



CYMRU Older People's Alliance

YOUR VOICE : EICH LLAIS

Cynghrair Pobl Hyn CYMRU

Registered Charity (Number 1174518)

Letter sent to newly appointed Assembly Party Leaders in Wales

7 February 2019

A MANIFESTO FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN WALES

Cymru Older People Alliance (COPA) is a new independent charity in Wales run by older people for older people. The main objective of COPA is to enable older people across Wales to have an independent voice, ensuring their opinions are heard, acknowledged and acted upon, giving Older People in Wales a strong and independent national voice. Our specific role is ensuring Older People's 50+ forums and groups across Wales have access to and can influence the national debates about issues that affect their lives.

We are writing here as a non-political organisation to all the recently appointed political party leaders in Wales to set out what our members want to see changed and improved in public services used by older people. An ageing society in Wales presents many opportunities as well as challenges and addressing these collaboratively and with a high priority is in our view the only viable way forward. Older People vote in greater numbers than any other section of the population and we invite all the new political leaders in Wales to listen to and work with COPA to help achieve our "Manifesto" for Older People in Wales as set out below. All of these issues are important but our main priorities are highlighted in bold lettering.

[for Mark Drakeford letter] We particularly value the support and engagement that the Welsh Government have given to COPA and under your leadership we want to further develop and improve that relationship to benefit older people across Wales.

We look forward to your response

Yours sincerely

S G Milsom

Chair

Cymru Older People's Alliance – on behalf of the Board of Trustees and Voting Members

COPA c/o Age Cymru Offices, Mariners House, Trident Court, East Moors Road, Cardiff, CF24 5TD

A MANIFESTO FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN WALES

A Strong Strategic Direction

1. **A resourced and refreshed Strategy for Older People in Wales** should continue to drive forward the agenda to “make Wales a great place to grow old” on an all-party basis. The forthcoming Framework for an Ageing Society could be a significant step forward but it must be ambitious and strategically focussed. There needs to be extensive consultation with older people before it is published. Plans should include **undertaking a Longitudinal Study of Ageing in Wales** (other parts of the UK have already done this).

Engagement and Participation of Older People

2. **Meaningful and effective engagement and participation of older people across all of Wales on a more consistent basis** must be the standard reached. This includes continuation of a Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing with “a direct line of sight” to Ministers on a basis of co-production. **Local and Regional Forums should be supported sufficiently by Welsh Government and Councils to be able to make an impact.** We want to see continued support for the national Older People’s organisations in Wales. Collaborative working by all to achieve the mission of “Wales is a great place to grow old” is the only way forward. A programme to ensure very local groups who provide vital early intervention and prevention services for older people are supported and also reach those who are not normally engaged. A new Welsh Government Strategy for Inter-generational Practice is needed to demonstrate fairness across the generations. **Most importantly adequate funding to enable our Commissioner for Older People to undertake her role effectively is essential.**

Human Rights, Discrimination and Abuse

3. Human Rights of Older People in Wales is a key priority. It is essential that a rights-based approach is embedded across public services for older people in Wales through **robust new legislation that is at least the equivalent of the Children’s Measure** and its supporting Regulations. Meaningful action must be taken to ensure that the rights of older people across Wales are upheld, particularly for those who may be vulnerable or need care and support. This must include raising awareness both amongst the public and staff who look after older people. **Abuse of Older People in all its forms must be addressed. We want to see an end to ageism and age discrimination wherever it occurs through a national campaign.** Resources should be adequate to ensure that the rights of the elderly are not subordinated to those of the younger generation.

Age Friendly Communities

4. We want to see the **creation of Age Friendly Communities across Wales** which recognise and celebrate diversity, brings people together to challenge ageism and ensure that all ages can fully participate in community life. This should take account of the need to develop Dementia Friendly Communities and meet the World Health Organisation 8 Domains for age-friendly communities. This concept should be developed and supported by Councils and Health Boards in Wales. **The Ageing Well in Wales programme should be given full support** to further develop and reach its potential to ensure an active old age for all older people in Wales. Many older people in Wales are also disabled including sight impaired and action to ensure good access to community facilities and encouraging and resourcing them to live independently is essential.

