Ageing Well in Wales
Impact and Reach Report
June 2017

Ensuring Wales is a good place to grow older for everyone
About Ageing Well in Wales

Ageing Well in Wales is a national partnership programme chaired and hosted by the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales. It brings together individuals and communities with public, private and voluntary sectors to develop and promote innovative and practical ways to make Wales a good place to grow older for everyone.

What does Ageing Well in Wales want to achieve?

- To make Wales a nation of age-friendly communities
- To make Wales a nation of dementia supportive communities
- To reduce the number of falls
- To reduce loneliness and unwanted isolation
- To increase learning and employment opportunities

What is the Ageing Well Programme doing?

- Building networks: a rapidly-growing network of hundreds of individuals and organisations has been established to share ideas and work together
- Sharing good practice: the Ageing Well in Wales website features good practice throughout Wales, the UK, Europe and further afield
- Bringing people together: conferences, workshops and training sessions are organised across Wales
- Making change happen: Ageing Well is actively supported by the Welsh Government, key national organisations and all Local Authorities

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Foreword

Since its official launch in October 2014, the five-year Ageing Well in Wales programme has continued to achieve considerable success. The Action Plan for Phase Two was published in October 2016, and this report highlights some of the key achievements to date across the programme.

Progress is being made at all levels of Ageing Well. At the European level, the new 4* Reference Site status establishes Wales as one of the exemplar countries/regions in Europe via the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP-AHA). At the strategic level, an ever expanding partnership (currently over sixty) includes partners from across the public, voluntary and, increasingly, private sectors, working on actions across the five priority themes.

At the Local Authority level, colleagues are working on their local Ageing Well plans, and making good progress in collaboration with other partners/agencies and older people themselves. At the community network level, over 1,300 individuals representing over 500 groups and organisations are now part of the Ageing Well movement, working on their own community-based solutions to help empower and enable older people to lead healthy and active lives within their communities.

Ageing Well also complements key legislative drivers such as the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. As key platforms to bring partners together and work towards preventative, sustainable outcomes for people of all ages, I have engaged with all Public Services Boards (PSBs) and following the publication of my Guidance¹, I am encouraged with the inclusion of key Ageing Well themes in their draft assessments of local wellbeing, the need to make decisions with older people rather than to older people, and the importance of considering the needs and circumstances of older people beyond health and social care.

Furthermore, the refreshed Welsh Government Strategy for Older People 2013-23 will provide added impetus to the work of Ageing Well,

helping to provide strategic direction and the establishment of age-friendly communities across Wales. Ageing Well priorities continue to receive extensive coverage in local and national press and significant engagement remains with politicians at all levels.

For older people who are online, the Ageing Well website continues to develop as a valuable hub for useful resources, signposting to relevant partners, helpful guides and publications, and highlighting good practice\textsuperscript{2}.

Ageing Well in Wales continues to be a national movement and I am delighted with the engagement from individuals, community groups, social enterprises and a broad and diverse range of partners from all sectors across Wales. The ‘Celebrating Communities’ events held in Bangor and Cardiff in late 2016 demonstrated the positivity, enthusiasm and desire from colleagues to do more and to take forward the partnership approach with older people. All have something to offer, and by working together, highlighting good practice and identifying low-cost, high-impact innovative solutions, all can make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of people aged 50+ in Wales.

Looking ahead, I will continue to engage with and support partners to make further progress with actions and be able to respond to future challenges and opportunities during Phase Two, building upon the collaborative approach taken to date to ensure that Wales is a good place to grow older for everyone.

\textit{Sarah Rochira}
\textbf{Older People’s Commissioner for Wales // Chair, Ageing Well in Wales}

\textsuperscript{2} \url{http://www.ageingwellinwales.com}
Key Achievements

Age-Friendly Communities

The development of age-friendly communities across Wales is the overarching theme of Ageing Well. If Wales is to be a good place to grow older for everyone, then empowering and enabling older people and supporting the development of age-friendly communities in our villages, towns and cities must be the aim.

Whilst good progress has been made to date and the importance of taking forward age-friendly transport, housing and planning is increasingly being recognised by strategic partners, further work is needed at all levels. The report prepared by the Welsh Government Expert Group on Housing an Ageing Population in Wales will give some clarity and strategic direction on what is needed to develop age-friendly housing, and the establishment of a Welsh Government Accessible Transport Panel will help to take forward the age-friendly transport agenda, ensuring that our public transport, including public buses, trains and stations, is more inclusive and accessible for people of all ages.

“The Centre for Ageing and Dementia Research (CADR), funded by Health and Care Research Wales, works closely with Ageing Well in Wales. It helps provide a channel that links policy, practice and older people with the latest cutting-edge research. It means the research we deliver is of direct relevance to the needs and issues of the older people and relevant charities and third sector organisations in Wales. The relationship has allowed such groups to influence research agendas and, in turn, hear the latest research findings. In terms of my own research on transport and mobility it has been useful to provide information to charities and third sector groups through the work of the Ageing Well Age-Friendly Communities strand. I have also been able to work with new organisations and develop research that fits their needs.” (Dr. Charles Musselwhite, Centre for Ageing and Dementia Research/Centre for Innovative Ageing)

The new Ageing Well guide, ‘Making Wales a nation of age-friendly communities’ provides individuals, volunteers and community groups practical advice and support on how to set up an age-friendly community. Ageing Well will be promoting the guide at community events across Wales throughout 2017/18 and supporting a scheme to recognise community efforts to become more age-friendly, which is being run by Cymru Older People’s Alliance (COPA).

