



Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru

Changing Practice, Changing Lives

Impact and Reach Report
2016-17

An independent voice and
champion for older people

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales is an independent voice and champion for older people across Wales. The Commissioner and her team work to ensure that older people have a voice that is heard, that they have choice and control, that they don't feel isolated or discriminated against and that they receive the support and services that they need.

The Commissioner and her team work to ensure that Wales is a good place to grow older, not just for some but for everyone.

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Foreword

Older people make a significant contribution to our communities, providing care and support to loved ones, volunteering in a huge variety of ways, and through working, spending and paying taxes. Without this contribution, Wales would be a far poorer nation, both economically and socially.

But in order to be able to make this contribution, remain engaged with their communities and have the best possible quality of life, some older people may need a little help and support.

It is therefore vital that the systems through which this help and support is delivered are tailored to meet the needs of individuals, that they are designed and improved by using the voices of older people, and have a genuine focus on outcomes.

As a result of my work as Commissioner, and the work of many others working tirelessly to improve the lives of older people, we have begun to see a shift towards this in recent years, with a range of policy, legislation and regulations and practice based on providing a more person-centred, outcomes-focused approach.

This is positive, of course, but as is always the case when new approaches are introduced, there is a learning curve in terms of service delivery on the ground, an inevitable degree of lag in aspiration becoming the day-to-day lived reality for people using services.

Addressing this by growing knowledge and understanding amongst those delivering services for older people has therefore been a key focus of my work this year. This has not only included using my legal powers to issue formal guidance, but also includes working directly with the newly established Public Services Boards, Local Authorities and Care Home Providers across Wales to ensure that they understand the issues that affect older people, the ways in which the decisions they make can impact upon older people's lives and the importance of delivering outcomes.



“Without the contribution of older people, Wales would be a far poorer nation, both economically and socially.”

Furthermore, as part of my work to safeguard older people, I have continued to raise awareness amongst public services staff across Wales to help them to understand the nature of the abuse faced by over 40,000 older people each year so there is a systematic approach to identifying those at risk of harm and ensuring they can access the help and support they need to regain their safety and well-being.

In order for the change that older people want and need to see within our public services to be delivered, it is essential that there is ongoing monitoring and scrutiny, that reports identifying issues and areas for improvement are not simply published and left to sit on a shelf as is so often the case.

My work this year has therefore also been focused on assessing the ways in which public bodies are meeting the commitments they made following my review into the quality of life and care of older people living in care homes and my work to highlight the challenges faced by people living with dementia, and their carers. This follow-up work is essential to ensure that action is being taken to deliver the change required to improve the lives of some of our most vulnerable older people and address the issues affect their lives.

It is important to remember that when services for older people do not meet their needs effectively, a cost is not only paid by an individual, but also by the public purse.

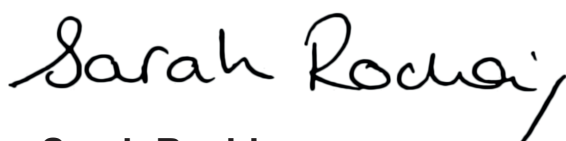
This was clearly demonstrated by my work looking at older people's experiences of accessing and using GP services in Wales, which identified a number of issues that can create unnecessary challenges and barriers that may prevent older people from accessing GP services or push them towards accessing other less appropriate unscheduled care services. This not only has a negative impact upon older people's health and well-being, but can also create pressures in other parts of our health and social care systems, something that is simply not sustainable, particularly at a time when public finances are severely restricted.

“It is important to remember that when services for older people do not meet their needs effectively, a cost is not only paid by an individual, but also by the public purse.”

Ensuring that our public services will meet the needs of older people both now and in the future is also a key feature of the Ageing Well in Wales programme, which has continued to drive change at both a national and a local level. A wide range of action is now being taken by over 60 Ageing Well Strategic Partners across the programme's five strands, while membership of local Ageing Well Networks, which promote good practice and empower older people within our communities, has increased to over 1,300.

Recognition about the challenges faced by older people, both within our public services and across society more widely, has perhaps never been greater, which has led to new ways of thinking about service delivery, new approaches and good practice being introduced and a greater awareness about the importance of delivering meaningful outcomes. Whilst this is a positive step forward, I have been clear that success will only have been achieved when this good practice becomes the standard across Wales, when meaningful outcomes are being delivered for all older people.

The appetite to do this certainly seems to be there and, as Commissioner, I will continue to both support and challenge our public bodies until services and support will meet the needs of older people, wherever they happen to live in Wales, both now and in the future so they can have the best possible quality of life and continue to make such a huge contribution to our lives.



Sarah Rochira
Older People's Commissioner for Wales

"I have been clear that success will only be achieved when this good practice becomes the standard across Wales."

