aside £2.5m for Bus Network Reform. This funding will allow us to make better use of data to inform our future investment. It will also provide valuable information on how we can continue to improve the passenger experience. To support us to develop our integrated vision for transport in Wales, TFW are working with local communities to learn more about the journeys they make. Through this work, we aim to gain a better understanding of how we can connect people who live in areas not served by public transport with main bus routes.

We will introduce high quality buses in Wales that can be run with green energy and are equipped with up to date technology including Wi-Fi access and charging points.

3. Supporting people to plan journeys door to door

Stakeholders have told us that, in the future, they expect people to be able to plan

their services 'door to door' confident that the streets, pavements, station facilities and information will support them to reach their destination safely. This is our vision for an age friendly transport system. The previous section has outlined how we are improving our built environment to support this aim, but we are also developing a new national technology platform that will, in the future, allow us to implement an account based ticketing solution for bus, rail, cycle hire, park and ride and access to other forms of transport. **This system will form the foundation of how people across Wales pay for and access buses across Wales in the future.**

Through TFW, we have also been working with partners across Wales to explore how bus services can be improved by integrating routes and timetables with the railway. From Cardiff to Flintshire, this will have a real impact on the way that services operate for the benefit of users.

We are trialing a new seat booking facility for passengers travelling on the longer distance TrawsCymru bus network across Wales. This will be progressively introduced from October 2020. We are also looking to put in place strengthened arrangements for the TrawsCymru bus network to provide better quality services and improved connections with rail and other key bus services at important hubs and interchange points.

Why have we chosen these priorities?

Improving the availability of local bus services is always cited as a priority in our wider engagement with older people – we asked participants 'what matters most to you?' and transport was the most popular response. This was reflected in our transport working group discussions. Statistics showing the impact of austerity on local bus services further support our decision. The working group also prioritised the need to support people to plan their journeys from door to door to allow people with limited mobility to use public transport with confidence.

UN Principle for Older Persons: Independence 5

4: Building and retaining people's own capability

Community participation

Community participation is the process by which an individual engages with locally-based activities which may benefit them and their community.

Effective forms of community participation rely on people being aware of and able to exercise their rights and responsibilities. It requires people to be empowered and enabled to actively engage with and influence things that impact on them or their community. This should be carried out in a way that is meaningful to the individual. However, for disadvantaged communities and individuals, community participation can be hindered by a lack of available resources and opportunities.

Enabling older people to effectively participate in community activity requires the support and involvement of a wide range of actors. Older people may lack the confidence and the resources to engage in community activities, or face barriers to accessing information. This can be exacerbated in communities which have lost traditional key community services such as banks, shops, post offices and community centres which previously acted as informal community hubs.

In line with a rights based and preventative approach promoted by this strategy, we recognise that targeted support is needed in areas particularly affected by disadvantage to address current inequality in opportunities between richer and more disadvantaged areas in Wales. We also are mindful of the impact that discrimination or even verbal and physical abuse can have on an individual's ability to participate.

Members of our focus groups noted that in much of Wales there may be insufficient numbers of LGBT+ people to sustain businesses designed for them alone. It was recognised that a more achievable ambition (and one which is attempted, with differing degrees of success), is to have a "gay friendly" evening in a coffee shop or pub.

Right now, to support community participation, we are:

- **Improving digital inclusion** through our Digital Companions volunteering initiative which trains individuals delivering doorstep services to older people to provide digital support. In response to the pandemic we have adapted this model to support virtual digital companions, helping ensure those who still need help can still be supported. Our intergenerational Digital Heroes initiative continues to help to tackle loneliness and isolation by supporting young people to spend time with older people to show them the benefits of being online. As of 31 March 2020, over 5,000 Digital Heroes (young volunteers) had been trained to help older people in hospitals and care homes stay in touch with friends and family or access key online public services.

- **Promoting volunteering** by working with partners to develop more opportunities for people to volunteer and generate maximum potential for volunteering in Wales.

Volunteers make a significant contribution, in unpaid hours, to the economy of Wales. It is estimated that every year volunteers contribute 145 million hours, which is worth £1.7 billion (WCVA 2016). This is equivalent to 3.1% of Wales GDP. Data from the National Survey for Wales (2020) showed that the majority of volunteers in Wales are aged over 65. Indeed many community groups are almost totally dependent on older people's contributions and have struggled to continue during the pandemic due to public health restrictions.

- **Improving access to information and advice** - Through our engagement with older people and their representatives we know that the following points will support community participation:
 - Access to accurate and up-to-date information about community services and groups;
 - promotion of community opportunities to lead a healthier lifestyle; and
 - promotion of a range opportunities to volunteer within the community.

We are taking action against all of the above points. DEWIS Cymru is a national well-being directory developed, owned and resourced by local government in Wales. It is able to share information with "Infoengine" (a Third Sector directory) and the NHS Direct Wales Directory of Health Services to provide a single, shared directory of local and national services. The creation of this single, shared directory of resources can enable the public and frontline staff to identify and connect with the right care, from the right service, organisation or person, at the right time.

