

Cwm Taf Ageing Well in Wales Plan

Heneiddio'n Dda
yng Nghymru
Ageing Well
in Wales



MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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Making Cwm Taf a good place to grow older for everyone.

It is well documented that people are living longer and this is something to celebrate, however this alone is not enough if quality of life is not maintained during these additional years. The Ageing Well in Cwm Taf Plan sets out our vision for Cwm Taf to be a good place to grow older for everyone, where Older People can continue to do the things that are important to them. This plan outlines a range of existing services, opportunities and support available for Older People in Cwm Taf, and sets out our objectives to drive forward the work of Ageing Well in Cwm Taf so that we improve the health, well-being and lives of people as they age.

In Cwm Taf and throughout Wales we have an ageing population. The facts and figures below demonstrate some key statistics relating to our current and projected population of Older People in the region:

- In 2013 there were over 53,000 people aged over 65 and over 23,000 over 75;
- By 2030 the number of people over 65 years is expected to increase by 30.4% and people over 80 years by 71.3%;
- 44.5% of people aged over 75 in Cwm Taf live alone – Older People can spend between 70-90% of their time in their home;
- The number of informal Carers over the age of 65 in Cwm Taf grew by more than 30% between 2001 and 2011, more rapidly than the general Carer population;
- 30% of Carers in Cwm Taf provide substantial levels of care with 32% providing over 50 hours of care per week and;
- The number of people over 65 living with dementia is expected to increase from 3,463 to 5,325 (a 53.7% increase) and for those over 75 from 2,903 to 4,676 (a 61% increase).

The national [Ageing Well in Wales Programme](#) hosted by the Older People's Commissioner for Wales was launched in October 2014, with Wales being the first country in the world to establish a Commissioner for Older People. The Programme contributes to and complements the [Welsh Government's Strategy for Older People](#).

The overall aim of the Ageing Well in Wales Programme is simple: to ensure that there is an improvement in the well-being of people aged 50+ in Wales.

The five strands of the Ageing Well in Wales Programme are:

- Age Friendly Communities
- Falls Prevention
- Dementia Supportive Communities

- Opportunities for Learning and Employment
- Loneliness and Isolation

Heléna Herklots was recently appointed as the new Older People's Commissioner for Wales, replacing Sarah Rochira following her six year term. The new Commissioner has recently set out her ambition to make Wales the best place in the world to grow older, and is likely to have thoughts on how the issues that affect the lives of Older People in Wales can and should be addressed. As such the Cwm Taf Ageing Well Plan will need to take account of this and any resulting changes to the national Ageing Well Programme will need to be reflected in updates to our plan. In relation to the well-being of the population as a whole, two key laws have been passed in recent years - the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. These acts provide a unique opportunity for public services to work differently together. The public bodies involved are required to consider people's wider well-being when providing services, to consider the long-term, to work better together and with communities, to look at preventing problems arising or situations worsening and to take a more joined-up approach. These acts are not specific to Older People, they consider the needs of the entire local population, with Wales leading the way when it comes to improving well-being for all including Older People. As such these plans link closely with Ageing Well in Wales and the local Ageing Well Plan which also focuses on improving well-being, but specifically for those aged 50+.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 required an initial Assessment of Local Well-being. This assessment looked at the assets and challenges of our communities in terms of their social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being using existing data and by engaging with the people who live and work in Cwm Taf. This information was used to develop Well-being Objectives and inform the Well-being Plan. The [Cwm Taf Well-being Plan](#) was published in May 2018 and identifies three key objectives, all of which will benefit Older People:

- **THRIVING COMMUNITIES:** To promote safe, confident, strong and thriving communities improving the well-being of residents and visitor and building on our community assets.
- **HEALTHY PEOPLE:** To help people live long and healthy lives and overcome any challenges.
- **STRONG ECONOMY:** To grow a strong local economy with sustainable transport that attracts people to live, work and play in Cwm Taf.

In order to provide a better future for the people of Cwm Taf the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 required public services to undertake a Population Assessment. To understand what is important to communities, the things impacting on their well-being and their individual needs for care and support (across a number

of client groups, including Older People), taking account of the population that live in the area now and the population likely to live here in the future. This Assessment included a range of both quantitative and qualitative data, which helped to improve understanding of what matters to our residents and communities. The Assessment provided a stronger platform from which future plans could and can be developed and delivered together, including the commissioning of innovative solutions and new models of service delivery, in line with the requirements of the SSWB Act. [The Regional Plan](#) published in May 2018 is informed by this assessment, responding to the needs of people for care and support. The Regional Plan proposes the implementation of an Older Peoples Commissioning Group, and identifies the following objectives for Older People:

- We will nurture supportive communities and family networks through making easily accessible universal services, general and targeted health and well-being initiatives available.
- We will offer integrated, time limited and goal orientated services to help Older People whose needs cannot be met purely by community and preventative support.
- We will ensure people have access to holistic assessment that takes into account people's needs and wishes, promoting choice and control to improve quality of life.
- We will ensure that Older People whose needs require a specialist or substitute service are able to access those services at the right time at the right place and that they offer an improved quality of life.

In Cwm Taf we have worked across partnerships with colleagues including those within the respective Local Authorities, Cwm Taf University Health Board, and the third sector to collate information about activities to support the Ageing Well in Wales agenda.

We continue to work closely with our Older People through engagement to listen to their views and incorporate these views into our plans. A questionnaire was used to assist in this process as well as face-to-face interaction. A copy of the questionnaire used is available as Appendix 1.

Both Local Authorities are committed to supporting Age Friendly Communities and have demonstrated this through signing the Dublin Declaration (2013) details of which can be found in Appendix 2.

In terms of how Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council provide services for Older People, both local authorities and Cwm Taf University Health Board have worked in collaboration to publish their [Joint Commissioning Statement for Older People's Services 2015-2025](#). This commissioning statement describes a strong and shared commitment to ensure

seamless and integrated health and social care services for our older population. Focusing on prevention, self-management, responsive and sustainable to promote healthy lifestyles, promotion of independence and protection of vulnerable people and improvement of services and joint working across Cwm Taf. This truly integrated system ensures services are co-designed by those using services, developed in partnership with all key partners and sectors whilst being wholly focused on those people receiving care.

Common themes identified through consultation on the Joint Commissioning Statement were:

- Living independently at home;
- Accessing accessible information and advice;
- Social isolation and loneliness;
- Transport;
- Dignity, respect and compassion;
- Easier and quicker access to GP's;
- Family Carer Support;
- Accommodation/Housing and;
- Funding/Resources.

Age Friendly Communities

Background

In Cwm Taf we have a number of diverse communities, varying in their make-up, appearance and size. Age Friendly Communities are ones, which meet the needs of everyone irrespective of their age. Such communities should encourage and enable Older People to engage with their surroundings and continue to engage socially within those communities, this will help to maintain their health, well-being and independence.

Age Friendly Communities were launched as part of the Dublin Declaration on Age Friendly Cities and Communities which looks at all factors that can influence the health and well-being of Older People including social participation, housing, transportation, outdoor spaces and buildings, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information and community support and health services. These can be seen simply as things such as; signage and pavements affecting mobility, affordable housing, interaction with family and/or friends to positively

impact mental health and having opportunities to participate in volunteering/employment to name a few.

As part of this process both Merthyr Tydfil CBC and Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (in 2015), along with all other Welsh Local Authorities have signed up showing real commitment at local levels to create communities that are inclusive and supportive for all regardless of age.