Reaching out and listening to older people across Wales

Direct engagement with older people across Wales, sharing information about my role and the ways in which I can provide assistance and support, remains a key part of my work as Commissioner. Just as importantly, this engagement also allows me to hear directly from older people about the things that matter to them and the challenges they face, which is essential to guide and shape my work.

Engagement Roadshow

My team and I met with 168 groups across Wales during 2016-17, engaging with over 4,300 older people in a wide range of settings such as social clubs, day centres, support groups, forum meetings, residents' associations and conferences. During the year, my team and I travelled nearly 18,000 miles to reach out to and engage with older people in every Local Authority in Wales.

In planning my engagement with older people, I ensured that I met and spoke with older people in all of their diversity, capturing the voices of people whose voices are seldom heard. This is vital to ensure that the experiences of older people from a wide variety of backgrounds are reflected throughout and continue to inform my work. To support this approach, I have worked with a wide range of organisations that work with and for people with protected characteristics, including Race Equality First, Diverse Cymru, People First, the Dementia Engagement and Empowerment Project (DEEP), the North Wales Regional Equality Network, Men's Sheds, Action on Hearing Loss and Parkinson's UK.

To ensure that those who make policy and decisions hear directly from older people about their experiences and the challenges that growing older can bring, I arranged many joint visits with Assembly Members, MPs, Council Leaders and Councillors across Wales during 2016-17. These visits provided opportunities for older people to have their voices heard, discuss the issues that matter to them and suggest ways in which improvements to the services they often rely on could be delivered.

Wider Engagement

Alongside engaging with thousands of older people as part of my Engagement Roadshow, I have continued to work with formal organisations that represent older people and their interests, such as the National

Pensioners' Convention, Active Wales, Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA) and the Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing, as well as with older people's 50+ forums across Wales.

I also continued to work with a wide range of public bodies in Wales throughout 2016-17, including Health Boards, Local Authorities, Public Services Boards, the Wales Audit Office, Public Health Wales and National Trading Standards, as well as with third sector organisations such as Age Alliance Wales, Age Cymru, Age Connects Wales, Alzheimer's Society and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, delivering keynote speeches at conferences and events, and meeting with key individuals within these organisations.

In addition to growing knowledge and understanding about the challenges that older people in Wales face, the issues that affect their lives and their experiences of growing older, this work also allows me to promote good practice and identify opportunities for joint working to drive change on behalf of older people and improve their lives.

Media

Working with the media allows me to reach out to large numbers of older people across Wales so they know about the work I am undertaking and the ways in which I am driving change on their behalf. Furthermore, working with the media allows me to ensure that the wider public are made aware of the issues and challenges that affect older people.

I have continued to maintain a strong presence across television and radio, appearing on BBC Wales Today, ITV Wales news, S4C Newyddion, BBC Radio Wales and BBC Radio Cymru.

I also worked throughout 2016-17 to secure extensive media coverage in daily newspapers, including the Western Mail, Daily Post, South Wales Argus, South Wales Evening Post and South Wales Echo, as well as weekly local newspapers based around Wales. My comments on particular issues were also included in the Independent and the Guardian.

My work has also been featured in a wide range of other publications such as professional magazines, journals and blogs, which helps to ensure that I am able to reach out to as many older people and stakeholders as possible and grow wider knowledge and understanding about key issues.

Acknowledging Excellence

As Commissioner, I have met many outstanding public services staff who are dedicated to making a real difference to the lives of older people and it is essential that this good practice is highlighted and promoted.

To ensure that good practice in the care and support of older people is formally acknowledged, I sponsored the RCN Wales Nurse of the Year Awards and the Wales Care Awards to ensure that the valuable contribution of outstanding individuals, as well as their hard work, commitment and innovation, is recognised and celebrated.

Support to Individuals

My Casework Team has provided assistance and support directly to older people and their families across Wales throughout 2016-17, in line with my powers under the Commissioner for Older People (Wales) Act 2006.

Older people and their families contact me when they feel that their voice isn't being heard and find themselves in the most difficult and often distressing of circumstances, requiring support to challenge the decision-making and practice of public bodies.

In many cases, the older people who contact me face a maze of complex policies, frameworks and processes, which can intensify the stress they are under and cause great anxiety. My Casework Team offers information, advice and guidance to help older people and their families negotiate their way through these complex processes, intervening on their behalf when necessary (subject to their consent).

During 2016-17, my Casework Team provided direct assistance and support to 372 older people and their families across Wales (333 new cases; 39 older, ongoing cases). Many of these cases have been very complex in their nature, particularly those where safeguarding and protection issues were identified.

