



Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru

Datgloi asedau cuddiedig Cymru a newid canfyddiadau: Cyfraniad pobl hŷn i gymdeithas

Unlocking Wales' hidden assets and changing perceptions: The contribution of older people to society

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www.olderpeoplewales.com

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Older People: a burden on society and a drain on resources? Think again!

- Wales is a nation of older people: 800,000 people aged over 60, reaching over a million in next 20 years – the largest and fastest growing demographic.
- An ageing population does present challenges, but more importantly presents opportunities.
- Where are the hidden assets? Everywhere!



Older People: a burden on society and a drain on resources? Think again!

- **A net contribution worth over £1bn a year to the Welsh economy**, almost £3m a day. Their contribution will total almost £27bn over the next twenty years (taxes, spending power, provision of social care, volunteering).
- **A 2011 RVS study** suggested that by 2030, older people will benefit the economy by around £291.1bn, compared to projected welfare costs of £216.2bn. £61bn UK economic contribution in 2013 (under £10bn spent on social care).



Older People: a burden on society and a drain on resources? Think again!

- **Employment:** Over a million people aged 65+ in job market (2013). Reinforcing workforce with older workers could boost GDP up to 5.6%, an additional £88.4bn.
- **1.2m people aged 50+ in UK want and need to work**, adding around £50bn to UK economy. Provided with help and support, older people could contribute so much more e.g. engage with the 205k older NEETs in Wales, over a third of people aged 50-64 not working. A range of skills and experience that is currently underused and undervalued in the workforce. 13.5m job vacancies in UK, yet only 7m young people will leave education in next decade.



Older People: a burden on society and a drain on resources? Think again!

- **Spending power:** People aged 50+ supported 5.7m jobs in the UK economy in 2013 through expenditure and supporting 878k full-time jobs for young people. People aged 65+ supported UK economy by £37bn through travel spending (2014).
- **Total annual spend** of people aged 65+ could be at least £57bn by 2025.



Older People: a burden on society and a drain on resources? Think again!

- **Social care:** 87,000 people (1 in 5 people) over 65 provide unpaid care, saving £7.7bn per year. The value of childcare is estimated to be £259m. There are more unpaid carers in Wales than in any other part of the UK.
- **For those who care for people with dementia alone,** it is estimated that it saved public finances £294m per year. Providing care takes a toll on physical and mental health in 92% of cases.



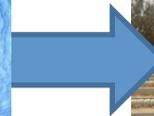
Older People: a burden on society and a drain on resources? Think again!

- **Volunteering:** The value of volunteering by older people, the “hidden army”, is estimated at £469m. 40% of people aged 60+ undertake paid or voluntary work, with 60% of older volunteers undertaking voluntary work at least once a week. RVS: older people provide over 100 hours of informal volunteering per year.
- **Active Age report (2010):** Older people bring huge financial advantages to society, “£230bn as paid workers, £5bn as volunteers, and £4bn as grandparents”.



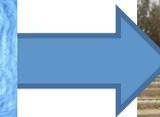
Older People: changing perceptions

- **Plenty of reports, articles and studies** supporting the economic contribution of older people...yet they are still perceived as a burden, scroungers, spongers:
- “Pensioners escaped effects of austerity” (Resolution Foundation study)
- “Cut pensioner benefits immediately” (Taxpayers Alliance, Oct 2015)
- Are the elderly a burden on society? 65% No, 35% Yes (debate.org)



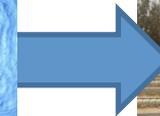
Older People: changing perceptions

- **Not just economic assets:** a wealth of skills, knowledge and experience. Older people as advisers, mentors, guides and leaders.
- **Reverse behaviour change:** older people “can shape the responses of the relatively young who have set out to influence them”.



Older People: changing perceptions

- **NAfW debate, Nov 2015:** “Growth in the number of older people presents us with a wonderful opportunity... far from being a burden, their contribution to the Welsh economy and society is growing.”



Making the change:

Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Framework for Action 2013/17: Five priorities to help make Wales a good place to grow older

- Embedding the wellbeing of older people at the heart of public services
- Driving up the quality of, and availability and access to, health and social care
- Protecting and improving community services, facilities and infrastructure
- Standing up for older people who are at risk of harm and ensuring that they are safeguarded and protected
- Tackling prejudice, inequality and discrimination

“Wales’ public services would simply grind to a halt without the huge contribution of older people...with a little help, older people can contribute so much more”

Making the change:

Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Annual Work Programme

- Ageism and Discrimination ('Say No to Ageism' campaign launched October 2015)
- Domestic Abuse, Safeguarding and Protection
- Care Home Review follow-up work ('A Place to Call Home?' report launched Nov 2014)
- Giving a voice to people living with dementia (report published Feb 2016)
- Ageing Well in Wales

Tackling prejudice, inequality and discrimination: 'Say No to Ageism'

- **Campaign launched in October 2015:** The significant contribution of older people to local communities and economies is overlooked & undervalued.
- **Time to challenge some of the stereotypes,** myths and misconceptions around older people, present a more accurate portrayal.