An Age Friendly Community is a community in which people come together to make changes to make life better for the people who live there. These changes can be minor but make huge differences to people's lives and independence, this can include recognising people locally who may be isolated and lonely and looking to establish activities in which they could participate to encourage community cohesion. Each community will be unique in terms of their definition of age friendly, based on their own experiences, and how this can improve the quality of life for those living there.

What Older People told us?



Current picture

The needs of Older People are addressed across eight dimensions enabling communities to be more age friendly. Work underway locally relating to some of these dimensions includes the investment by Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil Local Authorities in extra care housing for Older People, to ensure appropriate support for people as they age and their needs change. Extra care housing allows Older People to maintain their independence with the reassurance that help is available with care workers on hand when needed. Extra care housing may be suitable for couples who have different care needs, as it can provide more flexible care and support.

In relation to social participation, it is recognised that interacting with family and friends is an important part of positive mental health and that having a sense of community is important. In Rhondda Cynon Taf we have been fortunate in recent years to have been able to offer Older People's groups and organisations the opportunity to bid for grant funding for projects and activities that link with the Ageing Well in Wales themes. A wide variety of groups and organisations have received funding towards various activities, helping to ensure their sustainability and affording their members the opportunity for social participation. A regional 'Celebrating Our Communities' event was arranged in March 2018, in collaboration with the Ageing Well in Wales team at the Older People's Commissioners office, Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority, Merthyr Tydfil local authority and Cwm Taf Care & Repair. The event showcased successful local projects that benefit Older People across Cwm Taf.

There are six 50+ forums in Cwm Taf who meet in their local communities: Merthyr, Upper Rhondda, Rhondda, Taf Ely, Cynon and Llantrisant. These forums together with, in Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Older Persons Advisory Group are supported by the respective local authorities. Members are involved in a range of aspects of community life, being part of local groups and organisations. Through the forums, Older People are encouraged and supported to have their say on local issues that extend their day to day activities, including various consultations undertaken by the Public Service Board, Cwm Taf University Health Board, Welsh Government and the respective Local Authorities.

In relation to communication and information, partners work together to produce an information calendar for Older People with contributions from a range of organisations, including those from both the statutory and third sectors. This calendar provides a wide range of information in a traditional format, signposting Older People to relevant local services and organisations to assist them in improving their health and well-being and to stay connected with the local community. The calendars are distributed widely across Cwm Taf to ensure as many Older People as possible benefit from the information contained within them. The 50+ forums are supported with IT training to ensure that they can access information digitally. On an ongoing basis information is disseminated to known groups and organisations across the area including details of relevant key events and services.

In terms of Community support and health services, the Stay Well @ Home service is a multi-disciplinary and multi-sector service (including both local authorities), which has been transformational in its approach to integrated health and social care. The service undertakes initial assessments and commissions/provides health, social care and third sector community support to facilitate safe and timely return home from A&E and the Clinical Decision Unit (CDU) to prevent unnecessary admission to hospital. For those patients who are admitted, integrated complex discharge assessments will be undertaken utilising the default position that individuals are supported to return to a community setting. The aim of the integrated @Home service links directly to the principles of the Supporting People programme who commission services in which people over 50 can access to live independently for as long as possible.

Age Connects Morgannwg (ACM) have a range of services on offer with regards to support including information and advice, community outreach services, hospital

discharge services and support@home service to help improve people's confidence, reduce isolation and promote independence. ACM also provide an Independent Advocacy Service to ensure people's rights and wishes are being listened to. Age Connects Morgannwg Hospital Discharge Service, can provide 6-8 weeks support to Cwm Taf residents aged 50+ who have recently been discharged from hospital. Many Older People live alone or with an elderly partner or relative. After a stay in hospital the transition from hospital ward to home environment can be traumatic. Additional support may be needed during this period of readjustment. This free service can provide assistance with things like bed changing and laundry, preparation of light meals/snacks, reassurance and emotional support, information/liaison with other agencies and support to carers.

Merthyr's already well established Contact Centre / One Stop Shop at the Civic Centre and the numerous One4All Centres run by RCT provide members of the public with a convenient location to pay bills, speak to an officer face-to-face, and to source information, advice and support.

Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities. Bringing generations together in this way can greatly contribute to communities which are age friendly. There are a range of formal and informal intergenerational activities ongoing throughout the region, examples include project work with Digital Communities Wales where youth groups and local schools are engaged to work with Older People to assist them with improving their digital skills working with modern technology to enable them to access services and information. Other examples include local schools who link in with local community groups for Older People for celebration events including St David's Day Concerts and Easter Bonnet Parades.

Falls Prevention

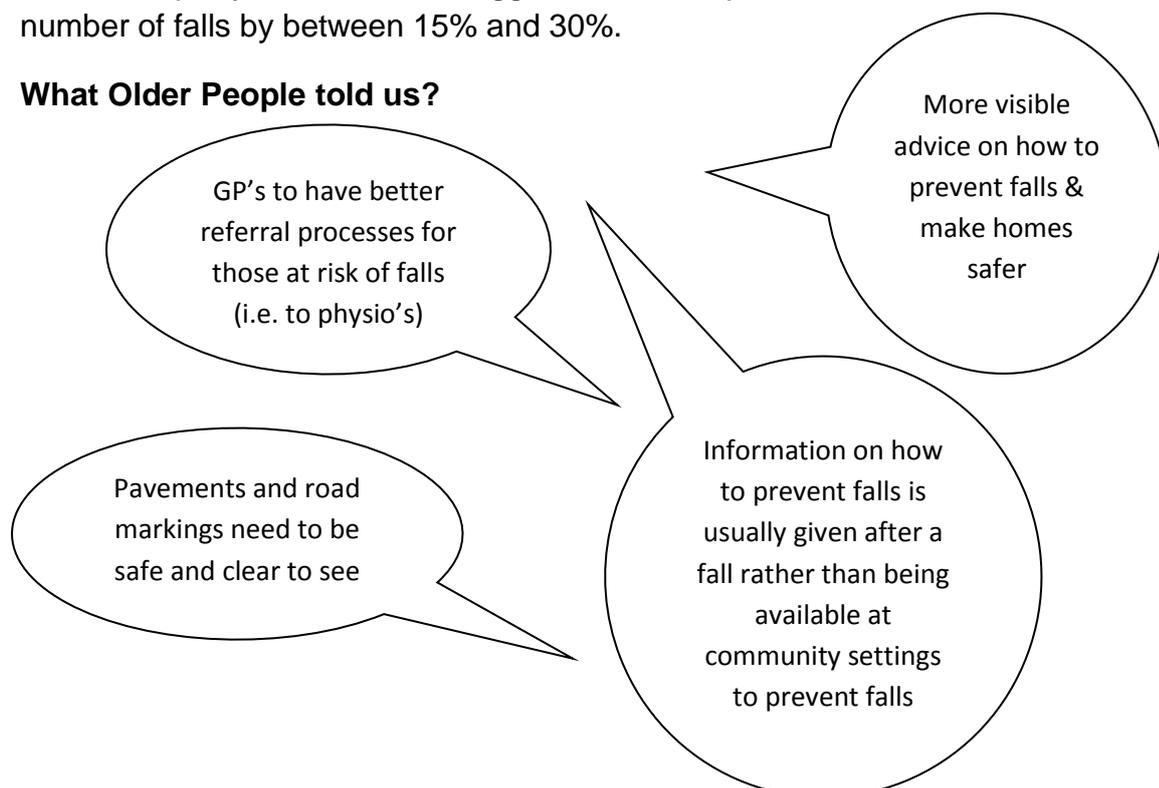
Background

Falls prevention is a key issue in the improvement of health and well-being amongst Older People. Falls are a major cause of disability and death in Older People in Wales, and result in significant human costs in terms of pain, loss of confidence and independence. Over a third of people over the age of 65 fall each year, which increases to 50% for the over 80s. In Cwm Taf approximately 70 people aged over 65 attend A&E each week due to a fall. These figures are increasing due to an ageing population.

