



Comisiynydd  
Pobl Hŷn  
Cymru  
Older People's  
Commissioner  
for Wales

# COMMISSIONER'S NEWSLETTER

**MAY  
2026**

**An update from the Older People's Commissioner for Wales**

## A MESSAGE FROM RHIAN

As we leave behind the winter months and enjoy the longer days brought about by spring, I have been reflecting on the work that my team and I have undertaken over the past quarter, to enable older people to live and age well across Wales.



As ever, we've been busy taking forward a range of action, most recently publishing a report examining why many older people face long waits for crucial adaptations to their homes, something that often leaves individuals unable to undertake basic tasks or move around their homes safely, and puts their health, safety and independence at risk.

I also was pleased to launch my new guide to Future Care Planning, to empower and support older people to plan for their futures so that their wishes are respected if they find themselves in need of care and support, or unable to make decisions for themselves.

Alongside this, I've also brought together articles from public service leaders published as part of my Spotlights on Ageism series, which shines a light on the impact of ageism on older people's everyday lives and the significant barriers this creates for individuals and society. The insights offered and evidence shared provide a helpful picture of key issues across a wide range of sectors, as well as how action to tackle these could be prioritised.

I have also called for action to address concerning issues that have had a particular impact on older people in recent months, including the provision of healthcare in corridors and other unsuitable spaces, and financial fraud linked to Winter Fuel Payments.

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](mailto:ask@olderpeople.wales).

As we enter the warmer months, I hope you all have the opportunity to enjoy some spring sunshine, and I look forward to updating you again towards the end of summer.

Rhian

# Delays in home adaptations putting older people's health, safety and independence at risk



**In March, the Commissioner published a report that revealed that older people in many parts of Wales are waiting over a year for crucial adaptations to be made to their homes, with the average in one area sitting at nearly two years.**

Sharing the findings of her report, 'Time to Adapt: Examining waiting times for Disabled Facilities Grants in Wales', the Commissioner warned that delays in adapting older people's houses often leaves individuals unable to undertake basic tasks or move around their homes safely, which puts their health, safety and independence at risk.

The Commissioner's findings are based on data requested from local authorities on average waiting times for works delivered through Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), which offer funding for home adaptations to those who qualify.

The Commissioner found an average overall waiting time for adaptations of 370 days in Wales, indicating that waiting times have almost doubled since 2019. Responses from local authorities also show that older people in around half of areas are waiting considerably longer than the average, with the average waiting time in one area sitting at a massive 692 days, almost a year longer than the average for Wales.

The report includes a series of recommendations for local authorities and the next Welsh Government to address the issues identified, including improving the quality of the data collected and publishing this more quickly to enable greater transparency, monitoring, oversight and scrutiny, as well as opportunities to identify and respond to potential issues more quickly.

The Commissioner is also calling for the Welsh Government to work with local authorities, housing adaptations service providers, support agencies and older people to develop an updated All-Wales Practice Guide and new Service Standards for Wales, which would support effective practice and help to improve consistency.

Discussing her findings and recommendations, the Commissioner, said:

"It's crucial that action is delivered both immediately and in the longer-term to ensure that older people across Wales can access the adaptations they need to be safe, healthy and independent at home, and can live and age well."

**Read the full report here - <https://olderpeople.wales/resource/time-to-adapt-examining-waiting-times-for-disabled-facilities-grants-in-wales/>**

# Future Care Planning: Take action today to plan for your future



**The Commissioner is urging people to take action to plan for their futures, so that their wishes are respected if they find themselves in need of care and support, or unable to make decisions for themselves.**

This important message comes alongside a new guide from the Commissioner – Future Care Planning: Planning for your future today – which provides a wide range of helpful information about the ways in which we can think about, discuss, and record our wishes for the future.

The guide covers topics that many people may already be familiar with, such as making a will or organ donation, as well as less well-known arrangements, such as setting up Lasting Powers of Attorney or Advance Statements, which enable us to record our preferences in terms of care, treatment and financial matters.

The guide also includes details about resources and templates that can help people with future care planning, as well as contact details for organisations that can provide useful information and support.

Hundreds of copies of the guide have already been distributed to older people throughout Wales, which will continue to be distributed via partners across Wales. We'll also be sharing the guide with older people at a range of engagement events and information days.

The Commissioner, said: “We often find it difficult to consider how our needs or circumstances may change as we grow older, and what we would want to happen if they do. But it's really important that we think about, discuss and record our preferences to help ensure that any care or treatment we may require reflects our needs and wishes, or that our financial affairs are properly managed.

“This could include things like how we'd like to be cared for, treatment options we wish to refuse, preferences based on personal beliefs and nominating individuals to speak up for us if we are no longer able to make decisions for ourselves.

“Many older people I've spoken with across Wales have told me they'd like to look into making these kind of arrangements, but have struggled to find clear information and resources to help them navigate these processes.

“I hope that with the support of my guide, people across Wales feel more empowered to plan for their futures today.”