Tackling prejudice, inequality and discrimination: 'Say No to Ageism'

- “Contrary to the pernicious narrative that they are a burden, older people in fact contribute a huge amount to our society, both economically and socially, through ongoing employment and paying taxes, unpaid caring, childcare and volunteering. Older people also have a wealth of knowledge and experience that could be utilised far more effectively. Without older people, our society would be a poorer nation in so many ways. Put simply, older people are a national asset whose contribution every year in Wales exceeds £1bn, net of health, social care and pension costs.”

Tackling prejudice, inequality and discrimination: 'Say No to Ageism'

A short video may be found on the Commissioner's website:

<http://www.olderpeoplewales.com/en/ageism/say-no-to-ageism-overview.aspx>

Discussion: Over to you!

- What are your thoughts on the perception of older people?
- Are older people treated differently in society? Is their contribution underappreciated and undervalued?
- Do we live in an 'us and them' society? Is there a tendency to see older people as one large homogenous group?
- What needs to change? How do we unlock these hidden assets?

Discussion: Over to you!

- **Public service design and delivery:** how do we empower and enable older people to become contributors in an increasingly challenging financial climate? How do we improve individual & organisational resilience?
- **Community services are crucial** in maintaining the independence of older people. New, creative and innovative ways of service delivery are needed more than ever. There are good examples across Wales (included on Good Practice Wales) however do we need smarter, more radical and transformational approaches to service delivery?
- **Behaviour change is critical** for establishing sustainable lifestyles and promoting economic prosperity. How do we use legislative drivers e.g. Wellbeing of Future Generations Act to promote this approach? How do we ensure sustainability i.e. top-down & bottom-up buy-in?

Ageing Well in Wales

- **Ageing Well in Wales reflects the need to move towards an outcomes-focussed, preventative and asset-based model. How can we invest in Wales' hidden assets and double their £1bn contribution? How can we keep older people active, healthy and independent within communities?**
- **Ageing Well is a five-year national partnership programme to improve the wellbeing of people 50+ in Wales, formally launched in October 2014. Chaired by OPCW, Ageing Well includes a wide range of public & third sector partners and CADR. Now includes over 1000 network members at community level.**

Heneiddio'n Dda
yng Nghymru
Ageing Well
in Wales

Rhaglen bartneriaeth ar gyfer gweithredu ar y cyd
ar draws Cymru ac yn Ewrop
.....
A partnership programme for collaborative action
across Wales and in Europe



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Ageing Well in Wales

5 key priorities:

- Age-Friendly Communities
- Falls Prevention
- Dementia Supportive Communities
- Opportunities for Learning and Employment
- Loneliness and Isolation

2016: End of Phase One Event & Launch of Local Authority Plans (January), National Commitments by Partners, Engagement events across Wales, Phase Two Action Plan

Complements Welsh Government Strategy for Older People 2013-23, Social Services and Wellbeing Act, Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, Declaration of Rights for Older People, UN Principles for Older Persons.

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Unlocking potential, changing attitudes & recognising contributions

- **A culture shift in working practices and a new starting point** is urgently required: an asset-based and outcomes-focussed approach. Investing in older people i.e. social capital, enable them to undertake activities that have economic benefit.
- Investing in older people is cost-effective in the medium to long term, move from dependents to contributors, contain the costs on statutory services, avoid costly crisis ‘trigger points’.



Unlocking potential, changing attitudes & recognising contributions

- Delay the effects of frailty and dependence, keep older people active, healthy and independent. Establish the ‘virtuous circle’, improve the resilience of individuals, take a preventative, long-term and holistic approach to turn £1bn into £2bn+.
- Cultural innovation: “Social norms and behaviour change needed to value, engage and mobilise older people and rethink roles across the generations” (Nesta 5 Hours a Day: Systemic Innovation for an Ageing Population).

Unlocking potential, changing attitudes & recognising contributions

- **Wider societal challenge:** how we perceive and treat older people and ageing. Respect, deference, honour, celebration and terms of endearment in other cultures/nations e.g. Greece, Native Americans, Korea, China, India.
- “The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members” (Gandhi).
- An ageing population: ‘crisis’ = opportunity.



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Call for Action!

- **What three things can we do today to help unlock Wales' hidden assets?**
- **What three things can we do today to help change perceptions of older people?**





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Thank you

Diolch yn fawr

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