

Cross-Party Group Annual Report

07.06.2022

Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing

1. Group membership and office holders

Members

Chair: Mike Hedges MS

Janet Finch-Saunders MS

Dr Altaf Hussain MS

Joel James MS

Delyth Jewell MS

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS

Sioned Williams MS

External members

- Steve Milsom - Cymru Older Persons Alliance
- Lynda Wallis – Welsh Senate Older People; Vale 50+ Strategy Forum
- Dereck Roberts – National Pensioners Convention Wales
- Barry Stephens - Active Wales
- Carys Henry - Age Cymru Trustee
- Charles Carter – Age Cymru Trustee
- Michael Phillips - Age Cymru
- Joshua Hayman - Older People's Commissioner for Wales
- Christopher Williams, Age Alliance Wales
- Faye Patton - Care & Repair Cymru
- Huw Owen, Alzheimer's Society Cymru
- Andrea Nicholas-Jones – Action for Elders
- Lucy Symington, Hourglass Cymru
- Georgia Marks, British Red Cross
- Melanie Minty - Care Forum Wales
- Stephanie Griffiths - Social Care Wales
- Mathew Norman, Diabetes UK (Wales)
- Steve Amos, RVS
- Neeta Baicher, BASW
- Lorraine Morgan – independent consultant
- Maria Cheshire-Allen - Swansea University
- Professor Dame June Clark, Swansea University
- Dr Roiyah Saltus - University of South Wales
- Professor John Williams - Aberystwyth University, Chair Age Cymru

Secretariat

Dr Ceri Cryer - Age Cymru

2. Previous Group Meetings since the last AGM

Minutes of meetings were prepared by Ceri Cryer and Michael Phillips, Age Cymru.

Meeting 1

Meeting date: 9 February 2021 – online meeting.

This meeting was held during the fifth Senedd, and the Minutes are included in Appendix 1.

Meeting 2

Meeting date: 15 June 2021 – online meeting.

Attendees

Mike Hedges MS (Chair)	Joshua Hayman, Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Ryland Doyle, Office of Mike Hedges MS	Rhys Jackson, Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Peredur Owen Griffiths MS	Steve Milsom, Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA)
Dr Altaf Hussain MS	Melanie Minty, Care Forum Wales
Joel James MS	Faye Patton, Care & Repair Cymru
Sioned Williams MS	Michael Phillips, Age Cymru
Lee Gonzalez, office of Joel James MS	Royah Saltus, University of South Wales
Huw Bendall, Age Cymru Consultative Forum	Matthew Russell, MSD
Professor Dame June Clark, Swansea University	Lynda Wallis, Vale 50+ Strategy Forum; Welsh Senate of Older People
Lauren Cooper, Older People's Commissioner for Wales	Christopher Williams, Age Alliance Wales
Ceri Cryer, Age Cymru	Professor John Williams, Chair Age Cymru; Aberystwyth University
Stephanie Griffith, Social Care Wales	

Apologies

Delyth Jewell MS	Vicki Howells MS
Janet Finch-Saunders MS	Rachael Nicholson, Hourglass Cymru

Mike Hedges MS welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Election of the Cross Party Group on Older People and Ageing: Mike Hedges MS was nominated and elected as Chair.

Ceri Cryer Age Cymru presented the findings of the survey 'Experiences of people aged 50 or over in Wales during the winter Covid-19 lockdown'. The survey was

conducted during March and April 2021 by Age Cymru, Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA), Welsh Senate of Older People, Active Wales, National Pensioners Convention Wales, and Pensioners Forum Wales.

The findings were presented on a Powerpoint presentation, which was later distributed to Group members.

Discussion: what does the Cross Party Group on Older People and Ageing consider to be priorities arising from the findings of the survey?

Lynda Wallis - the findings are very much as we expected. Still lots of older people nervous about going out, lunch clubs yet to open. To comply with the regulations rather than have one large meeting some groups have had to organise several smaller meetings which costs more money.

It is safe out there, even though some people are ignoring the directional arrows on the street – some people are more carefree than others. We now need to build confidence in older people.

Steve Milsom – The survey is an excellent piece of work. We are not through this (the pandemic) yet, there is more to come so we need to continue seeking the views of older people who need to be front and centre in engagement. We also need clear priorities for the NHS to deal with older people on long waiting lists. Views of the very old need to be taken into account.

But there were some positives, particularly the support we received from younger volunteers let's capture their interests in older people.

There are also concerns regarding the impact on employment. The Centre for Ageing Better found that older people are finding it harder to get jobs which could help to increase pensioner poverty.