Going forward, our three priority areas are:

1. Tackling loneliness and isolation

Since Phase 3 of the Strategy for Older People was launched in 2013, there has

been an increased recognition of the impact of loneliness on physical and mental well-being. Welsh Government published its response *Connected Communities; Loneliness and Isolation Strategy* in February 2020.

Connected Communities addresses the ways in which loneliness can affect people across their life course. Although the causes of loneliness and social isolation are complex and can vary for different age groups, many of the trigger points, such as bereavement, retirement, giving up driving, taking a caring role and the onset of ill health, are more common in later life.

Via our **Sustainable Social Services Third Sector Grant 2020/21**, we are funding Cruse Bereavement Care Cymru to transform national and local bereavement services, by developing a 'Bereavement Hub.'

We are also funding Contact the Elderly to reduce loneliness and social isolation among people aged over 75 by delivering co produced community activity and social groups. The project will target the most marginalised older people.

As we age and leave the workplace, our social networks can diminish. The research report, [*Retirement Transitions in Later Life*](#), by the Centre for Ageing Better showed that the main thing that retirees miss from work is the social contact it gave them. In addition, the sense of isolation following bereavement can be particularly acute. Closures of places to meet, such as libraries, community centres, pubs and churches can make it more challenging for older people to develop and maintain social networks.

Whilst *Connected Communities* explores the complex issue of loneliness across the life course and aims to develop solutions across a range of policy areas, the Strategy for an Ageing Society considers the issue through the lens of age friendly communities. This strategy sets out how we aim to create an age friendly Wales that builds resilience across the life course and prevents people from becoming socially isolated. From legislating for person centred care to developing travel systems and housing that cater to individual need, we aim to keep people connected within their local communities.

We will work with partners to ensure the implementation of *Connected Communities* addresses the needs of older people experiencing, or at risk of loneliness.

2. Improving access to and availability of places to meet

Suitable spaces for community groups to meet and flourish are vitally important in the development of an age friendly Wales, however, reduced local authority budgets have led to closures of community centres, libraries and sports centres. We will encourage local authorities to work with town and community councils and public sector organisations to make spaces in existing publicly-funded or publicly-supported buildings available for community participation. It is also important to consider how informal meeting hubs such as coffee shops, pubs and church halls can support community participation. Transport to and from meeting places should also be considered.

The Fire and Rescue Service offers use of its premises to any collaborative partner or community group. Organisations currently using the facilities include a community bingo club, cadet groups and various community volunteers. The Fire Service also shares its facilities with the Police, WAST, local authority and any other collaborative partners.

3. Encouraging intergenerational contact

Recent reports and media articles on ‘intergenerational fairness’ risk pitching one generation against the other. We must not let such rhetoric take hold in Wales. It is vital that we use the emotional bonds we all have with younger people in our families and communities to build mutual respect and intergenerational solidarity. Working across generations can support the statutory sector to develop services that meet the needs of all ages and, ultimately, to plan for an age friendly Wales.

Working closely with the implementation of the Strategy for Loneliness and Isolation, we will encourage all local health boards across Wales to establish, embed and grow intergenerational practice. Older people have told us that cross generational work should not just be an opportunity to “tap a little old lady on the head”, to “mollycoddle” or patronise older people, or to “force” younger and older people to meet. There should be genuine opportunities to share skills and knowledge.

We will talk to the Commissioners for Children and Older People to discuss resources to support intergenerational practice. We will also work with third sector organisations to organise a ‘national summit’ to discuss the recommendations contained in the Welsh Government commissioned [Review of mechanisms in intergenerational practice and their effectiveness in reducing loneliness/isolation](#).

Why have we chosen these priorities?

Loneliness was measured for the first time in Wales, in the National Survey 2016-17. In 2017-18, it found 16% of those participating in the survey, of just over 10,000 people aged 16 and above, were lonely and 53% of people had experienced some feelings of loneliness. 11% of people aged over 75 said they felt lonely. Recent estimates by Age UK (2019) indicate that over 3.6 million older individuals in Britain live alone. Furthermore, additional research by Age UK (2016), [No-One Should Have No One](#), argues there are 1.2 million chronically lonely older people in Britain, while over half a million may go up to a week without speaking to someone. Although Wales ranked 1st for social connections in the Global Age Watch Index, our engagement and working groups have clearly shown that closures to community venues and lack of community transport is limiting older people’s ability to connect with others. At our engagement events, older people were keen to counteract ageist stereotypes and wanted to be portrayed as valuable members of society with skills and knowledge worth sharing.

UN Principle for Older Persons: participation 7, 8, 9

Ending abuse of older people

The UN Principles for Older Persons state that ‘*Older persons should be able to live in dignity and security and be free of exploitation and physical or mental abuse*’.

As a government we are clear that abuse or neglect in any form against older people will not be tolerated. This includes financial scams, physical and mental abuse and neglect. Age does not diminish an individual’s right to live with dignity and respect.

Scams can have a terrible effect on victims and older people can be particularly at risk of this form of abuse – evidence from National Trading Standards shows that 85% of victims of doorstep scams are aged over 65. The impact on health and well-being can often be far greater than the financial loss. People lose confidence and can suffer from increased isolation and become more fearful. This in turn leads to a deterioration in both mental and physical health.