“Age-Friendly Communities are a vital component of the Ageing Well in Wales programme and in Wales we celebrate ageing and value older people’s contribution to society. Cymru Older People’s Alliance (COPA) has links with Forums throughout Wales and can circulate the excellent work being done throughout Wales by older people. In Newport, Pembrokeshire, we are looking at ways to make the town more age-friendly by expanding our Good Neighbour scheme to develop a ‘drop in’ centre where older people can come to meet together for tea, cakes, social activities and plenty of chatting.” (Gaynor and Ken Davies, Cymru Older People’s Alliance)

The Ageing Well ‘Guide to being an age-friendly business’ will help to ensure that local businesses consider the needs of customers of all ages. Infocards signposting the guide have been developed in partnership with older people’s groups, enabling older people to engage directly with their local businesses to promote age-friendly businesses and consider the needs of people of all ages.

Ageing Well in Wales, in partnership with Age Cymru, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, Arts Council for Wales and Sports Wales, has launched a national Age-Friendly Culture Network. This new network will help to ensure that a diverse range of cultural venues across Wales, including museums, galleries, libraries, theatres and

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sporting clubs, become age-friendly and are more inclusive for people of all ages and for people living with dementia.

“Arts participation and attendance can be powerfully effective in breaking through older people’s isolation, building physical confidence and reconnecting people with their life stories. At the Arts Council of Wales, improving equality of access and opportunity to experience the arts is our major priority. Partnership is vital in achieving this aim, so we’re absolutely delighted to be joining our partners in the Age-Friendly Culture Network. Together we can find innovative ways of engaging with older people to improve quality of life and wellbeing.” (Dr. Phil George, Chair, Arts Council of Wales)

Social participation, information and engagement are key components of an age-friendly community. The continued participation of older people’s groups and forums is crucial, including the Local Authority 50+ networks and the refreshed Cymru Older People’s Alliance (COPA). Decisions about local communities and services should always be made with older people rather than for them, and effective engagement and consultation between service providers and older people remains a key Ageing Well principle.

One example of engagement is the Ageing Well walkability survey, undertaken in partnership with Living Streets and the Centre for Ageing and Dementia Research (CADR)\(^7\), which encourages older people across Wales to assess how easy it is to walk around their local community. The findings will help to develop the age-friendly agenda with key partners, including Local Authorities and town/community councils.

Swansea University’s Centre for Innovative Ageing has designed and published OPERAT (Older People’s External Residential Assessment Tool)\(^8\). This new tool enables people to make simple assessments of how well their neighbourhoods meet the needs of older people. In conjunction with Ageing Well in Wales, Swansea University will be


\(^8\) [http://www.swansea.ac.uk/media-centre/latest-research/newtoolwillhelpolderpeopleratetheircommunity.php](http://www.swansea.ac.uk/media-centre/latest-research/newtoolwillhelpolderpeopleratetheircommunity.php)
training groups of older people to carry out the assessment in their communities, as well as capturing results of assessments nationally.

“Through Ageing Well in Wales we have promoted OPERAT to help in the planning of built environments that are ‘friendly for all ages’ – and together our work will help planners to anticipate the impact of the environment on users with different functional and cognitive abilities rather than designing for the ‘able. As part of Ageing Well in 2017 older people will be coached to become peer-educators in the use of OPERAT, to enable local area audits across Wales.” (Prof. Vanessa Burholt, Director of the Centre for Ageing and Dementia Research; Director of the Centre for Innovative Ageing)

Enabling people to maintain their independence and continue to live well in their communities is an essential component of age-friendly communities. Many housing associations in Wales are proactively engaging with older residents and helping them to shape their homes and communities. Bron Afon Community Housing in Torfaen supports a retirement forum in which older people take the lead in ensuring their voice is heard on issues that affect them. The forum has helped to ensure that developments meet the needs and wishes of older residents, and has been successful in ensuring effective communication of important issues among older residents, improving security and helping in the development of an online tool to assist people with sight, language or literacy issues.

“Just because we have retired doesn’t mean we can’t make a difference. We all have important life experiences and it is important that we are listened to.” (Ricky Edwards, Afon Retirement Forum Chair)

“Being part of the forum has made a huge difference. I feel they value my opinions and we are able to influence decision-making.” (Mary Edwards, Afon Retirement Forum)

Work is also continuing on delivering the age-friendly proposals in local Ageing Well plans. For example, further work is being undertaken in Pembrokeshire to establish Fishguard and Goodwick as age-friendly communities. Both communities participated in a World Health

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Organisation (WHO) pilot[^10] and are developing age-friendly facilities and infrastructure, as well as encouraging intergenerational work between younger and older people. In Flintshire, similar work is underway to develop Leeswood and Pontblyddyn as age-friendly communities[^11].

