Ageing Well Plan

(Incorporating Strategy for Older People)

2015-2018

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Foreword

It gives us great pleasure to introduce Carmarthenshire County Council's first ever Ageing Well plan. This plan is complementary to 'Carmarthenshire's Vision for Sustainable Services for Older People for the Next Decade',[1] but focuses instead on the wider functions of the Council in supporting independent living.

At least two dramatic influences are shaping public services in Carmarthenshire. The first of these is budget restraint – a result of UK Government decisions aimed at tackling the budget deficit - which is having a significant impact upon what the Council is able to deliver. As a result of year on year reductions, the Council is reducing expenditure and constantly seeking new cheaper and more imaginative ways of helping meet the needs of people in Carmarthenshire – including older residents.

The second is a shift in the County's demographic makeup. In common with Wales, the UK and the wider developed world, older people now make up a greater proportion of the population. Media attention has tended to focus on the negative – the 'demographic time bomb', and the 'grey tsunami' – the focus firmly on the dependency of older people. This is something of a partial presentation of the issue. For example, while some older people will require support, 61% of unpaid carers are aged 50 or over.

These influences give us an opportunity to reconsider our approach to the issue of demographic change. A different emphasis is needed. We need to help communities harness the assets that help older people live in their communities. We need to work with older people as partners, to help and support them in maintaining their independence and quality of life - reducing their need for expensive health and social care interventions. This empowerment is at the heart of Welsh Government intentions behind the Social Services and Well-being Act (2014).

This Ageing Well Plan explains how the activities of the Council – including those beyond mainstream 'social care' – can make important contributions to the overarching aim of making Carmarthenshire a good place to age.

Councillor Linda Evans:
50+ Champion, Executive Board Member for Housing

Councillor Jane Tremlett:
50+ Champion, Dementia Champion, Executive Board Member for Communities

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[1] The Vision for Sustainable Services concentrates on the future delivery of direct social care services for older people.

Introducing the Plan

People, Living Longer, Ageing Well: namely, to ensure that all older people in Wales have the financial, environmental and social resources to Age Well.

It is structured according to the five priority areas of the Ageing Well in Wales programme:

Age Friendly Communities: taking action to make sure communities meet the needs of all sections of the community. Making sure facilities – such as transport, and opportunities for interaction, recreation and leisure - are open to older people, generally makes them more accessible to all.

Dementia Supportive Communities: considering the ways in which people with dementia can continue to be independent within communities. Dementia comes with a stigma of 'decline', 'burden' and 'deficit'; but communities can do much to help independence and self-esteem. Communities can value the contribution of people with dementia.

Falls prevention: recognising the negative, and in some cases, irreversible effect fall events can have on older people, and doing what is possible to prevent fall events.

Opportunities for employment and new skills: maximising the benefits of work, volunteering and learning for older people, and the wider economy. Older people should be able to develop their employability, skills and interests; and free to continue contributing to communities.

Loneliness and isolation: doing what can be done to help people who are lonely develop beneficial relationships that support their self-worth, and addressing isolation. Some older people, especially those living in rural areas, are isolated from access to services. Isolation can contribute to loneliness, or can deprive people of access to essential basic services.

The plan considers each theme in turn. For each theme, the plan explains:

* The importance of the theme to the 'ageing society'

* The key evidence we have available

* What older people have told us

* The things the Council will do about the theme

Taken as a whole, this plan demonstrates the contribution the Council can make to Ageing Well in Carmarthenshire – through its activities as an employer, service provider and community leader.

Before considering the five themes in turn, evidence relating to the general theme of the ageing society will be described, followed by what the Carmarthenshire 50+ Forum has said about the Ageing Well programme. This is to provide an overall context for understanding the Plan.