A fall can happen to anyone at any age and at any time, and falling is not an inevitable part of ageing. The vast majority of falls are preventable with some minor changes to lifestyles and homes. Most falls experienced by older adults result from a number of interacting risk factors, including physical, behavioural and environmental. It is important that Older People are encouraged to regularly have their vision and hearing checked; to see their GP or Pharmacist for regular medication reviews; to look after their feet and nails; to wear sensible shoes and slippers; to maintain a safe indoor environment at home one which is free from slip and trip hazards; and to take regular exercise to maintain their strength and balance. These are some examples of a range of simple actions Older People can take to reduce their risk of having a fall.

As well as the personal human costs associated with falling outlined above in terms of pain, loss of confidence and independence, there are also financial costs associated with health and social care services. UK NHS costs are estimated at more than £2.3billion per year. Evidence suggests that falls prevention services can reduce the number of falls by between 15% and 30%.

What Older People told us?



Current picture

A number of substantial national and local initiatives are underway throughout Wales to address the issue of falls, ranging from prevention through to treatment. A Falls Awareness Project was developed locally in Rhondda Cynon Taf to raise awareness of falls risks and to contribute towards falls prevention. Following the successful pilot of the project, and the subsequent development of resources the project was formally launched, and the project is now being rolled out in a variety of settings across the region. The project is supported by a number of partner organisations, these partners help us deliver a range of information and activity sessions on a variety of topics including foot and nail care and appropriate footwear, management of medicines, home safety advice, etc. Other sessions introduce gentle exercise which is very much age appropriate and can be tailored to the abilities of the participants, this includes chair based yoga, a tai chi taster session and LIFT (Low Impact Functional Training). Practical advice is also offered during sessions with Welsh Ambulance Service Trust advising on what to do in the event of a fall, British Red Cross offering first aid advice and assessment of functional mobility undertaken by colleagues from Physiotherapy. The overall aim of the project is to raise awareness of falls risks and reduce the risk of participants actually having a fall.

The National Exercise referral scheme operates throughout Wales. The scheme targets people aged 16 and over with, or at risk of developing, a chronic condition. In addition there is the Joint Care programme, this is an exciting bespoke programme focusing on improving the mobility and weight management of people with knee or hip pain. The Merthyr Tydfil Sport Physical Activity Development Plan was updated for 2018/2019 and includes key programmes including the Free Swim initiative delivered through Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust for all those over 60 and Family Engagement Activities to engage with wider family members to get more involved in physical activity and sport to promote good physical and mental health. There has also been the establishment of a new Disability Sport Merthyr Tydfil Forum to work with key partners to consult and communicate with community members to develop high quality activities that people with disabilities can access.

There are a number of age appropriate exercise activities available for Older People through both respective Local Authorities run leisure facilities and voluntary and private sector organisations. Age Cymru have successfully trained a number of volunteers in both Tai Chi and LIFT (Low Impact Functional Training) locally and these volunteers are able to run courses in the area and we are also fortunate enough to have the support of volunteer Tai Chi and Chair-based Yoga instructors as part of the Falls Awareness Project running locally.

Cwm Taf Care and Repair offer a free home visiting service where a healthy homes check of the property is undertaken. The aim is to reduce the risk of falls with the installation of aids and adaptations that are assessed by their accredited Trusted

Assessors. This intervention reduces falls within the home that can often lead to hospital admissions.

The Organisation also work with Cwm Taf Health Board, Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Services department and Merthyr Tydfil Community Services on prevention services and their hospital discharge Programme RRAP (Rapid Response Adaptations Programme).

They also work in partnership with both local authorities and Cwm Taf University Health Board to deliver “Enable”. This project is underpinned by prevention and early intervention, designed to keep people out of hospital and from requiring treatment as a result of a fall at home. Where people have been admitted to hospital, it is designed to help facilitate their earlier discharge thus freeing up beds for others and helping to reduce or prevent delays in the transfer of care and generally reducing the demands on the NHS. The system supports the intent of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, which is to ensure there is care and support in place to meet people’s needs, with a specific focus on prevention and early intervention to reduce dependency and reliance on statutory services.

Cwm Taf Care and Repair currently deliver “Falls Prevention Brief Intervention” training to partners and clients across Cwm Taf. This has evolved from Care and Repair Cymru chairing the National Taskforce across Wales that has membership from 1000 Lives Wales, NHS in Wales, Public Health Wales, and a range of other public and third sector bodies and has been built upon from the Expert Advisory Group from Ageing Well in Wales. Cwm Taf Care and Repair also sit on the Cwm Taf University Health Board Falls Improvement Group.

The Age Connects Morgannwg Nail Cutting Service has been operating since 2011 and now supports over 3000 Older People to take better care of their feet. For many Older People, arthritic joints and tough overgrown toenails make wearing shoes and walking comfortably almost impossible and increase the likelihood of falls. For Older People who cannot cut their own toenails, the nail-cutting service is a very important aspect of their healthcare. Tough, overgrown toenails can break leaving sharp edges or grow so long they can penetrate the skin and lead to pain and infection. This is particularly important to avoid in those more susceptible to infection such as diabetics and people taking anti-coagulant medication. Good foot and nail care is important for reducing falls risk.

Dementia Supportive Communities

Background

The overarching aim is to make Wales a dementia supportive nation by building and promoting dementia supportive communities, to be achieved through the following outcomes:

- Wales is an environment where people affected by dementia feel confident, valued and understood.
- People affected by dementia in Wales note an improvement in the timely identification of dementia and support provided before, during and after identification
- Enhanced and extended education, training, information and advice around dementia is established.

The number of people with dementia in the UK is expected to grow rapidly over the next several decades and with age being the largest risk factor for dementia, increased life expectancy is the driving force behind these projections:

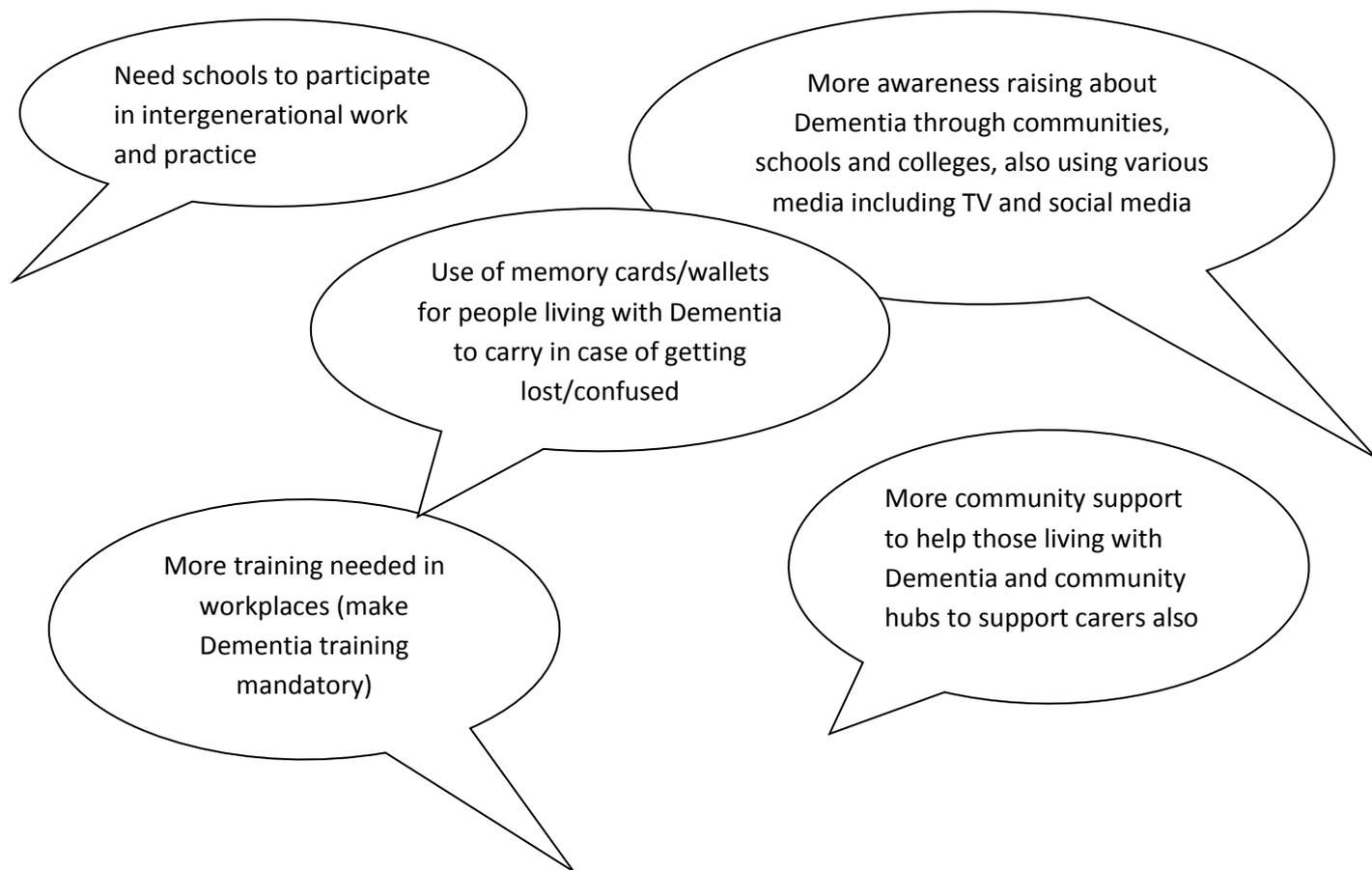
- 1 in 3 people born in the UK this year will develop dementia in their lifetime
- 850,000 people are estimated to be living with dementia in the UK
- 38% of the population know a family member or close friend living with dementia

The Cwm Taf population assessment told us that the number of people over 65 living with dementia is expected to increase from 3,463 to 5,325 (a 53.7% increase) and those over 75 from 2,903 to 4,676 (a 61% increase).

The Assessment also highlighted that Older People need and value supportive communities and family networks as well as personal independence and a desire to remain at home, with coordinated health and social care.

The Cwm Taf Memory Assessment Service is working in the community providing support to the Llantrisant Dementia Support Group alongside the Church community in the area. This group provides a safe and welcoming environment for those living with dementia, their carers and family members to receive support from the community, their peers and the memory service. The group aims to increase awareness and understanding of dementia within the community, by using the resources available to them.

What Older People told us?



Current picture

In February 2018, Welsh Government published its Dementia Action Plan for Wales 2018-22. In response, the Cwm Taf Dementia Steering Group have developed the draft Dementia Statement of Intent and Action Plan which has been informed by local stakeholders and will be further developed to include outcome measures, specific timescales and more lower level detail over the coming months following further consultation.

Cwm Taf Community Coordinators work closely with colleagues from the Alzheimer's Society, frequently making referrals so that individuals living with dementia are able to benefit from their activities and services. From March 2019, funding has been approved for a dedicated Dementia Coordinator working across Cwm Taf.

The Alzheimer's Society, which is also part of the Carers Strategy Network is promoting Dementia Friends, and Dementia Champion Training as well as supporting Cwm Taf in local areas currently to become Dementia Friendly Communities (DFC). This involves working with all sectors and agencies including those living with dementia and their carers to inform how to become a DFC and reduce the stigma often associated with dementia. Merthyr has made some progress with becoming a DFC through the Dementia Friendly Steering Group

chaired by community representatives and Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil and supported by the Alzheimer's Society. Although they are not officially launched as a DFC just yet, the action plan refers to the progress made around increasing the numbers of Dementia Friends, rolling out training and publicity materials to raise awareness of dementia and the support available for those living with and caring for those with dementia, also working to achieve intergenerational projects, engagement with schools and local businesses to support the communities in which they serve to become Dementia Friendly.

Similarly Dementia Friendly Communities have been established in Maerdy and Pontypridd, and there are also a number of smaller scale dementia support groups in existence throughout the region.

The Alzheimer's Society coordinate 'Singing for the Brain' sessions and local Dementia Cafes to provide a friendly and comfortable environment for people living with dementia to come together and feel supported, as well as carers to come together and share experiences, meet other carers and support each other.

The range of services provided by Age Connects Morgannwg can assist those living with a diagnosis of dementia. For example the Support@home Service provides help, encouragement and support to people who may be struggling to live independently and may be at risk of homelessness. They may be struggling with their diagnosis of dementia. The service aims to help Older People remain living in their own home for as long as they wish and is possible, by providing one to one support to continue doing the things they enjoy and that keep them healthy and independent. Each year thousands of hours of support is provided to Older People, helping them maintain or regain their independence. Cwm Taf Care & Repair provide an intensive Casework Service in partnership with key partner organisations that proactively addresses the housing needs of people with dementia and their carers which aims to:

- Avoid crisis situations that can arise when the home of a person with dementia is unfit or unsuitable for their needs and which can hasten a move into hospital or residential care.
- Reduce the response times taken when urgent repair work is needed to the home of a person with dementia by having detailed knowledge of that home e.g. type and make of central heating boiler etc.
- Have detailed knowledge of the support network of the person with dementia to make it easier to respond to potential crisis situations.
- Ensure that those with dementia and their carers have access to detailed information on housing matters when and where appropriate e.g. on first being diagnosed.

The Valley LIFE project aims to deliver for our Valleys Local Integrated services for the Frail and Elderly. This will include developing two highly effective and dynamic

Health and Well-being Hubs for Older People with cognitive and memory problems in the Cwm Taf region. Working in partnership with Older People, carers, voluntary organisations, and clinicians and social workers, two centres of excellence will be created to provide: early diagnosis, tailored treatment programmes and ongoing support for people with dementia. Plus integrated holistic care services for the frail elderly to support people to stay well at home for longer, together with a range of community based enhanced support services.

This will help ensure Older People, their carers and families receive timely support to bring enhanced well-being and quality of life. The ambition is to be world leaders in the treatment, care and support for people with dementia, by working with our local communities to support people with dementia together. The Valley LIFE project includes work to develop Ysbyty George Thomas in Treorchy into a Dementia and Frailty Hub, with initiatives underway there including natural wakening, a sensory room and pet therapy.

