

South Wales West Regional Committee

SWaWR (2)-01-07 (p.3)

Date: Friday 02 March 2007

Venue: North Cornelly Community Centre, North Cornelly, Bridgend

Title: Maintaining the Health, Well being and Independence of Older People

- Tuesday morning 10.30am and Mrs Jones is £120.00 per week better off she has had assistance to fill in the forms to go on the housing list of two local housing providers, she has been referred to the handy person scheme to help her access a hand rail to help her until she moves. Mrs Jones is one of 8500 Older People helped by Age Concern Swansea each year.
- Every day we use the commonly spoken words of Health, Well-being and Independence when we are talking about Older Peoples needs.
- These vital words are what actually enable Older People to stay in their home , the place where we all want to be.
- Older People have to be enabled to be empowered this means a need to address peoples rights as well as needs.
- The WAG role is to set the frame work and ensure the under pinning policies and enforcement are in place, an example of this is that the Older Persons Commissioner needs to have teeth and not be a tokenistic older person representative, Care and Repair must continue to get funded to provide disability adaptations.
- Age Concern Swansea is very pleased at the success of the Older Persons Strategy in our County which is strategically and operationally meeting the real needs of our residents.
- There is a demonstration of true partnership working which is both proactive and amounts to real outcomes , an excellent model really delivering what is needed.
- So what do the words Maintaining Health , Well-being and Independence actually mean to Older People?
- To live safely in their own home, access to information, good income, a social life to enjoy, good housing, access to health accessibility of getting to appointments, nutrition.
- Services that are reactive to their ever changing needs and recognise the link to the "making the Connections and the Beecham Reports" where the citizen is at the centre of the services particularly

Advice and Information and promoting independence. Resulting in making the documents worth while and with positive and real life enhancing outcomes.

- Maintenance is the most important word as nothing works without regular support and input, similar to a car with a breakdown insurance that is there when you need it.
- Support that if not in place often results in expensive Health and Social Care intervention and often a need for the person to leave their home. It therefore makes sense to make the best possible use of every contact with an Older Person and work holistically to meet their needs to live comfortably and safely.
- Age Concern Swansea is a local independent charity who have for the last 30 years worked to deliver living at home support enabling and addressing well know issues that affect the over 50's in Swansea. We are aware that to assist Older People to the best standard we can not work in isolation and therefore we work with more than 35 partners to help to fill the gap of needs for Older People.
- We now have 712 over 50's per month asking us for help. There has been a dramatic year on year increase with a notable change from April 06 - to Dec 06 with an average increase of 250 calls for assistance monthly. This has had a huge impact on the Charity and everyone now see us as main service delivers and not as extra assistance to meet the needs.
- We currently run 9 services which aim to include and enable Older People to stay physically and emotionally well in their own homes for as long as possible.
- A Hospital Discharge Scheme which supports people for 6 weeks post admission to hospital, helping with shopping basic cleaning and essential tasks to allow them to be discharged from hospital. We have a multi Disciplinary team which includes 2 senior nurses, a social worker, benefits officer, volunteers and visiting staff and daily we demonstrate the benefits of working in partnership knitting together staff from the NHS, Social Services, and the Voluntary Sector. Providing a unique service preventing delayed discharge and minimising the time Older People have to remain in hospital.
- Supporting People Project supporting 200 Older People to remain on their own homes with weekly home visits providing Low Level intervention and on going support. The project has been running for 3 years and works with paid staff and 70 volunteers all encouraging integration in the community, accessibility to up to date accurate information and advocacy, a direct link to other services and partners and also timely intervention when situations change as situations can quickly deteriorate leading to loss of independence or ill health. Reading and understanding your mail a task that we all take for granted but essential in managing and maintaining you, for many we are the eyes and ears of the outside world. The Supporting People Project is an essential model of a service which addresses the Health Social Care and Well being Agenda and has made life changing differences to individuals who would otherwise have gone into a care home or lived in poverty due to poor income. It is vital that Supporting People services are continued to be supported by the Welsh Assembly Government as they meet all the Agendas linked to Health, Well being and Independence and as 36.6% of the population of Swansea is currently over 50 the increase for need for assistance will continue to raise

due to our ageing population.

- Well being and Independence is strongly affected by the amount of money a person has to live, Last Year Age Concern Swansea gained over 1.2 million in extra income for Older People and this year we estimate it will be nearer 2 and half million. Money that enables people to pay for services to help them live comfortably, independently with enough money to pay their bills and even have some spare to enjoy social activities.
- Accessible advice, information and advocacy is paramount to our activities for the older residents of Swansea so in order to assist individuals and professionals alike we have recently developed a directory of services listing more than 300 agencies who can assist Older People, the directory is available to download off the Age Concern Swansea website and also available in hard copies as we are aware that not everybody has access to a computer. In planning the directory it was essential that we built in systems for regular updates as Information must be accurate for the time it's needed.
- We know that the services we deliver are in response to local issues and needs as we record and evaluate all the contacts we make with Older People which last year was 8500.
- So what can the Welsh Assembly Government do next?
- All the issues that have been researched endlessly, evidenced are now in vast quantities.
- Actions speak louder than words so please
- No more documents or strategies call a one year amnesty
- Commitment from politicians to make changes happen
- Implementation of existing knowledge e.g. National Services Framework
- Resources to enable Voluntary Sector to have the capacity to play the new expanded role of the 3rd sector.

These issues are not going to go away so lets make a positive change on how we help Older People remain independent, whilst addressing their Health and Well being.