The five most common subjects my team were contacted about were residential care, care, housing, domiciliary care and abuse. Within these subjects, a number of themes emerged, which suggest that a number of cross-cutting issues are affecting the lives of older people in Wales:

- Insufficient staffing levels affecting continuity of care.
- A lack of clear and transparent communication with older people and their families across a range of public services.
- A lack of meaningful consultation with older people when changes to services they use are being considered.

The issues set out above clearly suggest that reductions in public spending are having an impact upon the public services that older people rely upon to support their health, well-being and independence and that public services need to improve their understanding of the challenges that older people face.

Driving Change for Older People

Older People's Experiences of Accessing and Using GP Services

Many of the older people my team and I met and spoke with across Wales during 2015-16 shared their concerns about GP services in their area, highlighting a range of issues that can have a negative impact upon their experiences.

I therefore began a programme of work during 2016-17 to look at older people's experiences of accessing and using GP services in Wales, to identify good practice that could be more widely adopted by our GP surgeries and areas in which improvements were needed.

Through group discussion sessions held across Wales and a widely distributed questionnaire, I captured the views of over 1,600 older people on a range of matters relating to GP services, as well as 47 stakeholder organisations that work with and for older people, including Health Boards, professional bodies and third sector organisations.

The evidence gathered formed the basis of a detailed report – 'GP Services in Wales: The Perspective of Older People' – which made clear the significant and unacceptable variations older people face when accessing GP services.

Whilst a number of those who responded spoke in positive terms about their experiences, many others shared concerns and identified particular issues relating to appointments booking processes, the accessibility of GP surgeries and the surgery environment, the time available for appointments, and communication and privacy. These issues can create unnecessary challenges and barriers that may prevent older people from accessing GP services or push them towards accessing other less appropriate unscheduled care services, something that has a negative impact upon their health and well-being.

Alongside my report, I also used my powers under the Commissioner for Older People (Wales) Act to issue formal guidance to Health Boards to provide support in addressing the issues and concerns shared by older people. The guidance, which Health Boards must have regard to when discharging their functions, includes examples of good practice and is designed as a developmental tool to support Health Boards, service directors or practice managers as they make changes to service design and delivery.

The report and guidance were welcomed by a number of key organisations working to improve health services in Wales, including Community Health Councils, the Royal College of Nursing, the Royal College of GPs, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists.

In welcoming the report and guidance, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales also confirmed that they will use their GP inspection programme to determine how well Health Boards have understood and are acting upon their responsibilities, as set out within the guidance.

Similarly, the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport confirmed that he welcomed the report and would be writing to Health Boards to encourage them to use the findings and that the newly established Primary Care Board will consider the report when looking at areas in which an all-Wales approach will be helpful. He also confirmed that the report will be used to inform the development of Welsh Government policy relating to primary care.

Care Home Review Follow-up Work

My care home review, which was undertaken during 2014, found that too many older people living in care homes in Wales have an unacceptable quality of life, are no longer able to do the things that matter to them, lose meaningful choice and control over their lives, have their emotional needs neglected and often do not have their basic rights upheld.

As part of my review report, 'A Place to Call Home?', I published a series of requirements for action for public bodies and care home providers, setting out the action that needed to be taken to ensure that older people living in care homes can have the best possible quality of life.

Each of the public bodies subject to my review – the Welsh Government, CSSIW, Health Boards and Local Authorities – were required to submit detailed plans to provide me with assurances that they would deliver the improvements needed within care homes and the wider care home system in Wales.

When I published my review report, I was clear that, in addition to ongoing scrutiny of the bodies subject to my review and their monitoring progress against the delivery plans, I would undertake a specific programme of follow-up work to ensure that they had delivered upon their commitments, with a particular focus on any areas where I had identified that further work was needed to deliver the outcomes for older people included within my review report.

I therefore wrote to all of the bodies subject to the review in January 2017, requesting information about the progress they had made against 14 of my requirements for action, in areas such as continence care, access to specialist services, falls prevention, dementia training, medication reviews and the use of antipsychotics, and using the voices of residents to drive improvements.

My team and I will analyse these responses ahead of the publication of a report in November 2017 that will set out the change that has been delivered and the good practice now underway as a result of my review. The report will also highlight any areas in which additional work is needed to deliver the change that older people living in care homes across Wales want and need to see.

Seminars for Care Home Providers

In order to grow knowledge and understanding about the ways in which the quality of life of older people living in care homes could be improved, and to promote the good practice identified as part of my care home review, I held a series of seminars for care home providers during 2016-17. The seminars were held in Cardiff, Llanrindod Wells and Wrexham, and were delivered in partnership with Credu (formerly Powys Carers), Dementia Adventure and Taith Ltd.

The seminars in Cardiff and Wrexham explored themes related to risk assessment and management, with a particular focus on enabling people with dementia to spend time outside, something that has been shown to have a range of benefits. The seminar in Llandrindod Wells was based on the ‘magic moments’ that could be created by care home providers – simple actions that can make a big difference to the life of an older person living in a care home.