“I am very happy to support the Ageing Well in Wales programme. Bringing together people, communities, public, private and voluntary sectors is the best way of ensuring that there is a shared understanding of older people’s concerns and of identifying the best ways of addressing them. Indeed, it is only by having all of these groups working together that we will be able to get the kind of outcomes that are needed.

We all want Wales to be a place where older people are cherished and play a full role in the life of their community, not one where they feel marginalised or experience loneliness and isolation. A network of age-friendly and dementia supportive communities will help with this aspiration.” (Rebecca Evans AM, Minister for Social Services and Public Health)

The Ageing Well rolling programme of network events continues across Wales. Some of these events, as well as others hosted by Local Authorities and key partners, address key age-friendly issues, such as local transport, housing and infrastructure that meet the needs of people of all ages. Examples include the Age Cymru age-friendly transport event in December 2016 and the Age-Friendly Newport event in February 2017. The latter attracted a wide range of older people and key local organisations to discuss what can be done to support the City Council and other partners in their work to establish Newport as an age-friendly city.

Dementia Supportive Communities

As the Commissioner’s 2016 ‘Dementia: more than just memory loss’ report highlights\(^\text{12}\), much more needs to be done to ensure that people living with dementia, as well as their families and carers, have access to services, facilities and infrastructure that suit their needs and enable them to both live their lives in, and contribute to, their communities. Ageing Well in Wales network members have been very active in the dementia supportive communities strand, and the rolling programme of events across Wales has a strong focus on dementia.

Recent examples include events in Denbigh and Bridgend in March 2017 to discuss the importance of establishing dementia supportive communities and how local groups and volunteers can get involved. Throughout 2016/17, Ageing Well hosted community events across Wales in partnership with Local Authorities, Alzheimer's Society and the Dementia Empowerment and Engagement Project (DEEP), speaking to over 400 people about how they can work to make where they live and work more dementia supportive.

“We’re told that dementia is now the largest cause of death and yet we’re also told that there is no more funding for dementia. It is therefore more essential than ever that we pull our socks up to work together to find creative solutions. Events run by Ageing Well in Wales show that there are hundreds of people doing amazing things in small groups. They’re struggling to make ends meet but providing a lifeline in their local communities which don’t attract funding and rely solely on the passion and personal commitment from the people who lead them.” (Nigel, living with dementia, Swansea)

The Ageing Well ‘Pocket guide to being dementia supportive’\(^\text{13}\) has been very popular and provides individuals, volunteers and groups with


practical advice and support on how to establish dementia supportive communities in villages, towns and cities across Wales. Over 10,000 copies of the guide have been distributed to individuals and groups across Wales over the past year, and a number of partners e.g. Barclays are helping to share the guide and raise awareness.

“I’m running a dementia friends session for my colleagues at Wrexham Council soon, and will use the Pocket Guides to being Dementia Supportive from Ageing Well as a very practical hand-out at the end of the session. The booklet is a really useful way to move the conversation on, so that they can start to develop practical next steps, which we will build in to how we deliver services at Wrexham Council, as we work with community partners towards becoming a dementia friendly place.” (Michael T Cantwell, Senior Sustainability Officer, Wrexham County Borough Council)

At a strategic level, work has focused on engaging with partners and people living with dementia on the consultation for the new Welsh Government national dementia strategy. The strategy should provide some direction and structure on how partners can work together to help establish Wales as a dementia friendly nation. In the Gwent ‘region’, the regional Dementia Board has developed a draft dementia strategy to set out how the recommendations of the national dementia strategy will be delivered for the people of Gwent. The regional strategy, supported by local Assembly Members, will include an action plan setting out the actions to progress, and the regional strategy will be launched in conjunction with the national dementia strategy.

“Dyfed-Powys Police is extremely proud of our Neighbourhood Policing Team’s continued commitment to support Dementia Supportive Communities across the Force area, and to become recognised Dementia Friends in order to ensure that they are providing an informed service to those living with dementia. We have committed to delivering Dementia Friends sessions to all front line officers as part of our commitment to the Alzheimer’s Society

14 https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/draft-national-dementia-strategy
to ‘Work towards becoming a Dementia Friendly Organisation’. As part of these awareness sessions, we will be distributing the Ageing Well in Wales Pocket Guide to being Dementia Supportive in order to further increase the awareness of those staff and officers receiving the Dementia Friends sessions.” (Assistant Chief Constable Liane James)

Work to support the Alzheimer’s Society Dementia Friends and Champions scheme in Wales is continuing and the scheme now includes an estimated 45,000 dementia friends, one for each person diagnosed with dementia in Wales\(^5\). Ageing Well will continue to support the Alzheimer’s Society Dementia Awareness Week, with the most recent having taken place in May 2017\(^6\). The week is an important opportunity to raise awareness of dementia and highlight the help and support available to older people living with dementia, their families and carers.

