

The Cross Party Group on Older People and Ageing

Tuesday 15 June 2021, 12.30 - 13.30pm

On-line meeting

Meeting Note

Attendees

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

Apologies

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| 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 are presented on the attached Powerpoint presentation.

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 Hussein – 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 notes by Michael Phillips, Age Cymru.