Feedback from the events was positive and delegates completed pledge cards during the seminars to set out the ways in which they would use what they had learnt to improve the lives of the older people they care for and support.

Guidance for Public Services Boards

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 replaced Local Service Boards (LSBs) with statutory Public Services Boards (PSBs), which have a crucial role to play in maintaining the health, well-being and independence of older people across Wales and ensuring that their lives have value, meaning and purpose.

In an increasingly challenging financial climate in which PSB partner organisations are under real pressure to deliver more with fewer resources, there is a greater need than ever for smart, cost-effective and innovative joint working and collaboration to maximise the impact of their work. Furthermore, with the number of people aged 75 and over due to increase by nearly 80% in the next twenty years, there will be wide ranging implications for public services.

Under the Act, each PSB is required to publish a Local Well-being Plan, setting out how it intends to improve the economic, environmental and cultural well-being of its area and how it will deliver on the national well-being goals that will be monitored by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

In order to shape the well-being plans to ensure they will deliver for older people and reflect older people's needs, wishes and circumstances, I met with each of the 19 PSBs across Wales between December 2014 and July 2016 before issuing formal guidance – 'Preparing Local Well-being Plans: Guidance for Public Services Boards' – to them using my powers under the Commissioner for Older People (Wales) Act.

Public Services Boards must have regard for the guidance, which is designed to support a culture shift in how services are shaped and delivered so they reflect the needs of an individual and do not require an individual to fit into the system. The guidance also makes clear the importance of placing outcomes at the heart of service delivery, as well as providing helpful and practical advice for service providers on preparing their well-being plans.

Feedback from PSBs on the guidance has been very positive, and a number of PSBs have already discussed how they will use it as they assess local well-being and develop their Local Well-being Plans.

Dementia: more than just memory loss

In March 2016, I published my 'Dementia: more than just memory loss' report, which gave a voice to people living with dementia, and their carers, and highlighted the challenges they face in many aspects of their day-to-day lives.

The report found that there is still a lack of knowledge and understanding about dementia, that dementia services often lack the flexibility to meet people's needs effectively and that a lack of co-operation between services creates unnecessary difficulties and barriers.

In order to address the significant variations that exist across Wales in terms of the quality of services available for people living with dementia and their carers, the report included a number of actions that needed to be taken by

those providing public services to address the issues identified.

These actions included work to ensure that primary care services are more dementia supportive and that their working practices reflect the needs of people with dementia and their carers; training for staff to ensure they have sufficient knowledge and understanding to respond to the needs of a person living with dementia in an appropriate and sensitive manner that protects their dignity and respect and minimises distress; and greater post-diagnosis support, including a single point of contact to provide information and advice on the services and support available that can be accessed whenever required.

Following the publication of the report, I wrote to public service leaders across Wales, seeking assurances that the change required for people living with dementia, and their carers, will be delivered. Regional Partnership Boards subsequently provided written responses to me, setting out the action they would take to deliver this change.

The responses showed that while the recommendations included within the report were being taken seriously and influencing the development of practice across Wales, there were still a number of areas in which further work was needed, particularly with regard to arrangements for respite care, training for health and social care staff and engaging effectively with people living with dementia, and their carers, to drive improvements.

Detailed feedback was therefore provided to Regional Partnership Boards, both in writing and at subsequent face-to-face meetings, to ensure there was a clear understanding of the gaps that needed to be addressed. I also developed a checklist to support public bodies to be more dementia supportive, along with a series of questions that could be used to scrutinise board members within Health Boards and Local Authorities.

Furthermore, based on my findings and the responses from the Regional Partnership Boards, I also shared a number of high-level observations with the Welsh Government, making clear my expectation that these would be used to shape the National Dementia Strategy.

Equality and Human Rights Seminars

In February 2016, I issued formal guidance to Local Authorities on how to undertake robust equality and human rights assessments when changes to community services are proposed, essential to ensure that alternative approaches are considered and that decisions do not have a disproportionate impact upon older people.

Following the publication of this guidance, I held a series of seminars across Wales during 2016-17 to support Local Authority members and officers in using this guidance effectively, which were attended by over 100 delegates.

The seminars explored the ways in which stereotypes around growing older and unconscious bias can lead to discriminatory policies and practice, and highlighted the instruments available that can support the decision making process, such as the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the UN Principles for Older Persons. The seminars reinforced the importance of undertaking meaningful impact assessments, from both an equality and human rights perspective, to guide decisions, as well as the importance of considering alternative proposals or mitigating actions to address any potential issues identified by the assessment process.

Feedback from the seminars was positive, with delegates stating that they had generated many new ideas and making commitments to adopt new approaches in their work when making decisions on community services.

