



Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru
Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Annual Report 2020-21: Summary

**An independent voice and champion
for older people**

Foreword

In this most extraordinary of years I want to start by paying tribute to the resilience of older people.

Over the last year I've spent time with older people, mainly on zoom, and listened to their experiences and stories about how they have coped during lockdown, how they have continued to help others, and their insights for what needs to happen as we transition through this dreadful pandemic.

The many emotions and challenges are encapsulated well by Margaret who shared her story with us for my Leave No-One Behind report and webinar. Margaret cares for her husband who has dementia and described how 'Lockdown pulled the rug from under us overnight, taking away the secure network of support I have cobbled together to keep us safe in our own home'. In sharing the many challenges that she and her husband face she also described how 'Good things also happened against expectation'.

This experience, of every day being a struggle, of worrying about what the future holds is one that will feel familiar to all of us. But I think many of us have also been fortunate in seeing and experiencing those good things that happened against our expectations. For me those good things have included the way in which people have reached out and supported each other, and the many new people and organisations that I've met and with whom I'm now working.

My heartfelt thanks to older people, to all those I've worked with over this last year, to my Audit and Risk Assurance Committee for their wise counsel, and in particular to my own team for their compassion and commitment to older people, their care and empathy, and for all their support.



Heléna Herklots CBE
Older People's Commissioner for Wales



Delivering against my priorities

The Covid-19 pandemic meant that the focus of my work shifted significantly, and that plans relating to a number of key pieces of work due to be delivered in 2020-21 had to change.

Despite this, my work during 2020-21 was still strongly focused on the priorities set out in my 2019 Strategy:

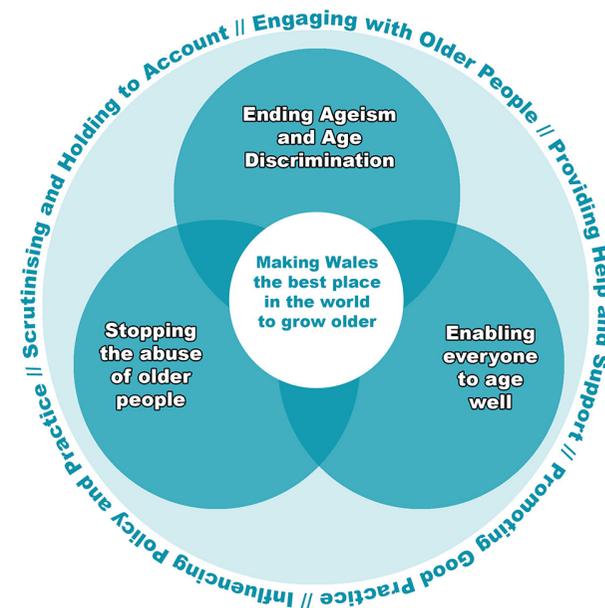
- **Ending ageism and age discrimination**
- **Stopping the abuse of older people**
- **Enabling everyone to age well**

Protecting and promoting older people's rights has also been a priority for me during 2020-21, which has been particularly important given the issues we have seen as a result of the pandemic. In addition, my calls for action and change across a range of issues, have been crucial in helping to ensure that older people are not discriminated against because of their age.

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, engagement with older people has also remained a priority, and I have held regular engagement sessions to hear directly from older people throughout Wales and ensure that my work has continued to be guided by their voices and experiences, and the issues that matter most to them.

This has supported my work to influence the action, decisions and planning of the Welsh Government and other public bodies, to ensure that the right policy and practice is in place to ensure that older people can participate in their communities and access the services and support they may need – which is vital to enable people to recover from the pandemic and age well as we move forward.

For more detailed information about the Commissioner's work during 2020-21, including audited accounts, download the Commissioner's Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21 here: <https://www.olderpeoplewales.com/en/publications/annual-reports.aspx>



Snapshot of the year 2020-21



April 2020

Calls for older people's rights to be protected following concerns relating to Do Not Attempt CPR notices and blanket treatment decisions.

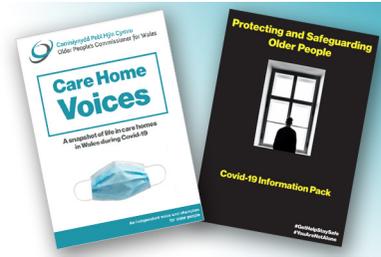
Establishes the Stopping Abuse Action Group to ensure that older people can get the support they need to keep them safe and protected.



May

Raises concerns about the impact of the pandemic on older people's rights and calls on the EHRC to examine whether rights have been sufficiently protected.

Begins virtual engagement sessions with older people across Wales to hear their experiences of the pandemic and what support and changes are required.



June

Invites older people living in care homes, their families and friends and staff to share their experiences and publishes Care Home Voices.

Distributes a Covid-19 information pack that provides information about keeping older people safe from abuse and crime.



July

Begins work with the EHRC in Wales to examine whether older people's rights have been sufficiently protected during the pandemic, requesting evidence from Welsh Government.

Calls on the Welsh Government to repeal measures in the Coronavirus Act that put older people's rights at risk.