Telephone scammers who target vulnerable and elderly consumers with scams and nuisance telephone calls have been stopped in their tracks, with a National Trading Standards project. Locally Trading Standards Officers have provided call blocking devices to Older People, and specifically those living with dementia. The devices completely block all recorded messages, silent calls and calls from numbers not already pre-identified by the home owner, reducing the risk of falling victim to telephone scams and thus the worry about unwanted phone calls.

Opportunities for Learning and Employment

Background

It is recognised that Older People have a wealth of knowledge and experience, and are currently worth over £1 billion to the Welsh economy every year, therefore it is mutually beneficial for individuals and the economy for people to be engaged in some form of education, employment or training.

Continued learning during older age can bring a range of benefits including contributing towards personal well-being and fulfilment, being part of society and the economy and supporting creativity and innovation.

The Strategy for Older People 2013-2023 highlights Older People who are unemployed are more likely to be long-term unemployed. Around 45% of unemployed people aged 50-64 have been unemployed for a year or more.

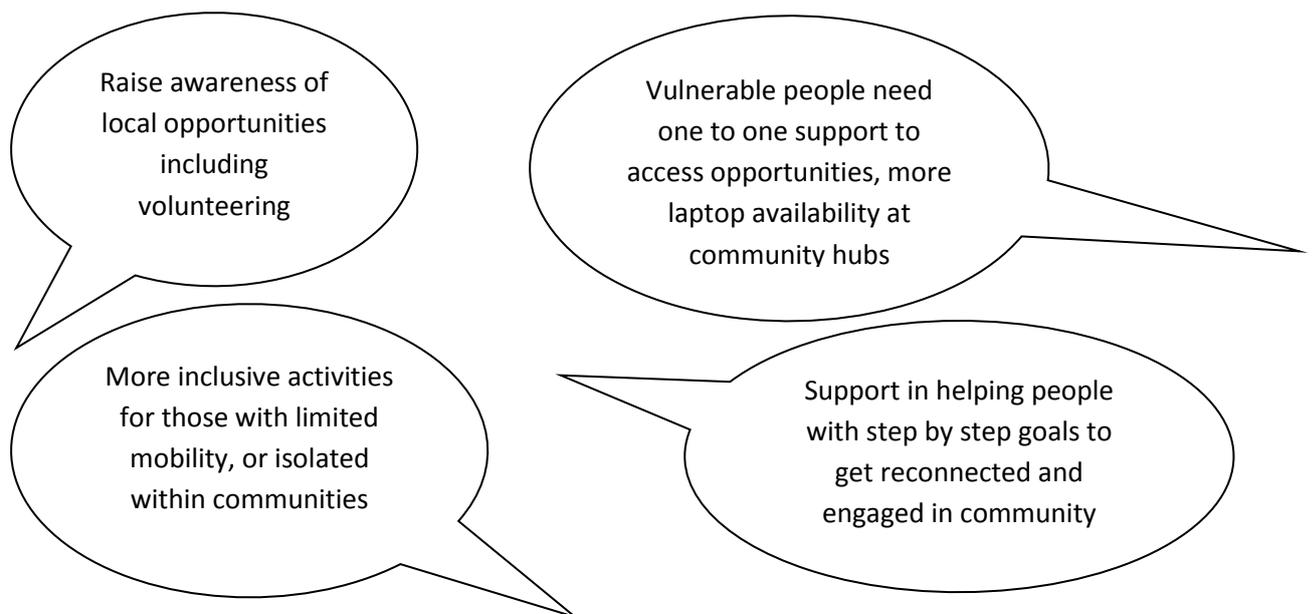
Given the downturn in the economy Older People are potentially nowadays having to remain or re-enter the workforce at an age when in the past they would have been able to comfortably retire. Increasing numbers are unable to afford retirement at State Pension age, and therefore having opportunities to continue to learn and develop to

improve prospects for employment is key. Employers need to recognise the benefits of employing Older People and having an age diverse workforce, with Welsh Government's 'People Don't Have a Best Before Date' campaign encouraging employers to recruit and train older workers.

For those Older People who are able to retire when they choose, access to learning can be key to maintaining well-being. Learning and skills development for these individuals might include, digital inclusion, or social interaction, providing new challenges, self-fulfilment and mental stimulation.

Increasing opportunities for employment, education, training and volunteering, will enable Older People to remain a key part of society for a prolonged period, complementing the work being undertaken in tackling loneliness and isolation and promoting community cohesion.

What Older People told us?



Current picture

Job Centre Plus can help Older People if they are out of work; providing training, for example with IT literacy and English language skills, as well as signposting to further sources of information and jobs in the local community. They can also help with practical advice in terms of preparing CVs and application forms.

Older People are not excluded from applying for apprenticeships. An apprenticeship can provide an opportunity to gain new skills and experience and to embark on a new career.

Self-employment is a popular option for many older workers who want to build on past experience, develop specialist knowledge and increase control over their working lives. Setting up a social enterprise might be an appealing prospect for an older person who wants to make a difference in their local community and beyond. Support for this exists via organisations like UnLtd and the government's New Enterprise Allowance can also offer support, including financial and mentorship, to certain individuals wishing to set up their own business.

The default retirement age has been removed, so in most cases employers can no longer force employees to retire just because they reach a certain age. Working flexibly or part-time may be a good bridge into retirement. Flexible working could help individuals to adjust in a more gradual way, or spend more time doing something else (for example a hobby or caring responsibilities). Both Local Authorities offer flexible or phased retirement options, other local employers may offer similar options. This can help Older People prepare as they approach the time when they will fully retire. This can allow some time to begin reviewing finances to ensure future income will allow individuals to enjoy the lifestyle they want. It is also important to consider how time will be spent, thinking about staying active and socialising after leaving work. Age UK can offer advice and support to prepare for the retirement process.

As the workforce ages, more and more grandparents will be working. It's important to acknowledge the contribution grandparents make, both in work and in childcare. Grandparents Plus is an organisation with a lot of experience representing the views of grandparents. They provide advice on balancing work and caring responsibilities and finding childcare. Grandparents who look after their grandchildren may be eligible for National Insurance credits which would increase their state pension.

Many other Older People may find themselves responsible for caring for a partner, parent, other family member or friend. These caring responsibilities can restrict their ability to remain in work, or to access learning and training. Information for these unpaid carers in relation to employment support and benefit entitlements is available via the Cwm Taf Carers A-Z, with further support via the Carers Support Project. This project can provide advice and support to carers to enable them to retain their role in the workplace, training or volunteering.

Communities for Work, which is a Welsh Government partnership programme between local authorities and the Department of Work and Pensions, works with people of all ages to provide support and advice on gaining employment and training. The programme which is supported by the European Social Fund operates in all 52 Communities First Clusters in Wales and in a number of areas in Cwm Taf.

The Bridges into Work Project is a European funded project working across five Local Authority areas of South Wales, including both Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. Through a collaborative approach, Bridges into Work aims to engage, support and prepare the economically inactive, including those who are unemployed or on

incapacity benefit, to acquire the appropriate skills to become job ready and to gain sustainable employment. The project is able to support individuals who are working less than 16 hours per week, unemployed, not in full time education and actively seeking employment.

Both local authorities provide a range of adult learning opportunities which are targeted to Older People in their areas. Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council delivers a range of courses to suit all levels, from complete beginners, to those with more experience. The Local Authority also works with Merthyr Tydfil ACL Partnership to provide learning opportunities. Adult Education at Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council provides quality learning opportunities in the local community. An experienced team offer value for money to individuals, organisations and professional groups covering a wide range of subjects. The courses can provide new skills, including Computers and Languages, or can help to develop hobbies and interests; for example Painting with Watercolours, Creative Writing or Sugarcraft. A range of more unusual courses are also offered which are ideal for someone looking for something different; examples include Indian Cookery, Astronomy, Robotics and Beauty Tips.