Navigating Social Services – Information Leaflet and Factsheets

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which came into force in April 2016, created a wide range of new duties for public services and new rights for individuals, designed to make care and support more personal to people's needs.

However, through my engagement with older people ahead of the legislation coming into force, it became clear that many were simply not aware of what they could expect under the Act and the new approach that those delivering social services were required to take in order to meet their needs.

In order to address this, I developed an information leaflet and a series of factsheets on the Act for older people.

The leaflet provided a brief introduction to the Act itself and the principles that underpin it, as well as setting out people's rights under the new legislation and what they can do if they are unable to access the help they need.

The factsheets built upon the information within the leaflet, providing more detail on specific sections of the Act, covering areas such as advocacy, information and advice, needs assessments, paying for care, and safeguarding.

To date, over 5,000 copies of the leaflet have been distributed to older people across Wales through a wide range of stakeholders including Age Connects, Age Cymru, Alzheimer's Society, Care and Repair, Local Authority Older People's Strategy coordinators, Housing Associations and the British Red Cross.

Intergenerational Resources Hub

In recent years, a divisive narrative has emerged that has pitted our older and younger generations against each other, something that creates mistrust and misunderstanding. In reality, however, older and younger people have a huge amount to offer each other through sharing their knowledge and experiences, learning from one another and providing each other with support.

I therefore worked in partnership with the Children's Commissioner for Wales to bring together a set of resources to support communities across Wales in establishing intergenerational groups that bring younger and older people together.

These resources included a series of videos in which older and younger people highlight the benefits of being part of an intergenerational group based on their own experiences, a lesson plan to help schoolchildren think about how they could develop an intergenerational group in their school, and an online resources hub that provides a wide range of easily accessible information on how to set up an intergenerational group.

The resources were launched at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr in Cardiff, at an intergenerational session attended by pupils and older people from a local sheltered housing complex. During the session, the Children's Commissioner and I led a lively discussion on the stereotypes associated with age and the benefits of intergenerational projects, before participants broke off into groups to explore the activities they could do together in the future.

Since the resources hub was launched in February 2017, the videos and information have been accessed thousands of times, which will help to ensure that community groups and schools across Wales understand the benefits of intergenerational activities and have the information they need to set up and run intergenerational projects to break down the barriers between our older and younger generations.

Ageing Well in Wales

2016-17 saw the roll-out of phase two of Ageing Well in Wales – the national partnership programme to improve the health and well-being of people aged 50+ in Wales – building upon a wide range of achievements delivered at both a local and strategic level during the initial phase of the programme.

As part of phase two, over 60 Ageing Well in Wales strategic partners, including the Welsh Government, Health Boards, Local Authorities and other key organisations from the public, private and third sectors, have made a number of commitments to deliver action across the five Ageing Well strands – Age-Friendly Communities, Dementia Supportive Communities, Falls Prevention, Learning and Employment, and Loneliness and Isolation. These commitments are set out in the Ageing Well in Wales Phase Two Action Plan, which was published in October 2016 and will underpin the delivery of change and improvements to the lives of older people across Wales over the next 18 months. Examples of the commitments within the action plan include making bus and train stations and services more age-friendly, delivering further awareness raising about how communities can better support people living with dementia, increasing the number of older people with digital skills and developing a national strategy to tackle loneliness and isolation.

Across the Action Plan, there is a strong focus on joined-up and partnership working, an approach that will be vital to deliver the change needed across the five Ageing Well strands.

Work also continued at a community level during 2016-17, to not only increase the number of local network members, which is currently over 1,300, but also to share good practice and useful resources, and to grow knowledge and understanding across the five Ageing Well strands.

Part of this engagement included two large conference events held in Bangor and Cardiff in November and December 2016 that were attended by around 300 delegates. In addition to presentations from a wide range of speakers working to deliver change through Ageing Well at both a strategic and local level, the conferences also included a number of practical workshop sessions and an interactive marketplace that allowed Ageing Well partners to showcase the innovative work and good practice they are delivering to improve the lives of older people.

Ageing Well in Wales Information Booklets

To help to ensure that individuals and organisations in communities across Wales are empowered to take action to improve the lives of older people, I worked with Ageing Well partner organisations to publish a number of 'pocket-sized' information booklets during 2016-17.