John Williams – This report is extremely valuable. The post Covid-19 challenge is just as great as the pandemic itself. There are many hidden problems such as access to healthcare and elder abuse. You should be offered a face-to-face consultation with your GP if that is what is required. Hospital services here in Ceredigion have been regionalised so now some people in Aberystwyth have to travel to Haverfordwest for some treatments. Some older people have now been shielding for 18 months and are now petrified to go out. The challenges are difficult and complex.

Sioned Williams MS - Following lockdown some things will have to be done differently. The very old don't or didn't drive and now they can't have lifts. At the same time bus services have been cut but opportunities to socialise need efficient public transport.

Melanie Minty – We haven't seen the worst in terms of care provision as there is a lack of capacity in the system. Many paid carers are taking early retirement but demand going up.

Altaf Hussain MS– People have the right to live without pain. Covid is there and so we have to learn to live with it. Those on long waiting lists should call their GP. Patients should be seen as a whole and not just focus on the one symptom. Continuity of care and who is treating you is important. Older people need access to all NHS services.

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS – What's astounded me is people's capacity to change. We need to remember these other ways of doing things.

Mike Hedges MS – There is an increase in the number of older people looking after the very old. As we live longer we become the carers ourselves. Ceri will produce a list of the priorities identified by the survey and share it with us so we can adopt them as priorities and then write to the Health Minister and the Minister for older people.

Formats and dates of future meetings

Mike Hedges MS - We'll continue online meetings for the time being.

Ceri Cryer – the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 19 October 2021, and the topic scheduled for discussion is social care funding.

Steve Milsom – I welcome the focus on one issue so we can apply an in-depth consideration. Welsh Government's Strategy for an Ageing Society will be published later this year.

Altaf Hussain – The Health and Social Services Minister should report to this group.

Lynda Wallis – The abuse of older people could be one for us for future discussion.

John Williams – We could look at the 2014 Act. How effective are the measures? How effective are the referrals? Do they become referrals?

Meeting 3

Meeting date: 19 October 2021 – online meeting.

Attendees

Mike Hedges MS (Chair)	David Kirby, Care & Repair Cymru
Ryland Doyle, Office of Mike Hedges MS	Georgia Marks, British Red Cross
Dr Altaf Hussain MS	Steve Milsom, Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA)
Eleri Griffiths, Office of Heledd Fychan MS	Melanie Minty, Care Forum Wales

Anna Jones, Office of Peredur Owen Griffiths MS	Andrea Nicholas-Jones, Action for Elders
Charles Carter, Age Cymru Trustee	Michael Phillips, Age Cymru
Andrea Cooper, Older People's Commissioner for Wales	Dereck Roberts, National Pensioners Convention Wales
Ceri Cryer, Age Cymru	Lucy Symington, Hourglass Cymru
Emma Davies, Social Care Wales	Lynda Wallis, Vale 50+ Strategy Forum; Welsh Senate of Older People
Carys Henry, Age Cymru Trustee	Christopher Williams, Age Alliance Wales
Louise Hughes, Age Cymru	Professor John Williams, Chair Age Cymru; Aberystwyth University
Rhys Jackson, Older People's Commissioner for Wales	

Apologies

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS	Joshua Hayman, Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Steve Amos, RVS	Matthew Russell, MSD
Huw Bendall, Age Cymru Consultative Forum	

Mike Hedges MS welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes and updates

The Minutes for the meeting held on 15 June 2021 were approved. Ceri Cryer had sent an email update to members detailing the priorities arising from the findings of the survey conducted by Age Cymru, Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA), Welsh Senate of Older People, Active Wales, National Pensioners Convention Wales, and Pensioners Forum Wales, entitled 'Experiences of people aged 50 or over in Wales during the winter Covid-19 lockdown'.

The priorities were as follows:

- Reducing waiting times for health and social care services
- Improvements needed in social care
- Support for increased numbers to deal with bereavement and activities to improve mental and physical health
- Loneliness and isolation
- Built environment in communities
- Public transport.

Action: Mike Hedges MS to write to the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Minister for Social Justice in relation to the priorities arising from the survey.

The abuse of older people

Louise Hughes, Head of Safeguarding and Advocacy at Age Cymru gave a presentation on Safeguarding older people, which was later distributed to Group members.

Discussion

Mike Hedges MS – it's hard to recognise financial abuse as many older people find it hard to report on their children and grandchildren if it is them carrying out the abuse.

Lynda Wallis – We should note that it's not just women being abused but men are also being abused which we tend to ignore. People need to be aware of the new telephone number 159 which allows people to report financial scams which is a good step forward.

Steve Milsom – This paper highlights the extent and seriousness of the problem which is something that needs to be addressed by the Senedd.

Lucy Symington – We need to understand how we can increase the incidence of direct disclosures from victims of abuse.