Evidence:

People 50 and over now make up a larger proportion of the population. This proportion is likely to continue growing, as standards of living and health interventions continue to improve. This fact is reflected across the western world. Using 2013 data from Stats Wales, the table below[2] shows that Wales has a higher percentage of people 50 and over than the UK. In turn, Carmarthenshire has a higher percentage than Wales. The table shows that the same trend is in evidence for the 75 and over age group:

	Total Population	Population Aged 50+	% Population Aged 50+	Population Aged 75+	% Population Aged 75+
UK	64,105,654	22,292,821	34.8	5,101,203	8
Wales	3,082,412	1,191,741	38.6	271,137	8.8
Carms	184,681	78,513	42.5	18,272	9.9

Based on actual figures for 2011, population projections for Carmarthenshire[3] suggest substantial future growth in the numbers of people in both the 50 and over, and 75 and over categories. The 50+ population is expected to grow from 76,552 (2011) to 93,469 by 2036 – a rise of nearly 17,000, or 22%. An even greater proportionate increase is expected for those 75+: from 17,899 (2011) to 32,191 by 2036 – a rise of just over 14,000 people, or more starkly, 80%.

17,899 in 2011

75+ increase in number of people over the age of 75+

32,191 in 2036

[2] 2013 mid-year estimates, Stats Wales
[3] Stats Wales

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www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales

The changing demography means the needs of people must be delivered in new ways and with a much greater emphasis on prevention of ill health. The Council's older people's services default aim is to support the independence of older people in their communities, rather than to 'institutionalise' people in homes. The implementation of this Ageing Well Plan will help people keep healthy and at a lower level of need, maximising the assets a community has to support older people.

What older people have told us:

The views of older people are essential to the development of this plan.

A consultation exercise on the Ageing Well programme took place with the Carmarthenshire 50+ Forum in September 2014. The exercise resulted in 476 responses. More recently, the Council received 478 responses to its consultation on older people's services, which sought to identify the support people need as they age. The views of over 950 people are taken into consideration in the formulation of this plan, with key findings detailed throughout.
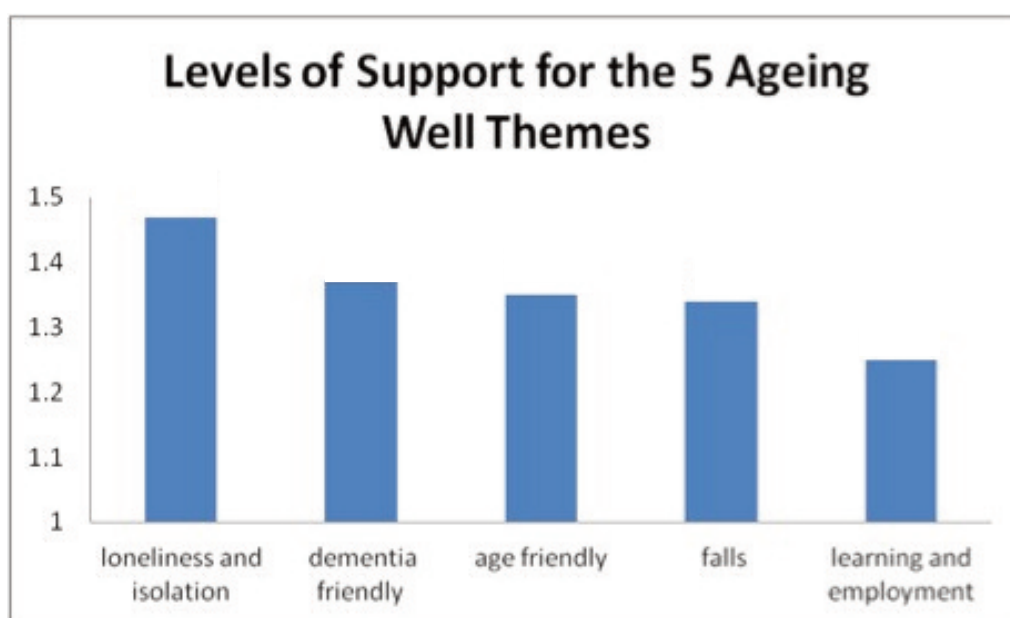
The Ageing Well consultation asked for people to indicate how far they agreed with each of the five themes. A technique known as the Average Index Score was used to generate values between 2 (strongly support) and -2 (strongly against). Though there was strong support for all, the chart shows 'loneliness and isolation' has the greatest overall support.

