

# MAKING WALES A NATION OF AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES



Comisiynydd  
Pobl Hŷn  
Cymru  
Older People's  
Commissioner  
for Wales

## Why It Matters

The communities we live in shape our health, independence, and quality of life as we age. Age-Friendly Communities remove barriers and create environments that empower older people to stay active, connected and safe.

Building Age-Friendly Communities across Wales supports:

- Healthier ageing and independence
- Reduced inequalities
- Stronger collaboration and co-production
- Alignment with Wales' prevention-focused policy agenda

## What are Age-Friendly Communities?

Age-Friendly Communities are places where people of all ages can thrive. They are built through partnerships between individuals, organisations, and services working together to improve well-being and quality of life.

These communities are guided by the World Health Organization's 8 Age-Friendly domains, which influence how we age and benefit everyone - not just older people.



## Key Benefits

- Promote independence and dignity
- Strengthen intergenerational connections
- Encourage active lifestyles and social engagement
- Reduce isolation and prevent avoidable hospitalisations

**Investing in Age-Friendly Communities is an investment in healthier, more inclusive, and resilient communities for all.**

## Creating Conditions for Age-Friendly Communities to Thrive

### Collaboration & Coordination

Effective collaboration is key to building Age-Friendly Communities and making the most of limited resources. This requires creating spaces and opportunities for people, organisations and services to connect, build trust and work together. Relationships can't grow without coordination, shared experiences and open dialogue. Surveys and isolated data aren't enough.

### Bringing People Together

Age-Friendly Communities flourish when people from all sectors engage with residents, understand local needs, and co-create solutions. Everyone - older adults, young people, and working-age individuals - bring unique insights and skills. Their involvement strengthens community ties and ensures inclusive, future-focused planning.

### Enabling Contributions

Age-Friendly Communities are built on equity, respect, and openness to all contributions, regardless of age or background. Inclusive participation helps achieve shared goals in realistic, agreed-upon ways.

### Adding Value

Age-Friendly partnerships benefit organisations by:

- Building shared understanding and resource alignment.
- Strengthening inter-organisational relationships.
- Facilitating cross-sector collaboration and cost-sharing.
- Leveraging community networks for insight and efficiency.
- Enhancing transparency and decision-making through ongoing dialogue.
- Reducing consultation fatigue while boosting trust and accountability.

# Sustaining Age-Friendly Communities in Wales

## Current Landscape

Wales has made significant progress in developing Age-Friendly Communities, supported by key initiatives:

### Welsh Government Age-Friendly Coordination Funding

Since 2021, each local authority has received £50,000 annually to fund Age-Friendly Coordinators. These roles are central to building local networks, fostering collaboration and connecting older people with services and organisations. Continued funding is essential to maintain and grow these efforts.