Andrea Nicholas-Jones – Male victims make up at least 2/5 of elder abuse and we need to be aware there is under-reporting of male abuse. There is only one refuge to support males being abused. It's not just about Safeguarding, this is about rape, assault, and abuse, particularly amongst those living with dementia.

Georgia Marks – We need to be aware that many who are abused are isolated from services.

Louise Hughes – We need to review the terms and meanings we use when discussing this issue. Abuse of older people makes it sound less extreme.

Lucy Symington – Abuse of older males has recently been picked up by the Older People's Commissioner. The link between abuse and dementia is now being picked up. Would the strengthening of legislation in Wales help? We already have the Social Services and Well-Being Act but what else needs to be in place? There are still high numbers coming through local authorities.

Prof John Williams – Does the current legislation work? In part but not enough. Protection orders are not used, legislation needs rethinking. Why do people say no to help? Do they know their rights and are they free from intimidation?

The crime survey for England & Wales stopped recording after the age of 60 but now it's up to 75 – we need data although we don't know how reliable it is, probably underestimates the true figures.

Lynda Wallis– It is hard for women to report abuse after being in a marriage for more than 30 years. It is a huge step to report the abuse and where do they go? You can't place older women with younger women with families in refuges. Why do women have to leave the home and not the abuser?

Lucy Symington – how do we improve the evaluation of existing legislation? Perhaps more input from older people and social workers?

Louise Hughes – I can support any of the actions that come from this group. As well as the Social Services and Well Being Act we have the Violence Against Older People Legislation.

Prof John Williams - These two great pieces of legislation need to work together. Scotland has the powers but rarely uses them.

Andrea Cooper – Statistics from Essex from their Safer Essex Project: in 2023 stats were being recorded for the over 74s.

Mike Hedges MS left the meeting to attend a Senedd event.

Ceri Cryer said she would collate issues raised by Members during the discussion with a view to further discussion with the Group to agree any actions to be taken forward. Issues included:

- The extent and seriousness of the abuse of older people needs to be addressed by the Senedd.
- The abuse of older people is widely under reported and under recorded, there is the need for reliable data.
- The incidence of direct disclosures from victims of abuse needs to increase.
- Current legislation needs rethinking. Protection orders are not being used. Do people know their rights and are they free from intimidation?
- There is a lack of suitable refuges for older people who are victims of abuse.

Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Cross Party Group on Older People and Ageing is to be confirmed, but it will be in the new year. Ceri updated the Group on the reason for the change of topic for today's meeting: the topic for discussion at today's meeting was originally scheduled to be on social care funding, and we had invited the Deputy Minister for Social Services to provide an update. The Deputy Minister stated that she that she would be happy to attend a future meeting, as it is important that we await the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review at the end of October. The Deputy Minister wanted to reassure the Group that a significant amount of work has already been undertaken to look at the long-term options for social care in Wales through the Inter-Ministerial Group on Paying for Social Care.

Ceri will contact Members in due course regarding a date for the next meeting.

Meeting 4

Meeting date: 8 March 2022 – online meeting.

Attendees

Mike Hedges MS (Chair)	Rachel Lewis, Welsh Government
Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services	David McKinney, Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Ryland Doyle, office of Mike Hedges MS	Lorraine Morgan, independent consultant
A Hughes-Howells, office of Dr Altaf Hussain MS	Andrea Nicholas-Jones, Action for Elders
Anna Jones, office of Peredur Owen Griffiths MS	Faye Patton, Care & Repair Cymru
Huw Bendall, Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA)	Michael Phillips, Age Cymru
Ceri Cryer, Age Cymru	Dereck Roberts, National Pensioners Convention Wales
Gethin Edwards, Welsh Government	Dr Roiyah Saltus, University of South Wales
Carys Henry, Age Cymru Trustee	Barry Stephens, Active Wales
Rhys Jackson, Older People's Commissioner for Wales	Professor John Williams, Chair Age Cymru; Aberystwyth University
Sion Jones, Alzheimer's Society Cymru	

Apologies

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS	Dr Bernadette Fuge, President Age Cymru
Charles Carter, Age Cymru Trustee	Joshua Hayman, Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Maria Cheshire-Allen, Swansea University	Lynda Wallis, Vale 50+ Strategy Forum; Welsh Senate of Older People

Mike Hedges MS welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes and updates

The Minutes for the meeting held on 19 October 2021 were approved.

Action: With reference to discussions held at the previous meeting about the abuse of older people, Mike Hedges MS asked Ceri Cryer to invite the Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt MS, to a future meeting of the Group.

Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services introduced the Welsh Government's Strategy for an Ageing society:

We're all getting older, thanks to advances in health and social care, as a nation we have increasing numbers of older people, more than ever before. This creates challenges as well as opportunities. Covid-19 has had a significantly detrimental effect on the lives of many older people in Wales. However, this pandemic has also brought out the best in many people, showing the willingness and fortitude of older people to reach out, to volunteer and to help others in need.