Right now, to prevent abuse of older people, we are:

- **Continuing to implement Our Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act (VAWDASV)** which acknowledges that victims can be from across the whole spectrum of society, including older people, all ethnicities, religions and beliefs and disabled people.
- **Exploring how we can provide additional training** for professionals working within VAWDASV or with older people via our National Training Framework.
- **Funding 500 additional Community Support Officers** to carry out awareness raising about scams with local residents, particularly older people.
- **Piloting a project** to increase our understanding of how best to enable diverse groups of survivors to participate in a national engagement framework. We are aiming to ensure that we engage with those survivors we have been unable to reach through previous engagement activities and consultation, including older people.
- **Launching our ‘Home shouldn’t be a place fear,’** campaign to make sure victims and survivors of domestic abuse know that they are not alone and that they can access support through the pandemic and beyond.

We will continue to support partnership working amongst organisations to safeguard the people of Wales and address the devastating impact of scams and fraud on victims and their families.

Going forward, our priority is:

- Continue to work with the Older People’s Commissioner and key partners to publish and implement a national plan to prevent abuse of older people by end 2021.

UN Principle for Older Persons: Dignity – 17, 18

Planning for the future

Attendees at our engagement events said that although they had retired from full-time paid work, they were as busy as they had ever been, with voluntary jobs, part-time jobs and caring roles (for adults and grandchildren). They questioned what is meant by the concept of “retirement”, as they could not envisage a time when they would not have some sort of responsibility towards others or calls on their time.

The numbers of people working past state pension age is increasing and perceptions of retirement are changing. Later life can offer the opportunity to change career, move house, travel, take up a new interest or make new friends. It can also bring unexpected challenges such as ill health, a drop in income or taking on a caring role.

Everyone’s experience of ageing is different, but we all aspire to enjoy later life. For some, the move from full time employment to full time retirement can be a difficult. Effective planning can ease this transition and allow individuals to realise their ambitions after a lifetime of compromise. It can also build the financial and emotional resilience needed to cope well with adverse circumstances. From an early age people are encouraged to save for their future, but consideration should also be given to the wider range of social and environmental factors that can support people to live and age well. It is also vital to consider the situation of people who have not been able to save for retirement and for whom choice in later life may be limited.

Going forward, our three priorities are:

1. Encouraging individuals to consider a range of factors when planning for later life

We will work with the Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing to explore how we can encourage people to consider the psychosocial factors that can support them to age well.

2. Encouraging employers to deliver mid-life reviews

The Age at Work programme in Wales, supported by the National Lottery Community Fund, supports older workers (50+) to remain in work, to stay connected, develop new skills, continue to earn and have a fuller working life. The five year programme is being delivered by Business in the Community Cymru in partnership with Age Cymru and aims to raise awareness of the need for an age friendly agenda in government, business and wider society. We will work with Business in the Community and Age Cymru to maximise the impact and to consider the learning from the Age at Work programme.

3. Encouraging employers to consider their corporate responsibilities by supporting employees to volunteer

Our conversations with older people have shown that the transition into retirement can be difficult. Some said that they would have preferred to reduce their working hours gradually so they could take part in community activities but were unable to do so. Participants felt it was important that people develop a plan for what they intend to do in retirement, whether that's taking up or continuing a hobby, learning something new or travel. Some people described the ending of their paid work as a "bereavement", instantly moving from the workplace to "doing nothing" led to a loss of their sense of purpose. It was therefore suggested that employers could do far more to inform their older workers about volunteering opportunities in their localities, and to allow them to taper down their working hours in order to move into these roles.

We will encourage employers to consider their corporate responsibilities by supporting employees to volunteer.

Why we have chosen these priorities

The Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing advised us that encouraging people to plan for their futures must form part of a Strategy for an Ageing Society. Consequently, a working group was convened to advise on the issue. We want local and national governments to work with third and private sector organisations to ensure people of all ages have the confidence to access the skills and knowledge they need to plan well for the future.

UN Principle for Older Persons: Independence 3

Civic engagement

Civic engagement is an essential component of the WHO's age friendly communities programme. In order to join the WHO's Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities, leaders must demonstrate that they are engaging effectively with older people. This approach also supports the Well-being of Future Generation's Act's Five Ways of Working which focus on involvement, collaboration and prevention. By listening to the experiences of older people today, rural and urban communities can plan for future generations.

In line with our commitment to embed a rights based approach across the Welsh public service, we are working to improve citizen engagement and participation across health and social care. The drive towards closer integration of health and social services with improved public engagement is reflected in the aims of A Healthier Wales.

Right now, to support civic engagement with older people, we are:

- **Supporting and working with national older people’s organisations** so that they are well placed to influence the design and implementation of Welsh Government policy and delivery.
- **Supporting and working with Age Alliance Wales** which is an alliance of 21 voluntary organisations working with and for older people.
- **Supporting and working with the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales** who acts as an independent voice and champion for older people.
- **Encouraging and supporting the use of citizen panels** to inform the work of regional partnership boards.
- **Refreshing the membership and terms of reference of the Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing (MAFA)** to place older people’s voice at the heart of Welsh Government policy making. 50% of MAFA members are older people, including representatives from a diverse range of backgrounds. When public health restrictions allow, the work of MAFA will be informed by community outreach events held with older people who do not traditionally take part in formal meetings or groups.