Organisations like University of the Third Age (U3A) are also able to offer courses in a range of areas. U3A believe that continuing to learn, developing interests, making friends and trying new things is a life-long passion.

Working Skills for Adults 2, which operates in the Merthyr Tydfil borough area, aims to increase the ownership of generic, transferable skills across the workforce through community based provision, thereby improving the opportunities for low skilled workers to sustain employment and increase their earning potential. The Working Skills for Adults 2 project provides access to a wide variety of free courses and the opportunity for advice and guidance from a team of employment support officers. One of the key target groups supported are those over the age of 54. They are an international movement with courses run locally within Cwm Taf, whose aims are the education and stimulation of mainly retired members of the community.

The Wales Cooperative Centre deliver the Welsh Government's Digital Inclusion programme Digital Communities Wales, providing support to organisations working with people who are digitally excluded. It is estimated that nearly one in six adults in Wales are still not online. Many of these individuals will be Older People and they are missing out on opportunities to save money, look for work, find information, keep in touch with family, learn new skills and access important services. Many of these people might already be coping with issues such as isolation, poverty or unemployment, these issues may be worsened by not being online. With the assistance of Digital Communities Wales a number of initiatives have been run locally and continue to do so.

Volunteering can offer Older People the opportunity to play an active role in their society and contribute to positive social change. Allowing them to feel an increased sense of purpose and self-value, this can also contribute to tackling loneliness and isolation. There are a number of opportunities locally including through Interlink RCT, Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT), Age Connects Morgannwg and Age Cymru. Specific opportunities to become involved in outdoor activities in our local parks also exist at Ynysangharad War Memorial Park in Pontypridd and at Cyfartha Park in Merthyr Tydfil. Volunteering Matters who work across the UK including in Cwm Taf can match volunteers with beneficiaries for the mutual benefit of both parties. Across the UK they have engaged with more than 10,000 people over the age of 50 wishing to offer their time to volunteer. Developing, supporting and running volunteering projects for and with people over the age of 50. Local examples include Welcome Friends Merthyr Tydfil which is a befriending service for socially isolated, lonely people who are over 50. Volunteers make weekly home visits and give encouragement to help them engage in a social activity of their choice. Volunteers also help at lunch clubs, craft and social groups in community settings such as sheltered accommodation and day centres. Volunteering Matters recruit, train and support volunteers to prepare them for home visiting. They will make weekly visits in a local area to help introduce new interests to Older People and rebuild their confidence.

Tempo (a national organisation) assists communities in increasing opportunities for learning and development through their Time Credits Programmes. Building connections at a local level by joining up public, private and voluntary sectors in a community, where volunteers can earn time credits through a network of local community organisations, charities and services. Existing and new volunteers are thanked and rewarded for giving up their time, and Tempo have and continue to develop partnerships with organisations across all sectors to enable individuals access to a wide range of positive activities and spend opportunities. For example someone might earn credits by volunteering at local community groups and choose to spend them on a visit to one of the many London attractions that accept time credits in exchange for entry.

Arts and culture can help to improve health, well-being and quality of life for Older People. In Wales, the Arts Council has been supporting activity in this field for some time. It was particularly gratifying in May 2017 to hear the Director of the Baring Foundation say that Wales 'leads the world' in Arts for Older People. Arts in Health work, so powerful in relation to dementia and the care home experience, is having beneficial impact across the full ranges of age, class and geography in Wales.

Loneliness and Isolation

Background

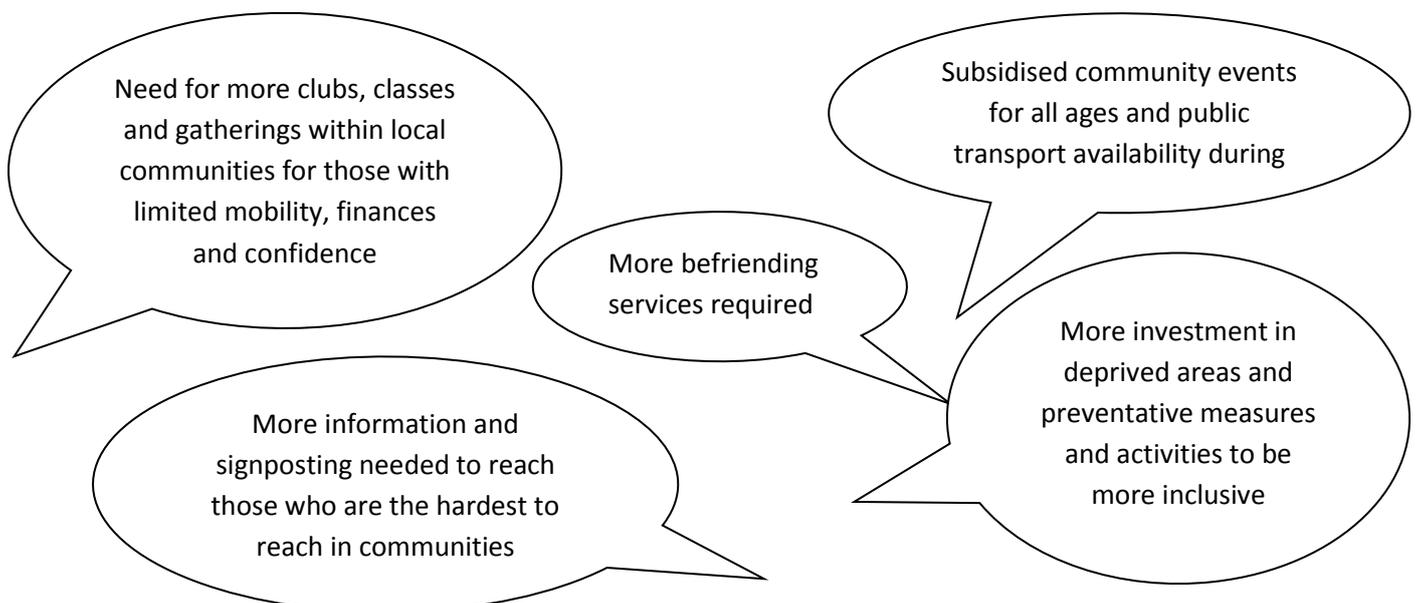
Huw Irranca-Davies, who at the time was the Welsh Government Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care is quoted as saying the following; “loneliness and social isolation is one of the most significant issues facing people in Wales, especially people aged over 80”; as a result, tackling it is one of his top priorities. A cross-government strategy on loneliness and isolation will be published in 2019.

A cross cutting objective supporting the delivery of all of the Well-being objectives outlined in the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan 2018-2023 is Tackling Loneliness and Isolation. This includes working with communities to understand what matters to people, target volunteering for people who are isolated, either through joining in or receiving support and connecting people with local volunteering opportunities.

Research shows that loneliness has a similar effect on people’s mortality as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, is associated with poor mental health, and depression as well as health service use. Coupled with reduced budgets to both community and public services often seen as ‘lifelines’ and with more than 75% of women and a third of men over 65 living alone, an increasing number of Older People are feeling isolated and lonely resulting in damaging effects on mental health.