**You can download a copy of the Commissioner's guide here - <https://olderpeople.wales/resource/future-care-planning/>**

**Here you can also find accessible versions of the guide, available in Audio, BSL and Easy Read formats. If you'd like to receive a paper copy of the guide (or multiple copies), please get in touch.**

# Commissioner Calls for Rapid Action from the New Welsh Government to Tackle Corridor Care



**In March, the Commissioner called for rapid action from the new Welsh Government to tackle corridor care, following the publication of a report by the Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM). State of Emergency Medicine in Wales report.**

The State of Emergency Medicine in Wales report revealed that ‘an estimated 965 deaths in Wales in 2025 were associated with waits of 12 or more hours in Emergency Departments before admission into a hospital bed’, with an increase of 29 deaths compared with 2024. In the report, the RCEM called on the next Welsh Government to commit to ending the link between long waits and deaths by 2030.

In a statement responding to the report, the Commissioner said:

“The findings from the Royal College of Emergency Medicine offer further important insights into the scale and impact of care delivery in non-clinical environments, so-called ‘corridor care’, and demonstrate why far more needs to be done to tackle these issues.

“Words like ‘frightening’ and ‘warzone’ should never be used to describe aspects of our health service, yet this kind of language is increasingly common in reports from patients and staff about their experiences, as well as conversations I’ve had with older people and their loved ones across Wales.

“There is growing evidence that corridor care – which puts the safety and dignity of patients at risk – has become normalised within the NHS due to the pressures it faces and is now an everyday reality, as reflected in RCEM’s report.

“This must change rapidly, which is why I want to see coordinated action from health boards and the next Welsh Government that will ensure treatment is provided in appropriate settings at all times.

“This will not only be crucial to enable the delivery of high quality, safe and dignified care, but also to improve people’s expectations about what they might experience should they need treatment and, importantly, to restore trust in our health system that unfortunately seems to have been lost amongst many older people.”

**You can read the full report from RCEM here – [https://rcem.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/RCEM\\_SoEM\\_Wales\\_A4\\_0326.pdf](https://rcem.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/RCEM_SoEM_Wales_A4_0326.pdf)**

# Winter Fuel Payment: Commissioner warns of increased risk of scams targeted at older people



**The Commissioner has warned that older people are at increased risk of being targeted by criminals exploiting tax changes relating to the Winter Fuel Payment.**

She said that scams and fraud relating to tax arrangements are common, but when new arrangements like these are put in place there are often significant increases in this kind of criminal activity, adding that criminals also often target older people specifically, due their perceived vulnerability.

The Commissioner has urged older people to be vigilant and to avoid sharing personal or financial information with anyone who contacts them unexpectedly about this matter.

The Commissioner said:

“Whenever high-profile changes to tax or financial arrangements are made, like those we’re seeing with the new Winter Fuel Payment system, we often see massive spikes in fraud and scams, which are often targeted at older people who are often seen as ‘easy targets’ by criminals.

“Common scams include being contacted by text or email, either with a warning that money is owed or the promise of a rebate, advising individuals to click a link to resolve the matter, which often involves sharing personal or financial information.

“If someone receives something that seems genuine, but are not sure, then they should find a publicly available phone number or email address and contact the organisation in question to double-check.

“Similarly, if you receive something you think is a scam, please report it. You can forward suspected scam texts to 7726 (which spells out SPAM), or forward suspected scam emails to [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk) so they can be investigated.

“It’s crucial that older people are vigilant and do not share personal details if they are contacted unexpectedly about this or a similar matter.”

# Spotlights on Ageism: Growing knowledge, inspiring action

## Sylw i Oedraniaeth Spotlights on Ageism



**The Commissioner has published a series of contributions from public service leaders and other experts which shine a light on the impact of ageism on older people's everyday lives and the significant barriers this creates for individuals and society.**

Spotlights on Ageism highlights a number of areas where people may face exclusion or discrimination due to their age – including mental health services, transport and the built environment – and the insights and evidence shared provide a helpful picture of key issues across a wide range of sectors, as well as how action to tackle these could be prioritised.

Tackling ageism continues to be a key focus running across the Commissioner's work, and evidence captured through Spotlights on Ageism will strengthen her calls for action and recommendations for public bodies.

Alongside this, the Commissioner is also calling for a national conversation about ageism and its impact here in Wales, with the voices of older people at its heart.

This would provide a strong platform for raising the profile of these issues, highlighting the injustice of ageism and age discrimination, and – ultimately – changing attitudes and behaviours.

While this may be uncomfortable and challenging at times, facing up to the realities of ageism is crucial to enable action to tackle it and ensure we all have the opportunities we need to live and age well.

**Huge thanks to everyone who contributed! Read the Spotlights on Ageism here - <https://olderpeople.wales/news/spotlights-on-ageism/>**

# Need help and support? Get in touch with our Advice and Assistance Service



**We all need a bit of help and support from time to time, but sometimes it can be difficult to know where to turn.**

So if you have a problem, or need support with an issue, please remember you can contact the Commissioner's Advice and Assistance Team. The team can help to connect you with support and services throughout Wales, and help to ensure your rights are upheld.