The challenges we face in delivering this strategy are both short term and long term. In the short term we need to get back on track as we recover from the pandemic. In the long term we will do all we can to support the development of age friendly communities across Wales. Communities that enable and support older people to live and age well.

I'd like to start by emphasising the importance of this strategy in the context of the newly revised Programme for Government which will run until 2026. This programme is aligned in so many ways with the issues highlighted in the strategy.

- Providing treatments which have been delayed by the pandemic
- Delivering better access to doctors, nurses, dentists and other health professionals, and
- Prioritising mental health and reviewing patient pathways.

These are all built in, and will be delivered as part of our Age Friendly Wales strategy.

I'd like to give you an overview of the strategy, where we have reached and what we plan to do next.

Our Strategy for an Ageing Society was published on October 7th, 2021 following an extensive programme of engagement with older people and their representatives. The strategy sets out our vision for an age friendly Wales, which supports people of all ages to live and age well.

The strategy challenges ageist stereotypes of older people as passive recipients of health and social care - I am concerned that the pandemic may have helped to embed such stereotypes in people's minds. It is all too easy to overlook the many ways older people support our communities to flourish.

We should not forget that many older people living with dementia are cared for by their partner, siblings or a neighbour who are often older too, or that many working adults rely on grandparents for childcare. The value of older volunteers certainly became clear during the pandemic as many charities struggled to cope without their support. Before Covid-19, older people's contribution to the Welsh economy was estimated to be over £2 billion a year.

The Strategy for an Ageing Society aims to change the way we all think and feel about ageing – 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.

Thanks to ground-breaking developments in healthcare and technology, the global population of people aged over sixty has been growing faster than any other age group, but the pandemic showed how easily these gains can be taken away.

It also showed how important it is that different generations understand each other so they can pull together at times of crisis and play to our strengths as strong, vibrant communities across Wales. Working in partnership across generations, sectors and communities is fundamental to the creation of an age friendly Wales.

To turn our vision into reality, this year we have allocated £550,000 to local authorities to support their work to become age friendly and to gain membership of the World Health Organisation's Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities. To gain membership, local authorities must show how they are engaging with older people. Our vision is shared with the Older People's Commissioner for Wales, who is providing valuable support and guidance to local authorities as they work towards age friendly status. I will be increasing this funding to £1.1million for 2022-23 with £50,000 to be distributed to each of the local authorities. Each authority will have a lead officer. A networking group is being coordinated by my officials to support delivery and the sharing of good practice.

The United Nations' Principles for Older Persons have informed the development of this strategy and run throughout it. I want Wales to be a nation that celebrates age and, in line with the UN Principles, a nation that upholds the independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity of older people at all times. This year, we will allocate £100,000 to promote awareness of older people's rights and inspire a common understanding of the transformative effect of a rights-based approach.

We are fortunate that we have a firm grasp on the circumstances of older people in Wales. In 2019, we commissioned the internationally recognised Centre for Innovative Ageing at Swansea University to benchmark the situation of older people in Wales against the other 3 UK nations. This measure was updated in 2021.

The centre used a range of measures to create a UK Age Index. The results show that Wales was ranked 1st, with the highest overall score, followed by Scotland, England and finally Northern Ireland. 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.

In addition, the Older People's Commissioner for Wales' State of the Nation reports of 2019 and 2021 offer a firm statistical and empirical grounding to build on, which charts the impact of Covid-19. Collectively, these reports provide a clear indication of where action is needed to improve lives for older people across Wales.

Older people have been directly involved in creating this strategy and will be involved in its delivery via the Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing. We will put the voice and experience of older people at the heart of our policy process and continue to support five national older people's groups and forums, hosted by Age Cymru. Collectively, their work helps us to understand and respond to the key issues affecting older people today. We will work across government to address the wide range of factors that influence how we age – from our health, social care and transport systems to the way we socialise, work and care for others. The strategy aims to unlock the potential of today's older people and tomorrow's ageing society.

The delivery plan for the strategy is almost ready to be published, it sets out clear actions, milestones and timescales to monitor the strategy's implementation and was developed in collaboration with the Ministerial Advisory Group. The delivery plan will help to focus the attention of teams across Welsh Government on ensuring that the needs of older people are built into all of our projects and work programmes.

This strategy is about how we look to the future, based on sound knowledge and understanding - a strategy developed with and for the people of Wales. 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.

Questions and Discussion

Dereck Roberts – In terms of Welsh Government support to local authorities to have plans in place for engagement, what will be the response of local authorities – is the funding guaranteed for three years? There is a problem with the proliferation of champions as there are 24 in Swansea! How do we respond to the tidal wave of inflation? Also, our members are still nervous to go out.

