



Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru
Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Commissioner's NEWSLETTER

An update from the
Older People's Commissioner
for Wales

Winter 2018/19

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Outstanding Response to Commissioner's Work Programme Consultation

There has been an outstanding response to the Commissioner's work programme consultation, with over 250 older people and stakeholders sharing their ideas about the work the Commissioner should focus on over the next three years and how we can make Wales the best place in the world to grow older.

The responses will help to support the development of the Commissioner's work programme, which will be published in April.

The Commissioner's work will deliver against three key long-term priorities for Wales – ensuring everyone can age well, ending ageism and discrimination, and stopping the abuse of older people – which were identified through the Commissioner's engagement with older people and stakeholders since she took up post in the summer.

Under these priorities, the Commissioner's work will have a particular focus on improving the quality of life of the most vulnerable older people, those whose voices often go unheard, and those at risk of harm, and will also highlight the significant contribution that older people make to their communities and to society.

The Commissioner said: "There has been a great response to my work programme consultation from both older people and stakeholders throughout Wales.

"The responses will be used to help to determine the work I will deliver as Commissioner through my work programme, which will be published in April.

"I'm really looking forward to beginning the delivery of my work programme and I'd like to thank everyone who has responded for sharing their views and ideas about how we can make Wales the best place in the world to grow older."

Ask About Advocacy

The Commissioner is working in partnership with Age Cymru to encourage older people to Ask About Advocacy, something that can help them to make their voices heard and ensure their rights are upheld.

To highlight the importance of advocacy and the ways in which it can support older people, we have launched a new awareness-raising video, alongside a new online advocacy resources hub, which provides a range of useful information and resources for older people and those working with and for them.

The video tells the story of Betty, who wants to return home following a hospital stay, but finds that no-one is listening to her wishes and that she is unable to make her voice heard.

The Commissioner said: “Ensuring that older people have a strong voice so they can participate in and guide decisions being made about their lives in a meaningful way is vital.

“For some older people, the only way to achieve this will be with the support of an advocate who can represent their views and speak out on their behalf.

“However, a key finding of the advocacy report published by my office last year was that older people and professionals are often unaware of advocacy services and the positive difference they can make to people’s lives, particularly those who may be vulnerable.

“That’s why I have worked in partnership with Age Cymru to produce this video and online resources hub – to raise awareness about the importance of advocacy and the ways in which it can help and support older people.”

The video, which will be shared with older people and professionals via social media, is available to view here – <http://www.olderpeoplewales.com/en/advocacy-hub.aspx>. It will also be distributed to members of the Commissioner’s Ageing Well network and will be shown at events and seminars for professionals and volunteers working with and for older people.

The online resources hub can be accessed here: <http://www.olderpeoplewales.com/en/advocacy-hub.aspx>. Older people can also get information and advice about Advocacy by contacting Age Cymru’s Advice Line on 08000 223 444 or the Commissioner’s Casework Team on 03442 640 670.



Care Home in Wales: Your Questions Answered

The Commissioner will soon launch a new information guide for older people and their families to provide answers to common questions about moving into, and living in, a care home.

The guide covers a wide range of topics, including finding a care home that meets your needs; the information that should be available from a care home; having a say in decisions; activities and socialising; accessing health care; and what to do if you are unhappy with a care home.

Discussing the guide, which will be launched on 18 March, the Commissioner said:

“People can worry about moving into a care home, and often have many questions about what this will mean for them.

“But older people I have met and spoken with throughout Wales have told me that they are often not sure where to find the answers they need.

“That’s why I have produced this new information guide, which provides simple, clear answers to common questions that older people, and their loved ones, may have when they are looking for, moving into or living in a care home.”

The information guide will be widely distributed throughout Wales via organisations working with and for older people.

If you would like to receive a copy (or copies) of the guide when it is launched, call us on 03442 640 670 or email ask@olderpeoplewales.com



Care Homes in Wales

Your questions answered



An independent voice and champion
for older people

Commissioner gives evidence to Assembly Committee Inquiry into Carers

In November, the Commissioner gave evidence to the Inquiry into the Impact of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act in relation to carers, which was undertaken by the Assembly's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee.

