

Pwyllgor Iechyd, Gofal Cymdeithasol a Chwaraeon
Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
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Alzheimer's Society Cymru,
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alzheimers.org.

Dr Dai Lloyd AM,
Health, Social Care & Sport Committee,
National Assembly for Wales,
Cardiff,
CF99 1NA.

SeneddHealth@assembly.wales

15th December 2017

Dear Dr. Lloyd,

Re: Report on the Committee inquiry on loneliness and isolation

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the report from the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee on its inquiry into loneliness and isolation, published in December 2017. We were very glad to read the committee's recommendations.

In particular, we look forward to seeing the Government's strategy for loneliness and isolation and strongly agree it should dovetail with and build on existing Welsh Government strategies such as the Dementia Action Plan, the Carers Strategy and the Strategy for Older People. We also welcome the Committee's recommendation that the Government takes a cross-departmental approach to its strategy on loneliness and isolation, and agree the National Dementia Strategy and Carers Strategic Action Plan should include reference to tackling loneliness and isolation.

We also welcome the Committee's recommendation 4 regarding funding. Lack of stable funding is a key challenge faced by voluntary sector organisations of all sizes. In order to provide vital specialist services for vulnerable communities, we strongly support the Committee's recommendation that the Government should work with the voluntary sector and local government to provide stable funding, including by introducing three year funding programmes.

However, we feel the need to clarify comments made by Dr Victor Aziz included in the report. We appreciate the acknowledgement that these comments were made in a personal capacity and do not represent the views of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. But we feel we must make clear that Alzheimer's Society Cymru is fundamentally not "moving from patients and carers into more policy and strategy" and that we are committed to supporting every person affected by dementia.

Alzheimer's Society has the vision of a world without dementia. Our mission is to transform the landscape of dementia forever – until we have a cure, we will strive to create a society where those affected by dementia are supported and accepted, able to live in their community without fear or prejudice. Our new five-year strategy *The New Deal on Dementia* was published this year to set out our path to achieving this vision. Through our strategy, we will ensure we reach every person who has a diagnosis of dementia and wants our help; change the conversation on dementia and mainstream the rights of those affected by it; and drive the research agenda – working tirelessly to improve support today and unlock the answers for a cure tomorrow. Please see the enclosed briefing for further information.

Alzheimer's Society Cymru is the leading voice for people affected by dementia in Wales. We are committed to supporting and improving the lives of all people affected by dementia. Our new deal on support will provide easy access to telephone and email support and face-to-face support for people with more complex needs to help people navigate the maze of health and social care services; help people keep connected to their communities and interests through Side by Side; and connect people at all times through our online community (Talking Point) and online service directory. Our service will be available to every single person at the point of diagnosis onwards so no-one has to face dementia alone. Our ambition, by 2022, is to reach out to everyone from the time of diagnosis to offer help, and deliver a universally accessible support and advice service. We will build awareness and understanding of dementia, grow dementia friendly communities and partnerships, recruit four million Dementia Friends and help them play their part in changing how society supports people affected by dementia. You can read more about our new strategy at alzheimers.org.uk/strategy

We acknowledge that our services are in high demand, which can mean longer waiting times than we would like – this is partly to do with reduced funding from service commissioners, which is a challenge across the voluntary sector, and increasing demand because of rising numbers of people with a diagnosis of dementia. There are no easy solutions, but we hope that more stable funding in the sector, as recommended by the Committee, would help the third sector meet these challenges. We hope our service offer can dovetail with the proposals in the Dementia Action Plan, ensuring that the third sector plays an integral role in supporting people affected by dementia as a valued partner in service delivery.

Our policy, strategy and public affairs work is designed to support this – we advocate with and on behalf of people affected by dementia to make sure we get the best deal we can for one of Wales' most vulnerable communities. We have engaged with the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, Welsh Government, and individual AMs to do this, and facilitate the Cross Party Group on Dementia. We also work with local commissioners and health and social care sector representatives to ensure that the support people affected by dementia tell us they need is in place. We want to see all of Welsh society united against dementia and for Wales to be a place where people affected by dementia feel valued and able to contribute. Our strategy is designed to achieve this through the work of our services, our volunteers and our supporters.

I would be happy to discuss this further if you would like. Please don't hesitate to contact me if Alzheimer's Society can be of any use to your ongoing work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Phelps', written in a cursive style.

Sue Phelps

Country Director, Alzheimer's Society Cymru

The New Deal on Dementia

Alzheimer's Society Cymru briefing

Alzheimer's Society's new strategy and brand

Finding out you have dementia can devastate lives. For someone living with dementia, for their loved ones, for their friends, dementia means the plans you made will not be so. Until the day we find a cure, we will strive to create a society where those affected by dementia are supported, accepted, and able to live in their communities, without fear or prejudice.

This year sees the launch of Alzheimer's Society's new five-year strategy: *The New Deal on Dementia*. Through it, we will ensure we reach every person who has a diagnosis of dementia and wants our help; change the conversation on dementia and mainstream the rights of those affected by it; drive the research agenda – working tirelessly to improve support today and unlock the answers for a cure tomorrow.

It is worth reflecting on the achievements of the community here in Wales over the course of our current strategy, *Delivering on Dementia*. We have built the biggest social movement around health, with nearly 80,000 Dementia Friends. There are over 50 communities up and down Wales working towards becoming dementia friendly. And we have been working together as the Welsh Government develops Wales' first dementia strategy to ensure the voices of people affected by dementia are heard and that we have a truly ambitious strategy to make Wales a dementia friendly nation.

We have unveiled our bold new brand, enabling us to speak louder for people affected by dementia, as well as attract more people to join the growing dementia movement. In Wales, we have become Alzheimer's Society Cymru, reflecting our position as the leading voice for people affected by dementia in Wales.

Our new strategy is built on three key pillars:

1) New deal on support

We will provide information and support to anyone who needs it, in the way they need it – combining local face-to-face support with telephone and online advice to help people navigate the maze of health and social care services. This service will be available to every single person at the point of diagnosis onwards so no-one has to face dementia alone. Our ambition, by 2022, is to reach out to everyone from the time of diagnosis to offer help, and deliver a universally accessible support and advice service.

2) New deal on society

We will change the conversation on dementia. We will bring dementia rights into the mainstream and make sure people with dementia are treated as equal members of society. We will secure change nationally and in communities, galvanising all those who want to achieve change and joining them in the dementia movement. In 2022 more people living with dementia will say they live in communities that support them.

We will have increased public awareness and understanding of dementia, ending the stigma associated with the condition today.

3) New deal on research

We will drive the dementia research agenda - joining together the research community and putting the knowledge and experiences of people affected by dementia at its heart. This includes investing £50 million in the UK's first dedicated Dementia Research Institute and a further £100 million into pioneering research across the spectrum including biomedical, prevention, assistive technology and care research. Cardiff University has recently been named as one of the six new partner centres for the UK Dementia Research Institute, meaning a £13 million investment in new research. Our ambition by 2022 is to have made our biggest ever investment in dementia prevention, care and cure research. This will transform the landscape of dementia research, here and abroad.

To view a full version of the strategy, visit alzheimers.org.uk/strategy

Morgan Griffith-David
Policy Officer