The team can provide you with help and support if:

- You are aged 60+
- You live in Wales
- You have been experiencing problems with services, such as health, social care, community services or housing
- You have questions about your rights

You can also get in touch on behalf of an older person, such as a family member or friend if they are facing issues or difficulties.

The Commissioner's Team will take some information from you so they can investigate your concerns and identify the best way to resolve your issues. In some cases, this might mean referring you to a partner organisation that is better placed to help. You can contact the Commissioner's Advice and Assistance Team in a number of different ways:

**Phone: 03442 640 670**

**Email: [ask@olderpeople.wales](mailto:ask@olderpeople.wales)**

Or write to the team at the address below.

**You can also get in touch via our website: [www.olderpeople.wales/advice-and-assistance-team/](http://www.olderpeople.wales/advice-and-assistance-team/)**

# Meeting and speaking with older people across Wales

In addition to the wide range of action highlighted above, the Commissioner continues to attend a variety of engagement events across Wales, giving her the opportunity to meet and speak directly with older people, to learn more about their experiences of growing older in their communities, as well as the issues they may be facing and the changes they would like to see, to help them to live and age well. 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 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 and deliver positive change.

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](mailto:ask@olderpeople.wales).

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

## Older people's groups

- Probus Club of Porthcawl, Bridgend
- Penmorfa Centre for Independent Living, Ceredigion
- Inside Out Cymru – Bedwas Choir, Caerphilly
- The Dusty Shed, Cardiff
- Newtown Community Café, Powys
- ShedConnect, Swansea
- Pen y Fai WI, Bridgend
- Van Community Centre Gardening Group, Caerphilly
- Wrexham Miners Project, Wrexham
- Book of You Project, Wrexham
- Coleg Cambria, Wrexham
- Dementia Friendly St Fagans Session, Cardiff



Alongside her engagement with older people over the past few months, the Commissioner held meetings with key stakeholders including Welsh Ministers, local authority Age Friendly teams across Wales, and senior leaders of key public bodies such as the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust and the Equality and Human Rights Commission. These meetings provided opportunities for the Commissioner to raise issues and concerns, highlight older people's experiences and examine the action needed to deliver positive change.

The Commissioner's team also contributed to a wide range of stakeholder events and conferences across Wales and more widely, to ensure older people's voices are heard, shape discussion and debate and influence policy and practice.

**Want to find out more about our engagement with older people and stakeholders across Wales? Follow us on X / Facebook / LinkedIn or visit the Commissioner's Engagement Diary: <https://olderpeople.wales/engagement-diary/>**

# 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.

## CARE Lived Experience Collective

The CARE Lived Experience Collective, brings together people with a wide range of experiences of social care – both as people using care and support services for different reasons, or as unpaid carers themselves.

Members of the collective share their insights and perspectives about research based on their lived experiences. The collective, which is hosted within the Centre for Adult Social Care, aims to improve research by ensuring it is shaped and influenced by those who have first-hand experience of using and providing adult social care support.



The CARE Lived Experience Collective are Recruiting for new members. If you're interested in sharing your experiences, find out more here: <https://careresearchwales.org/care-lived-experience-collective-2/>

# CWMPAS Media Literacy Sessions

CWMPAS have recently launched their Media Literacy programme, which is funded by Ofcom and developed for staff and residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

This initiative is designed to help local organisations, frontline staff, and communities develop the essential skills needed to navigate today's complex media environment.

Their programme offers a series of free media literacy workshops, both online and in-person. Each workshop will cover:

- Understanding media and media literacy
- Misinformation, disinformation and why they spread
- The role of AI in the spread of fake news
- Practical tools and strategies for evaluating online information and responding to misleading and harmful content.



## They provide the following opportunities for those in Rhondda Cynon Taf:

1. A general introduction and overview of Media literacy: critically evaluating online information including mis/disinformation and the role of AI

Audience: Frontline staff and volunteers, and community members in RCT

Length: 1 hour

2. A deeper dive into media literacy

Audience: Frontline staff who have attended the overview session and are interested in becoming Media Literacy Ambassadors - sharing their learning and supporting others to develop media literacy skills.

Length: 1.5 hours

All workshops are interactive, accessible, and designed to empower participants to become more informed and confident digital citizens.

**If you are interested in learning more or would like to arrange a workshop for your staff or community group in Rhondda Cynon Taf, please contact [medialiteracyenquiries@cwmpas.coop](mailto:medialiteracyenquiries@cwmpas.coop)**

# 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. You can also [unsubscribe here](#).

## 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](mailto:ask@olderpeople.wales)

Website: [www.olderpeople.wales](http://www.olderpeople.wales)

X: @talkolderpeople

## Accessible Formats

If you would like this publication in an alternative format, please contact us. All publications are also available to download and order in a variety of formats from our website.

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