Whilst it is unrealistic to eliminate all loneliness and isolation, work is being done to identify and understand the main causes and factors amongst Older People to develop appropriate and accessible support to make the necessary changes to positively impact Older People’s lives.

What Older People told us?



Current picture

There is a team of five Community coordinators who were introduced across the whole of Cwm Taf in 2014/15 as part of the Intermediate Care Fund initiative launched by Welsh Government. The intention of the Fund was to encourage improved working relationships between Local Authorities, Health, Housing and Third Sector for the purpose of supporting Older People, particularly, the frail elderly, to maintain their independence. The Coordinators are an invaluable resource helping individuals and their carers to access services and activities which will assist them in maintaining their independence and improving their health and well-being.

To complement this work there are also dedicated GP Support Officers across Cwm Taf based in GP Surgeries to tackle non-medical issues including loneliness and isolation, signposting to appropriate services and reduce unnecessary GP appointment pressures.

A key function of the role has been around building networks and making connections with organisations and community groups who deliver services to Older People in order that the Coordinators may make appropriate recommendations. Anyone can refer to the team, and the type of support that they can source includes befriending; benefits checks; small home adaptations; shopping/cleaning/gardening as well as condition-specific support, such as dementia. The Coordinators produce monthly bulletins to promote a range of activities available to Older People in their local areas.

Since the implementation of the Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act (SSWB) the team has strengthened its connections with Local Authorities and now spends part of their time working alongside the Initial Support Services Team (Keir Hardie Health Park) and Single Point of Access Team in RCT (Ty Elai), offering advice and support in relation to preventative services available within the local areas.

There is also a support@home service provided by Age Connects Morgannwg which provides help, encouragement and support to people who may be struggling to live independently and may be at risk of homelessness. They may be struggling with the effects of substance misuse or the challenges of a new situation or diagnosis, such as dementia. The aim is to help Older People remain living in their own home for as long as they wish and is possible, by providing one to one support to continue doing the things they enjoy and that keep them healthy and independent.

The British Red Cross hosts local Connecting Communities Teams to help explore people's interests and help them meet friends, rediscover interests or find new ones, and help build confidence to enable people to be more involved in their local communities.

Cwm Taf Care and Repair discuss loneliness and isolation with all clients visited as part of their Healthy Homes check. If further assistance is required their officers work in partnership with the ICF Coordinators to try and assist with the issues.

In Merthyr, Safer Merthyr Tydfil have piloted a RECONNECT scheme for anyone over 50 wishing to be better connected in their communities through mentoring, opportunities to join group activities, grow in confidence and reconnect with people.

With the support of volunteers Contact the Elderly, a national charity, organises monthly Sunday afternoon tea parties for small groups of Older People aged 75 and over who are dealing with loneliness and social isolation. There are local opportunities but this could be replicated elsewhere in the region.

A Blue Badge parking permit is designed to help people with walking difficulties, cognitive impairment or other mobility problems to travel independently, as a driver or as a passenger. The Blue Badge scheme allows people who meet the eligibility criteria to park, when displaying their blue badge, where restrictions for other motorists may otherwise apply. The scheme plays an important role in helping people with mobility problems to overcome some of the barriers they face when accessing jobs, shops and other important services.

The All Wales Concessionary Bus Pass Free Travel Scheme is funded by local authorities and the Welsh Government. It entitles people aged 60 or over and people with certain disabilities to travel free of charge on local bus services throughout Wales, so that they can continue to access services, visit friends and family and travel for work, social and leisure purposes.

Alongside these provisions are also a range of Community Transport schemes which can provide a door-to-door service, specifically designed for people who find it very difficult or impossible to get on or off ordinary buses or even to get to the nearest bus stop. It is possible to book journeys for shopping, medical appointments or social visits. There are a range of membership details and fares, and travel is available for individuals and groups. All Community Transport buses are specially equipped in terms of access including for those needing to use wheelchairs.

The Health, Social Care and Well-being Forum in Merthyr regularly promote events / activities for community members to participate in to reduce isolation and tackle loneliness and these organisations regularly attend the Merthyr 50+ Forums to raise awareness of community activities and social events/clubs.

Befriending services offered by Age Connects Morgannwg aim to reduce loneliness and isolation and empower independent living. Schemes encourage the formation of friendship groups and offer reciprocal and on-going support. Practical support such as shopping, transport and small DIY tasks and specialist bereavement support may also be available.

The Drink Wise Age Well Big Lottery Funded project which runs across five areas in the UK aims to help people in Cwm Taf make healthier choices about alcohol as they age. Drink Wise Age Well run a number of local activities with the aim of building

community resilience and reducing social isolation and loneliness. These opportunities are promoted locally, with some people attending because they are seeking support with alcohol issues; others may simply enjoy the activity and want to meet new people; others still may never have considered being involved in an alcohol-related programme but, once they get there discover some useful tips for simple changes they can make to have a healthier life.

Age Connects Morgannwg can help with various advocacy matters, including safeguarding issues involving abuse or neglect. In addition, specialist advocacy services are available for those affected by cancer and for the victims of abuse and hate crime with support available to navigate the criminal justice system.

The Supporting People (SP) Programme established in 2003, provides essential help to some of our most vulnerable individuals. The strong prevention and early intervention approach reflects the objectives of the Housing Act Wales (2014) and the wider Welsh Government legislative agenda to promote and enjoy greater independence and reduce homelessness.

Both Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taff SP Teams commission services based on local need to provide housing-related support to vulnerable members of the community to promote independence and prevent homelessness. The Housing-Related Support available is tailored to individuals' needs to promote independence as much as possible and assist people in developing the required skills to maintain and sustain tenancies, supporting people to gain these necessary skills with a 'doing with' and not 'doing for' approach to enable and equip people to live confidently and cohesively within their community.

One of the vulnerable groups to which the Programme provides much needed support includes 'People over 55 with Support Needs'. The activities in which the SP Services can support include providing help with:

- Finding alternative accommodation where required;
- Understanding tenancy agreements and setting up utilities, etc;
- Maintaining a tenancy, assist in setting up Direct Debits and budgeting;
- Arranging adaptations/alterations to property when required;
- Supporting in the availability and access of community services/resources including Social Services, Housing and Health;
- Budgeting and organising finances, assisting with applications for appropriate benefits;
- Arranging access to emergency health services on behalf of individuals.

In 2018, Welsh Government, consulted on “Connected Communities” , which set out their vision for Wales for the future and highlights work carried out to tackle loneliness and social isolation. The document sets out five key priorities which may make a significant contribution in tackling loneliness and social isolation; early years, housing, social care, mental health and skills and employability. The future work will include reducing inequalities between communities and delivering more services closer to home to help improve good health, well-being and acknowledging the importance of communities.

Ageing Well in the Future:

The preceding sections of this plan outline the vast range of services, opportunities and support available for Older People in Cwm Taf, including under each of the themes of the Ageing Well in Wales Programme. There is additional scope and opportunity for further development under each of these themes, as such Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council have developed an Action Plan. This Action Plan will drive forward the work of Ageing Well in Cwm Taf in order to further improve the health, well-being and lives of all as they age.