The research shows that this ranking is consistent for women and men, as well as across age groups. It is striking that addressing loneliness and isolation had the highest support, with recent research suggesting that loneliness can have a health impact equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.[4]

The consultation results relating to each theme will be described later in the relevant section of the Plan. In closing this section of the Plan, it is important to report the suggestions and comments made by 50+ Forum members about the Ageing Well in general.

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[4] Holt-Lunstad J, Smith TB, Layton JB (2010) Social Relationships and Mortality Risk: A Meta-analytic Review.

The following suggestions and comments were made by 50+ Forum members about the Ageing Well in general.

- Raise the public profile of the Ageing Well programme to capitalise on the ideas and enthusiasm of people and communities

- A need to improve the availability of community and public transport, particularly in rural areas

- The essential role of public toilets in helping people get 'out and about'

- The availability of purposeful things to do (e.g., clubs and activities), together with adequate publicity / information

- Around six in ten felt they would in future need support. 'maintaining one's home' and 'getting out and about'

About Carmarthenshire 50+ Forum:

With support from Carmarthenshire County Council, the 2400-member Forum is one of the largest of its kind in Wales. Members benefit from regular opportunities to have their say on important issues and receive an informative magazine twice a year. Functioning as the voice of older people in the County, the Forum is led by a steering group and chairman, elected from the wider Forum membership.

The Forum was a partner in the development of the Carmarthenshire Healthy Ageing Action Plan and takes an active role in responding to consultations from Carmarthenshire County Council and other public sector organisations. It also contributes to all-Wales discussions concerning older people and has an identified research lead officer who ensures input into the work of universities.

The Forum involves itself as part of the solution to issues it identifies through consulting with members. Recent successes include sponsorship of 'get on-line' initiatives, information events and joint work with the Council's Road Safety section to promote driver awareness amongst older people. The Forum also hosts the successful Walking Well Carmarthenshire project.

Age Friendly Communities:

"To make Carmarthenshire a county of age-friendly communities"

The concept of 'age friendly' places (initially applying to cities) began in 2007 and had its origins as an initiative of the World Health Organisation (WHO). Eight domains are defined as relevant to the wellbeing of older people:

• Outdoor space and buildings

• Transport

• Housing

• Social participation

• Respect and social inclusion

• Civic participation and employment

• Communication and information

• Community support and health services

Importance to the Ageing Society:

• Communities need to be ready to meet the needs and opportunities of having more older people

• The Council needs to consider how its activities can support the capacity of communities to be 'age friendly'

• The Council needs to ensure its own policy and practices support the needs of all age groups

Evidence:

It is recognised that health will have an impact on all five themes of the Ageing Well Programme, though health status greatly affects the ability of people to successfully age where they live.

Carmarthenshire has 11,722 people 50 or over reporting 'bad' or 'very bad' health (2011 Census). This represents 16% of those in this age group.

Personal mobility is an important consideration for Age Friendly Communities. Data from Daffodil[5] is used to measure people aged 65 and over who are unable to manage at least one mobility activity on their own. 7375 Carmarthenshire residents fit this category and the County is ranked 4th in Wales. This is set to rise to 10,865 by 2030, an increase of 47%.

As expected, amongst those 65 and over, the numbers with poor mobility increase with age. Those 65-69 make up the smallest proportion at 15%, whereas in contrast the 85 and over group make up 33% of the total. A very similar picture emerges when data for the population 65 and over unable to manage at least one self care activity is considered, with 27% being 85 or over.[6]

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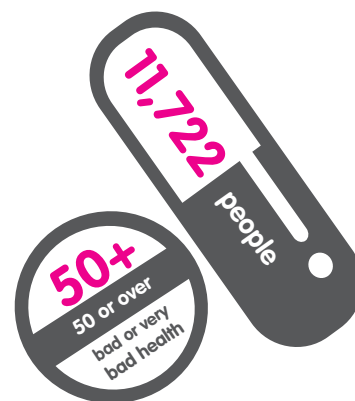
[5] Daffodil is a web-based system developed by the Institute of Public Care (IPC) for the Welsh Assembly Government. See: http://www.daffodilcymru.org.uk/

[6] 2013 data from Daffodil

In a rural county like Carmarthenshire, the ability to live a fulfilled life depends on accessing services and activities, many of which will be unavailable in close proximity. This is evidenced by data from the 2014 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), which shows that over half - 58 - of Carmarthenshire's 112 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are within the 30% most deprived in Wales for 'Access to Services'.[7]

Private transport fulfils an often essential function, particularly in rural areas. It is notable that of 23,274Carmarthenshire residents who do not have access to a car or van 11,632, or 50%, are 50 or over (2011 Census). Only 55% of those 80 or over have access to a car or van, showing increased association into older age.