The guides, which have been widely distributed across Wales via stakeholders and Ageing Well partners, present information in a clear, accessible way and provide practical advice on a number of different topics:

- A pocket guide to being dementia supportive (produced in partnership with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Alzheimer's Society)
- Making a Difference: A pocket guide to help you deal with loneliness (produced in partnership with the Centre for Ageing and Dementia Research, British Red Cross and Royal Voluntary Service)
- Making Wales a nation of age-friendly communities (produced in partnership with the Cymru Older People's Alliance)
- A guide to being an age-friendly business (produced in partnership with the Cymru Older People's Alliance)
- A guide to setting up a community learning club (produced in partnership with the Royal Voluntary Service, the Learning and Work Institute, Men's Sheds Cymru, U3A and the Cymru Older People's Alliance)

In addition to publishing these guides, I also published an info card that older people can share with businesses in their communities to encourage them to become more age-friendly. The info card briefly highlights the benefits of being an age-friendly business, directing owners to the Ageing Well website where they can access further information and download the age-friendly business guide.

Safeguarding and Protecting Older People

Throughout 2016-17, I have continued a wide range of work to raise awareness about the nature of the abuse faced by over 40,000 older people each year and the circumstances that can lead to older people becoming particularly vulnerable or at risk of harm.

As part of this work, I was privileged and humbled to meet a number of survivors of domestic abuse, who shared with me heart-breaking accounts of the abuse they had suffered for many years before eventually seeking help from their local Women's Aid group.

Each survivor expressed their concern that more work was needed to raise awareness about the domestic abuse of older people, as they did not know that specialist domestic abuse services were available to them and not just to younger people.

I have therefore continued working to ensure that there is a systematic approach to identifying older people at risk of harm and that those who are abused are fully supported to access the help and support they need to regain their safety and well-being.

Work with the National Safeguarding Board

I met with members of the newly established National Safeguarding Board to set out the essential characteristics of an effective safeguarding system.

I was clear that there must be evidence of real time learning that leads to prompt and effective changes in practice at both a local and national level, and that the views of individuals and the wider community are continually used to test and improve practice.

I was also clear that a clear and differentiated baseline of the prevalence and incidence of different forms of abuse (domestic abuse, adult abuse etc.) must be established and used to underpin local plans, with clear and ambitious outcome focussed targets created and reported on.

I set out the importance of establishing mechanisms to commission effective regional safeguarding research and measuring the impact of this research on knowledge and practice. Furthermore, I highlighted the importance of evidence to not only demonstrate that measures are being implemented to address historic and ongoing issues relating to effective multi-agency

information sharing, but also that professionals have appropriate knowledge around safeguarding.

Finally, I was clear that advocacy services must be available to ensure that the rights of vulnerable people are upheld and that their voices are heard.

To help to ensure a standard approach is adopted across Wales, this information was also shared with all Regional Adult Safeguarding Boards to support the development of their strategic plans.

Awareness Raising Seminars and Presentations

Building upon the success of similar events run during 2014-15 and 2015-16, I held six safeguarding seminars to continue to raise awareness of the abuse faced by older people. Held in Carmarthen, Wrexham, Llanrwst, Baglan, Brecon and Cardiff, the seminars covered the scale and impact of abuse, human rights, abuse within the BAME and LGBTQ communities, the vital role of advocacy and the support available for victims of abuse.

For the first time, the seminars included a video of an older domestic abuse survivor, which added a new and powerful dimension that demonstrated the reality of the abuse experienced by older people.

The content of the seminars was evaluated by Agored Cymru and accredited with their 'Quality Mark', which allowed participants to earn Continuing Professional Development (CPD) hours.

412 delegates from a wide range of organisations working with and for older people attended the seminars in total. Feedback from the seminars was overwhelmingly positive, with particular praise for the multi-agency perspective of the speakers and the depth of the information provided.

Other Awareness Raising Presentations and Events

In addition to the seminars described above, awareness raising presentations, highlighting the abuse of older people as a key issue and setting out what needs to be implemented to improve the lives of those who are affected by abuse, were delivered to the following stakeholders during 2016-17:

- Gwent Police (to over 700 front-line police officers)
- Hywel Dda University Health Board (over 80 front-line staff; further presentations will be delivered during 2017-18)
- Public Health Wales Conference

- Capita Safeguarding Conference
- Citizens Advice Bureau Financial Abuse Conference
- Townswomen's Guild, Cardiff

Furthermore, my Safeguarding Lead also participated in the following engagement events to raise awareness about the scale and impact of the abuse faced by older people:

- Roundtable safeguarding meetings with the Public Guardian
- Age Cymru 'Question Time' Event
- SafeLives UK wide webinar event on domestic abuse of older people
- Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board Ask & Act Steering Group meetings
- IPCC Stakeholder forum meetings
- Live Fear Free (Domestic Abuse Helpline) Steering Group meetings
- Home Office MARAC Scrutiny Panel review of cases involving older people
- Mental Capacity Act Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding Group
- North Wales Police multi-agency development of an innovative training module (Hydra) on domestic abuse of older people
- Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse Consultation event in relation to the revised strategy document

Friends Against Scams

Building upon my work during 2015-16 to establish the Wales Against Scams Partnership (WASP), in October 2016 I worked in partnership with National Trading Standards to launch the Friends Against Scams Initiative in Wales.