Deputy Minister – I expect the money to be there. Welsh Government will do all it can but the macro-economic levers are with Westminster. We are aware that older people are worried about going out.

Andrea Nicholas Jones – The sustainability of funding is a critical issue. The previous strategy was successful until the money became unhypothecated and was absorbed into local authority budgets, and the strategy co-ordinator roles became diverted. How do we support older people in getting back to normal?

Huw Bendall – We support age friendly communities and engagement. COPA felt it was not discussed at a local authority level in Cardiff – reality of engagement.

Lorraine Morgan - Had similar experiences. Consultations never came to us. Nothing about rural communities; there needs to be equity around Wales.

Professor John Williams – This is exciting but challenging. Older people suffered during Covid-19 – it's a shame there is no Inquiry for Wales. Can we be sure that older people's experiences are included within the UK Inquiry?

Sion Jones – We welcome that the strategy links to the Dementia Action Plan and the Unpaid Carers Strategy. It's important that there's alignment with the announcement to create a National Care Service; Alzheimer's Cymru is included in the expert group.

Responses of Deputy Minister:

- I did hear that the money previously allocated to local authorities petered out.
- I am sorry if Cardiff engagement seems tokenistic as they are the only ones to apply and join the World Health Organisation's Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities
- And Lorraine I'm sorry if consultations didn't reach you.
- Regarding a Wales only Inquiry - I think we are too closely bound up with England. But the First Minister has said he will talk to the Prime Minister to make sure we will not just be a footnote, especially bereaved families who have met with Ministers. We want clear scrutiny of what happened.
- National Care Service – we're excited about this – it needs to be free at the point of need eg mental health services. We need to look at a living wage.

Dereck Roberts – NPC doesn't want a Wales Inquiry as the unions are involved with the UK Inquiry

Lorraine Morgan - supports a Wales Inquiry.

Action point

Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice to be invited to a future meeting.

Date for next meeting: Tuesday 26 April 2022 12.15 – 13.30 pm to discuss Social Care Funding.

Meeting 5

Meeting date: 24 April 2022 – online meeting.

Attendees

Mike Hedges MS (Chair)	Maria Cheshire-Allen, Swansea University
Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services	Ceri Cryer, Age Cymru
Dr Altaf Hussain MS	Dr Bernadette Fuge, President Age Cymru
Matt Jenkins, Welsh Government	Rhys Jackson, Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Andrew Pithouse, Welsh Government	Victoria Lloyd, Age Cymru
Ryland Doyle, office of Mike Hedges MS	Georgia Marks, British Red Cross
Ioan Bellin, office of Rhys ab Owen MS	Steve Milsom, COPA
Billy Jones, office of Peredur Owen Griffiths MS	Lorraine Morgan, independent consultant
Jason McLellan, office of Carolyn Thomas MS	Andrea Nicholas-Jones, Action for Elders
Heather Ferguson, Age Cymru	Mathew Norman, Diabetes UK (Wales)
Huw Bendall, Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA)	Michael Phillips, Age Cymru
Valerie Billingham, Older People's Commissioner for Wales	Dereck Roberts, National Pensioners Convention Wales
Charles Carter, Age Cymru Trustee	Helen Twidle, Age Cymru

Apologies

Carys Henry, Age Cymru Trustee	Melanie Minty, Care Forum Wales
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Mike Hedges MS welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes and updates

The Minutes for the meeting held on 8 March 2022 were approved.

Update: Ceri Cryer invited the Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt MS, to speak about the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) National strategy at the next meeting of the Group to be held on 7 June 2022.

Presentation - Initial findings in relation to social care from the third national survey of the current experiences of people aged 50 or over in Wales of the Covid-19 pandemic - Heather Ferguson - Head of Policy and Projects, Age Cymru

This national research funded by Welsh Government focused on the last three months at the time of doing the survey, to gather the current experiences of people aged 50 or over, and their thoughts on the future.

We gathered the information in March and beginning of April 2022, and are still in the process of completing the overall report and in-depth analysis. We will share the full results with the Group. The survey was carried out in partnership between Age Cymru, Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA), Welsh Senate of Older People, Active Wales, National Pensioners Convention Wales, and Pensioners Forum Wales.

This was the third national survey carried out together since the beginning of the pandemic. It was crucial that we hear directly from people aged 50 or over as we know that older people have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and we need to ensure that their voices are heard and continue to be heard.

The survey focused on a number of key areas including; communication, unpaid carers, access to health and social care, physical and mental wellbeing, employment, accessing communities, useful experiences of the pandemic, challenges of the pandemic, cost of living, and future recovery, amongst others.