55%

of those **80** or over have access to a car or van

About Driver Awareness courses:

As a result of ageing, older drivers may lose confidence in their driving ability; need to get back behind the wheel following the loss of a partner who was the main driver and/or wish to seek reassurance that they are a safe and competent driver.

In partnership with the 50+ Forum, the Road Safety Unit offered free driver refresher courses to 110 older drivers during 2014/15. The course consisted of a theory and practical session with a qualified driving instructor, and was found to improve confidence in negotiating roundabouts, executing a parking manoeuvre, identifying hazards and suchlike. 99% of participants said they felt more confident in their ability following the course. These courses can therefore help reduce the demands on public transport, and, more critically, maintain personal mobility and independence in old age.

[7]   The Access to Services domain considers the average public and private travel times to a number of key destinations such as food shops, GP Surgeries, schools etc.

Community based services are important supports for people to continue to age well within their communities. Such services can mean the difference between a person staying independent at home or alternatively, entering residential care. In Carmarthenshire, 2,589 people 65 and over are supported in this way (ranked 5th in Wales).[8]

1424 people 50 or over live in Communal establishments (including care homes and hospitals), the 5th highest local authority in Wales. While this type of provision is most appropriate for some, the further development of age friendly communities will help support as many people in their own homes for as long as possible.

What older people have told us:

Consultation with the Carmarthenshire 50+ Forum undertaken in September 2014 revealed strong support for each of the three objectives.[9]

In addition, 190 comments were made about 'age friendly communities'.

Access to services emerged as a key theme. Services need to be made available 'in-place', or where this is not possible, transport provision (public, private or community-based) is needed. Some suggestions included:

- Mobile provision, including shops and libraries
- Fitting appointments (hospital, GP, etc.) with bus timetables
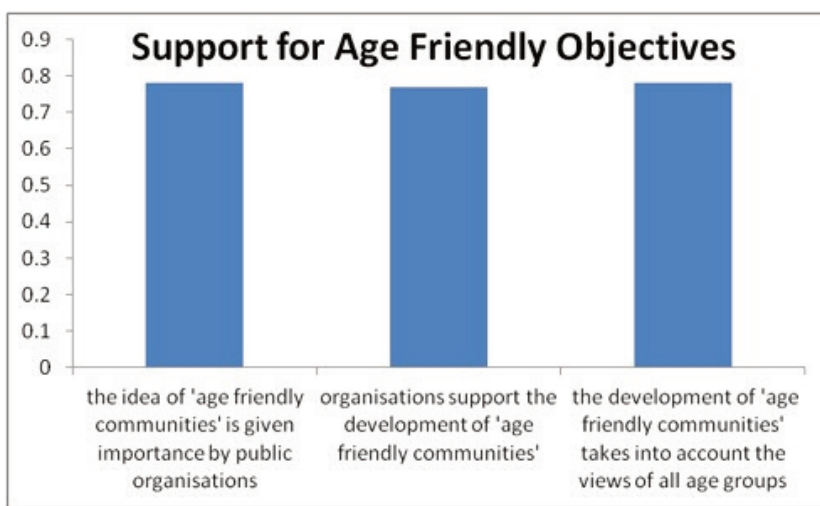
A wide range of suggestions were made about things under the Council's control, including:

- Covered bus shelters and adequate public seating
- Public toilets are important to encouraging older people to go out and about
- Good street lighting and even pavements can reduce hazard
- Providing truly accessible information

A number of comments were made about things the Council could influence:

- Encourage local business to be 'age friendly' (e.g., seats in shops)
- The publicising of existing clubs and activities taking place in localities
- The development of local 'good neighbour' schemes

A key message was the need to publicise the 'age friendly communities' theme, so that people can take the initiative forward in their communities.