Friends Against Scams is designed to highlight the scale and impact of scams, challenge perceptions of why people fall for scams and inspire action to protect people from scammers, criminals who often prey upon the most vulnerable members of society.

The launch event was attended by a wide range of stakeholders from the public, financial and third sectors, who made pledges about what they would do to tackle scams in their communities and how they would raise awareness of the Friends Against Scams initiative.

Following the launch, I also wrote to public bodies across Wales, providing them with information about Friends Against Scams and encouraging them to sign up and take part in the initiative.

Friends Against Scams sessions are now being delivered across Wales, enabling organisations and individuals to learn about the different types of scams used to defraud and steal from people, and how to spot and provide support to a victim, with online learning also available to grow knowledge and understanding amongst those who are unable to attend an awareness session.

Influencing Policy, Legislation and Practice

National Assembly for Wales Election 2016: Calls for Change

Ahead of the National Assembly for Wales election in May 2016, I published a document outlining a number of key priorities for the next Welsh Government. The document was distributed to all the main political parties in Wales, with the expectation that my calls would be included in their manifestos ahead of the election.

The vast majority of my calls were adopted in at least one political party's manifesto, with many enjoying significant cross-party support. These include retaining the concessionary bus pass, increasing funding for befriending services, creating dementia-friendly communities across Wales, and a pre-election pledge to introduce legislation to protect and promote the rights of older people.

I was particularly pleased that the Welsh Government responded to my call to introduce an all-ages apprenticeship programme and has made a commitment to introduce a national strategy to tackle loneliness and isolation, a growing and significant public health issue.

Older People's Spokespeople

In order to ensure that the issues that matter most to older people are considered, debated and addressed over the course of the fifth Assembly, I called upon the leaders of the opposition parties in the National Assembly for Wales to appoint a spokesperson that could ensure that older people's voices are heard in the chamber and represent their views.

I was therefore pleased to announce, on the International day of Older Persons (October 1), that each party leader had responded to my call and that Sian Gwenllian (Plaid Cymru), Janet Finch-Saunders (Welsh Conservatives) and David Rowlands (UKIP) would act as their party's spokesperson. I will work with these spokespeople, as well as with the Minister for Social Services and Public Health, whose portfolio covers the work of my office, to ensure that a strong message is sent to older people across Wales that their voices and experiences matter and will be used to shape policies, decisions and our public services.

Legislation to Protect and Promote the Rights of Older People

On World Human Rights Day in December 2015, I called upon the Welsh Government to introduce legislation to protect and promote the rights of older people so they can live free of abuse, neglect, ageism and discrimination, participate fully in their communities and thrive in older age.

Over the last year, I have been working with a group of experts from across the legal, public and third sectors, as well as with older people, to consider what could be included within the proposed legislation and how it would work in practice, and I have shared these proposals with the Welsh Government.

I have subsequently met with the First Minister and the Minister for Social Services and Public Health, and I am pleased that they have responded positively to my call for legislation and have made clear commitments to work with their officials to look at how this could be taken forward.

I am also pleased that there is cross-party support for my proposals, which demonstrates a genuine desire from all parties in the Assembly to ensure that Wales continues to lead the way in improving the lives of older people, building upon its proud record of driving the social justice agenda and ensuring that the rights of all of its citizens are upheld.

The support for my proposal is a positive and significant step forward and I will continue to work with the Welsh Government and Assembly Members so that legislation can be introduced to protect and promote the rights of older people across Wales.

Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016

Ensuring that the regulation and inspection systems of our social care system are robust and effective is essential to not only protect older people using social care services and keep them safe, but also to ensure that they receive the highest standards of care and support.

Following my work during 2015-16 to influence the content of the Act itself, I have closely monitored the development of the regulations that will set out the detail that underpins much of what the Act aims to deliver. Whilst this work is ongoing and some regulations have yet to be published within the public domain, I have made my expectations clear through engaging with those responsible for drafting this secondary legislation and through more formal

consultation responses.

My work in this area has focused on the following during 2016-17:

Ensuring that quality of life at the heart of the new standards of care -

As highlighted by my care home review, too many older people living in care homes have an unacceptable quality of life. Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 will introduce new standards for care homes, replacing the current National Minimum Standards from April 2018. The new standards must have quality of life, as well as dignity and respect, at their heart to deliver the change that older people want and need to see.

Ensuring that provision meets the needs of older people -

Robust strategic overview at a national and local level is vital to ensure that there is sufficient and appropriate care home provision for older people in Wales. The Act seeks to establish an effective system of oversight of the social care market in Wales through requiring both the service regulator and Local Authorities to produce market assessment reports. It is therefore vital that population assessments are robust in their assessment of an area's current and future care and support needs to accurately inform market oversight and any subsequent action required.

