

Commissioner's NEWSLETTER

An update from the Older People's Commissioner for Wales // Sept 21



Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru
Older People's Commissioner for Wales

A message from Heléna

“A Wales where older people are valued, rights are upheld and no-one is left behind.”

The summer months have brought with them a bit more hope and optimism, with the wide-scale rollout of the vaccine and the easing of restrictions, which has meant many older people have been able to meet up again with their loved ones, and get out and about again to do the things that matter to them.

But this has not been the case for everyone, and I know that for some older people the past few months has continued to be a time of uncertainty, anxiety and loneliness.

As we move into the next phase of the pandemic, and into what could be another difficult winter for us all, it is crucial that older people can get the support they may need to regain their health and well-being so they can re-engage with and fully participate in their communities.

Alongside this we also need to ensure that older people's rights are upheld and protected, given the kinds of issues we've seen and the difficulties people have faced during the past 18 months.

So as we move forward, my work will continue to have a strong focus on ensuring that older people's voices are heard and that their experiences guide policy and decisions in both the short and longer term to ensure that no-one is left behind.

Heléna Herklots CBE
Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Commissioner's Priorities 21-22

In July, the Commissioner published her priorities for 2021-22, setting out the extensive programme of work she will be taking forward in the year ahead to ensure that older people are protected and supported during the next phase of the pandemic, and are able to re-engage and contribute towards our communities as we move forward.

The Commissioner's work during 2021-22 will be focused on the priorities in her 2019 Strategy - Ending Ageism and Age Discrimination; Stopping the Abuse of Older People; and Enabling Everyone to Age Well - as well as protecting and promoting older people's rights, given the ways that the pandemic has exacerbated many pre-existing inequalities and injustices faced by older people.

Alongside this, the Commissioner will continue to provide information and support directly to older people through her casework service, alongside engaging extensively older people throughout Wales to ensure their voices and experiences guide her work.

You can find more information about the work planned for 2021-22 below:

Protecting and Promoting older people's rights



- Taking action with partners in Wales and across the UK to improve the rights of older people living in care homes
- Addressing the evidence gap on the specific issues faced by older people in Black Asian and Minority Ethnic communities by carrying out research and making recommendations for action
- Exploring how Advance Care Planning could be improved so older people feel fully involved in decisions about their future healthcare needs, and have their wishes recognised and respected
- Continuing work with the UK network of key partner organisations established in 2020 to ensure that older people's rights are protected and promoted, and collectively drive change

Ending Ageism and Age Discrimination



- Providing training for older people and professionals to empower them to recognise and challenge ageism
- Challenging examples of ageism and age discrimination, including the way older people are portrayed in the media
- Working with partners – including international partners – to tackle ageist attitudes in society and promote solidarity between generations

Commissioner's Priorities 21-22

Stopping the abuse of older people



- Improving support services for older people experiencing or at risk of abuse, and raising awareness amongst professionals, including training for public bodies
- Leading partnership work with the Stopping Abuse Action Group, including:
- Influencing the Welsh Government National Action Plan to prevent the abuse of older people
- Work to empower and enable older people to share their experiences
- Research into the experiences of older men at risk of or experiencing abuse
- Developing work on older people living with dementia and their carers affected by abuse

Enabling Everyone to Age Well



- Working with partners to ensure older people have support to rebuild or regain their health and well-being, as we transition through the pandemic
- Leading work with partners throughout Wales to make communities more age-friendly, including supporting local authorities to apply for World Health Organisation recognition for age-friendly communities
- Championing digital inclusion amongst older people, promoting good practice and issuing guidance to public bodies to ensure older people who are not online can access the information and support they may need

Find out more about the Commissioner's Priorities for 2021-2022 on our website:

https://www.olderpeoplewales.com/en/news/news/21-07-13/Commissioner_s_priorities_for_2021-22.aspx

Transport to Health Report

The Commissioner's latest report – **Accessing Health Services in Wales: Transport Issues and Barriers** sets out the findings of research into older people's experiences of accessing health services in Wales and the difficulties they often face due to issues relating to transport.

“I think that some older people are not going to health appointments because it is too difficult, they have to weigh up where money is best spent.”

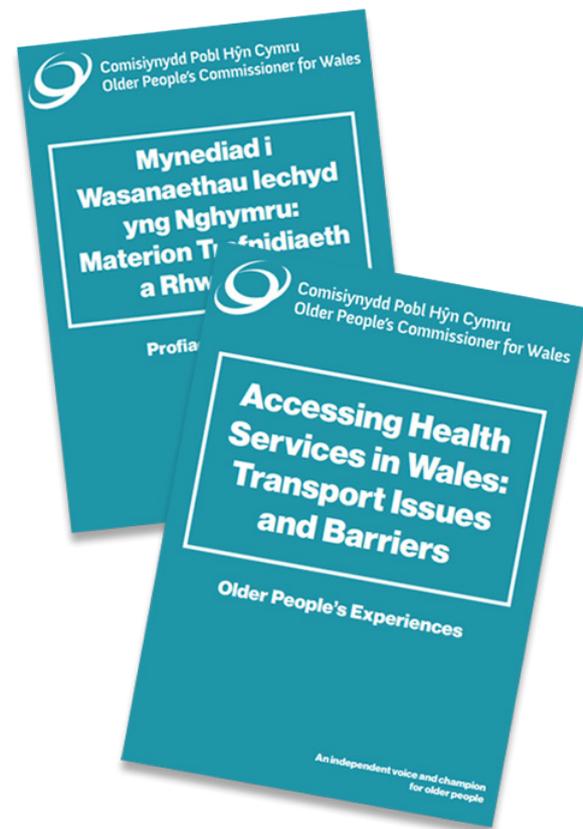
The Commissioner's findings – based on evidence captured from hundreds of older people throughout Wales and key stakeholders – highlight the significant barriers and difficulties older people may face when travelling to health services, often as a result of the limited transport options available, and issues relating to quality, accessibility and reliability.

