



Future of an Ageing Population Project: Local Expert Stakeholders' Roundtable – Swansea

19 February 2015

Context

As part of the evidence gathering for the Foresight Project on the Future of an Ageing Population, Sir Mark Walport and the Lead Expert Group undertook a programme of visits around the United Kingdom. The third of these visits was to Swansea on 19 February 2015. This meeting was held in partnership with the Older People & Ageing Research & Development Network (OPAN Cymru).

Meeting

The Local Expert Stakeholders' Roundtable provided a forum for local stakeholders to present their views and to discuss the key future challenges, opportunities and vision for the future of the ageing population of Wales. These discussions will contribute to the development of the FoaAP Project and reveal ways in which the Project may inform local decision making.

Sarah Harper opened the meeting by welcoming the group, outlining her role as Chair of the project's Lead Expert Group (LEG), setting out the roundtable's aims and giving an overview of the Project. The attendee list for the roundtable is attached at Annex A.

Discussion: Key Themes

The issues discussed by attendees are summarised below.

Joined up approach across Wales

- There is a very joined up approach to tackling the issues around ageing in Wales. Wales was the first country to have a Commissioner for Older People.
- The main driver of change has been the Welsh Government's Strategy for Older People and the Commissioner-led Ageing Well in Wales programme that brings together the diverse parties connected with ageing.
- The Commission's work is organised into five pillars: [Age-Friendly Communities](#); [Falls Prevention](#); [Dementia Supportive Communities](#); [Opportunities for Learning and Employment](#); and [Loneliness and Isolation](#).
- There is a strong research element to the Commissioner-led Ageing Well in Wales programme via OPAN Cymru. They are looking to collaborate with colleagues across Europe, learn from others and to share experience and initiatives.
- The Commissioner uses 50+ as the benchmark for looking at older age via Ageing Well in Wales, with the goal of helping older people be independent for as long as possible.
- Wales's Strategy for Older People has afforded a structure to look across the different areas (such as transport, housing), integrate them and engage older people.

- Desire to drive up the quality of health and social care provision, but need to have a structure in place in terms of transport, housing and leisure. It's also important to include older people in the decisions around this structure.
- Wales was an early adopter of Wellbeing thinking. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill (now an Act following the March 2015 vote) & Public Health Bill (White Paper, Bill published later in June 2015).

Citizen empowerment

- Big infrastructure and national services not always the right response, particularly given period of austerity.
- Strong focus in Wales on citizen and community empowerment and Welsh Government supporting local initiatives. This has been a strong direction of travel through the Social Services and Wellbeing Act and into the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.
- Local institutions and the third sector are joining up with the private sector to offer further services, at a cost to the individual.
- The Commissioner is asking Local Authorities to provide examples of creative and innovative community and public services for the benefit of older people. To date, only a few examples have been provided with concrete savings identified for the Local Authority. The Commissioner will ask Local Authorities to provide more good practice examples, and hopefully a report on these innovative services will be published at a later date.
- Need to challenge the view of older people as 'passive recipients' of care, there's a huge amount of mutual support, and need to establish the narrative of taking responsibility.
- Social action takes time to establish – how to ensure resilience if traditional services withdraw?
- Improving resilience of communities partly about improving uptake of services and benefits: £168 million in pension credit in Wales being returned to the Treasury unclaimed (Age Cymru 'Life on a Low Income' report).

Social capital and communities

- There is in general good social cohesion in Wales, which is something to be proud of.
- Changing patterns of internal migrations alter the nature and resilience of communities, as well as service needs:
 - increasing numbers of young people moving away for jobs and university, but not returning, leading to fewer people around able to provide informal care;
 - well-off people moving into idyllic rural areas in later life, but lacking the social capital built up over time in a community and feeling isolated.
 - Less well-off people less likely to move in later life, which means they're likely to age with more social capital but are less able to take advantage of new opportunities in other areas.
- Need to promote social care as a career and to cost/reward volunteering properly.

Unemployment and low pay

- The long-term unemployed are more likely to be 50 plus. For every one young person not in education, employment or training (NEET) there are three older people.
- However, the changing nature of poverty means people are more likely to be in-work poor.
- Low wage earners over the life course face a challenge in terms of saving for their retirement.
- Other inequalities arise from poverty, such as life expectancy, poorer access to services, and poverty of opportunity.
- There are differences in how possible it is to keep working into your 60s in different professions and sectors
- Impacts of how sectors and employers in the area have changed, and may change in future, with potential to disproportionately impact different groups (e.g. 45% of people in Wales employed in the public sector, more women in the service sector).
- Women provide the majority of informal care, impacts on earning ability and own retirement savings.
- A paper on employment opportunities for older people has been put to the National Assembly for Wales (Assembly committee's report published in July 2015).

Role of Housing

- Housing is critical to how optimistic people are about ageing. In Wales, many older people do not want to leave their communities, and want to stay in their homes.
- There is a need to challenge our perceptions on what moving means and a cultural shift away from staying in a house by default. There is a lot of negativity around moving into a care home. Attitudes to moving into different kinds of accommodation vary across the UK. By way of example, it was suggested that moving into a care home is seen as something to aspire to in Jersey.
- Need to make housing provision attractive to older people, local housing needs upgrading, rather than lots of new build.

Technology

- Need to engage with technology companies so they can understand what the real world is like for older people.
- Relationships are central to wellbeing. Technology can be used to enhance these, but unlikely to replace the need for direct human contact entirely. An older person can't be helped into bed by IT.
- It was questioned whether relationships would be the same in 2040 with more information technology.
- Design is very important to older people: they need to be able to use the technology easily.

ANNEX A

Sarah Harper (chair)	Director of Oxford Institute of Population Ageing and Chair of FoAP Project's Lead Expert Group
Andrea Nicholas-Jones	Head of Strategy for Older People, Welsh Government / Llywodreath Cymru
Claire Turner	Team Head in the Policy and Research Unit, Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Euros Owen	Access to Services Team Leader, City and County of Swansea / Dinas a Sir Abertawe
Helen Patterson	Office for National Statistics
Iwan Williams	Communities, Local Government and Wellbeing Lead at Older People's Commissioner for Wales / Comisiynydd Pobl Hyn Cymru
Joy Kent	Chief Executive, Chwarae Teg
Judith Philipps	Professor of Gerontology, Centre for Innovative Ageing and Director of the Research Institute for Applied Social Sciences at Swansea University
Mary Pitson	Chief Executive Officer, Age Cymru Swansea Bay
Sue Lambert	Chair, Older People and Ageing Research and Development Network (OPAN) Steering Group
Martijn Hogerbrugge	Cardiff University / Prifysgol Caerdydd
Jeanette Munn	City and County of Swansea / Dinas a Sir Abertawe