“Brecon Dementia Friendly Community was the first community in Wales to be officially recognised by the Alzheimer’s Society as ‘working to become dementia-friendly’. Taking the learning from examples outside of Wales, there was an appetite locally to do something to support people living with dementia. What started with a few enthusiastic volunteers soon grew into a broad and diverse community partnership. Those partnerships have resulted in a greater awareness and understanding of need, and the outcome is that Brecon is now far more inclusive and supportive of those living with dementia within our community. The initiative has also encouraged a significant number of intergenerational projects – with the work achieved by Llanfaes County Primary School being recognised at the Alzheimer’s Society Dementia Friendly awards ceremony in 2016. What’s also really pleasing, is that the ‘ripple effect’ has gone beyond Brecon. It is very encouraging to see

\(^5\)https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20089/campaigns_in_wales/239/45000_reasons_wales_needs_a_dementia_strategy
\(^6\)https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20167/dementia_awareness_week
further villages and towns in Powys, including Knighton and Newtown, also now being recognised for their dementia friendly work and I’m sure this number will grow and grow. We are delighted to be part of Ageing Well in Wales and support all efforts to establish dementia supportive communities across Wales.” (Rhiannon Davies, Chief Officer, Dementia Matters in Powys & former Chair, Brecon Dementia Friendly Community)

Ageing Well partners are also undertaking dementia-friendly staff training, including Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, Fire and Rescue Services and the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust. Furthermore, all Police Forces in Wales are taking forward the Gwent Police ‘Herbert Protocol’ so that older people living with dementia in care homes who go missing can be found more quickly.

The work of the Sporting Memories Foundation in Wales continues, with an increasing number of sports clubs following the lead of Glamorgan County Cricket Club and others to improve opportunities for people living with dementia to participate in sporting events and receive help and support in the community through sport.

From Barry to Brecon, Aberaeron to Buckley, Pontyberem to Prestatyn, and Maerdy to Porthmadog, work to establish dementia supportive villages, towns and cities across Wales continues via the local Ageing Well plans. The plans also focus on improving services for people living with dementia. On Anglesey for example, a community commissioning model is being trialled as a pilot project to provide tailored day care services for people living with dementia. In Llanelli, partners have built upon the success of community initiatives such as establishing the first dementia friendly market in Wales by rolling out ‘Fulfilled Lives’, an outcome based commissioning service. The project involves community resilience coordinators who work with domiciliary care providers to support dementia friendly venues based on the needs and interests of individuals.

In Neath Port Talbot, the Council staff’s own Health and Wellbeing Group has sponsored Alzheimer’s Society dementia awareness sessions for all staff, as many are carers or may know someone living

with dementia, and as a large employer this has increased community awareness. The Leisure Service in Gwynedd Council is responsible for running the pioneering DementiaGo scheme, which aims to make a physical and mental difference to those who live with dementia, and those who care for them. The scheme currently runs in five centres and participants take part in physical and social activities in the centres.

In the Gwent ‘region’, the five Public Services Boards, through links with the Regional Partnership Board, are working together to adopt dementia friendly accreditation through the Alzheimer’s Society. The accreditation involves staff receiving Dementia Friends awareness, designating a lead champion within the organisation and promoting dementia friendly practices. To date, 11,000 people have received dementia friends awareness and 200 people have trained as champions. St Joseph’s RC High School in Newport has also been accredited as the first dementia friendly school in Wales. Furthermore, the Raglan Project in Monmouthshire introduces a new approach to support people living with dementia. The project supports people living in their own homes and moves away from the current model of service delivery to one that places the service user at the core in terms of timetables and activities undertaken.

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18 The five Public Services Boards are: Newport, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Monmouthshire

Falls Prevention

There is increasing recognition amongst key partners that more needs to be done to tackle falls amongst older people in Wales. This preventative approach benefits everyone: it improves the resilience and quality of life of individuals, and reduces the need for costly health and social care interventions.

A key development is the establishment of the Welsh Government Prudent Healthcare Falls Prevention National Task Force, bringing together all relevant partners to coordinate efforts to ensure that there is a consistent national approach to tackling falls across Wales. The Task Force is based on the former Ageing Well Expert Advisory Group on Falls, and includes a number of Ageing Well partners, as well as representatives from all Health Boards in Wales.

A key objective of this new group is to build upon the ‘Steady On... Stay SAFE’ public awareness campaign developed by the Ageing Well in Wales Expert Advisory Group and ensure that falls prevention is fully embedded within the concepts of Prudent Healthcare. 1,000 Lives Plus, in partnership with Ageing Well in Wales and the National Taskforce, has run workshops in every Health Board in Wales to share good practice and to promote the Falls Prevention agenda throughout Welsh communities.