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[8]   Ranked 1st is Caerphilly, with 4,524 receiving community based services
[9]   Values range from 2 (strongly positive) to -2 (strongly negative)

Independent living was a common thread in the Council's recent consultation on older people's services. Over three quarters of respondents said that maintaining independence was important to them. To allow this to take place, it was felt that support at home, support to recover (i.e., upon discharge) and the provision of advice and information would be required.

Action – we will:

- Develop and implement a publicity campaign to promote public awareness of the Ageing Well programme
- Continue to deliver the Bwcabus service in the rural area around Newcastle Emlyn (subject to securing funding)
- Continue to support and fund the Country Cars project for providing essential journeys
- Continue to support and promote the County's public transport network
- Deliver and promote concessionary travel in line with Welsh Government requirements
- Implement the Carmarthenshire Home Standard across the Council's housing stock
- Provide inclusive leisure and learning opportunities, including the National Exercise Referral Scheme
- Take steps to help alleviate poverty and promote inclusion through raising awareness of available benefits and voluntary services
- Deliver age-friendly awareness training to staff directly serving customers
- Deliver pre-retirement sessions, outlining options for participation in learning, activities and volunteering
- Engage a wide range of people, including older people, in customer feedback on the Council's website
- Help older people contribute to recycling through: 'assisted lift' for people unable to take waste to the kerbside; a glass collection service (with Age Cymru Sir Gar); special arrangements to help people in sheltered housing; and provide advice and guidance to older people and their groups
- Continue to integrate community-based health and social services so that customers can move smoothly between the systems.

About Bwcabus:

Bwcabus is a bus service operating alongside normal scheduled services in an area of northern Carmarthenshire. Users ring the day before to book a journey.

Users include Mary Jennings of Rhydlewis, who said "healthcare is an issue to me right now and access to appointments is very important...If Bwcabus didn't exist, I would have to move. Now, I have the freedom to go where I want, when I want. Without the service, my independence would be severely cut".

As the Commissioner for Older People, Sarah Rochira, comments, "Bwcabus is so clearly more than transport: it's a place where people meet, catch up with each other and the local news...Bwcabus keeps so many older people healthy, safe aand well because that's what this service does".

Dementia Friendly Communities:

"To make Carmarthenshire a county where communities are dementia-friendly"

Making sure communities support people with dementia is essential for preserving independent living. While specific services for older people are critical, people with dementia can face everyday difficulties due to attitudes and discrimination, as well as difficulties in accessing services and maintaining hobbies, interests and relationships. Dementia friendly communities and organisations have high levels of awareness and understanding of dementia.

Importance to the Ageing Society:

- People can continue to live well with dementia, particularly with early diagnosis[10]

- People with dementia should be able to continue living in their communities. This can be helped by 'low level' support

- Changing attitudes towards the condition can help communities and organisations offer greater support to people with dementia

- Dementia can have an impact on loneliness and isolation

Evidence:

Dementia is set to increase in line with the growing numbers of the oldest old. In 2013, the number of Carmarthenshire residents 65 and over diagnosed with dementia was 2783. By 2030, it is predicted that this number will reach 4371, a rise of 1588, or 57% (in line with the figure for Wales overall).[11]

In 2013, the number of Carmarthenshire residents 65 and over diagnosed with dementia was

2785

By **2030**, it is predicted that this number will reach

4371

It is estimated that the number of people who actually have dementia is far higher than the number diagnosed. For Wales, the formal diagnosis is 17661, compared against an estimated total 45529, meaning only 39% have been diagnosed.[12]

[10] According to the Welsh Government, this is particularly so where there is early diagnosis and appropriate support is given. See: http://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/110302dementiaen.pdf
[11] Data produced on 22/05/15 11:35 from www.daffodilcymru.org.uk version 5.0
[12] see: www.Alzheimers.org.uk

What older people have told us:

Consultation with the Carmarthenshire 50+ Forum undertaken in September 2014 revealed strong support for each of the three objectives.[13] The importance of people with dementia being able to contribute and feel valued is reflected by this being the most strongly supported objective.