1169 people aged 50 or over responded to the research, and there was a similar response rate for all three surveys. Ages of respondents ranged from 50 to 100 and around 40% of respondents were over the age of 70, this was 14% more than last year.

68% of respondents are retired with the rest working full time, part time, self-employed, not in paid work, volunteering, or homemakers. 31% of people live with a disability, and 4% of people served in the Armed Forces. We gathered responses from all local authorities across Wales.

Social care

In our research we asked people about their experience of accessing social care. 14% of people told us that they had accessed or tried to access social care in the last three months. Of those people, 30% told us the experience had been a positive one, and 70% reported negative experiences.

Positive experiences – key themes

- Were easily able to contact occupational therapists and physios by phone
- Support and dedication from carers
- Support provided by third sector agencies
- District nursing support.

Negative experiences – key themes

- Staff shortages resulting in sporadic care
- Lack of person-centred care
- Poor communication between health and social care
- Poor communication with service users
- Lengthy delays in care assessment
- Long waits for support at home

Unpaid carers

We need to reflect on what those who are unpaid carers told us about their current experiences through this research, with many feeling they are shouldering the burden where they haven't been able to get support from social care. 31% of people who completed the survey look after someone, and 55% of these unpaid carers had increased their caring in the last three months

We also asked overall what had been the challenging experiences of the last three months and 18% told us that this had been caring for a spouse/friend/relative.

Key themes impacting unpaid carers

- Isolation
- Worries about infecting the vulnerable person they care for
- Challenging / difficult to look after
- Worries about employment and finances
- Lack of respite

For further information contact Heather Ferguson – Head of Policy and Projects at Age Cymru - heather.ferguson@agecymru.org.uk

Mike Hedges MS thanked Heather for the presentation and that the Group would like to invite Heather to a future meeting of the Group to give a presentation on the survey when published.

Presentation – Social care funding - Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services:

Thank you for inviting me to your meeting today to provide an update on social care funding, and I am grateful for the opportunity to meet with you all.

We have undertaken extensive work on paying for care, particularly through the Inter-Ministerial Group established in the previous Senedd term. The Inter-Ministerial Group explored the possibility of raising additional funding for a social care promise, as first proposed by Professor Holtham in his 2018 report to Welsh Government, and detailed work of the Inter-Ministerial Group included analysis of potential tax raising options and corresponding funding options for adult social care.

The funding options considered looked at the amount of funding to be raised annually and on a recurring basis to fund a social care promise; hypothecation compared with budgetary flexibility; intergenerational fairness, and whether the benefit may only be available based on a contribution. We also considered the collection and administration of any tax options, as well as the UK Government's appetite for further tax devolution was also considered. The then Minister for Health and Social Services delivered an oral statement to the Senedd on 16 March 2021 to update members on the work of the Inter-Ministerial Group. At this point in time, it was the conclusion of the Inter-Ministerial Group a UK-wide answer to social care funding remained preferable, given the complex links with the tax and welfare benefits systems.

The Inter-Ministerial Group concluded that, considering the pandemic and the economic and fiscal climate, a tax solution for raising funds was more of a longer-term potential solution and without this, it would not be possible to raise or redirect resources to improve social care through the social care promise.

However, the Inter-Ministerial Group did recommend measures to be considered by an incoming government which, subject to budget prioritisation could be implemented more quickly. These included a real living wage for the social care workforce and capital investment to enable better housing solutions, both of which now feature in our new Programme for Government and remain key areas of priority for us.

On 7 September 2021, the UK Government announced long-term funding arrangements for health and social care in the form of an increase in National Insurance Contributions. This has taken the form of a 1.25% increase from the beginning of this month and will become a specific Health and Social Care Levy (HSCL) from April 2023. The announcement, and subsequent further details, included proposed revisions to the adult social care charging regime in England, which will affect the assets and savings of people in England, and their contribution to the cost of their care; the key takeaway of the announcement was a Dilnot-style cap on care costs, in the form of a £86,000 'lifetime' cap. These changes will come into effect from October 2023.

Following the UK Government announcement, it was clear our preference for a sustainable UK-wide solution was not open to us and further consideration was needed for the way forward in Wales.

As such, an Expert Group has been established and forms part of our Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru. This Expert Group's aim is to provide recommendations on practical steps which can be taken towards the creation of a National Care Service where care is free at the point of need.

Our Programme for Government commitments and recently agreed Budget demonstrate social care is a priority for the Welsh Government. Most of the agreed funding for social care is within the Revenue Support Grant and the 2022-23 budget provides a major step up in resources for local authorities.

As part of the 2022-23 local government settlement £67.4 million of prioritisation funding has been directed into the personal social services element of the distribution model. As a result, the overall increase for this sector, on a like for like basis, is £180.5m within the settlement. This additional £180m of funding is provided within the Local Government settlement for the real living wage for care workers and to support the sector's pressures.

