

# The Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing

Tuesday 23 May 2023, 12.15 - 13.00pm

## On-line meeting

### Meeting Note

#### Attendees

Mike Hedges MS (Chair)	Jackie Marshall-Cyrus, Jackie's Revolution
Ryland Doyle, office of Mike Hedges MS	Mel Minty, Care Forum Wales
Laura Anne Jones, MS	Michael Phillips, Age Cymru
Jack Sargeant MS	Becky Ricketts, Care & Repair Cymru
Carolyn Thomas MS	Dan Steer, Nuffield Foundation
Ceri Cryer, Age Cymru	Helen Twidle, Age Cymru
Dr Bernadette Fuge, President Age Cymru	Naomi White, British Red Cross
Molly Gray, Nuffield Council on Bioethics	Prof. John Williams, Chair Age Cymru
Carys Henry, Age Cymru Trustee	

#### Apologies

Lorraine Morgan, Jackie's Revolution	Andrea Nicholas-Jones, Action for Elders
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#### Annual General Meeting

The Annual Report and Accounts 2022-2023 for the Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing were approved.

Mike Hedges MS was elected as Chair for the Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing, nominated by Laura Anne Jones MS and seconded by Jack Sargeant MS.

Ceri Cryer, Age Cymru agreed to provide the Secretariat for the Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing, following nomination by Mike Hedges MS, Chair, and seconded by Jack Sargeant MS.

#### Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing

Mike Hedges MS, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The Minutes for the meeting held on 28 March 2023 were approved.

Mike Hedges MS, Chair, is awaiting a response from the Minister for Health and Social Services to his letter regarding issues around hospital discharge.

The Future of Ageing report – presentation by Molly Gray, Project Manager,  
Nuffield Council on Bioethics (presentation sent to Group members).

The Nuffield Council on Bioethics is an independent policy and research centre, and the foremost bioethics body in the UK. We are concerned with examining and communicating the issues that sit at the intersection of bioscientific innovation and societal challenge. By this we mean the developments which have the potential to fundamentally change the way we live, treat illness, or think about being human. Issues we're interested in range from assisted reproduction to assisted dying, and in our 30-year lifetime we've published definitive reports on over 30 areas within bioscience and health. We are funded jointly by the Nuffield Foundation, the Medical Research Council and the Wellcome Trust.

The two-year inquiry on the Future of Ageing started during the pandemic in December 2020. We are a multidisciplinary working group with expertise in ageing, medicine, nursing, biomedical research, mental capacity, public health, technology, philosophy, ethics, and health inequalities. The main aim was to produce a report with key themes and policy recommendations. We gathered evidence and conducted our own research including an engagement programme with the general public involving older people and a dialogue with the general public.

The aim of the Future of Ageing inquiry was to explore ethical questions in relation to the role of science and technology in helping people live well in old age, and we focused on three areas: developments in geroscience - aiming to treat underlying mechanisms of biological ageing; innovation in assistive and communications technologies - robots, smart homes, telecare; and innovative predictive and diagnostic technologies - e.g., the use of AI to support earlier diagnosis of diseases that commonly occur in older age.

There has been considerable policy attention paid to the role that biomedical research and innovation might play in responding to the age shift in the population. Developments in these areas offer important future benefits, both for individuals and for wider society. They also raise significant ethical questions, not least about how ageing is perceived, and how older adults are valued., and how they wish to flourish in later life.

In terms of our findings, we think there should be an emphasis on the opportunities that longer, healthier life offers for all generations. Science and technology needs to be considered alongside the many non-technological ways in which society needs to change to meet the needs of older people better. Research and innovation should be concerned with addressing inequalities in health and wellbeing in older age.

Key ethical concerns and themes emerged during the project. Whose voices are heard, with concerns about older people's values and perspectives not being included in the way that research is prioritised, planned, and carried out, for example the lack of inclusion of older adults in clinical trials. Another concern was equitable access regarding the accessibility, availability and affordability of products and treatments that are currently being developed.

We also heard concerns regarding choice and control; technological innovations may increase the options open to all of us as we get older, and enable us to live independently for longer. However, the way some technologies are used may also act to limit the control that older adults have over their own lives.

There were also concerns around impact on relationships – how science and technology impact human contact and interpersonal relationships which are essential for people of all ages.

We put together an ethical framework (and toolkit) to help policy makers, research funders, researchers and practitioners in their work:

- Ethical findings
- Supporting flourishing in older age
- Promoting equity
- Challenging ageism
- Shifting power
- Demonstrating trustworthiness
- Enabling sustainability.

The key recommendations of our report include:

- Take account of the ethical framework and toolkit
- Public input into policymaking
- Cross-governmental strategy on ageing should be supported by a public intergenerational advisory forum
- Inclusion: influencing the research agenda
- Experiences of diverse older adults shape decisions about research
- Inclusion: taking part in research
- Supporting interdisciplinary research
- Regulation and accreditation
- Develop accredited standards for promoting ethical research practices for technologies designed to support older adults
- Better links between research and implementation
- Promoting closer working between researchers, and those directly involved in providing services for older people.

### Questions and Discussion

Mike Hedges MS– Loneliness is the great enemy for people that are older. Things must be done with older people and not for them.

Prof. John Williams – this is quite a comprehensive study that help us focus on the issue of dignity where we must balance the benefits of technology to ensure that the technology doesn't dehumanize people.

Molly Gray – the study found how technology can benefit but it highlights worries over older people losing one to one contact. We heard about fear around robots taking over – which is not too far away and is already happening in Japan in the care system. What do these developments mean for older people in terms of choice?

Mike Hedges MS – human interaction is so important for older people, especially for people living on their own where a care worker may be the only person they see; a care robot would make the quality of life of that older person much worse.

Jackie Marshall-Cyrus – how was the study structured in terms of the four UK nations, chronological age groups, gender, ethnicity and diversity?

Molly Gray - the study was only based in England but it would have benefitted from being undertaken in the four nations but it was a good spread across England with some female only groups, and different ethnicities. We didn't age cap any group but investigated an intergenerational perspective and included people between the ages of 18 to 84 and targeted each group within that span. We will definitely base the research on the four nations next time.

The presentation by Age Cymru on the preliminary findings of Age Cymru's 'What matters to you – national survey of the current experiences of people aged 50 or over in Wales' was postponed to a future meeting as data analysis of the survey findings is still underway.

Members were asked what topics they would like to see discussed at future Cross-Party Group meetings – suggestions can be emailed to Ceri Cryer. Mike Hedges MS, Chair would like to invite the Deputy Minister for Social Services to a meeting. Ceri Cryer updated Members on forthcoming agenda items for the next two meetings.

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 27 June, 12.15-13.30pm, online Zoom meeting.

Close of meeting.