Going forward, our priority is:

1. Review of mechanisms for engaging with older people

In 2003, the launch of the Strategy for Older People provided funding to support 50+ forums in each local authority. Since then, tightening local authority budgets have seen some forums struggle whilst others flourish. We are reviewing these structures to ensure all local authorities have robust mechanisms in place for engagement. We are also keen to explore how older people wish to engage with policy makers and organisations delivering services.

Questions relating to this review of engagement are included at the end of this consultation.

UN Principles for Older Persons: Participation 7, 8, 9

Older workers

The UN Principles state that ‘*Older persons should have the opportunity to work or to have access to other income-generating opportunities.*’

Between 2003 and 2018, the numbers of people aged 50 – 64 in employment has increased from 56% to 69%, with the number of women rising by 14 percentage points. During this period, the number of people aged 65 and over in employment rose from 5% to 10% (StatsWales May 2019). Alongside the financial benefits of employment, going to work can support people to stay physically and mentally well for longer.

It is an economic imperative that employees in Wales are supported to adapt their skills to fit emerging new technologies and the changing jobs market. This can be achieved in

part by equipping the workforce with the skills they will need across their working lives, but it will also require employers to provide more flexible working policies and environments. If Wales is to have a workforce that is fit for the future, employers must consider the health and caring implications of this demographic shift and identify ways to create more age friendly workplaces and combat ageist stereotypes of older workers. This should include a consideration of what an age friendly workplace would mean in practice.

Right now, to support older workers, we are:

- **Recognising the impact of the pandemic on employment**, our firm priority has been on supporting people to stay in jobs and helping them find work through a new £40m fund to support anyone 16 or over to access advice and help to find work, increase their skills, qualifications and employability, secure an apprenticeship, a job or to start a business.
- **Adopting the [Fair Work Commission's](#) definition** and characteristics of fair work across Welsh Government and using it to promote fair work. The re skilling of older workers is included in the definition.
- **Ensuring older workers are represented in a positive way across all of our mainstream communications and programmes.** We are also working with partners to ensure older workers' skills and employment needs are actively considered and employers are encouraged to retain, train and recruit older workers.
- **Supporting working carers by funding *Carers Wales to host an Employers for Carers Wales Hub which helps organisations in Wales to support staff with caring responsibilities. The [Hub](#) provides practical guidance, expert consultancy and training as well as supporting employers to share best practice.***

Going forward, our three priorities are:

1. Promoting re skilling of older workers

We will work with Working Wales and other partners to ensure that older workers are encouraged to think proactively about their career opportunities and skills needs throughout their lifetime.

2. Promoting and actively encouraging age friendly workplaces

We will work with employers and their representative bodies to encourage them to provide age friendly workplaces that support the increasing number of older workers and carers in our workforce.

3. Delivering our Employability Plan that sets out our vision for making Wales a full-employment, high-tech, high-wage economy. The plan also made it clear to employers that they have a responsibility to nurture, train and sustain their employees to ensure that the future of the Welsh workforce is a stable and forceful one.

Why we have chosen these priorities

Wales ranked third in the UK Age Index for employment and education of older people. Across all the other categories Wales scored 2 so it is clear more must be done to support older workers and learners. The profile of the Welsh workforce is changing. Welsh Government population projections (2019) show that around a third of the Welsh workforce is now aged 50 or over. An increasing number of older workers are balancing work alongside caring commitments or health conditions. Taking on a caring role can be

an isolating experience and for those who have had to give up work or go part time to care, it can have major impact on their pension and savings. This can disproportionately affect women who are more likely to take on the caring role. Statistics released by Carers Wales in 2019 showed that 1 in 7 of the Welsh workforce are caring for a loved one and 6% of the Welsh adult population have quit their job to care.

UN Principles for Older Persons: Independence 2, 3, 4

Lifelong learning

We believe people of all ages in Wales have a right to lifelong learning. Learning as a form of social engagement and mental stimulation is extremely important for older learners not only to help them to stay active and to stay healthy; but also to help to address loneliness and isolation. [Research from Alzheimer's UK](#) suggests that people who take part in activities that stimulate the brain are less likely to develop dementia compared to those who do not engage.

Right now, to support lifelong learning, we are:

- **Providing funding for digital elearning** to support the development of on-line delivery and to provide digital resources for adult learners.

Going forward, our three priorities are:

1. Delivering a new right to lifelong learning

The Minister for Education is committed to exploring how the Welsh Government can deliver a new Welsh right to lifelong learning – to give everyone in Wales access and opportunity to learn throughout their lives.

2. Supporting informal learning

We aim to support the provision of social engagement courses through clubs and self-directed learning groups which will support people to continue to learn in an informal way to benefit their health and well-being.