“I’d like to congratulate Ageing Well in Wales on being a critical success factor in developing and sustaining a significant national campaign around falls prevention. The ‘Steady On...Stay SAFE’ call to action has inspired a wide range of public service organisations and citizen groups to focus on providing positive examples of ageing and promoting the vital notion: falls are not an inevitable consequence of growing old. The National Taskforce on Falls Prevention has evolved to make a difference to people’s lives. The cornerstone of our agenda is prudent healthcare: helping those in most need to prevent a risk of a fall. Its real chance of success is that its approach is simple, evidence-based and relevant to everyone. My own organisation, Care & Repair Cymru, is proud to play its part. We know poor housing can lead to a fall: 500 older

20 http://www.1000livesplus.wales.nhs.uk/falls
people fall in their homes each day, many end up in hospital and some die. With funding from the Welsh Government and Local Authorities we can help and prevent a fall. Together, we can make Wales a safer and healthier place for us all to grow older.” (Neil Williams, Chair, National Taskforce for Falls Prevention)

In February of this year, Ageing Well partners Age Connects Cymru, Age Cymru and Care & Repair Cymru launched National Falls Awareness Week. This initiative coincided with Community Pharmacy Wales supporting ‘Steady On... Stay SAFE’ through over 700 pharmacies across Wales and its key messages to reduce the risk of falls and to dispel the myth that falls are an inevitable part of growing older: stay active; if you fall, tell someone; be aware of trip hazards.

The launch of the Falls Awareness week was attended by a range of Ageing Well partners and Rebecca Evans AM, Welsh Government Minister for Social Services and Public Health. Work to highlight the campaign and other schemes and publications that help older people is also continuing through, for example, the 1000 Lives Improvement service, the Age Cymru ‘Avoiding slips, trips and falls’ guide, and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy ‘Get up and Go’ guide.

“Each year around 250,000 people over 65 years old in Wales will fall. Falls are preventable and not an inevitable part of growing older, by improving and maintaining strength and balance, talking about previous falls with healthcare professionals and carrying out home safety assessments within the home environment, falls can be reduced. Ageing Well in Wales has played a very important role in developing and supporting the Prudent Healthcare Falls Prevention Programme for Older People. It was the inclusion of falls prevention in Ageing Well that led to the development through ‘coproduction’ of the ‘Steady On...Stay SAFE’ message. Ageing

23 http://www.1000livesplus.wales.nhs.uk/home
Well complements the Public Health Wales Prudent Healthcare Programme and other initiatives such as the Falls Brief Intervention Train the Trainer programme. By raising awareness of ‘Steady On...Stay SAFE’, Ageing Well provides the ideal opportunity to align with the Prudent Healthcare falls prevention work and PHW housing and health agendas, enabling them to move forward more quickly and more broadly than would have been possible through any of the three agendas individually.” (Dr Tracey Cooper, Chief Executive, Public Health Wales)

Local Health Boards are continuing to address falls prevention and are working on a number of schemes and interventions to raise awareness and minimise the risk of falls. Examples include compulsory falls training for clinical staff in Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, and the promotion and expansion of the Otago Exercise Programme in Cardiff and Vale University Health Board26.

Local Authorities are also working on falls prevention via their local Ageing Well plans27. Examples include the provision of falls training for care home staff in Swansea, community wellbeing coordinators in the Vale of Glamorgan working with GPs to signpost people towards falls prevention initiatives, and the Community Assistance Team (CAT) pilot in Conwy and Denbighshire to help people who have experienced a fall at home. Local Authorities also continue to signpost people towards exercise, strength and balance classes for older people, including the National Exercise Referral Scheme and Low Impact Functional Training exercise classes.

"The Community Assistance Team (CAT) is a broad collaboration including North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Welsh Government, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and Conwy and Denbighshire Councils. It was an 8 month pilot dealing with non-injury fallers that have been identified by Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) colleagues. There is an increasing demand on WAST to respond to a wide range of patients with complex

26 http://www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/falls-prevention
needs in a timely manner and to improve patient experience and most importantly clinical outcome. Our service helps older people as they get a more person centred approach. We’re able to spend more time with the patient to also offer home safety advice, crime prevention advice as well as offer referral pathways to falls teams, social services and GPs. To the end of the pilot we have calculated that we have freed up 540 hours back into WAST resources."

(Steven Roberts, Service Integration Manager, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service)

In Bridgend, the Local Authority and partners staged the OlympAGE event in December 2016. Over 200 people attended, finding out how older people can stay active. Groups from local care homes and day centres participated in the Olympic-themed event, with a range of games and activities throughout the day to help improve physical and mental wellbeing.

“We have been engaged and fully committed to achieving those actions set out within the Ageing Well in Wales Phase Two Action Plan. The plan has provided us with the framework in which to focus our engagement plans and achieve many successes to improve the experiences of older people in Wales who need our services. Our values based ‘Promises to Older People’ are ensuring that people receive a quality service and positive experience when in our care. We continue to engage with people and partners in taking Ageing Well further in achieving real and meaningful differences to people in Wales.” (Claire Bevan, Director of Quality, Safety and Patient Experience, Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust)

“We have developed a Resource Pack and Handbook for Sheltered Housing Schemes, Communities First and community groups to run their own ten week course to inform, educate and provide practical advice on falls awareness. We are now rolling this project out, working in partnership with Registered Social Landlords across Cwm Taf. Many of the sessions included an activity, for example a taster session of tai chi based exercise. The project is not only about falls awareness but reflects the ethos of Ageing Well, in particular combating loneliness and isolation. It was great to be part of a project with such positive results – at the end of the ten weeks, participants had receive sight and hearing tests, all were drinking more water and all felt more informed on falls awareness.” (Rhian Webber, Health and Wellbeing Improvement Manager, Cwm Taf Local Health Board)

Furthermore, Ageing Well partners, including Care and Repair and the emergency services, are taking forward the ‘Make Every Contact Count’ approach and providing older people with practical advice on how to reduce the risk of falls, as well as carrying out a falls risk assessment, when entering people’s homes.”

http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/65550
Opportunities for Learning and Employment

The 2015 National Assembly Inquiry on Employment Opportunities for people over 50 has given this agenda some momentum\(^{30}\). However, Wales is still under-utilising and under-valuing its older workforce, and the skills, knowledge and experience that older people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) possess are still under-appreciated.

