

The Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing

Tuesday 7 June 2022, 12.15 - 13.00pm

On-line meeting

Meeting Note

Attendees

Mike Hedges MS (Chair)	Andrea Cooper, Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice	Ceri Cryer, Age Cymru
Jack Sargeant MS	Dr Bernadette Fuge, President Age Cymru
Ryland Doyle, office of Mike Hedges MS	Heather Ferguson, Age Cymru
Ioan Bellin, office of Rhys ab Owen MS	Steve Milsom, Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA)
Alex Hughes-Howells, office of Dr Altaf Hussain	Michael Phillips, Age Cymru
Paul Webb, Welsh Government	

Apologies

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS	Charles Carter, Age Cymru Trustee
Rachel Dawson, Age Cymru	

Lynda Wallis, who had been a long-standing member of the Cross-Party Group has stood down from representing the Welsh Senate of Older People.

Mike Hedges MS welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual Report and Accounts

The Annual Report and Accounts of the Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing (2021-22) were approved.

Election of Chair of the Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing

Mike Hedges MS was elected as Chair of the Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing, nominated by Jack Sargeant MS.

Nomination of the Secretariat for the Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing

Ceri Cryer Age Cymru agreed to provide the Secretariat for the Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing.

Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing

Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes for the meeting held on 24 April 2022 were approved.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)
National strategy - Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt MS

Thank you for the opportunity to update you on our new Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Strategy for 2022 to 2026.

It is an ambitious Strategy, that builds on successful interventions we want to continue but also defines new priorities and approaches to expand and focus how we address VAWDASV as a whole system.

It is a Strategy marked by a commitment to tackle cause as well as effect, which will depend on collaboration and working in a preventative way to tackle the root causes of VAWDASV.

This strategy is built on a strengthened partnership. There is a considerable amount of commitment between key partners, both statutory, in the specialist sector and with survivors. However, the structures of leadership and governance can be strengthened further to ensure action is co-ordinated and directed so that collectively we offer more than the sum of our parts.

It is also a Strategy for wider society to make changes to norms, behaviours and cultures. I don't want to detract from the excellent work that has gone on to support survivors, but we need to achieve more in tackling perpetrators.

A key part of the new Blueprint approach for implementing the strategy is the National Partnership Board which brings together devolved and non-devolved partners, including the Older People's Commissioner. I Co-chair this Board with PCC Dafydd Llywelyn, the lead Police and Crime Commissioner on this issue for the four Police Forces in Wales. The Board will ensure the voices of a diverse group of survivors are heard to co-produce our solutions and monitor our progress.

Work on delivering the Strategy will be aligned to our Programme for Government commitments and it will be a Strategy for everyone in Wales whose lives have been impacted by VAWDASV – whatever their age. We have listened to the invaluable feedback from our consultation on a draft Strategy and have acknowledged the concerns about older people facing VAWDASV.

In response to this feedback and following further discussion at the National Partnership Board on 23 May, we have agreed to have a dedicated workstream which will focus specifically on the needs of Older People in relation to VAWDASV issues.

In addition to the workstream for Older People, we will have workstreams for street harassment and safety in public places; workplace harassment; tackling perpetration; sustainable commissioning; and children and young people's needs. Responsibility for developing detailed workplans for the implementation of the Strategy will fall to the workstreams.

The voices of survivors from different communities and backgrounds will be critical and integral to developing our strategy in a way which can work in the real world. Listening to those diverse voices will also help us to find solutions which build on the strengths of survivors.

This is a cross government strategy with active engagement and support from ministerial colleagues in education, health, housing, local government and the economy.

Those who are exposed to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence need us to work together.

I firmly believe this Strategy has the prospect of being a real step forward in our ambition to end VAWDASV and makes Wales the safest place to live for women and girls, where all have a right to 'live fear free'.

Questions and discussion

Steve Milsom – Encouraging to see the extent to which you took account of older people in this work – working with the Cymru Older People's Alliance and the Older People's Commissioner – so glad they're on the task force. The Older People's Commissioner have already done some research on violence against older men.

Minister - You make some important points. I met regularly with the Older People's Commissioner, especially on domestic abuse. There is a growing recognition of older men's experiences of elder abuse, and it is important that we focus on it within the overall older people's workstream. The pandemic affected relationships so much.

Heather Ferguson – The cost-of-living crisis increases pressures that can result in domestic abuse.

Minister – The cost-of living crisis has a huge impact on older people's lives – we need to look through the cost-of-living lens. I urge everyone to promote the 'Claim what's yours' campaign – pension credit is hugely underclaimed. There is Welsh Government support in place – such as the Winter Fuel Support Scheme. (The Minister later confirmed that the scheme will be extended to those claiming pension credit).

Andrea Cooper – We published statistics on older male abuse in July.

Paul Webb – We need to focus on toxic masculinity as a whole society problem, and the need to change culture. The older people working group can focus on male older victims. The various working groups can pull together in the summer and report back in September or October.

'Don't Get Me Started: Older people exploring their rights' – Heather Ferguson, Age Cymru (on behalf of Rachel Dawson, Human Rights Project Officer, Age Cymru).

Heather presented a screening of Age Cymru's animated short film and a summary of the actions taken during this six-month project, delivered in

partnership with the Welsh Government. The film can be viewed at: [Human rights project | Age Cymru \(ageuk.org.uk\)](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/human-rights-project/)

Mike Hedges – some GP surgeries are very good, but others are very difficult to get into.

Heather Ferguson – with reference to the third national survey of the current experiences of people aged 50 or over in Wales of the Covid-19 pandemic, which was carried between February and April by Age Cymru in partnership with national older people's organisations - access to healthcare and GPs was most talked about. Older people are struggling with the structure, especially with digital access, telephone triage systems, and carers trying to book appointments for the people they care for. The survey will be published next week.

Steve Milsom – This is a brilliant piece of work to raise awareness of older people's rights. I am also aware that the Welsh Government commissioned Swansea University to carry out research on human rights.

Action points

Heather Ferguson will be invited to a future meeting of the Group to speak about the results of the third national Covid survey.

Any Other Business

Ceri mentioned that the Group had been sent some information about the HARP (Health, Arts, Research, People) multi-partner research and innovation project that has been exploring how the arts can take a leading role in creating 'A Healthier Wales'. Partners include Arts Council of Wales, Nesta, Cardiff University's Y Lab, the Welsh NHS Confederation and the Wales Arts Health and Wellbeing Network. The information will be circulated with the Minutes.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Cross-Party Group will be held in the autumn; further details to follow in due course.

End of meeting.