3. Promoting digital literacy

Digital literacy remains a key priority of the Welsh Government's Adult Learning policy and lessons are free to learners. This provision offers individuals the opportunity to develop the essential skills needed to ensure they can access services and information on-line in a safe and secure manner. Much of the provision offered is specifically targeted at older learners to ensure they can engage in the digital technology that is prevalent in today's society.

Why we have chosen these priorities

Wales ranked third in the educational attainment of older people in the UK Age Watch Index.

Members of our working groups were keen to emphasise that older people should have a choice about how they take part in their local communities - informal clubs and self-directed learning clubs can allow people to engage on their own terms and help to mitigate the impact of austerity on more traditional forms of adult community learning. Finally, in an increasing digital age, it is a concern that half of those aged 75 or over do not use the internet (Welsh Government 2019). Whilst we recognise using technology is a choice, we want to ensure those who wish to use online services, are supported to do so.

UN Principles for Older Persons: Independence 4; Self fulfilment 15, 16

5: Tackling age related poverty

The percentage of pensioners living in relative income poverty increased for 4 consecutive periods reaching 20% between 2014-15 and 2016-17 before falling to 19 per cent between 2015-16 and 2017-18 (StatsWales). Although these figures are still below what they were in the mid to late 1990s, the impact of austerity, soaring rents and the zero hour economy are making it difficult for people in middle age to save for retirement. This could have an impact on rising levels of pensioner poverty for future generations.

Aside from stark choices between heating and eating, older people living in poverty can have limited choices about how to spend their free time. Older people told us that their financial position has a significant influence on their social life. People who do not own a car or are unable to pay for taxis, are far less likely to take part in evening time activities.

In the period 2015-16 to 2017-18, 17 per cent of working-age people living in working households in Wales were in relative income poverty. Worryingly, the rise of in-work poverty means that we have a 'ticking time-bomb' waiting. People who are struggling to make ends meet now and who perhaps have irregular and unstable contracts are unlikely to be able to make provisions for their futures.

We have a range of employability programmes which are helping people to build their skills and enter sustainable employment. Nevertheless, changes to working age benefits made by the UK Government under its programme of Welfare Reform means that increasing numbers of working adults are living in poverty.

Right now, to tackle age related poverty, we are:

- **Investing in employability programmes** - since its launch in April last year, Communities for Work Plus has engaged 5,130 participants up to the end of December with 1,476 of them securing employment. Up to the end of 2018 the Communities for Work programme had provided employment support to more than 18,535 people, and supported nearly 6,436 people into employment across Wales.
- **Introducing a new employability advice service** delivered by Careers Wales which secures enhanced advice and guidance and provides individualised support for those facing barriers to work.
- **Continuing to express our concerns to the Secretary for Work and Pensions** on the impacts of the increase in state pension age for women.
- **Limiting the amount people are required to pay for their non-residential social care** - since 2011 people who require social care and support at home, or in the community, cannot be charged more than a maximum weekly amount by their local authority. In addition, a number of financial protections and allowances are in place to ensure a person is not left in financial hardship when required to meet the cost of their non-residential care.
- **Allowing those in residential care to retain more of their capital** - for people requiring residential care, the Welsh Government has introduced a capital limit allowing them to retain up to £50,000 of their savings or other capital without having to use this to pay for their care or accommodation. This is the highest allowance of this type in the UK.

Going forward, our priorities are:

1. Commencing the socio-economic duty

[The Socio-economic Duty](#) will come into force on 31 March 2021. A priority for the Welsh Government is to take action to safeguard equality and human rights, particularly in the context of Brexit and responding to the Covid-19 crisis. The Duty will require certain public bodies, when making strategic decisions such as 'deciding priorities and setting objectives', to consider how their decisions might help to reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage.

2. Increasing take up of pension credit

*"You may know of people who you think could be in need, but how do you bring this up with them without insulting them, because of the image of benefits, being seen as scroungers, it's very hard to suggest to a friend that they should claim."
(Attendee at engagement event).*

Against rising levels of poverty, an estimated **£214 million** of Pension Credit and Housing Benefit (which is unlocked via a Pension Credit claim) goes unclaimed every year (Older People's Commissioner for Wales, 2019). There remains a stigma attached to claiming welfare entitlements that could be contributing to this high figure. We have convened a Pension Credit working group of relevant stakeholders to agree a way forward. In mid and West Wales, partners working through the Single Advice Fund are running a pilot (October 2020 – March 2021) to test and learn how to offer easier access to welfare benefit advice for older people and the carers of older people.

3. Investing in Wales' foundational economy

The foundational economy describes the goods and services we all use in our daily lives regardless of what background we are from or what age we are. [Estimates provided by academic researchers](#) suggest four in ten jobs in Wales and £1 in every three that we spend fall within this economy. In some parts of Wales this basic 'foundational economy' is almost the whole economy. By investing in the foundational economy, we can make our communities stronger and resilient and reach out to people who are feeling disengaged or left behind. It will enable us to help older people who are finding life difficult today, but it is also an investment in all our futures.

In line with a rights based approach, the Welsh Government's **Foundational Economy Challenge Fund** is offering more than **£4 million** to support projects that develop regional economies so that prosperity can be shared more evenly across Wales. There is no exact template we can lift and shift to support Welsh communities. The experimental Challenge Fund is to trial different approaches, develop a strong 'Community of Practice', an 'Alliance for Change' that will stimulate debate and help spread and scale learning on what works.