Action for an Age Friendly Recovery

August

Publishes 'Leave No-One Behind', which sets out the action needed to ensure older people are not left behind as Wales begins its recovery.

Welcomes 'Into Sharp Relief' report, which cites her evidence to the Senedd's Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee about the impact of the pandemic on older people.



September

Publishes position paper on care homes visits and calls for renewed action to enable safe visits to care homes in Wales.

Plans research relating to the services and support available in Wales for older people who are experiencing abuse.

ACTION FOR AN AGE FRIENDLY RECOVERY: MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN

Webinar: 1 October 2020, 10.00-11.30am

The Commissioner will be joined by an expert panel to explore the most effective ways to take forward action to ensure an age-friendly recovery from Covid-19.



Rocío Cifuentes
CEO, EYFI Wales



Prof. Tom Crick
Professor of Digital Education and Policy,
Birmingham University



Cllr. Huw David
Health and Social Care spokesperson, WGLA



Rachel Rowlands
CEO, All Cymunedau
Morgannwg

Be part of the conversation. Reserve your place now.



#LeaveNoOneBehind

October

Holds a webinar attended by over 350 delegates to explore effective ways to take forward the calls for action included in her Leave No-One Behind report.

Works with a Member of the Senedd to support the establishment of a new Cross-Party Group on Intergenerational Solidarity.



November

Welcomes consultation on Welsh Government transport strategy, which reflects concerns raised by her in work on transport to health services and issues shared by older people.

Holds event to discuss how to improve the accommodation and support needs of older people who need to escape abuse.



December

Urges older people to join her in responding to the Welsh Government’s draft Strategy for an Ageing Society to ensure their voices are heard.

Gives evidence to the Senedd Health, Social Care and Sport Committee on the impact of the pandemic on older people.



January

Welcomes announcement that following her calls the upper-age limit of 74 for crime survey data will be removed.

Establishes the Age-friendly Steering Group to help guide her work with local authorities to support them to become age-friendly communities and members of the World Health Organization Network.



February

Meets Home Office Minister to discuss the Domestic Abuse Bill and the changes needed to help older people

Holds training sessions to empower older people to recognise and challenge ageism and age discrimination.



March 2021

Welcomes new data that reveals an increase in the number of new Pension Credit claimants during her campaign to increase uptake.

Welcomes cross-party support for calls to take action to tackle the abuse of older people during the next Senedd term.

2020-21 in Numbers

643

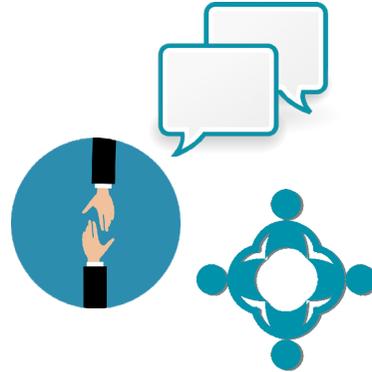
Number of older people supported by the Commissioner's Casework Team - a 14% increase compared with the previous year

584

Number of older people who took part in engagement sessions to share their views and experiences

50

Meetings with Welsh Government Ministers / Deputy Ministers



255,886

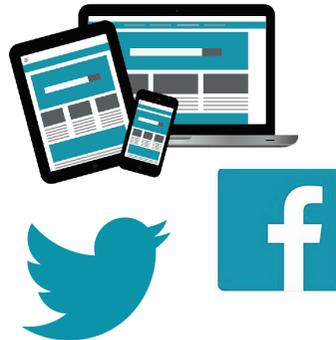
People reached with posts from the Commissioner's Facebook Page

1,171,300

Number of times the Commissioner's tweets were seen during 2020-21

12,500

Number of visits to Covid information pages on the Commissioner's website



188

Number of news items relating to the Commissioner's work during 2020-21

2.5bn

'Opportunities to see' news items relating to the Commissioner's work

£19.2m

Advertising value equivalent of the Commissioner's news coverage



Looking ahead

The pandemic has had a significant impact on older people throughout Wales, and has highlighted the need for a range of action to support older people's recovery and deliver longer-term change to improve their lives, as set out in my Leave No-one Behind report and Manifesto for the 2021 Senedd Election.

Playing my part to drive and deliver change for older people, I will be taking forward an extensive programme of work during 2021-22, focused on my three key priorities, as well as protecting and promoting older people's rights:

Stopping the abuse of older people

- Improving support services for 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.

Ending ageism and age discrimination

- 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.

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 the process and practice of Advance Care Planning could be improved so older people feel fully involved in decisions about their future healthcare.
- Continuing work with the UK network of key partner organisations I established in 2020 to ensure that older people's rights are protected and promoted, and collectively drive change.

Alongside this, I will also continue to provide information, advice and assistance directly to older people through my casework team, monitor and scrutinise the action and decisions being taken by the Welsh Government and other public bodies, and influence policy and practice at a national and local level.

Engagement with older people will also remain a key focus for me and my team during 2021-22, to ensure that their voices, insight and experiences guide my work.

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.

How to contact the Commissioner:

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Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg // This document is available in Welsh



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