Action Plan

Age Friendly Communities		
ACTION:	Responsibility	Delivery/Review Date
Consultation and engagement with Older People on Age Friendly Communities and improvement planning.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	March 2020
Utilising Community hubs and zones to ensure intergenerational work is at the forefront.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	March 2020
Replicate positive intergenerational links with education to build on current good practice.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	March 2020
Maintain strong links with Community Coordinators to ensure effective engagement with local 50+ forums and Older People generally to champion Age Friendly Communities.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	March 2020
Take account of the consultation evidence from the recent Local Toilet Strategy to ensure the voices of our Older People are considered.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	September 2019
Promoting the service Care and Repair offer and working collaboratively in the development of projects to support Age Friendly Communities.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	March 2020
Falls Prevention		
ACTION:	Responsibility	Delivery/Review Date
Continue to roll out the Falls Awareness Project working with partners and raising awareness.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	June 2019
Utilise the localised Falls Awareness Handbook to promote key messages regarding falls risks and falls awareness to Older People in the region.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	June 2019
Identify and promote community based activities (for example via the Community Coordinators Bulletin).	MTCBC/RCTCBC	March 2020
Work with Care and Repair around Falls Prevention Training and the further development of Healthy Homes Checks and maintaining independence at home.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	September 2019
Promotion of the Age Connects Morgannwg Foot Care project.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	June 2019
Dementia Supportive Communities		
ACTION:	Responsibility	Delivery/Review Date
Continue to develop the existing Dementia Friendly Communities established in Cwm Taf and look to replicate this good practice in other communities in the region.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	March 2020

Increase the number of “Dementia Friends” living and working in communities, so that people living with dementia in Cwm Taf are better supported.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	March 2020
Develop the range and number of activities available in Cwm Taf to support people with dementia and their families and carers.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	March 2020
Encourage individuals to adopt a healthy lifestyle to reduce their risk of developing a range of age related health conditions (including dementia).	MTCBC/RCTCBC	September 2019
Continue to roll out Care and Repair Dementia Friends training to their staff and contractors.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	September 2019
Learning and employment		
ACTION:	Responsibility	Delivery/Review Date
Promote training and learning opportunities through better communications utilising partners including Working Skills For Adults, Tydfil Training, Bridges Into Work, etc.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	March 2020
Promote volunteering opportunities by working effectively with our partners.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	March 2020
Signpost to sources of advice and support for Older People to allow them to plan for their future, including employment/volunteering opportunities and retirement.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	March 2020
Awareness raising regarding the barriers faced by Older People to maintain/secure employment at local and national level.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	March 2020
Work with colleagues in Digital Communities Wales in improving digital inclusion across the region.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	September 2019
Loneliness and Isolation		
ACTION:	Responsibility	Delivery/Review Date
Raise awareness regarding the impact social isolation and loneliness can have on Older People, including to organisations making decisions which may impact on this.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	March 2020
Promote activities and services available to Older People to minimise the risk of social isolation and loneliness (i.e. Community Coordinators and their monthly bulletins).	MTCBC/RCTCBC	March 2020
Support the work to tackle social isolation and loneliness being carried out as part of the Well-being Plan (i.e. linking to community hubs and zones).	MTCBC/RCTCBC	September 2019
Promote transport provision where appropriate and raise awareness where service gaps are identified.	MTCBC/RCTCBC	March 2020

Cwm Taf Ageing Well in Wales Plan Questionnaire

APPENDIX 1

The Ageing Well in Wales 2014-2019 is a programme to provide a consistent approach across Wales that supports healthy ageing and enables people to remain happy and independent in their own homes as they grow older.

There are 5 themes to enable this and we would like your views on these to shape our local action plan:

- Age Friendly Communities - this will encourage and enable Older People to engage with their surroundings and continue to engage socially within their community, thereby maintaining their health, independence and well-being.
- Falls Prevention - can enable Older People to live in their own homes and remain active in their communities.
- Dementia Supportive Communities - is crucial to the well-being of Older People and the people around them that are also affected.
- Opportunities for Learning and Employment - Older People have a wealth of knowledge and experience that can be under appreciated and undervalued in the workplace. Also, there is value of further learning, employment and volunteering opportunities.
- Loneliness and Isolation - can impact the health and well-being of Older People through poor mental health, depression and overall health. All of these themes can have an impact on this.

The findings of this questionnaire will form part of the action plan to further develop schemes and initiatives through collaboration and an integrated approach across Cwm Taf.

The consultation will run from 1st August- 7th September.

For further information, please contact:

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Age Friendly Communities

Overarching aim: to make Wales a Nation of Age-Friendly Communities

Q1 What do you think an age-friendly community looks like?

Q2 How do you think we could create Age Friendly Communities?

Q3 Do you feel you have a voice in decision making in the Local Authority?

Yes	No	Unsure

Do you think this could be improved, if so, how?

Q4 Is there anything you would like to add on Age Friendly Communities?

Falls Prevention

Overarching aim: To support Older People to reduce their risk of falling, reducing the number of falls amongst Older People in Wales.

Q5 Do you think there is enough information available on preventing falls?

Yes	No
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If no, what more could be done?

Q6 What do you do to safeguard yourself against falls?

Q7 What do you think could be introduced to help reduce falls?

Q8 Is there anything you would like to add on Falls Prevention?

Dementia Supportive Communities

Overarching aim: To make Wales a dementia supportive nation by building and promoting dementia supportive communities.

Q9 In your opinion - what is a Dementia Supportive Community?

Q10 Have you had experiences of people/places which have been dementia friendly?

Yes	No
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Please describe?

Q11 In your opinion, are there gaps in support available?

Q12 Do you think that education, training, advice and information could be improved? Yes/No/If so, how?

Q13 Is there anything you would like to add on Dementia Supportive Communities?

Opportunities for Learning & Employment

Overarching aim: To ensure the experience of Older People in Wales is optimised through continued learning and employment.

Q14 Do you feel there are opportunities to participate? For example through volunteering/learning? Yes/No/If no, how could this be improved?

Q15 Do you feel you have opportunities to maximise your income?

Yes/No

If yes, do you pursue these opportunities?

If no, what could be improved? What support would you need?

Q16 Do you feel there is enough support out there to plan for your future?

Q17 Is there anything you would like to add on Opportunities for Learning & Employment?

Loneliness & Isolation

Overarching aim: To reduce levels of loneliness and isolation and their negative impact on health and well-being as experienced by Older People in Wales.

Q18 What do you think makes you/people you know feel lonely and isolated?

Q19 Are you aware of where to go if you/or someone you know, is feeling lonely?

Q20 What do you feel could be done to reduce loneliness and isolation?

Q21 Is there anything you would like to add on Loneliness & Isolation?

Thank you for taking part in this consultation.

THE DUBLIN DECLARATION ON AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES IN EUROPE 2013

On the occasion of the 'EU Summit on Active and Healthy Ageing', held in Dublin, Ireland on the 13-14 June 2013, under the Irish Presidency of the European Union, we, the mayors and senior political representatives of European cities, municipalities, communities and regions unanimously declare the following:

We will:

Promote the 'Dublin Declaration on Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in Europe 2013' (Dublin Declaration 2013) in appropriate national and international forums.

Collaborate with all relevant regional and local stakeholders to support the full application of the pledges in the Dublin Declaration on Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in Europe 2013.

Communicate through local and regional channels and networks.

Supporting Pledge The undersigning cities and communities also pledge, where it is within their area of responsibility and economically feasible, to further specific actions, and to incorporate them into key planning instruments to strengthen long term sustainability.

Including promoting awareness **of Older People**, their rights, needs, and potentials, and highlighting the positive social, economic and cultural contribution they make. Ensuring their views and opinions are valued and listened to. Developing communities, buildings, facilities and transport which is inclusive, accessible and, affordable to all. Ensuring Older People are encouraged to participate and can access community support and services where necessary.

Dublin, 13 June 2013