Social Care

5. Care Homes and Domiciliary Care services provide vital support to over 60,000 vulnerable older people in Wales and must be given greater support and funding to be efficient and cost effective and **provide high quality person-centred care and support to older people at all times**. Councils must support older people to live independently at home for as long as possible. Early intervention and prevention must be available consistently across Wales. Quality responses must be made by councils to meet their legal duties and deliver **a wide range of relevant community services and activities in their local area**.

Fair Funding of Social Care

6. In respect of Paying for Care, the misunderstanding and confusion about social care as a chargeable service and its relationship to NHS Funded Nursing Care and Continuing Health Care must not continue. **Absolute clarity is needed to enable people to plan effectively for their long -term care**. There is **a tangible injustice in the care system for people with dementia**. It is not right that because you develop one medical condition such as dementia over another, you can be left facing care costs of £100,000s. We want this issue to be dealt with urgency – older people do not have time to wait any longer. Self-funders in care homes are cross subsidising council funded residents and this must be addressed. Top Up fees are sometimes being paid or families put under pressure to pay - when they should not be and this practice must be brought into line with the statutory requirements. **We want robust and radical change to the Paying for Care arrangements so that they are based on key principles of equity and fairness – whatever financial model is utilised**. A clear and transparent timetable with commitment to action from the earliest possible date should be agreed on a cross-party basis and involving older people's representatives from the outset.

High Quality Health Service for Older People

7. Older People are by far the largest users of the NHS but should not be “blamed” for rising costs – there are other costs which have risen more significantly. **Older people must always be treated with dignity and respect during a hospital stay or out-patients appointment and discharged from hospital in an effective and timely manner.** They should not be wrongly labelled as “bed blockers” which is insulting. Arrangements for Older people making an appointment to see a GP should be more responsive to their individual needs and circumstances especially those living with sensory loss, dementia or a cognitive impairment, as well as their carers. Waiting times for appointments for very old people should be minimised. NHS Financial Planning should take account of the impact of demographic trends transparently.

Support for Carers

8. The majority of unpaid Carers are also older people. The significant contribution they make must be recognised and the support they receive improved. **A specific fund to deliver the well-being of carers is required. Carers must always receive their legal right to an assessment** and where required also have their identified needs met.

Reliable and Integrated Transport

9. Transport is essential to many older people who cannot or no longer drive a car. **An effective, safe, reliable, accessible and integrated transport system is needed across bus and rail services**, especially in rural areas, which allows older people to lead the lives they want to live without restrictions. Community Transport has a vital role to play within a transport system that works well for older people and must be improved and support the role of voluntary drivers. **The Free Bus Pass for over 60s must continue.**

Action to combat Isolation and Loneliness

10. Isolation and Loneliness has an adverse impact on the health and lives of over 75,000 of older people in Wales. The forthcoming Welsh Government strategy must give **a high priority to tackling isolation and loneliness amongst older people and lead to the funding of practical solutions at a community level.** Access to independent professional advocacy must be guaranteed for vulnerable older people. Community Groups should be supported to help the “hardest to reach” older people in Wales. Lack of Public Toilets leads to isolation for older people with continence problems and any locally agreed Toilet Strategy must be accompanied by resources to make it a reality.

Housing to meet needs of Ageing Society

11. Housing should be fit for all older people whatever their circumstances. The recommendations in the **Expert Group Report on Housing for an Ageing Population in Wales must be effectively implemented as well as expansion of "Help to Stay, Help to Move" service and aids and adaptations schemes**. We want to see introduction of more viable and innovative accommodation options for older people as they age. More Extra Care schemes should be available in all areas of Wales.

Employment for Older People

12. Employment – older people are a valued and essential part of the workforce in Wales. They need to be explicitly covered in the economic planning for Wales. Action is required to ensure the “Age is But A Number” concept works well **to combat age discrimination in the workplace** and introduces programmes to promote retirement planning as well as change of career for older workers.

Community Safety

13. Programmes are needed to ensure **all older people feel safe in their homes and communities** with better awareness raising, stronger and quicker action to prevent scams and support to combat age related hate crime and make its reporting made more effective.

Digital Inclusion

14. **Improvement of Digital inclusion of Older People** through learning and support is needed. We want to see an **end to discrimination through digital exclusion by default** – by statutory organisations as well as businesses, ensuring ready access to consultations, application processes and complaint procedures that are not only available on-line.

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February 2019

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