

# Manifesto 2021

## Who we are and what we do

Age Cymru's vision is of an age friendly Wales where everyone enjoys good health and social care, lives safely, is free from discrimination and is actively engaged within their community. The Age Cymru network comprises independent local partners across Wales. We work together with Age NI, Age Scotland and Age UK to improve the lives of older people. Together we provide vital support and services directly to older people in the community.

## Rights of older people

Our priority for the next Welsh Government is the promotion and protection of the rights of older people so that more of us enjoy the dignified, secure and fulfilling later life we all want. The last year has been particularly difficult for older people and we are keen to ensure that the issues we are experiencing are recognised in plans for Covid reconstruction.

## Poverty and voice

### What's the issue?

- There is an ongoing inequality of access to advocacy for all older people in Wales
- 120,000 pensioners in Wales live in poverty
- 80,000 households in Wales who are eligible for Pension Credit aren't claiming it
- Digital exclusion is a major challenge for older people. Only 49% of people aged 75 or over have access to the internet.

### The next Welsh Government must:

- Make sure advocacy services are available to everyone who needs them, and the provision of information and services must be accessible and available both online and offline. Older people's voices must be heard
- Ensure that public services are proactive in informing older people when they become eligible for entitlements, to reduce the millions of pounds worth of unclaimed benefits, which could lift older people out of poverty
- Protect the vital role of library services in facilitating digital inclusion and ensure that such services are accessible to older people.

## Accessing primary care

### What's the issue?

Age Cymru research found that during lockdown older people had significant problems navigating online GP appointment systems and experienced difficulties caused by an over reliance on online interactions, such as emails. This was particularly difficult for older people with no internet access or poor connectivity. Others struggled with long waiting times on the phone or dealing with triage systems, often being told that a health issue was not urgent and they would have to wait, then not knowing where to turn for help.

### The next Welsh Government must:

- Ensure face to face GP appointments are available where appropriate. Appointment and booking systems must be age friendly
- Ensure accessible primary care practices and that any changes to services must be communicated clearly to older people and that they're effectively engaged in the process.



**Only 49% of people aged 75 or over have access to the internet**

## Seamless health and social care

### What's the issue?

Older people who are medically fit to be discharged remain in hospital because they don't have the appropriate social care support which would allow them to return home.

Too many older people are left waiting in hospital beds for longer than is necessary whilst complex discussions take place between agencies over the funding of a long-term package. Others are discharged inappropriately, without sufficient checks taking place to ensure that they can be cared for safely at home.

Older people are often in receipt of multiple services and would benefit from the introduction of a single, or primary, care co-ordinator who could act as first point of contact as well as seeking to improve coordination between services.



**Older people would benefit from the introduction of a single, or primary, care co-ordinator**

### The next Welsh Government must:

- Make sure the structures are in place so that health and social care services can be seamlessly delivered to older people
- Social care must be given parity of esteem and parity in terms of political and organisational status to the NHS, to ensure effective seamless care and focus on providing person-centred care
- A clear timeline must be in place, with extensive public consultation, to address the future funding of social care.



**120,000 pensioners in Wales live in poverty**

## Employment

### What's the issue?

Despite the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, age discrimination in employment remains widespread. Across the UK, 40% of workers aged 50 and over believe they've been disadvantaged at work because of their age.

### The next Welsh Government must:

- Ensure that all public authorities in Wales effectively use the Equality Act 2010 to protect older people from discrimination and promote age equality in later life
- Provide information and support to organisations so they can utilise the skills and experiences of older workers.

## Age friendly communities

### What's the issue?

Age Cymru's Community Calculator survey reported that more than 55% of respondents rated access to public toilets in their community as 'poor'. Over a third of respondents said that pavements in their community were 'poor' and more than 22% of respondents regarded public seating and places to rest in their community as 'poor'.

**More than 22% of respondents regarded public seating and places to rest in their community as 'poor'**



### The next Welsh Government must:

- Place a statutory duty on local authorities to provide enough accessible public toilets across Wales, which are clearly visible to those who need them
- Work with local authorities and community and public transport providers to support a sustainable, integrated and accessible transport network across Wales, to ensure that older people remain connected to communities and services.

References for the statistics used in this manifesto are available on our website.

**Telephone:** 029 2043 1555 **Email:** enquiries@agecymru.org.uk **Website:** www.agecymru.org.uk

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