There have been a number of positive developments since the Inquiry, including the development of the Welsh Government’s all-age apprenticeships and employability plan\(^{31,32}\), Welsh Government commissioned research to look at the specific barriers facing older people who are looking to re-enter employment, and the Welsh Government’s ‘Age of Investment’ campaign to tackle ageism in the workplace, address the myths and misconceptions around older workers and promote the benefits of an age-diverse and multi-generational workplace\(^{33,34}\).

In the past 12 months, Ageing Well in Wales has supported a number of activities to highlight the need to support older people to find and retain employment, including running workshops with Wales TUC and supporting Chwarae Teg’s Agile Nation 2 initiative, which provided free training to women aged 54 and over in the workplace\(^ {35}\).

“One of the key aims of the Older People’s Strategy is to enable people over 50 to continue to work, learn and be an active part of their communities. Ageing Well in Wales has worked closely with the Welsh Government, the public, private and voluntary sectors to


\(^{35}\) [https://www.agilenation2.org.uk/](https://www.agilenation2.org.uk/)
shape policy and practice. The Welsh Government all-age apprentice programme is welcomed. Older people in Wales are not looking for special treatment, just equal and appropriate treatment. I am sure that Ageing Well can continue to work in partnership to ensure that older people have the opportunities to learn, to earn and to play a full part in Welsh life.” (Terry Mills, Acting Chair, Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing (MAFA))

Thematic weeks have been useful in raising awareness and highlighting the opportunities available to older people. For example, opportunities for older people to take on apprenticeships during the Welsh Government Apprenticeship Week in March 2017\(^\text{36}\), the importance of recruiting, retaining and retraining people aged 50+ in the workplace during the Learning and Work Institute Skills for Work Week in May 2017\(^\text{37}\), and highlighting the learning opportunities available for older people during the Festival of Learning in June 2017\(^\text{38}\). Other Ageing Well partners, including the Wales TUC and Business in the Community, are also working on schemes and initiatives to help to improve employment opportunities for older people.

“The Wales TUC wants Wales to become a fair work nation. We believe that employers need to make better use of the skills and experience of their older workers, and to develop more sustainable approaches to work in later life. Unions are in a key position to promote age inclusive approaches to recruitment, career development and job and workplace design. The Wales TUC has worked in partnership with Ageing Well to provide briefings for union reps on key issues such as ageing well in the workplace and dementia awareness, knowledge which reps have been able to take back to their workplaces across Wales. As an organisation we have greatly appreciated the opportunity for joint working that has enabled workplace reps to benefit from the expertise of Ageing Well. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership in the future.” (Julie Cook, National Officer, Wales TUC Cymru)

Work continues to ensure that older people are fully involved in the digital inclusion agenda and are provided with opportunities to improve

\(^{36}\) [https://twitter.com/AgeingWellCymru/status/839885194354122758](https://twitter.com/AgeingWellCymru/status/839885194354122758)  
their digital skills via the Welsh Government Digital Inclusion Strategic Framework for Wales, ensuring that they have the right digital skills to help improve their employment prospects\textsuperscript{39}. Work also continues to address the financial skills and resilience of older people via the Welsh Government Financial Inclusion Strategy for Wales\textsuperscript{40} and the Money Advice Service Financial Capability Strategy for Wales\textsuperscript{41}. Good practice at the local level includes a new Money Advice Service ‘What Works Fund’ project in partnership with Age Cymru Swansea Bay\textsuperscript{42}. The project will support people aged 65+ in Swansea with confidence building on financial planning, help individuals understand how to use online financial services, and how to plan ahead and manage their finances through life events.

On the learning strand, the publication of the Ageing Well ‘Guide to setting up a community learning club’\textsuperscript{43} provides individuals, volunteers and groups with practical advice and support to establish a local community learning club. Ageing Well partners, including the Learning and Work Institute, U3A, Men’s Sheds and the Open University, also continue to work on improving adult community learning opportunities for older people and provide new and innovative solutions to develop community-based lifelong learning. The guide will be formally launched by the Learning and Work Institute as part of Adult Learners Week in June 2017, and distributed to key partners across Wales. Ageing Well will continue to support and highlight good practice achieved by older learners, and draw inspiration from previous award winners, for example the Learning and Work Institute Adult Learning Awards.