Providing better information for the public - It is vital that older people, their families and those who support them, are able to judge the quality of life, care and safety of the services that they depend on. The Act requires all providers to produce an annual return and this must be accessible both in its content and its availability to help older people make informed decisions about their care.

Consultation Responses

Throughout 2016-17, I responded to a wide range of Welsh Government and National Assembly consultations, using the voices and experiences of older people gathered via engagement and my casework team, to ensure that proposed policy and practice reflects their needs and will deliver positive outcomes:

- Welsh Government - Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan (2016-19), April 2016
- Welsh Government - “Improving the recruitment and retention of Domiciliary Care workers in Wales”, April 2016
- UK Government - HM Treasury ‘Public Financial Guidance Review’ consultation, June 2016
- Proposed improvement priorities for Social Care Wales, June 2016
- Welsh Government - Regulations and Statutory Guidance on Area Plans following the Population Assessment, September 2016
- Welsh Government - Phase 1 implementation of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, September 2016
- Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner - Police and Crime Plan for Gwent 2017-2021 Police and Crime Plan for Gwent 2017-202, October 2016
- North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner - Police and Crime Plan for North Wales, November 2016
- Welsh Government - Talk Communities: Building resilient communities across Wales, November 2016
- South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner - Consultation on Police and Crime Plan 2016-21, November 2016
- UK Government - Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy 2016 Post Office Network Consultation, December 2016
- Draft strategy for the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office 2017-2020, January 2017
- Welsh Government - Charging for Social Care, January 2017
- Community Health Council – Annual Planning Review, January 2017

- Equality and Human Rights Commission - Consultation on a single measurement framework for equality and human rights, February 2017

Working with National Assembly Committees

I have worked particularly closely with the Chair of the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee to identify potential areas of Inquiry and was particularly pleased that my calls for Inquiries into loneliness and isolation, and the use of anti-psychotic medication in care homes have led to the Committee taking this important work forward.

Throughout 2016-17, my team and I also gave evidence to a number of Inquiries being undertaken by the National Assembly for Wales:

- Health, Social Care and Sport Committee - Inquiry into the sustainability of the health and social care workforce, August 2016
- Priorities for the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee, September 2016
- Priorities for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee, September 2016
- Priorities for the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, September 2016
- Priorities for the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee, September 2016
- Priorities for the Children, Young People and Education Committee, September 2016
- Health, Social Care and Sport Committee - Stage 1 Scrutiny of the General Principles of the Public Health (Wales) Bill, December 2016
- Equalities, Local Government and Communities Committee - Inquiry into Human Rights in Wales, February 2017
- Health, Social Care and Sport Committee - Inquiry into Loneliness and Isolation, March 2017

Additional Work to Influence Policy, Legislation and Practice

In order to ensure that the needs of older people are understood by key stakeholders and reflected in their work, I have also continued to influence policy and practice through being a member of, and working in partnership with, a wide range of expert groups and advisory boards / panels, including:

- Welsh Government Digital Inclusion Programme Board
- Welsh Government Public Transport Users Advisory Panel
- Welsh Government Accessible Transport Panel
- Welsh Government Financial Inclusion Steering Group
- Aneurin Bevan Health Board 'Ffrind i Mi' Partnership Board
- Citizens Advice Cymru Independent Advice Providers Forum
- DWP Strategic Partnership Board
- DWP PIP Wales Stakeholder Forum
- Money Advice Service Wales Forum
- NAfW Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing
- Wales Against Scams Partnership
- Workforce Workstream (Care Home Steering Group)
- Registration & Inspection of Social Care Act CSSIW Stakeholder Group
- CSSIW National Advisory Board
- Welsh Government RISCA Technical Groups (time limited groups)

Forward Look

Despite the fact that the potential range of issues that I could focus on as Commissioner is vast, I must ensure that my work remains focused on the priorities that older people have told me matter to them, which are outlined in my Framework for Action.

Whilst much of my work is a continuation of action around specific priorities within my Framework, some areas will feature more prominently in my work programme, depending on their urgency and/or the experiences of older people.

In the coming year, my work will include a focus on the following:

- Follow up work linked to my review into the quality of life and care of older people living in care homes in Wales.
- Safeguarding older people in hospital
- Older people's access to and experiences of independent professional advocacy
- Further work as part of phase two of the Ageing Well in Wales Programme
- Analysis of Health Board Annual Quality Statements
- The provisions of respite care across Wales
- Learning from my casework

I will continue to work with a wide range of bodies to grow knowledge, thinking and understanding about the issues faced by older people, to drive change in practice across Wales. I will also, however, continue to use my legal powers where this is the most appropriate option available to ensure that the change that older people want and need to see is delivered by our public bodies.