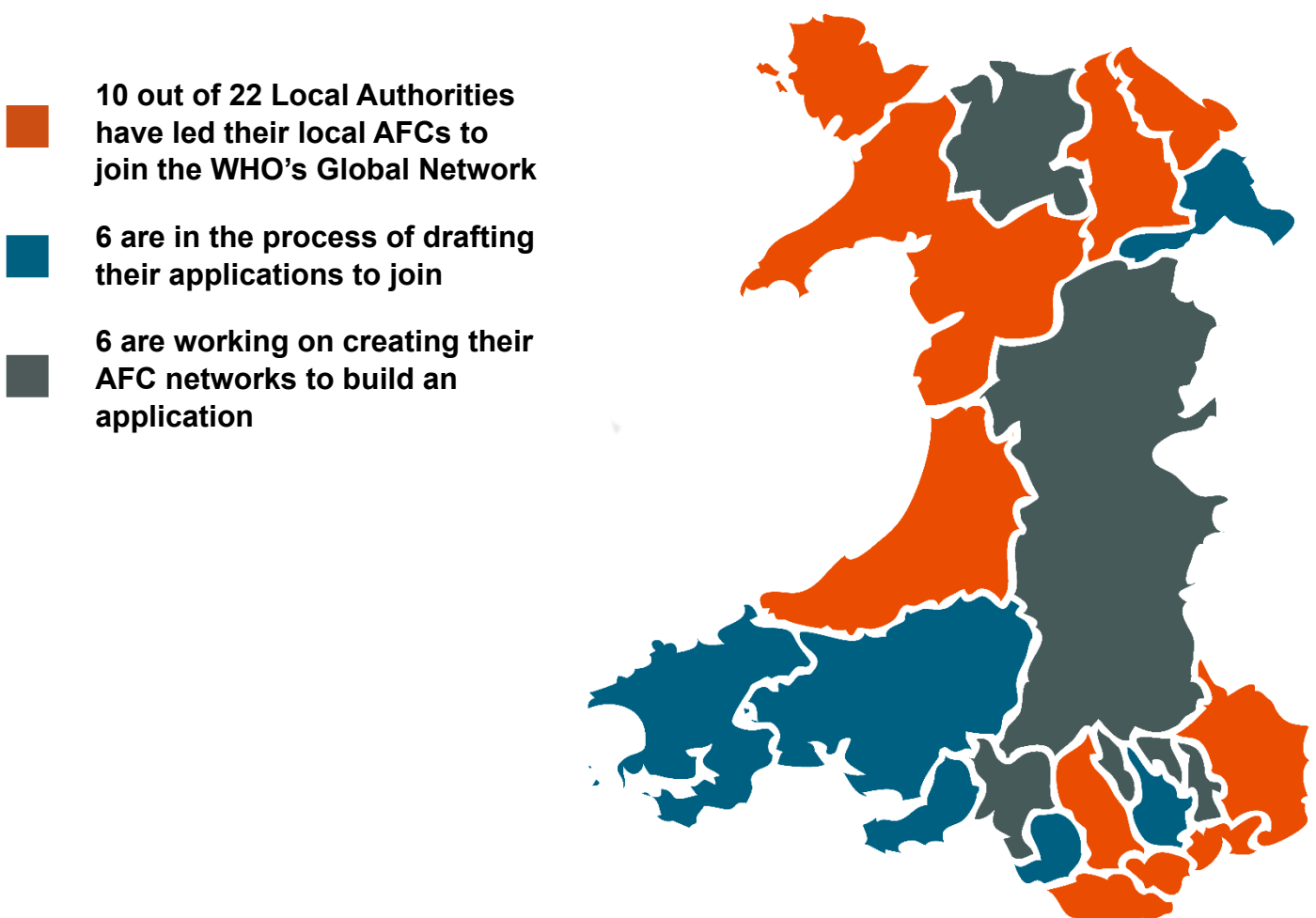
### WHO Global Network Membership

Ten Welsh local authorities are now members of the World Health Organization's Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, with 12 more working towards joining. This global affiliation enhances learning, visibility and access to international best practices.

### Older People's Commissioner for Wales

As a WHO affiliate, the Commissioner provides guidance on network membership and hosts a Community of Practice. This platform enables knowledge-sharing and collaboration among individuals and organisations working to make communities more age-friendly.

## Age-Friendly Progress in Wales



## Looking Forward: The Case for Continued Support

Over the past four years, Wales has built strong, effective networks that support healthy ageing. These networks enable organisations and communities to collaborate, share learning, and deliver impactful local action. However, without sustained funding and policy support, these gains are at risk.

### Key Risks Without Continued Support:

- Fragmentation of networks and return to siloed working.
- Reduced capacity for collaboration due to time and resource constraints.
- Loss of momentum and missed opportunities for innovation and shared learning.

### Policy Recommendations:

- Provide longer-term investment to support Wales being an Age-Friendly nation, enabling partnerships and projects within communities to support people to live and age well.
- This will allow more to be achieved by providing continuity and assurance.
- This will ensure that all older people in Wales live and participate in inclusive and effective Age-Friendly Communities, that work sustainably to play a preventative role and help us all age better.
- This will support partnerships between older people and their communities, local authorities, and other stakeholders to make the most effective use of resources and opportunities to spread and share development and good practice.

### Impact and Alignment with Broader Policy Goals

#### Age-Friendly Communities contribute to:

- Improved health, well-being, and independence for older people.
- Stronger community connections and resilience.
- Delivery of Wales' prevention-focused policy agenda through community-based interventions.

**With continued investment, Wales can build on its progress towards becoming a country where we can all live safely, enjoy good health and stay engaged with community life as we grow older.**

## **CASE STUDIES: Age-Friendly Communities in Action**

Age-Friendly partnership work has played a vital role in supporting the delivery of hundreds of activities and initiatives across Wales that provide opportunities for older people to stay connected, active and engaged. These initiatives - ranging from social groups to fitness classes, to intergenerational projects - have reached thousands of individuals and are hugely valued by older people.

The case studies included below provide more detail on two successful projects, supported through Age-Friendly partnership working, highlighting the benefits they are bringing to older people and the wider community.

### **Anglesey: Nifty 60s**

The Holyhead and Anglesey Weightlifting Centre (HAWFC) began a project in August 2019 to support older residents with healthy and active ageing through weightlifting and fitness activities, aiming to reduce slips, trips and falls whilst combating muscle loss. Called 'Nifty 60s', the project also worked to bring people together, support their mental and physical health, and to create longstanding relationships that would foster a sense of community and belonging.

The project continues to great success in Holyhead, now with over 150 members for the sessions there. Through engagement with the Age-Friendly Anglesey network, the project was able to reach out and showcase their work to other communities and organisations across the island. With support from Age-Friendly partners and with evidence of wider demand from older people and their communities, Nifty 60's was awarded a grant of £288,334 to expand across Anglesey. They now operate from five different locations and have gained nearly 300 new members.

**Video:** <https://youtu.be/F2HjqP8pbXA>

## Swansea: Collaboration Station

The Collaboration Station initiative in Swansea began in 2023 as a partnership between Swansea Waterfront Museum and Swansea Council, with the aim of tackling social isolation, improving community engagement, focusing on early intervention and prevention and shared resources.

From a welcoming physical space in the Museum, the Council's Community Engagement Team to work directly with local residents of all ages to coordinate and deliver free and subsidised events, building links between a diverse range of people, community groups and organisations. At the Collaboration Station, everyone is able to directly interact, form relationships, share ideas and jointly plan activities.

Following great success, the Collaboration Station expanded in 2024 to offer another, much larger hub in the St. David's Shopping Centre nearby. Working with Urban Foundry, part of the former Crane's Music Store was repurposed as a multi-use 'pop-up' space, within which a full activity programme could be planned and delivered in collaboration with Swansea's growing intergenerational community networks.

The new Collaboration Station was used first for the 'City Chill' events in Summer 2024, offering activities that brought young and older people together. These contributed to a 39.5% reduction in antisocial behaviour in the city centre compared to 2023, and City Chill was the overall winner of 2024 Safer Communities Award.

The Collaboration Station now offers a modular and open indoor space, furnished adaptably for both informal meetings, fun activities and areas for service delivery. It is used by a wide range of community groups and people of all ages, both to meet and interact, and to access services and support from local providers on site.

### More details:

[Collaboration Station – Waterfront Museum](#)

[Collaboration Station growth – St. David's Centre](#)

For more information, please contact [ask@olderpeople.wales](mailto:ask@olderpeople.wales) or arrange a visit through your own local AFC Coordinator to see and experience the work being delivered by the Age-Friendly Networks in your own area