Our Budget fully utilises the resources available to us including our Barnett consequential of the Health and Social Care Levy. The allocations in the Budget agreed by the Senedd reflect our clear choice to invest in the social care workforce which will help to stabilise care provision and better support people with care needs.

This Budget will also enable us to deliver on our Strategy for an Ageing Society, which I spoke with you about at your last meeting. The £550,000 we have allocated this year to local authorities will support their work to become age friendly and to gain membership of the World Health Organisation's Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities. I will be increasing this funding to £1.1m for 2022-23 with £50,000 to be distributed to each of the local authorities. I will also be allocating £100,000 this year to promote awareness of older people's rights and inspire a common understanding of the transformative effect of a rights-based approach.

In terms of future funding for social care, our Expert Group are tasked with including this in their considerations. As the work of the Group continues to develop, we get closer to the time when the recommendations are presented to us. These recommendations will help inform our longer-term decisions on timescale. A National Care Service, where care is free at the point of need, is a significant step-up in our reform of social care in Wales. Given the anticipated complexities associated with such an important change, and the vastness of the social care sector, an ambitious agenda such as this cannot be implemented immediately. As such, we will be engaging externally on the development of our implementation plan by the end of 2023 and look forward to working with the sector to create a National Care Service for Wales.

Mike Hedges MS thanked the Deputy Minister for the presentation.

Questions / Discussion

Mike Hedges read out a question from Georgia Marks – 'what are the timelines on the consultation for social care funding'?

The Deputy Minister and Matt Jenkins explained that they want the recommendations by the end of May - the Welsh Government will then discuss report and produce an implementation plan by the end of 2023.

Steve Milsom – There's a great deal to welcome, especially the move to a national care service and extra care. Survey shows that people are struggling, glad we're not

going down the road of the English caps. We need to involve the national older people organisations.

Deputy Minister - older people should be involved in the response. We need to retain the link with local government and build on existing community services.

Dereck Roberts: NPC welcomes this, that is, social care that is free at the point of need. Many people have left the sector. We must not let the fears of inflation prevent the plans from going ahead.

Deputy Minister - thousands of older people stuck in hospital waiting for packages of care. £10m to help domiciliary care workers with, e.g., driving licences and electric cars. It will take time but let's get the direction of travel going.

Mike Hedges MS - we're all on the same side – your side.

Deputy Minister – This group has commitment to older people at its core.

Action points: Mike Hedges said that an action point would be for members to respond to the consultation on social care funding

The Group will also invite Heather Ferguson, Age Cymru, to provide a presentation of the third Covid-19 survey when published.

Date of next meeting: 7 June 2022 - the Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt MS, will speak about the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) National strategy.

3. Professional lobbyists, voluntary organisations and charities with whom the Group has met during the preceding year

None other than as attendees of the Group's meetings and those stated as having provided presentations at group meetings.

Annual Financial Statement.

7 June 2022

Cross Party Group on Older People

Mike Hedges MS

Age Cymru

Group's Expenses.	Translation into Welsh <i>Group's Annual report 2020/21 (9/2/21) £285.70</i> <i>Group's Meeting note of 21/6/21 (13/8/21) £122.40</i>	£408.10
Costs of all goods.	No goods purchased.	£0.00
Benefits received by the group or individual Members from outside bodies.	No benefits received.	£0.00
Any secretariat or other support.	No financial support received.	£0.00
Services provided to the Group such as hospitality. All refreshments paid for by Age Cymru		
Date	Description and name of provider	Cost
		£0.00
Total cost		£408.10

Appendix 1

Meeting date: 9 February 2021 – online meeting

This meeting was held during the fifth Senedd.

Attendees	
Mike Hedges MS	Victoria Lloyd, Age Cymru
Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services	Steve Milsom, Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA)
Ryland Doyle, Office of Mike Hedges MS	Melanie Minty, Care Forum Wales
Huw Bendall, Age Cymru Consultative Forum	Rachael Nicholson-Wright, Hourglass Cymru
Maria Cheshire-Allen, Swansea University	Faye Patton, Care & Repair Cymru
Ceri Cryer, Age Cymru	Michael Phillips, Age Cymru
Kathleen Grieve, MSD	Helen Twidle, Age Cymru
Stephanie Griffith, Social Care Wales	Lynda Wallis, Vale 50+ Strategy Forum; Welsh Senate of Older People
Josh Hayman, Older People's Commissioner for Wales	Christopher Williams, Age Alliance Wales
Carys Henry, Age Cymru Trustee	Professor John Williams, Chair Age Cymru; Aberystwyth University .
Rachel Lewis, Welsh Government	

Apologies: Charles Carter, Dai Lloyd MS, Dereck Roberts.

