



Comisiynydd
Pobl Hŷn
Cymru
Older People's
Commissioner
for Wales

COMMISSIONER'S NEWSLETTER

An update from the Older People's Commissioner for Wales

OCTOBER
2025

A MESSAGE FROM RHIAN

September 30 marked one year since I took up the role of Older People's Commissioner for Wales, and the past few months have brought with them several publications, events and roundtables, which have helped to further my aim of enabling all older people across Wales to live and age well.

This past quarter has brought with it lots of opportunities to attend national and local engagement events across Wales, including the Royal Welsh, National Eisteddfod, and the Pembrokeshire County Show, all of which provided valuable opportunities to speak directly to older people, and engage with local and national organisations, sharing information, advice and good practice.



Alongside my ongoing work to engage with and hear directly from older people across Wales, I have also organised and hosted two roundtable events - one on older people's experiences of sexual violence and abuse, and the other on older people's experiences of accessing GP services – bringing together key public bodies to agree action to deliver improvements.

Another highlight of the past three months was hosting a successful webinar on growing older without children, which saw over 100 attendees join me to explore the findings of my recent research and hear from older people about their lived experiences.

The team and I have also been busy with the publication of several key reports, including 'Growing Older in Wales', which provides a snapshot of older people's experiences based on available data, and my 'Priorities for the Next Welsh Government' document, which outlines the action I am calling for from the next Welsh Government to ensure that older people in Wales have what they need to live and age well.

As always, please remember that if you need help and support with an issue you're facing, you can contact my Advice and Assistance Team on 03442 640 670 or email ask@olderpeople.wales.

Sending good wishes to you all.

Growing Older in Wales: A Snapshot of People's Experiences



Significant inequalities are impacting on the health, well-being and independence of many older people across Wales, creating barriers in their everyday lives and limiting opportunities to live and age well.

That's the key finding from the Commissioner's recent report 'Growing Older in Wales: A Snapshot of Older People's Experiences', which was published on the one year anniversary of Rhian Bowen-Davies taking on the role.

The report examines available data and research, tracking trends over time where possible, to provide a snapshot of people's experiences of growing older across key areas of their lives.

The report finds that while later life is a time of fulfilment and empowerment for many older people, others find themselves facing a range of issues and challenges that put them at greater risk of being left behind or excluded.

The report also highlights data that illustrates the ways key issues are impacting upon people's health and well-being. This includes data showing that people living in Wales's poorest areas can expect to live in poor health for almost a decade longer than those living in more affluent areas.

The Commissioner has shared the report with the Welsh Government and other key public bodies, highlighting the action needed to respond to the issues identified, and will use the important evidence captured to support her calls for change and improvements.

Discussing this report, the Commissioner said:

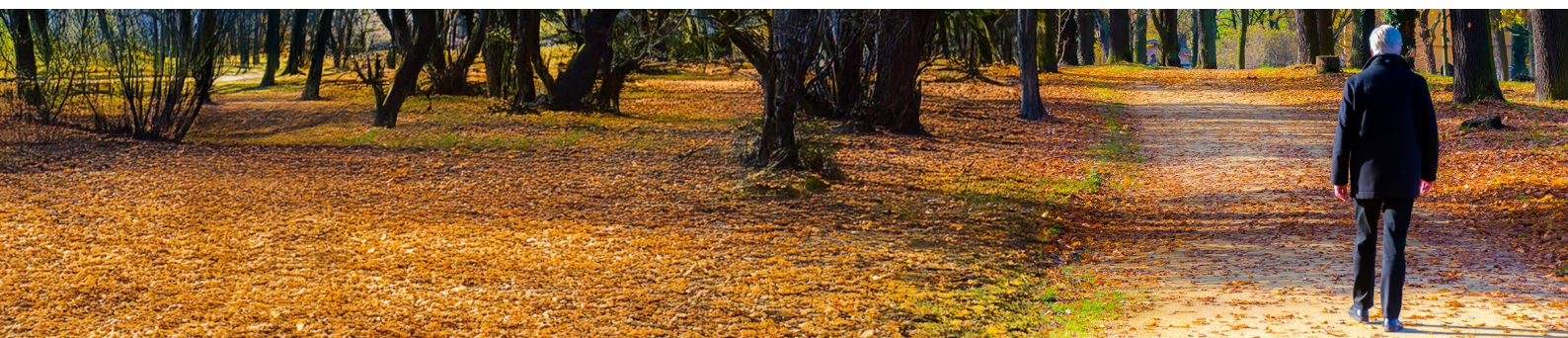
"It's positive that the data within the report shows that many older people feel fulfilled, empowered, and are able to do the things that matter to them.