We recognise that older people are involved in the foundational economy as consumers, workers and as business owners and innovators. We will explore how to support older people to thrive within our ageing economy.

How technology could provide new solutions

Foundational Economy Challenge Fund is enabling Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd Cyf to develop the infrastructure required to install monitoring sensors in properties that can respond to specific triggers such as temperature changes and movement. The

sensors will support older people to remain safe and independent in their homes for longer. The sensors include:

- Environmental sensors providing temperature, humidity, movement and illumination data - these sensors can pick up when the home is getting too cold or hot.
- Standalone movement sensors that can be placed in hallways to monitor people leaving and returning to their homes.
- Pressure pads (for beds and chairs).

The sensors can send 'live' information to a dashboard which allows users to identify patterns of behaviour. It is envisaged that this dashboard would be monitored centrally by a designated officer or partner agency.

The project will conclude by 31 March 2021 and the project leads aim to spread beneficial learning across Wales to help support our ageing society.

Why we have chosen these priorities

Wales ranked 2nd in the UK Age Index on financial support for older people, but the high level of unclaimed pension credit shows that we could be performing better. Unclaimed entitlements were raised as problem by all working groups and at our engagement events. Finally, it is vital that older people are not overlooked in any new initiatives relating to the Welsh economy. The tired stereotype of older people lacking new ideas and solutions must not limit the potential of older workers and entrepreneurs.

UN Principles for Older Persons: Independence 1, 2; Participation 7, 8, 9; Self fulfilment 15, 16

6: How we will monitor progress

From the outset, members of the Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing and our key stakeholders, including the Older People's Commissioner, were clear that this strategy should focus on actions against which progress can be measured.

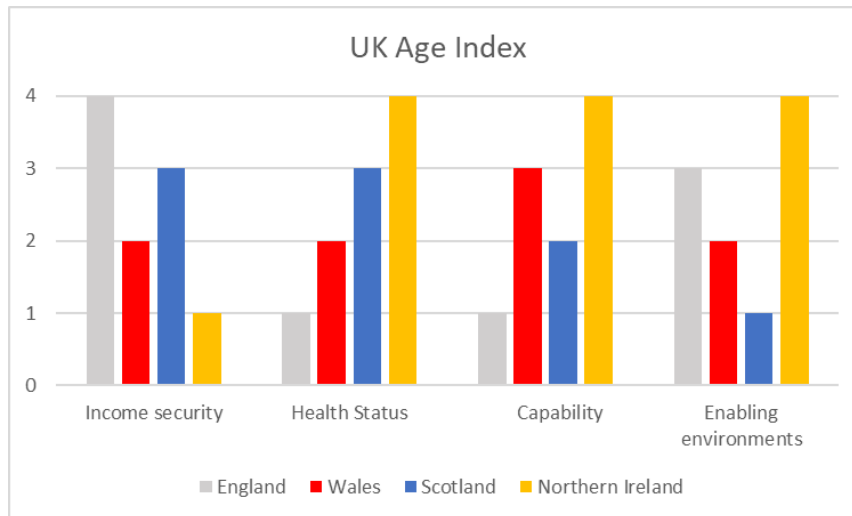
The membership, terms of reference and purpose of the Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing has been refreshed to ensure this group can play a pivotal role in overseeing the implementation of this strategy. Members of the Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing will help us to define this strategy's broader action points and following public consultation, we will issue final strategy accompanied by an action plan designed to support delivery.

We have commissioned and specifically produced an index for Wales which has shaped this document and which will be used by which to measure its success. It will show us what is working, where we need to improve and where we need to develop more data.

We will publish annual progress reports.

Please note this index was commissioned and finalised before Covid-19.

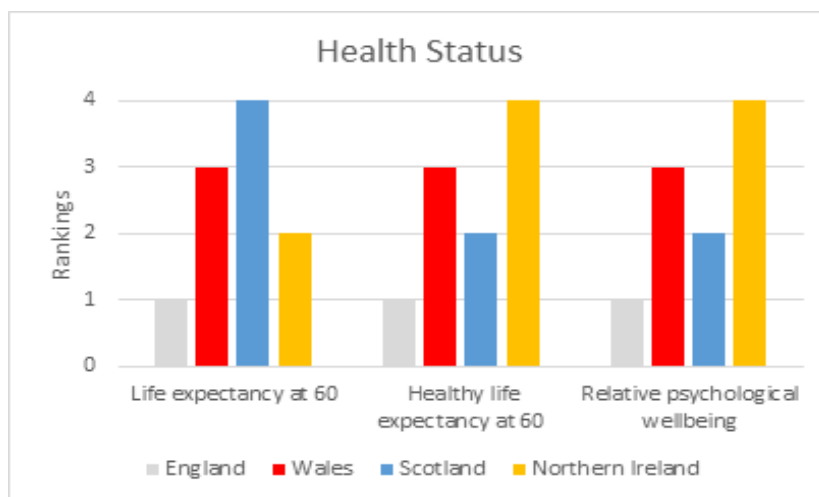
UK Age Index – Wales rankings



In order to measure progress towards improving the quality of life of current and future generations of older people in Wales, decision-makers should have access to a framework that allows them to monitor the well-being of older people. It is vital to use a measure that captures the complexity of the nature of ageing and later life. Following a review of the available measures, Swansea University's Centre for Innovative Ageing recommended producing a UK Ageing Index for Wales and the other countries of the UK, based on the Global AgeWatch Index.