As it was not possible to publish the report as planned in March 2020 due to the pandemic, the Commissioner worked with a number of key stakeholders to ensure that action and change would be implemented to address the issues identified, and has published a briefing paper alongside the report, which includes details of the progress that has been made to date in a number of areas.

As we move forward, the Commissioner will continue to engage with transport providers and public bodies to ensure that we can build upon this progress, and that further action is taken to ensure that older people can access the health services they need.

Furthermore, the issues identified within this report – particularly those related to planning and engagement with older people – have wider resonance given the significant amount of discussion and debate that is currently underway about how the delivery of a wide range of services will be delivered in the future.

It is crucial that the issues that older people may face when using transport services are properly understood, and that older people's voices are heard as changes are being considered to ensure that no-one is left behind.



Download the Commissioner's **Accessing Health Services in Wales: Transport Issues and Barriers** report here: [https://www.olderpeoplewales.com/en/news/news/21-08-12/Accessing Health Services in Wales Transport Issues and Barriers.aspx](https://www.olderpeoplewales.com/en/news/news/21-08-12/Accessing%20Health%20Services%20in%20Wales%20Transport%20Issues%20and%20Barriers.aspx)

Challenging Ageism: Training for over 60s

Ageism underpins many of the issues currently faced by older people and results in negative stereotypes, older people being treated unfairly and their rights not being respected and upheld.

Ageism can also mean that older people are discriminated against when trying to access the services, facilities and opportunities they need to help them to age well.

The Commissioner is delivering a further online training session to help older people to recognise and challenge ageism and age discrimination.

The two-hour session will take place in November, and will be delivered via Zoom.

So if you'd like to find out more about what to do if you've been treated unfairly because of your age, then book your place now.

You can also find information about how to recognise and challenge ageism in the Commissioner's Taking Action Against Ageism leaflet. This is available from the Commissioner's website, or contact us if you'd like a paper copy.

We're also developing training for professionals who work with older people, so watch this space for more details about this soon.

As part of the session, we'll explore:

- The ways that ageism and age discrimination can affect older people*
- How to recognise ageism and age discrimination*
- The laws in place to protect your rights*
- The ways we can challenge ageism and age discrimination*
- Where to go for help and support*

If you are over 60 and would like to book a place at the session, contact the Commissioner's office by calling 03442 640 670 or email us at ask@olderpeoplewales.com

● **Next Session:** ●

**23 November
11am-1pm**

Link: <https://tocyn.cymru/en/event/Of49902b-6ac3-4fcc-8900-e0b3678099b9>

Spotlight on...

Business in the Community: Mid-Career Review Webinars

More than 50% of us haven't thought much about our hopes or ambitions for life after 60. Have you?

The Mid-Career Review webinars delivered by Business in the Community Cymru provide an opportunity for you to reflect and take a fresh look at interlinked areas in your life and start planning for a positive future.

These FREE webinars, last about an hour, provide an overview of key aspects of your life including health, wellbeing, work and finances and aim to help attendees feel informed and confident about choices that will impact their future. It puts you at the heart of planning and to think through what changes you may want to make and where to access further support. To find out more or to register, please visit: [Mid-Career Review webinars - Wales](#).

Any individuals aged 50 or over who are in employment or actively seeking employment can register.



“I thought the Mid-Career Review webinar was very informative and gave me all the information I needed. The session was extremely useful, and now I feel a lot more confident in organising my financial affairs.”

– MCR attendee, male, age 55

“I now feel much more focused, with renewed confidence, that I still have much to contribute to the workplace.”

– MCR attendee, female aged 55+

The webinars are part of the Age at Work programme delivered in partnership with Age Cymru and supported by the National Lottery Community Fund.

For information about the Age at Work programme and the support it can offer to employers, please visit: <https://www.bitcni.org.uk/age-at-work-wales/>

Looking Forward...

Save the Date:



State of the Nation

**Webinar: Friday 1 October 2021,
10-11.30am**

Join the Commissioner for Wales on the International Day of Older Persons for the launch of her latest State of the Nation report, which examines a wide variety of primary and secondary data sources to evidence the current circumstances facing older people in Wales.

The Commissioner will be joined by a cross-party panel of politicians to discuss the report's findings and the impact that the pandemic has had on older people, as well as the action that is needed to support everyone and ensure no-one is left behind as we transition through the next phase of the pandemic.

Reserve your place now.

Visit: <https://tocyn.cymru/event/0de4c35c-1154-4dbd-9808-8a683f4b2168/s>

Follow the Commissioner's social media accounts to keep up to date with the Commissioner's work and upcoming events.



@comisiwnphcymru/ @talkolderpeople/ @helenaherklots



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www.olderpeoplewales.com

Our Newsletter

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to any colleagues or contacts that you think would be interested in receiving it.

If you have received this newsletter via a third party and would like to be added to our distribution list, please contact us (details below). We can also provide hard copies of the newsletter or a large print version on request.

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 protects and promotes the rights of older people throughout Wales, scrutinising and influencing a wide range of policy and practice to improve their lives. She provides help and support directly to older people through her casework team and works to empower older people and ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon. The Commissioner's role is underpinned by a set of unique legal powers to support her in reviewing the work of public bodies and holding them to account when necessary.

The Commissioner is taking action to end ageism and age discrimination, stop the abuse of older people and enable everyone to age well.

The Commissioner wants Wales to be the best place in the world to grow older.

How to contact the Commissioner:

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