"Other older people, however, face significant inequalities, leading to issues and challenges that create barriers to living and ageing well. This can affect many areas of people's lives, including access to services and support, feelings of safety and being treated fairly by society.

"As highlighted by the report, these issues undermine people's health, well-being and independence, all of which play a key role in our quality of life as we grow older."

You can read the full report here: <https://olderpeople.wales/resource/growing-older-in-wales-a-snapshot-of-older-peoples-experiences/> or get in touch if you would like a paper copy.

Growing Older Without Children: Responding Effectively to a Changing Landscape



In September, the Commissioner hosted a webinar attended by over 100 delegates, which explored the changing demographic landscape in Wales, in which an increasing number of adults are growing older without children.

The webinar provided an opportunity to explore the findings of the Commissioner's recent 'Older People Without Children' report, with a session led by Hannah Rigley from Miller Research, who undertook the research on behalf of the Commissioner.

Three older people – Andrew, Gilly and Jean – also contributed to the webinar, sharing their own lived experiences of growing older without children and providing valuable insights to those attending.

Ahead of a panel discussion and Q&A session, the Commissioner was also joined by Jenny Collieson, Co-chair of UK charity Ageing Without Children (AWOC), who shared her reflections on key steps that need to be taken to ensure people growing older without children can access the services and support they need. These include learning from people's positive experiences and supporting individuals to be proactive in terms of planning for later life, as well as improving data collection to understand more about what growing older without children means in terms of people's day-to-day lives.

The webinar provided an important opportunity to examine practical ways to tackle the issues highlighted in the Commissioner's report, which were reflected in the experiences of the guest speakers and panellists, brought bringing together a wide range of policymakers and other professionals and decision-makers to explore a subject that has been historically overlooked, challenging previous assumptions about ageing.

On our website, you can also read a blog written by Rob Hadley, a leading expert on male childlessness and ageing. Rob highlights his research into men's experiences of growing older without children, and explores the particular barriers and issues they can face. Rob also shares his views on the action needed at government, community and individual levels to transform the support on offer from society.

You can read the full article here - <https://olderpeople.wales/news/guest-blog-pawss-for-thought-the-hidden-mawfia-men-ageing-without-family-isolated-and-alienated/>

A Wales That Leads the Way for Older People: Priorities for the Next Welsh Government



The Commissioner is calling on the next Welsh Government to take a range of action in key areas to ensure that older people are not excluded from society and have the opportunities they need to live healthy, independent lives.

The Commissioner wants to see all political parties in Wales include commitments in their upcoming manifestos to tackle key issues affecting older people's lives and deliver services and support that respond to older people's needs effectively.

The Commissioner's 'Priorities for the next Welsh Government' paper, (published on 25 September) includes calls to ensure older people without digital skills are not excluded from accessing the services they need and to reduce poverty amongst older people by providing support to those who find themselves missing out due to the Pension Credit 'cliff edge'.

The Commissioner also wants to see further action to make Wales a nation of age-friendly communities, which play a crucial role in supporting us to live and age well as we grow older.

Delivering the action that the Commissioner is calling for is crucial, given that the number of older people in Wales is expected to continue to grow, reaching nearly a third of the population during the next Senedd term.

She has shared her calls with all political parties expected to win seats at the next Senedd election and has offered opportunities for them to meet with her to discuss these in more detail as manifestos are finalised in the months ahead.