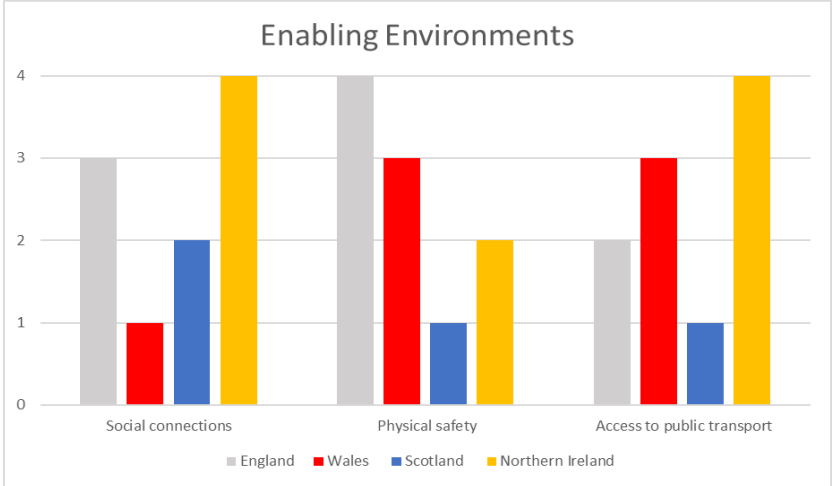
As detailed earlier in this document, overall Wales ranked 1st of the four UK nations. However, in the section below, we provide the detail of how Wales ranked in each of the four categories and against each of the individual indicators shown in the table above.

Enhancing well-being (health status)



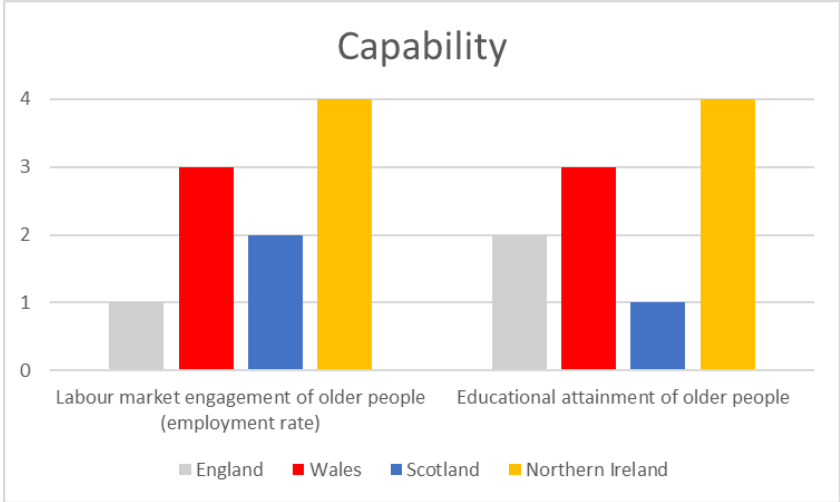
Overall Wales was ranked as 2nd for Health Status. When we look at the rankings for the individual indicators we actually see that Wales is ranked as 3rd for each of these. Here, Wales performs poorly compared to England, which is ranked as 1st for all indicators, and Scotland, which performs better in terms of Healthy Life Expectancy at age 60 and Relative Psychological Well-being.

Improving local services and environments (enabling environments)



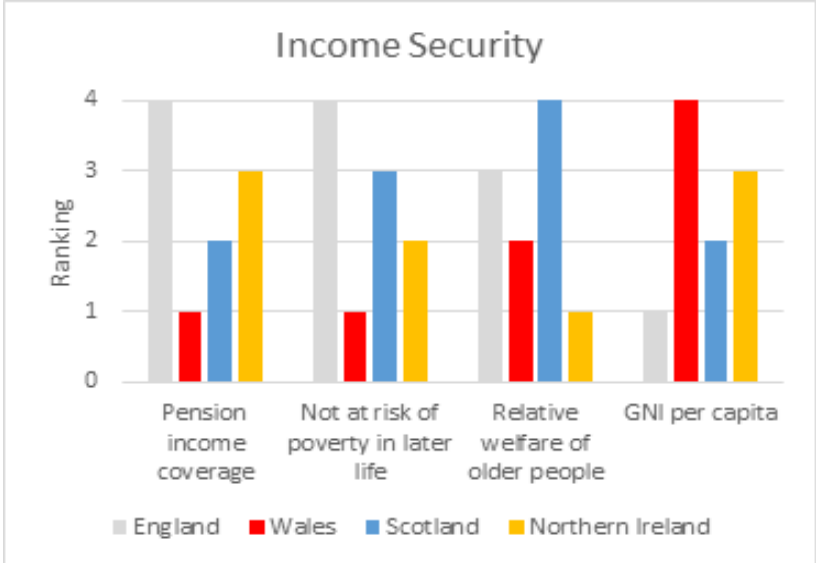
Overall Wales was ranked as 2nd for its Enabling Environments. However, a closer inspection of the scores for the domain indicators shows that it was ranked as 1st for its social connections. But it was ranked as 3rd for physical safety and access to public transport. Unfortunately, we were unable to find a comparable measure of civic freedom for Northern Ireland. Hence, in order to be able to continue to compare across all 4 UK countries we have omitted this indicator from the domain.