Chair: Mike Hedges MS

Secretariat: Ceri Cryer, Age Cymru

Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing: Annual General Meeting

Due to a technical issue Mike Hedges MS was not able to chair the meeting and so the meeting was progressed by Ceri Cryer.

The Annual Report of the Cross Party Group on Older People and Ageing was approved.

The election of the Chair of the Group was deferred to the next meeting.

Ceri Cryer, Age Cymru, agreed to continue to provide the Secretariat to the Group.

Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing: Strategy for an Ageing Society

Ceri Cryer relayed a message from Dereck Roberts (NPC Wales), who had sent apologies for today's meeting, that NPC Wales will be holding a special executive meeting on 14 February to draft a formal response to the strategy.

Welsh Government's Strategy for an Ageing Society - Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services:

The strategy was co-produced with older people and their representatives. Older people were involved from the onset and 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. 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.

To build on this work, we engaged over 1000 older people in a conversation about ageing. We visited national groups and local forums across Wales and funded a series of community engagement events led by Age Cymru. We also commissioned Age Cymru to hold focus groups with older people from minority groups.

Some people here today took part in this work so I would like to thank you for your contributions and welcome your continued engagement.

The strategy sets out the action we will take to ensure Wales can capitalise on the growing numbers of older people in our communities. This 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.

Our 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 national government. It also focuses on relationships between generations. The strategy is intended to encourage all parts of society to join us in considering the steps they should take to both plan for their own futures and to support us to achieve our vision.

The strategy adopts a rights based approach that promotes equality, social justice and empowerment 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 its development and will

guide its implementation. To support the implementation of a rights based approach, we have worked with older people and professionals to draft practical guidance demonstrating how local authorities can have due regard to the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, as required by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The guidance shows how simple changes to the way we work can uphold an individual's human rights and have a major impact on their well-being. We have also produced a version of this guidance specifically for older people. Following the consultation period, we will work with the Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing to agree and publish an action plan that will guide the Strategy's implementation.

I will also continue to work closely with the Older People's Commissioner to understand the impact of the pandemic on older people's rights in Wales. Safeguarding and promoting rights is a priority for this government – the pandemic has clearly demonstrated the importance of a rights based approach to policy design and delivery.

Prior to Christmas, Welsh Government were able to confirm the continuation of funding to Age Cymru for the 2021/22 financial year. We were able to provide additional funding in 2020 to enable them to further support the 5 national older people's organisations and facilitate wider engagement with a more diverse group of people.

The survey that was published last October to gather evidence of older people's experiences of the pandemic is evidence of this work and it received a tremendous response. Over 1100 responses, including 50 from older Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women. There are plans to repeat this work. As this pandemic changes so very dramatically it is important for us to be able to document whether people's concerns have changed further during the past few months.

Engagement such as this is extremely important to ensure that everyone, no matter what their circumstances, is engaged in decisions that affect them now and into the future. This work has shaped, and will continue to shape, the Strategy into a document that is meaningful.

Creating an age friendly Wales that upholds older people's rights and promotes intergenerational solidarity is more pertinent today than ever before. By working together I am confident that we will achieve this aim and improve the lives of all older people in Wales.

Questions and discussion

Steve Milsom (COPA) welcomed the Strategy for an Ageing Society and how it is raising the profile of older people. We have already contributed to the MAFA

group. We welcome the fact that it's a cross cutting government initiative and not just for the Health and Social Care department. Paying for care, financial inclusion, well-being, benefits, and grandparenting all need a focus. The strategy needs more detail on various types of accommodation such as care homes, housing, telecare and extra care. Also needs a commitment to free bus passes to help achieve an age friendly Wales.

Faye Patton said that housing conditions have deteriorated during lockdown as people have been unable/unwilling to access repair services. The strategy needs more detail on the rights to decent housing, the importance of maintaining housing conditions, and the issue of cold homes.

John Williams welcomed the willingness to involve older people, and adopting a rights-based approach. It is important that the strategy sits across government departments and that it includes an intergenerational approach and embraces all generations, as many young people have grandparents. How do we monitor and measure success, and how do we recognise and change failure?

Julie Morgan replied that we need to work together, across all government departments. There is not much on housing - we need to realise that in some cases some people have not thrown anything out since last March!

In terms of funding social care, we need to look at ways of raising money through a number of options.

In terms of knowing if we succeed - we need to measure how people feel about things now and how they feel after the strategy.

Rachel Lewis added that they are working to create a baseline and will monitor the strategy using an index for Wales devised by Swansea University, which will compare Wales with other UK nations.

Any other business

Future meeting dates of the Group were requested.

Ceri Cryer thanked everyone for their contributions and drew the meeting to a close.