Discussing the action she wants to see, the Commissioner said:

"I am calling for action in a number of key areas from the next Welsh Government focused on tackling key issues and supporting people to live and age well, recognising the diversity of older people and the needs they may have.

"The action I am calling for is based on the voices and experiences of older people living across Wales I have spoken and engaged with since I took up post, and I hope to have the opportunity to explore this in more detail with Welsh parties as they finalise their manifestos in the months ahead.

"It is important there are commitments across the political spectrum to deliver action to support older people as this will mean that whatever the composition of the next Welsh Government we will see important change, progress and improvements, building on the strong foundations already in place."

You can read the full paper here - <https://olderpeople.wales/resource/priorities-for-the-next-welsh-government/> - or get in touch if you'd like a paper copy.

Making rights real for older people: Commissioner delivers keynote lecture at Swansea University's School of Law



Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

Hillary Rodham Clinton
School of Law | Ysgol y Gyfraith

On the International Day of Older People (1 October), the Commissioner gave the Annual Lecture for the Observatory on Human Rights and Social Justice, at Swansea University's School of Law.

The lecture was focused on the practical action needed to address the significant gaps between the protection and support that should be offered by key policies and legislation, and what people experience in practice.

The Commissioner highlighted what older people often tell her: that they do not feel their rights matter, and that they feel that their rights diminish as they age. She also pointed out that age discrimination can impact upon the way our rights are applied in our everyday lives, leading to unfair treatment and exclusion.

A key issue explored by the Commissioner was the importance of greater accountability for public bodies, to ensure that they uphold their duties to safeguard people's rights.

The Commissioner also set out why a UN Convention on the Rights of Older People, would help to provide a clearer, more accessible interpretation of universal human rights in the context of older people's experiences.

This would provide a more robust framework against which to address specific rights violations experienced by older people, with a particular focus on including people's voices in decision-making processes.

You can watch the full speech online at: <https://www.swansea.ac.uk/law/observatory/>

Service transformation in primary and community-based care: June 2025 Roundtable Event



Access to GP practices is one of the issues older people raise most frequently with the Commissioner, and since the publication of her Access to GP Practices Report, she has held a series of roundtable events that bring together health bodies and other key organisations to examine the ways in which the report's recommendations are being taken forward.

The most recent of these events took place in June and provided opportunities to not only look at the progress being delivered, but to also consider emerging issues and the action needed to address these.

Some of the key issues examined at the roundtable included:

- Continuing challenges that older people experience in accessing GP services, including long waiting times for appointments and digital exclusion.
- The need to future-proof the healthcare workforce in the light of an ageing population and the importance of multidisciplinary teams of health and social care professionals working together in the community to provide comprehensive care for older people.
- The impact of service transformation on older people and the need to capture and measure people's experiences.
- The importance of continuity of care.
- Preventing older people from deconditioning in hospital.
- Digital transformation in primary care, including the development of AI tools, an integrated care record, and the importance of user-centred design to improve service delivery and patient experience.

You can read the full report here: <https://olderpeople.wales/resource/service-transformation-in-primary-and-community-based-care-summary-of-june-2025-roundtable-event/> - or get in touch if you would like a paper copy.

Meeting and speaking with older people across Wales

The past few months have seen the continuation of the Commissioner's visits across Wales, meeting and speaking with older people to hear directly about their experiences of growing older, the issues that they face within their communities, and the changes they'd like to see. These engagement events have also provided opportunities to share helpful information and resources and provide advice and assistance on a range of matters.

Everyone we've visited gave the Commissioner and her team a very warm welcome, and we thank everyone who spoke to us for sharing their experiences so openly and honestly, helping us to identify common and emerging issues which guide the Commissioner's work to influence policy and practice. We've got lots more engagement planned across Wales, but if you'd like the Commissioner to visit your group, please get in touch on 03442 640 670 or email ask@olderpeople.wales.

