In 2014/15 the Commissioner will attend Local Service Board (LSB) meetings across Wales. The purpose of these meetings is to secure a better understanding of the work achieved by LSBs, to ensure that LSBs reflect the needs, concerns and priorities of older people, and to inform LSBs about the Ageing Well in Wales Programme and how they can better support older people through the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill.

This approach relates to the Commissioner’s Framework for Action 2013-17 and Priority one: Embedding the wellbeing of older people at the heart of public services. By focusing on wellbeing (outlined in the Commissioner’s quality of life model\(^1\)), the Commissioner aims to ensure that older people’s priorities and issues are recognised, understood and reflected across the breadth of public service portfolios – not just in health and social care.

Wales: A nation of older people

There are over 800,000 people aged 50 and over in Wales, over a quarter of the population. In the next twenty years this is expected to exceed 1m people. Wales also has the highest proportion of people of pensionable age and people over 80 in the UK. The fact that Wales is a nation of older people should be seen as something positive.

Older people make a significant contribution to society through volunteering, providing care and support, and paying taxes. After accounting for costs relating to pensions, welfare and health, older people contribute over £1 billion a year to the Welsh economy, almost £3m a day. Their contribution will total almost £27bn over the next twenty years\(^2\). The value of childcare and volunteering alone is £750m per year. They are a valuable asset which we must recognise and invest more in\(^3\).

---

\(^1\) Quality of Life model: I feel safe and listened to, valued and respected; I can do the things that matter to me; I can get the help that I need; I live in a place that suits me and my life
\(^2\) WRVS (2011) Gold Age Pensioners: valuing the socio-economic contribution of older people in the UK
But it’s not just about being older or simply living for longer. Older people in Wales have been very clear about what they want and need. They want to have lives that have value, meaning and purpose, lives through which they can continue to contribute to their families, their communities and the wider economy. It’s about ageing well, being able to continue to do the things that matter to them.

**Ageing Well in Wales**

Ageing Well in Wales, formally launched in October 2014, is a collaborative partnership, built upon over a decade’s commitment in Wales through the Welsh Government’s Strategy for Older People (currently Phase Three 2013-23), to recognise the needs of older people and, more than that, to ensure that they are seen as a valuable asset.

The overall aim of Ageing Well in Wales, chaired and hosted by the Commissioner and also an active partner of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP-AHA), is simple: to ensure that there is an improvement in the wellbeing of people aged 50+ in Wales. The Programme overview, published in October 2014, outlines key aims and outcomes that will be supported by a detailed Implementation Plan (published in 2015), outlining how every Programme partner will be contributing to one overarching objective – to ensure that Wales is a good place to grow older for everyone.

The depth and breadth of Programme partners is a direct response to the depth and breadth of the needs of older people across Wales. Core LSB partners, including Local Authorities, Local Health Boards, Police Forces, Welsh Government, and County Voluntary Councils, are also involved in Ageing Well in Wales: the Welsh Local Government Association, Public Health Wales, Police and Crime Commissioners, Welsh Government and Age Alliance Wales are all Strategic Advisory Group members, whilst other LSB partners are also involved in the Programme at all levels.

Furthermore, as part of the process for Wales to be recognised as an Age-Friendly Nation, all 22 of Wales’ Local Authorities have signed up to the Dublin Declaration on Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, showing real commitment at local levels to creating communities that are inclusive and supportive for all, regardless of their age.

Ageing Well in Wales has five themes specifically chosen to address older people’s wellbeing: Age-Friendly Communities; Falls Prevention; Dementia Supportive Communities; Opportunities for Learning and Employment; and Loneliness and Isolation. The Programme overview outlines outcomes and priority actions under each theme, which will be achieved over the next five years through collaborative working across the public service landscape with high-level strategic direction set by the

---

Strategic Action Group, advice on good practice for adoption and the development of planned activities by the Expert Advisory Groups, and buy-in from community groups and individuals in villages, towns and cities via the Thematic Networks.

**Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill**

As outlined in her response to the National Assembly’s Inquiry, the Commissioner welcomes the Bill as potentially a transformational and highly influential piece of legislation. The proposal to establish Public Services Boards (PSBs) on a statutory footing is welcomed: the Commissioner emphasises that current LSBs should be seen as key platforms to bring together all partners and deliver integrated services that respond to the needs of older people at a local level. The broad and diverse range of partners within a LSB can only encourage joined-up, integrated working that focuses on common wellbeing objectives for the benefit of older people.

In her work to embed the wellbeing of older people at the heart of public services and protect and improve community services, facilities and infrastructure (another priority in the Framework for Action), the Commissioner has examined the role of LSBs and how key partners are working together to better understand and react to the needs of older people. The Commissioner has found that the role of LSBs is not very well understood and performance, relevance and effectiveness are seen as ‘patchy’. Strengthening the legislative base of the successor PSBs and retaining their focus on improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their areas via an integrated approach should help to improve performance and relevance to older people.

The Commissioner’s work has also included reviewing the Single Integrated Plans (SIPs). Across Wales there are real variations in how the SIPs address the wellbeing of older people and therefore the proposal to re-focus SIPs as local wellbeing plans is welcomed. The wellbeing plans should not only adhere to the sustainable development principle but also fully address the needs, concerns and priorities of older people.

**Conclusion**

The Commissioner is keen to develop close working links with LSBs across Wales and ensure that older people’s issues are reflected across the board. As outlined in the Welsh Government’s ‘Shared Purpose – Shared Delivery’ document, annual reports prepared by the Commissioner are important to enable LSBs to better understand the needs of older people. Developments in the Ageing Well in Wales Programme and the Well-being of Future Generations Bill present excellent opportunities to establish partnership working between LSBs and the Commissioner, and the Commissioner looks forward to working with all LSB partners over the coming months.

---

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, standing up and speaking out on their behalf.

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.

How to contact the Commissioner:

Older People’s Commissioner for Wales
Cambrian Buildings
Mount Stuart Square
Cardiff
CF10 5FL

Phone: 08442 640 670
Email: ask@olderpeoplewales.com
Website: www.olderpeoplewales.com
Twitter: @talkolderpeople