“Around 14,000 older people belong to the 59 U3As in Wales where members contribute to a wide variety of interest groups in an

\textsuperscript{39} http://gov.wales/topics/science-and-technology/digital/digital-inclusion/?lang=en
\textsuperscript{40} http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/communities/debt/?lang=en
\textsuperscript{41} https://www.fincap.org.uk/wales_strategy
\textsuperscript{42} http://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/swanseabay/news/mas-funding-won/
\textsuperscript{43} http://www.ageingwellinwales.com/Libraries/Documents/Learning-Club-Guide-eng.pdf
atmosphere of mutual support and companionship. Many speak of the difference that belonging to the U3A has made to them, particularly at different times or if they are on their own. Older people have so much to offer with their life experiences and skills; coming together within the U3A is hugely beneficial for their physical and mental wellbeing. The U3A is delighted to be a partner within Ageing Well in Wales to ensure that older people in Wales benefit from all this on offer to them.” (Hilary Jones, U3A Trustee for Wales)

Ageing Well in Wales is supporting the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) in bringing ‘GrandFest’ to Wales. GrandFest is a one day festival that celebrates the skills and talents of older people, and shares these with younger generations. The first GrandFest Cymru will be run in partnership with Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales and be held at St Fagans National Museum of History in July 2017.

Local Authorities are also continuing to work on their learning and employment actions via the local Ageing Well plans. Examples include improving older people’s financial and digital skills via the ‘Simon Says’ awareness raising campaign in Caerphilly; support for local learning groups with venues and learning materials in the Vale of Glamorgan; the provision of an older person’s mentor to establish links with local business and improve older people’s employment prospects via the Anglesey Council European Social Fund OPUS project; the provision of opportunities for older people in Torfaen to get back into the workplace via the WCVA New Challenge project funded by the European Social Fund, for example the introduction of job placements for individuals with ‘host’ companies and targeted skills and training opportunities through the Council; and the promotion of age-friendly businesses and how to make businesses more inclusive of people of all ages in Cwm Taf.

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44 [https://grandfest.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/](https://grandfest.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/)
Loneliness and Isolation

Since the official launch of Ageing Well in Wales in 2014, the recognition that loneliness is a serious public health risk that has serious and devastating impacts on older people has developed significantly.

Governments at all levels, Local Health Boards and other key partners are now recognising that Wales cannot afford to have a generation of older people at risk of loneliness and isolation. The cost for our health and social care services, and the individual, is simply too great.

“I have personal experiences of loneliness, and know how devastating it can be. It affects how you feel, think and severely impacts on your health and wellbeing. There are too many older people in Wales experiencing loneliness and isolation, and now is the time for action. I am pleased that tackling loneliness and isolation is a priority within Ageing Well in Wales and I support all efforts to ensure that older people can get out and about, participate in community activities and as a result reduce the harmful effects of loneliness.” (Phyllis Preece, Chair, National Pensioners Convention)

In addition to the Welsh Government Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan 2016-1946, which highlights the need to reduce loneliness and unwanted isolation, the forthcoming Welsh Government national strategy on loneliness, to be published in 2017/18, will give some clarity and structure for all partners to come together and develop a coordinated approach to tackling loneliness and isolation in Wales. The 2017 National Assembly Inquiry on loneliness and isolation is also helpful in highlighting the key issues and offering recommendations that need to be taken forward by key partners47.

“My officials are starting to look again at the Older People’s Strategy, taking into account feedback we have received since it was first launched and we hope that older people’s groups will be fully involved in this process. This revision of the strategy and the Ageing Well programme will work alongside additional work we are undertaking in respect of loneliness and isolation to help improve

the lives of older people in communities across Wales.” (Rebecca Evans AM, Minister for Social Services and Public Health)

The Ageing Well guide ‘Making a Difference: A pocket guide to help you deal with loneliness’ provides helpful advice, information and support to older people who feel lonely or at risk of loneliness. The guide was developed in partnership with the Centre for Ageing and Dementia Research (CADR), British Red Cross and the Royal Voluntary Service.

“I am undertaking a Wellbeing and Support Review with our older people. I’ll be visiting them for an informal chat about their general wellbeing and talking about any support they would like or are already receiving from family, friends, and others. We would like to help improve their sense of wellbeing and address many other issues faced by older people, for example loneliness, isolation and digital exclusion. In many cases it will be just a reminder that we’re an approachable friendly landlord.” (Mandy Carr, Older Persons Housing Officer, North Wales Housing)

Ageing Well partners continue to tackle loneliness and isolation amongst older people via a range of schemes, interventions and projects. For example, the British Red Cross and Royal Voluntary Service are working together on ‘Camau Cadarn’, a three year programme to deliver services to older people who are at risk of loneliness and isolation and need support to help regain their independence.