Here is a snapshot of the engagement events attended by the Commissioner and her team in the past quarter:

- Cardiff – Cardiff and Vale Unpaid Carers Assembly
- Swansea – Ageing Well Community Group
- Vale of Glamorgan – Cowbridge Dementia Friendly Day
- Conwy – Cartrefi Conwy Events in Llanwrst and Llandudno
- Swansea - West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Third Annual Carers Event
- Ceredigion - Neuadd Tregroes
- Blaenavon – Big Pit National Coal Museum
- Cardiff – Pickleball Welsh Open Championships
- Cardiff – Birchgrove Coffee Morning
- Llanharan – Llanharan OAP Association
- Pembrokeshire – Pembrokeshire County Show
- Caldicot – iConnect, Cwrt Severn
- Wrexham – National Eisteddfod
- Carmarthen – U3A Association
- Cardiff – Llandaff 50+ Forum
- Swansea – The Shed at the Pavillion, Llansamlet
- Torfaen - Cwmbran, Pontypool and Blaenavon's 50+ Forums
- Llanelwedd – Royal Welsh Agricultural Show



Spotlight On...

Our Spotlight On... section highlights useful information from other organisations, as well as opportunities to make your voice heard or get involved in upcoming projects.

Learning and Work Institute – Adult Learner of the Year

Every year, the Learning and Work institute celebrates lifelong learning and recognises people's achievements at the Inspire! Adult Learning Awards.

This year, the winner of the 'Ageing Well' award was Gloria Beynon from Llanelli, who is using her newly learnt skills to deliver helpful workshops to support new mothers. Read Gloria's story below.



"Learning has reawakened my mind beyond childcare, boosting my confidence and overall wellbeing. Volunteering has introduced me to so many wonderful families and CYCA has given my grandson the confidence to thrive among his peers. It's a fantastic experience that I would recommend to anybody of any age." says Gloria Beynon recipient of the Ageing Well Award at the 2025 Inspire! Adult Learning Awards.

From volunteer to inspiring learner advocate

Gloria Beynon's retirement has become an active chapter focused on lifelong learning and community service. A former teaching assistant, Gloria chose to view her later years not as a limitation, but as an opportunity for transformation.

Her journey of engagement began at the Connecting Youth Children and Adults (CYCA) nursery in Llanelli, where her grandson attended. Eager to be involved, she first participated in their Conversational Play course, which sparked her passion for learning and led her to complete six accredited courses that significantly boosted her confidence and wellbeing.

Now a Community Volunteer Ambassador, Gloria utilises her skills, notably by independently running weekly "Cooking on a Budget" workshops for young mothers, making her an invaluable, inspirational asset to the community.

Gloria's story was celebrated on the 18th September at the Inspire! Adult Learning Awards in Swansea, alongside ten other inspirational people and projects who have demonstrated a commitment to never stop learning.

Catch up on all the stories, and find out more about the awards on the Adult Learners' Week website: <https://adultlearnersweek.wales/award-winners/>

Help to shape Shelter Cymru's research on private renting

Shelter Cymru have launched a new project to better understand the experiences of people who rent their homes from private landlords so that we can put forward evidenced and achievable solutions to the challenges renters face.

Shelter Cymru wants every stage of this new project to be informed by people who have been private renters or who currently privately rent their home so have created an advisory panel of renters. They also think it's vital that this panel reflects the diversity of experiences of people who rent privately, and as part of that hearing the views of older renters is key.

If you'd be interested in being involved with a monthly panel meeting to help shape this work then they'd love to hear from you.

There is the option to be named and thanked publicly for your involvement or to be involved in the advisory panel privately.

If you would be interested in participating in this project, or would like more information, please contact laurenc@sheltercymru.org.uk, or call 07920 752468.



Our Newsletter

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to any colleagues or contacts that you think would be interested in receiving it. 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 is an independent voice and champion for older people across Wales.

The Commissioner is working for a Wales that leads the way in empowering older people, tackling inequality and enabling everyone to live and age well.

How to contact the Commissioner:

Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Cambrian Buildings
Mount Stuart Square
Cardiff
CF10 5FL

Phone: 03442 640 670

Email: ask@olderpeople.wales

Website: www.olderpeople.wales

Twitter: [@talkolderpeople](https://twitter.com/talkolderpeople)

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