

STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN WALES

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This Strategy is the product of extensive consultation, research and expert views about the lives of older people in Wales both now and in the future. The aims, objectives and more detailed programmes and projects reflect the findings of the report of the Advisory Group 'When I'm 64.....and more' published in May 2002 and over 100 responses to it. The Strategy recognises that:

- Over the next 20 years demographic changes will significantly change the balance of the population and mean that future policies and programmes in Wales must reflect the needs of an ageing society.
- There is a need to improve the quality, quantity and responsiveness of services for older people.

Action plan

In 2003, the Welsh Assembly Government launched a ten-year action plan to deal with the things that matter most in the lives of older people in Wales. Local authorities, the voluntary sector, and older people themselves are all involved in the strategy to improve quality of life.

Older people are not an homogenous group – they have a wide range of individual needs and wants. The Assembly Government aims to promote active lifestyles for those who are able and to ensure affordable care for those in need.

[Ref: <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/olderpeople/?lang=en>

From this webpage you can read [The Strategy for Older People in Wales](#). You can access information on the appointment of a Commissioner for Older People in Wales. The Commissioner's post is the first of its kind in the United Kingdom and is a giant step towards promoting positive images of ageing and giving older people a stronger voice in society.

In the other key sections covered in this topic area you can find out more about health, housing, income, benefits, and transport issues as they relate specifically to older people in Wales.]

Commissioner for Older People

The Welsh Assembly Government has pledged to set up a Commissioner to speak up for older people in Wales, along the lines of the Children's Commissioner for children and young people.



The commitment to establish a Commissioner for Older People in Wales was included in the Labour Manifesto for the 2003 Assembly Elections. Such an appointment was also recommended by the Advisory Group on a Strategy for Older People in Wales, which was launched in 2003 and provides a framework for all public bodies in Wales to plan for an ageing society and to improve services to older people.

Role of the Commissioner

The role of the Commissioner will be to ensure that the interests of older people in Wales, who are aged 60 or more, are safeguarded and promoted. The Commissioner, as an ambassador and authority on older people's issues, will speak up on behalf of older people, who deserve a stronger voice about the services they receive and the needs they have.

The Commissioner will be a source of information, advocacy and support for older people in Wales and their representatives and will also have a role in encouraging best practice in the treatment of older people in Wales.

For example, if an older person receiving help from a local authority has a problem with the service they are receiving, the Commissioner will be able to help them in making a complaint. That help could take the form of advice on how to use the appropriate complaints procedure, whether it be complaining to the service provider, local authority or Ombudsman. Alternatively it may be appropriate for the Commissioner to represent the individual concerned in making a complaint. Depending on the circumstances, the Commissioner might also be able to offer some financial support to help an older person meet any costs of pursuing a complaint.

If there were wider issues of concern surrounding the problem with the service being provided, the Commissioner could decide to investigate that particular case. In doing so, the Commissioner will have the power to request information and explanations from people involved in the case.

The Commissioner may find that the case highlights key areas of concern for older people more widely in Wales and would then be able to make a report with recommendations or issue best practice guidance.

Influence

Perhaps most importantly, the Commissioner will work to ensure that older people themselves can influence the way in which important public services are managed and delivered in Wales.

Next Steps

The primary legislation needed to establish a Commissioner for Older People in Wales has been passed by the UK Parliament, with the Commissioner for Older People (Wales) Act 2006 receiving Royal Assent on 25 July 2006.

The Act gives powers to the Assembly to make regulations which outline the detailed role, responsibilities and powers of the Commissioner. These Regulations were debated by the Assembly on 14 February 2007, and received broad cross party support. They subsequently came into effect on 16 February.

There are 2 sets of Regulations – one set dealing with arrangements for the appointment and term of office of the Commissioner and the other with the administrative and wider strategic functions of the Commissioner.

The final stage will be to appoint a Commissioner, in accordance with the Assembly's Public Appointments process. The process will ensure that the appointment is made fairly and on merit, and it is expected that a Commissioner will be in post by Autumn 2007.



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