Building and retaining people’s own capability



Wales was ranked as 3rd overall for its capability (its lowest overall ranking). When we look at the ranking for the individual indicators, we see that Wales is also ranked as third for each of these too.

Tackling age related poverty (income status)



As noted above Wales was ranked as second overall for income security. However, when we take a closer look at the rankings for the individual components for the income security domain we see that Wales was actually ranked as 1st for the level of pension income coverage (indicator 1.1) and the proportion of the older population that was not at risk of poverty in later life (indicator 1.2). It was also ranked 2nd in the relative welfare of older people, behind Northern Ireland which was ranked as 1st.

Closing comments

Overall the results show that within the UK, Wales is doing well to meet the needs of its ageing population. In particular Wales seems to perform well in meeting the financial needs of the older population and their social connectedness. However, there is still room for improvement in a number of the individual indicators. For example, Wales performs relatively poorly in terms of healthy life expectancy at 60, relative psychological well-being, labour market engagement and educational attainment of older people.

Consultation questions

1. The Strategy sets out the areas we will prioritise in planning for our ageing society and why. Have we prioritised the right areas?
2. Are there any issues that are not reflected in the Strategy that you think should be considered when planning for an ageing society?
3. Have we identified the key policies and mechanisms that can deliver real change in the lives of older people today and future generations?
4. Does the content amount to a sufficiently ambitious response to the major public policy issue of our ageing society?
5. Will the Strategy help to maximise the potential of the growing numbers of older people in our communities?
6. Do you agree with our ambition to work towards an age friendly Wales? If so, please state what you, as an individual or organisation, are doing to help us to create an age friendly Wales.
7. How has Covid-19 changed your ability to do things that matter to you, or the way you deliver services to older people?
8. How can we involve older people in the re building our communities following the pandemic?

Welsh Government review of engagement

Questions for older people

9. Are you a member of a 50+ group or forum? If yes, how successful do you think the forum is influencing local and national policy decisions?
10. Does the 50+ forum benefit your local area in other ways? (Eg. by reducing social isolation or building community resilience?)
11. How do you think local and national government can better engage with older people?

Questions for local authorities

12. Does a 50+ Forum still operate in your area? If yes, how successful is it in involving older people in local decision making?
13. Does your 50+ forum benefit your local area in other ways? (Eg. by reducing social isolation or building community resilience?)
14. If a 50+ forum is not active in your local area, how do you engage with older people?
15. We would like to know your views on the effects that *the Strategy for an Ageing Society* would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

- 16.** Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

United Nations Principles for Older People

The UN Principles for Older encourage governments to incorporate the following principles into their national programmes whenever possible.

Independence

1. Older persons should have access to adequate food, water, shelter, clothing and health care through the provision of income, family and community support and self-help.
2. Older persons should have the opportunity to work or to have access to other income-generating opportunities.
3. Older persons should be able to participate in determining when and at what pace withdrawal from the labour force takes place.
4. Older persons should have access to appropriate educational and training programmes.
5. Older persons should be able to live in environments that are safe and adaptable to personal preferences and changing capacities.
6. Older persons should be able to reside at home for as long as possible.

Participation

7. Older persons should remain integrated in society, participate actively in the formulation and implementation of policies that directly affect their well-being and share their knowledge and skills with younger generations.
8. Older persons should be able to seek and develop opportunities for service to the community and to serve as volunteers in positions appropriate to their interests and capabilities.
9. Older persons should be able to form movements or associations of older persons.

Care

10. Older persons should benefit from family and community care and protection in accordance with each society's system of cultural values.
11. Older persons should have access to health care to help them to maintain or regain the optimum level of physical, mental and emotional well-being and to prevent or delay the onset of illness.
12. Older persons should have access to social and legal services to enhance their autonomy, protection and care.
13. Older persons should be able to utilize appropriate levels of institutional care providing protection, rehabilitation and social and mental stimulation in a humane and secure environment.
14. Older persons should be able to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms when residing in any shelter, care or treatment facility, including full respect for their dignity, beliefs, needs and privacy and for the right to make decisions about their care and the quality of their lives.

Self fulfilment

15. Older persons should be able to pursue opportunities for the full development of their potential.
16. Older persons should have access to the educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources of society.

Dignity

17. Older persons should be able to live in dignity and security and be free of exploitation and physical or mental abuse.
18. Older persons should be treated fairly regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, disability or other status, and be valued independently of their economic contribution.