

Why are we still waiting?



Delays in social care in Wales

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Creu Cymru oed gyfeillgar
Creating an age friendly Wales

- **Third annual report on delays due to concerns coming though on delays in getting vital care for older people**
- **Last year's report found increasing demand post pandemic meant recovery and service change had been hampered.**
- **Additional focus this year on paying for care, and social care arrangements for hospital discharge due to concerns we are hearing through engagement and our services.**

- Sent in a Freedom of Information request to the 22 Local Authorities asking for data on how long each older person aged 55+ waited for an assessment and for care to be in place.
 - Received 12 responses on assessment waits and 8 responses on care waits.
- Met with 13 Social Care staff in 11 Local Authorities
 - Bridgend; Cardiff; Carmarthenshire; Ceredigion; Conwy; Isle of Anglesey; Pembrokeshire; Powys; Rhondda Cynon Taf; Torfaen; Wrexham.
- Included additional questions in our annual survey on access to social care and paying for social care.

1. The surge in demand for social care following the pandemic in 2021 to 2022 has reduced and waiting times appear to be reducing. However, delays in access to social care are still too long.

The proportion of older people that had care in place within 30 days increased slightly (81.3% in 21/22 and 83.6% in 22/23). But nearly 1 in 4 older people are still waiting more than 30 days for an assessment, and 1 in 6 waiting more than 30 days for care to be in place.

2. Efforts on social care recovery have continued, but the increasing complexity of need and future population projections means greater and quicker change is needed.

3. Communication from social services with older people and their families on first point of contact and whilst waiting for assessment or for care packages to be implemented, needs improvement.

“Every time I tried to access social care, I have been referred elsewhere finally coming full circle to the first people.”

4. Efforts to improve support for unpaid carers need to happen faster.

“It’s a slap in the face when you do a Carers Assessment after 12 years solo but there’s no space for him so that I can have a week off.”

A third (32%) of older people in our latest annual survey told us they are an unpaid carer for at least one person. The proportion of older carers that found their role challenging has doubled since 2023.

5. Data collection systems are still not able to effectively report on the delays in access to social care.

6. Short term funding arrangements mean edge of care services and lower-level support services continue to be at risk.

7. Poor advice on charging from some local authority social services, and the complexities of the charging arrangements means that some older people may be paying above the amount allowed through fairer charging, putting undue pressure on finances.

8. Poor communication around hospital discharge means older people remain in hospital longer than they need to.

9. Local authorities are increasingly providing in house support for direct payments that may allow an increase in older people seeing direct payments as a more attractive option.

Asks from social care leads of Welsh Government

- 1. Long term sustainable funding**
- 2. Parity between health and social care salaries**
- 3. A way to stop the 'who pays' discussions between health and social care**

Recommendations



1 : Welsh Government, ADSS Cymru, Social Care Wales and local authorities need to work together to ensure that reporting mechanisms are able to show where positive outcomes rather than outputs are recorded and reported.

2 : Local authorities should assess whether their current processes for providing initial advice and information and ongoing access to advice and information are meeting the needs of older people. This needs to include a focus on how well information is communicated and understood on fairer charging.

3. Local authorities should provide an additional focus on those individuals who are currently experiencing a wait longer than 30 days for a care needs assessment or implementation of a care package.

4. Local authorities should provide proactive support for those waiting longer than 30 days.

5. Regional partnership boards, local authorities and third sector services need to work together to improve the availability of earlier intervention and prevention support for older people.

6. Welsh Government, regional partnership boards, health boards and local authorities should ensure that third sector funding is provided on a sustainable basis.

7. There needs to be an emphasis on learning between local authorities and good practice sharing. This will reduce the volume of work that local authorities need to undertake and help them avoid pitfalls that other local authorities have faced.

8. Welsh Government, Regional partnership boards and local authorities should ensure the requirements of the Charter for Unpaid Carers are met.

Thanks for listening



Any questions?

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www.agecymru.org.uk/why-are-we-waiting