“For a partnership to work it has to have a common purpose. That should always be to improve the lives of individuals and Ageing Well in Wales is bringing together those organisations that have a person centred focus. On our own we can only do so much but together we can combine our skills and hopefully improve the lives of older people. Ageing Well focuses our efforts to make Wales a better place for older people.” (Dave Worrall, Independent Living Operations Manager - Wales, British Red Cross)

Age Cymru’s Gwanwyn festival is a month-long festival held across Wales each May which celebrates creativity in older age and offers opportunities for participation by older people in the arts. Age Cymru is

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50 http://gwanwyn.org.uk/
now looking to establish Gwanwyn clubs, which will enable the work of the project to extend throughout the year. Ageing Well partner Music in Hospitals\(^{51}\) arranges for free live music performances in hospitals and care homes across Wales, improving the wellbeing of isolated and ill older people. Spice Timebanking\(^{52}\) also continues to support community engagement and participation throughout Welsh communities through its time credits scheme, which fosters volunteering.

“Being a part of the Ageing Well in Wales movement has been invaluable for us. We basically want everyone who could possibly benefit from our service – professional-standard, live music performed by artists specially selected for their ability to work in a healthcare environment – to know about it. Ageing Well is working with Music in Hospitals to develop their next project, called Open for Music, which will deliver free concerts in care homes for members of the local community as well as residents. Watch this space!” (Robert Aitken, Director, Music in Hospitals Cymru/Wales)

The ‘Ffrind i Mi’ initiative is led by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and helps older people and veterans in south east Wales who feel lonely or isolated through partnership working, volunteering and befriending services\(^{53}\).

“I am absolutely delighted with the success of ‘Ffrind i Mi’ to date. This initiative shows great promise in driving forward a positive social movement that will reconnect older people with their communities. Working in partnership really can turn ‘passion into action’, encouraging communities to collectively support anyone who is at risk of loneliness and social isolation.” (Tanya Strange, Divisional Nurse, Primary Care, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board)

\(^{51}\) [http://www.musicinhospitals.org.uk](http://www.musicinhospitals.org.uk)

\(^{52}\) [http://www.justaddspice.org](http://www.justaddspice.org)

\(^{53}\) [https://www.ffrindimi.co.uk/](https://www.ffrindimi.co.uk/)
Ageing Well in Wales continues to strengthen its partnership with the UK-wide Campaign to End Loneliness. From June 2017, the Campaign to End Loneliness will have a full-time Wales campaign manager in place, working closely with Ageing Well in Wales. This new role, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, will support pilot projects in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire to tackle loneliness through community collaboration⁵⁴.

“The working alongside Ageing Well in Wales has meant that the Campaign to End Loneliness has been able to extend its reach and vision to help beat loneliness. They have been instrumental in helping us secure our recent £2.65m Big Lottery Fund grant and we look forward to working even closer with Ageing Well as we run our exciting new work programme in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire.” (Marcus Rand, Campaign to End Loneliness)

Older people who are at risk of loneliness and isolation are more susceptible to the dangers of scams and financial crimes and abuse. Criminals will often target older people who are socially isolated, and prey on older people via scams on the doorstep, on the phone, online and in the post. The Wales Against Scams Partnership (WASP), launched in 2016, brings together key partners to help improve the resilience of older people, raise awareness of the dangers of scams and make Wales a hostile place for scammers and criminals⁵⁵.

“I have worked closely with Ageing Well on a number of events and their contribution has been vital in disseminating our work to a wider audience. The Ageing Well team has been a key source of support, helping me identify relevant community groups to invite to these events. Ageing Well has worked with me to develop a booklet on coping with loneliness. They had a key role in translating my work into an accessible user friendly format to help people in Wales have conversations around loneliness.” (Dr. Deborah Morgan, Research Assistant, Centre for Ageing and Dementia Research/Centre for Innovative Ageing)

“I’ve experienced the terrible impact of loneliness after the sudden, sad and traumatic loss of my dear wife Diane. Working with Ageing

Well in Wales, I’ve done some public speaking on several occasions, sharing my story and highlighting how horribly distressing and depressing loneliness can be. I thought talking about my life would be easy, but it still hurts, as anyone who has attended one of my talks will know. I’ve been told by many people, old and young, and from all walks of life, that my talks are very moving, and I hope that they make people understand the reality of loneliness, and bring comfort to those in a similar situation. I still have to live every day, on my own. At times I feel a wreck, all I want is company. As part of Ageing Well in Wales I feel valued, and have hope that my experiences can help us do more to tackle the terrible impact of loneliness.” (Vic, mid Wales)

Local Authorities are continuing to work on actions to tackle loneliness and isolation via their local Ageing Well plans56. Examples include the development of a ‘heatmap’ in Flintshire to help identify people at risk of loneliness, particularly in rural areas. Pop-up cafes have been established to reduce the risk of loneliness amongst older people in rural Anglesey. In Carmarthenshire, weekly activity programmes have been developed to help address loneliness within extra care schemes and care homes, whilst similar activities and support have been developed to help older people in sheltered housing who are at risk of loneliness and isolation. In Pembrokeshire, Solva Community Council has established Solva Care57. Modelled on the Good Neighbour Scheme, Solva Care involves volunteers in the community supporting others, and has helped to tackle loneliness and social isolation. Torfaen County Borough Council is implementing a social prescribing service in GP surgeries, enabling isolated people to be referred to non-clinical, community services.

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57 [http://solvacare.co.uk/](http://solvacare.co.uk/)