The Commissioner gave evidence alongside Age Cymru's Chief Executive, Victoria Lloyd.

During the evidence session, the Commissioner highlighted her concerns that the eligibility criteria for accessing support under the Act may be too high, meaning that carers who previously qualified for support may no longer be eligible.

She also discussed the importance of respite with committee members and how using innovative models for delivering respite could deliver services that met the needs of carers and those being cared for more effectively.

In response to a question about the ways in which data relating to carers and the Act was being collected, the Commissioner said there are currently a number of gaps which makes it difficult to 'drill down' into the data to identify potential issues or barriers and how these could be addressed, or to understand why some carers were not accessing the support that might be available to them.

You can watch the Commissioner's session in full here: <https://bit.ly/2S6dz01>.

The Committee is due to publish its inquiry report during the spring, and more information about the inquiry is available here: <https://bit.ly/2Lg57M1>.



Spotlight on... Electrical Safety First – Reducing the risk of electrical fires

Research undertaken by Electrical Safety First has found that older people living alone who are aged 65 or over are at a greater risk from electrical fires – three times greater than people from the same age group who cohabit.



They found that of the 311 accidental electrical fires that occurred in older people's homes last year, 76% were in the homes of those living alone.

The research also found that many older people go six months without seeing someone they rely on to check their electrics – such as a family member, friend or neighbour – and that half of those surveyed do not know the warning signs of dangerous or damaged electrics.

Electrical Safety First is therefore urging people to pop in to see older relatives, friends and neighbours to perform some basic electrical checks.

Phil Buckle, Chief Executive of Electrical Safety First, said: "We are urging Welsh Communities to visit older people who may be living alone.

"Our findings reveal the disturbing number of electrical fires affecting this demographic, but we can all do our part to address this issue.

"Checking in on your older neighbour, friend or relative won't only help to tackle loneliness, but could save a life. You may discover something that prevents a serious incident from occurring and, with your help, we can change things for the better."

Electrical Safety First has developed a range of tools and guides to help keep older people safe in their own homes. For more information, visit: <https://bit.ly/2hClsc4>

Engagement Highlights

Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern

In December, the Commissioner visited Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern, joining a coffee morning held with the local Memory Café, to see the ways the charity is helping the community.

DPVC provides a range of services and support for older people in Dinas Powys, including transport to medical appointments and social activities, a befriending service and an information centre.



For more information about Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern, visit <http://www.dpvc.org.uk/index.html>

Carmarthenshire Support Buddies

In December, our Engagement Lead, Kate Hughes, visited a Macmillan Support Buddies event in Carmarthenshire, to find out more about the ways that volunteers are providing emotional and practical support to people affected by cancer.

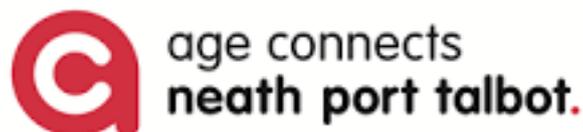


The support provided by the volunteer 'buddies' helps individuals to face one of the toughest challenges they will have in their life, relieves isolation and loneliness, and enables people to live a more enjoyable life during their cancer experience.

For more information about the Support Buddies scheme, visit <https://bit.ly/2P1Ah7Z>.

Age Connects Neath Port Talbot Outreach Group, Glynneath

In February, the Commissioner visited the Age Connects Outreach Group in Glynneath, which aims to prevent loneliness and isolation and encourage the development of new social relationships.



The group meets at the town hall in Glynneath and is usually attended by around 50 people who use the group to catch up with friends over a cup of tea and take part in different activities, such as crafts or physical activity. Younger people have also recently started to attend the group, providing support to members so they can get online.

For more information about Age Connects Neath Port Talbot's Outreach Hubs, visit <https://bit.ly/2T8EdtO> or call 01639 617333

Our Newsletter

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Please contact us if you would like to be removed from our newsletter distribution list.

Your comments, feedback and stories

We welcome your feedback about our newsletter so please feel free to contact us to share any thoughts or comments that you have.

We also welcome suggestions about potential content for the newsletter, so if you have any information that you would like us to include in future editions, please get in touch.

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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