



The Importance and Impact of Community Services within Wales (February 2014)

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http://www.olderpeoplewales.com/Libraries/Uploads/The_Importance_and_Impact_of_Community_Services_within_Wales.sflb.ashx

Good Practice

Community Transport

Community transport makes a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing agenda, helping older people to maintain their independence for longer, and combating loneliness and isolation by enabling participation in community life. There are over 80 organisations across Wales delivering generic community transport services, providing an estimated 1.6 million passenger journeys per year, according to the Community Transport Association (CTA Cymru)¹.

In addition to their traditional door-to-door accessible services, community transport operators are increasingly running demand responsive local bus services in Wales. These include 'Grass Routes' (Monmouthshire), the 'Green Dragon' (Pembrokeshire), Neath Port Talbot CT and DANSA (Western Valleys), 'Bws Bro' (Ceredigion) and ACT and Connect2 (South Wales valleys). The 'Bwcabus' service², launched by Carmarthenshire County Council in 2011, is a commercially run service that allows passengers to book their bus journeys from home or the nearest bus stop and links with conventional bus and train services. These services are making a huge contribution to the health, independence and wellbeing of older people in their areas.

Public Toilets

The British Toilet Association³ is developing an interactive UK toilet map which will identify and map all publicly accessible toilet facilities across the UK. In addition, the 'sat lav' initiative has been trialled in London to

¹ <http://www.ctauk.org/in-your-area/wales.aspx>

² <http://www.bwcabus.traveline-cymru.info/?force=1>

³ <http://www.britloos.co.uk/>

allow people to identify the location of the nearest public toilet using their mobile phone. These initiatives will be of immense benefit to older people who can access digital technologies and are struggling to find decent, clean, publicly accessible toilets that are open and available when they are most needed.

Community Centres, Community Spaces

The Age Well Centre in Llangefni, Anglesey, provides older people with activities and facilities to enable them to keep active and healthy⁴.

The Widdershins Centre in Torfaen includes a number of facilities for older people, including a Learning Suite with specialist tutors available, conference and catering facilities, and a Health Suite⁵.

Deva House in Wrexham provides high quality day care for older people, providing essential services to help older people remain independent, combat isolation and improve their health and wellbeing⁶.

‘Your County Your Way’ run by Monmouthshire County Council has been recognised as good practice in taking an innovative, creative approach to public service delivery, shifting the culture of an entire organisation in the process⁷.

The Age Cymru Community Calculator is a tool which enables older people to audit their local community on how ‘age-friendly’ it is⁸.

Lifelong Learning and Skills

The Anglesey Agewell project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, supports older people and responds to their learning needs by offering an appropriate range of learning opportunities⁹.

The University of the Third Age (U3A) is an independent, self-sustaining learning cooperative for people no longer in full time employment

⁴ <http://www.agewellhwyllogmon.co.uk/>

⁵ <http://www.ageconnectstorfaen.org/widdershins>

⁶ <http://caiapark.org.uk/older-people/deva-house-older-peoples-centre/>

⁷ <http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/home/local-democracy-and-councillors/policies-and-procedures/county-way>

⁸ <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/get-involved/campaign/community-calculator/>

⁹ http://www.ssiacymru.org.uk/home.php?page_id=4414

providing educational, creative and leisure opportunities. Inspired by the 'learning for pleasure' approach, U3A has 53 networks across Wales¹⁰.

Communities 2.0 is a Welsh Government programme that aims to use technology to break down barriers to engagement. Commencing in 2009, the scheme has launched a range of projects to engage older people in digital technologies, such as the 'Reaching Out' project and 'Digital Heritage in the Community'. Libraries play an increasingly important role in the scheme, offering free drop-in computer sessions for people¹¹.

Public Libraries

In May 2012, Conwy was the first public library authority in Wales to provide access to Boardmaker (picture symbol) software that can be used by anyone who has language difficulties, including older people with some forms of dementia or anyone who has lost some language skills after a stroke¹².

Powys Library Service launched a 'Healthy minds, healthy bodies' campaign, building on links with local leisure centres. Participants, including older people, visited their local libraries, where they were shown how to access the family history software free of charge and were given a demonstration of e-readers¹³.

¹⁰ <http://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=295&page=1>

¹¹ <http://www.walescooperative.org/our-work/communities-online/>

¹² <http://www.conwy.gov.uk/doc.asp?cat=6538&doc=31243&Language=1>

¹³ <http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s23716/PL%2027%20Powys%20County%20Council.html?CT=2>