



A Guide to Older People Engagement & Services

At a glance

With the increases in the cost of living, we know that many older people are concerned about shopping for food, heating their homes and filling up their car.

Also, many older people are unsure about the financial entitlements that may be available to them, and where they can go for help and information.

IMPACTS

The cost of living crisis can deepen social isolation for elderly people, especially those in rural areas of Wales, as they may cut back on travel, activities and social events.

The elderly, who are more vulnerable to cold-related illnesses, are facing sharp increases in energy bills. Rising fuel costs have pushed many older people into fuel poverty, where they cannot afford to adequately heat their homes.

With grocery bills soaring, many elderly people are struggling to afford a healthy diet. Some are cutting back on meals or turning to lower-quality, cheaper foods, which can lead to malnutrition. Older people living on their own may be especially impacted, as loneliness can reduce the motivation to prepare nutritious meals.

The financial stress caused by rising costs can lead to anxiety & depression in older adults. The uncertainty of not being able to meet basic needs or maintain their standard of living can weigh heavily on them, especially if they have limited support networks or face medical challenges.

The Older People's Commissioner is working for a Wales where older people are valued, rights are upheld and no-one is left behind

Challenges

Older adults often face several challenges when engaging with their community including physical limitations; cost, transportation, caregiving responsibilities & lack of opportunities. These barriers can limit their ability to participate fully in community activities and as a result many individuals face isolation.

Opportunities & Solutions



Community & Warm Hubs

These spaces can provide warmth, free hot drinks, and social interaction, helping older residents reduce their heating costs and feel less isolated.



Financial Assistance and Advice

Councils can fund or partner with local organisations to offer financial advice services; benefit checks to ensure older people are claiming all available entitlements; energy efficiency advice and signposting to support agencies.



Food Support and Meals

Offering/signposting to initiatives such as Community Pantries, Meals on Wheels, Luncheon Clubs can all help tackle food insecurity.



Social and Wellbeing Support

Offering social activities to encourage community participation & reduce loneliness. Introduce volunteer schemes where residents help older neighbours with shopping, household chores, or companionship.



Digital Inclusion

Councils can ensure older people are not left behind by providing free or subsidised internet access and training on using digital devices.



Community Transport

Provides a vital solution by connecting individuals to essential services and addresses the needs of those who struggle with access and affordability.

Key Stages

- 1 Understand Your Community's Needs**
Conduct surveys, focus groups, and public consultations to gather input from older adults and other community members about their needs and priorities. Identify existing resources, infrastructure, programs, and services that are already in place that support ageing populations.
- 2 Create An Action Plan**
Define a shared vision for supporting older people in your community and set measurable goals. Prioritise action areas such as transportation, outdoor spaces, social inclusion, health services, and communication.
- 3 Seek Out Partnership Opportunities**
Establish or enhance services that promote healthy ageing, such as exercise programs, health screenings, and mental health services. Facilitate social connections through community centres, intergenerational programs, and events aimed at reducing isolation.

Useful Information

Powers

Power to provide premises for the use of clubs or societies having athletic, social or recreational objectives – Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s 19

May contribute by way of grant towards expenses incurred by any voluntary organisations in providing recreational facilities which the authority has powers to provide – Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s 19

Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908, Section 23

Powers & justifications can differ, councils should consider their specific circumstances. For advice & guidance, councils may wish to contact their One Voice Wales Development Officer.

admin@onevoicewales.wales

What is adult safeguarding?

Our duty to protect an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect.

At the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.

[Age Friendly Wales](#)

[Age Cymru What Matters to You Survey 2024](#)

[Age Cymru Blueprint for Older people in Wales 2024](#)

Existing Services & Projects

Prestatyn Town Council in association with MIND hold a weekly 'Singing strummers' music group

Blaenavon Council's Cinema Befriending Club has successfully combatted loneliness through free monthly film screenings, engaging over 1,100 residents

Coedpoeth – Community Council offer a free, accessible to all food cupboard

Caia Park Community Council support their residents to apply for unclaimed benefits including Pension credit

Bedlingog & Trelewis Community Council host a weekly community hub which provides a warm space with food and bingo.

Pembrey & Burry Port Town Council partner with volunteers to provide a meals on wheels service for residents

Martletwy Community Council support a Good neighbour scheme

Cwmbran Community Council offer a gardening and decorating service



Watch our [One Voice Wales Older Persons Engagement & Services Webinar](#)

Funding Information & Potential Opportunities

[Welsh Government Warm Hub Funding](#)

[NFU Mutual Agency Giving Fund](#)

[National Lottery Awards For All](#)

One Voice Wales offer a training module on 'Making effective grant applications'

Community Engagement

One Voice Wales offer community engagement training modules

[Llandough Community Council](#) have completed an Older Persons Survey. Find out more information [here](#)

Partnerships

Partnerships between community & town councils, local authorities, and third-sector organisations are mutually beneficial. They enhance service delivery, promote efficiency, foster innovation, and increase the capacity for strategic planning. Combining resource or supporting other organisations through grant funding can create sustainability of services.

Digital Inclusion resources

Welsh Government guidance to help people become digitally confident.

Care & Repair Cymru

is a Welsh charity, working to ensure that older people can live independently in safe, warm, and accessible homes.

Age Cymru Benefit advice can support people to apply for entitlements and help boost income with benefits such as Pension Credits and Attendance Allowance

Partnerships enable better resource targeting, foster social inclusion, and support the well-being of all residents, especially the elderly & vulnerable.

Local authorities each offer Community Connect services, with **Community Connectors** linking vulnerable people to essential services. Partnerships with these connectors strengthen communities by ensuring robust support systems.

Every Welsh authority now has an Older People's Champion, helping to create an **Age-Friendly Wales**. Age-Friendly Officers promote activities that keep older adults active and engaged, enhancing well-being and reducing isolation.

Community and Town Councils are well-positioned to support these efforts.

Volunteering

Volunteering opportunities offer a wide range of benefits for older people, contributing positively to their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. As people age, staying active and engaged in the community can greatly enhance their quality of life. Volunteering gives older people a meaningful way to contribute to society, helping them feel valued and needed. Many volunteering roles involve physical activity, whether it's working in a community garden, helping at a local event, or delivering meals; regular movement can help older people stay physically fit and improve mobility.

Each local authority has an **Association of Voluntary Services** which support Volunteering

WCVA exists to enable voluntary organisations to make a bigger difference together.

Gardening and food growing are important for boosting individual wellbeing and bringing people together. Community gardening is an activity that offers a mix of fresh air, physical exercise, and social interaction.

For guidance and support you can contact Rachel Carter, Local Places for Nature Officer who can also advise on free garden packages for the community. Email: rcarter@onevoicewales.wales

Allotments and community growing guidance local authorities town community councils

Warm Hubs & Spaces

Warm hubs and spaces provide a warm welcoming place for older people and can play a role in offering immediate support and helping people to feel cared for.

As well as food and hot drinks, these hubs can offer advice and information from specialist agencies; host activities; provide digital support as well as food and clothing banks.

They can play a valuable role as part of a wider set of support, helping people through a very difficult winter and making sure they are not alone.

Find information for setting up a Warm Hub [here](#)

Tackling Isolation

The vital projects and activities community and town councils in Wales deliver play a crucial role in preventing loneliness and social isolation. Councils can also play a role in encouraging everyone to think about people they know in their communities who may be lonely, and to reach out to them. Co-ordinating or signposting to **Befriending Schemes** can provide a positive impact on peoples lives.

Want to Find Out More?

For more information on the One Voice Wales Cost-of-Living Crisis project contact the team at: