



Cross Party Group on Intergenerational Solidarity

Monday 12 May 2025
11:00am-12:30pm

Attendees

- Delyth Jewell MS, Chair, Senedd Cymru
- David McKinney, Older People's Commissioner for Wales
- Rachel Bowen, Older People's Commissioner for Wales
- Lauren Cooper, Older People's Commissioner for Wales
- Katherine Evans, Care and Repair Cymru
- Dr. Alan Hatton-Yeo MBE, Generations United
- Steven Crane-Jenkins, BASW Cymru
- Dr Deborah Morgan, Swansea University
- Ioan Bellin, Office of Delyth Jewell MS
- Phoebe Brown, Repair Café Wales
- Marie-Clare Hunter, ENRICH Cymru Advisory Group
- Stephanie Green, Swansea University
- Carol Maddock, Swansea University
- Heather Ferguson, Age Cymru
- Sian Wyn Griffiths, Gwynedd Council

Apologies

- Bryan Godsell, NPC

Welcome and Introductions – Minutes of Last Meeting

Delyth Jewell (DJ) Recorded the groups thanks to Rhys Jackson who had previously undertaken a lot of the administrative work for the CPG and asked if it would be possible to send him a letter of thanks/online card.

Action: RB to see whether it is possible to contact Rhys.

Sian Wyn Griffiths (SWG) was standing in today for the new ageing well lead in Gwynedd.

Alan Hatton-Yeo (AHY) is no longer volunteer of Volunteering Matters; his role is now with Generations United Washington- this will be corrected in the previous minutes.

Dr Deborah Morgan (DM) - All the lonely people (presentation)

DM Clarified the difference between loneliness and isolation: people can be lonely without being isolated, isolated without loneliness, or both. Evolutionary mechanism- tells us we need more social connection. Vulnerability to loneliness is not equal, some groups are more likely to be lonely

- older adults, people with disabilities, younger people, carers, those entering a care home, people from an ethnic minority community, migrants and refugees, LGBTQIA+ community, care leavers, people who are homeless. Pathways to loneliness are complex.

MCH - Seems that anyone in a position of vulnerability is more likely to experience loneliness- interesting to see if it's a subjective experience (linked to despondency and low mood) or objective (less likely to receive adequate support from social services etc) or a combination of the two.

DM- chronic loneliness has a negative effect on physical health, mortality exceeds obesity and is comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Also affects mental health. Can result in depression and anxiety, increased stress, and a range of other mental health impacts. DM showed some quotes highlighting the mental health symptoms people can experience with loneliness.

Stigma and stereotypes - the way we talk and think about loneliness makes it harder for people experiencing it to talk about. Stereotypes of no family, friends etc. Also shaped around media headlines. We talk about it differently for older/younger adults - problem in older age 'forgotten', 'threat'. These words are sometimes missing from articles on younger people.

Closing remarks - We need to work with lonely people, not do to them or for them, create opportunities to work with people

DJ thanked **DM**. **AHY** asked if work had also looked at impact of the smart phone on people's feelings and sense of identity as there is recent research from when phones became more common - anxiety, physical health.

DM looked at it in terms of different types of communication e.g. face to face with older adults. Face to face is best for meaningful connection.

DJ easier to get hold of people now, but we are more disconnected. She suggested that this was something that could be explored in a future meeting, possibly in conjunction with the Advertising Standards Authority, and looking at effect of targeted ads on younger people's health.

HF asked if anything was picked up on community infrastructure, for example, lack of transport, lack of community centres.

DM - developed a bid on optimising spaces and places, currently reworking the bid- feeling of belonging in certain places- where do people feel lonely, where do they feel connected. DM happy to chat about the bid, and happy to have conversations about this outside of the meeting.

MCH Expressed concerned about the increasing number of adults growing old without children who are therefore less likely to receive support from younger family members as they age. Welcomes previous engagement with the CPG from educational groups which actively promote intergenerational learning with grandparents and parents coming into their (grand) child's school to learn together, but it excludes those without those family connections. Social and educational opportunities should be encouraged for this group as well.

Highlighted potential greater use of AI and technology in Japan with regard to providing care for their older generations, and whether this is less "rich" than human contact.

Ageing without children - becoming a bigger issue. Stigma around older men chatting to children/going into schools

RB- we have commissioned a literature review on benefits and issues of ageing without children. Lots of health and social care assumes we have children to rely on, but more and more people do not have children, or contact with their children

DMK – We talk about an ageing population and how the trend is accelerating but we are also seeing an increase in older people without children, and having less children- population pyramid stem is decreasing- there will be far fewer younger people and far more older people, this has a profound impact on how we think about society and policy, and how services are funded

Stephanie Green (SG)- Loneliness and isolation: the role of policy taking an intergenerational approach.

SG gave an overview of global/national policy including the WHO Decade of healthy ageing (2020-30) and UK government strategy. Devolved context in UK - nations have diverged, Scotland appears to be in the lead in this policy area.

Wales started well but decelerated: Older People's Strategy 2008-13, dip until 2020, now have a similar sounding strategy to Scotland and England – strategy for loneliness and social isolation.

SG had conducted an analysis of policy documents and how the concept of intergenerationality has been represented in policy – using open ended and non-specific language. As a call to action, she suggested challenging policy makers to shift from intergenerational practices being framed as an 'optional' to 'essential', encouraging the Welsh Government to commit appropriate resources to make intergenerational practices meaningful and sustainable. There's only so much that can be done at an individual and community level.

There was a general discussion of the flawed design of shared spaces which can exclude disabled people, the loss of spaces to sit and meet people, closure of post offices and banks and also public toilets which has a real impact in people being able to use their communities.

In addition, the tendency for communities to be compartmentalised was highlighted, with the need for care home residents in particular to be seen more as part of the community

While there has been a lot of positive work going on around age friendly communities over last few years, many of the partnerships do not yet reflect intergenerationality- there is not much representation of or specific thinking about younger people in age friendly spaces.

General discussion/AOB

HF informed the group that she heads up compassionate Cymru Wales, bringing together people to create compassionate group around death, dying and bereavement. A Grant fund is open currently to kick start activities.

HF suggested this might be a future topic for the group and would do some thinking about this.

RB The Older People's Commissioner's work programme and strategic plan were due to be published on 13 May.

DJ thanked the group.

Next Meeting- Monday 20th October 2025