In addition, 166 comments were made about 'dementia friendly communities'.
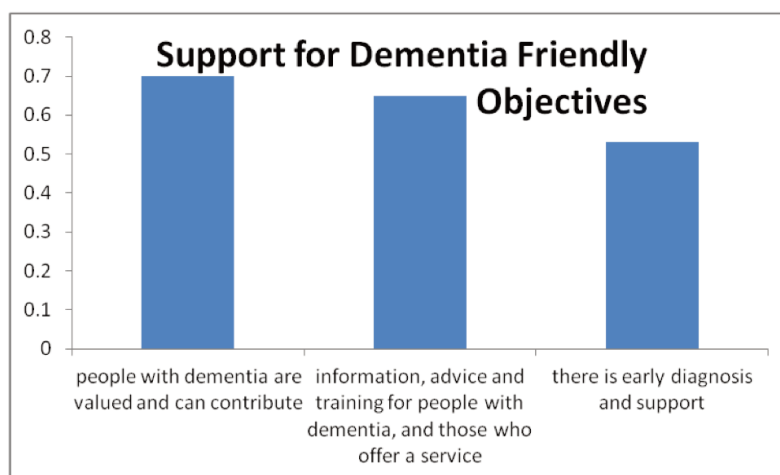
A key issue was information and awareness of the condition and the need for a public awareness campaign. This should tackle the stigma of the condition, improve the readiness of services and stress the value and contribution of those with dementia.

Further issues included the importance of early diagnosis, the development of 'good neighbour' schemes and the provision of stimulating activities for people with dementia.

When asked about the future role of the Council, a common view expressed in its older people's services consultation was a need to foster closer links with the Health Service, provide better advice and information and offer greater support to carers.

Action – we will:

- Develop and implement a publicity campaign to promote public awareness of dementia friendly communities, as a component of the Ageing Well programme

- Roll out 'dementia friends' awareness training to county councillors, in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society

- Deliver dementia awareness training to 'front line' staff, giving priority to staff with customer service responsibilities

- Provide dementia friendly information, including information packs for people diagnosed with dementia

- Ensuring Welsh language care provision is available to first language Welsh speakers with dementia

- Encourage the implementation of the lessons learnt from the Pontyberem Dementia Supportive Community initiative in communities across Carmarthenshire

- Support the work of the Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friendly Communities Co-ordinator

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[13] Values range from 2 (strongly positive) to -2 (strongly negative)

About dementia-friendly Pontyberem

In 2012, Carmarthenshire was selected by the Social Services Improvement Agency as a site to take forward service transformation for older people. Led by the multi-agency Carmarthenshire Dementia Action Board, a pilot project was set up to develop a dementia friendly and supportive community in Pontyberem.

Working closely with the Alzheimer's Society, the project involved developing a high level of public awareness and understanding of dementia, so that the community can help and support people with the condition. Because of this community awareness and support, people with dementia are better able to remain independent and to exercise choice and control over their lives. In recognition of the benefits of early diagnosis, the project has been successful in improving the diagnosis rate. It has also delivered awareness training to local businesses. An environmental audit has been undertaken and improvements made to help improve access to the various amenities.

Falls Prevention:

"To make Carmarthenshire a county where the risk of falling is reduced"

Falls can lead to a downward spiral for people: from a position of relative independence towards higher dependency and an increased risk of becoming institutionalised. Falls can result in a loss of confidence, fracture, head injury, and the costs to individuals and care organisations are high. Evidence does suggest that as many as 15-30% of falls can be prevented through use of well organised services.[14]

Importance to the Ageing Society:

• Falls can trigger loss of independence together with significant personal and social costs

• Many different things can make someone more likely to fall, some of which are preventable

• Falls are not an inevitable part of ageing

[14]   See www.1000livesplus.wales.nhs.uk/falls

Evidence:

Though falling isn't inevitable, there is an association between increasing age and likelihood of serious falls. In 2013, 1,065 people 65 or over were admitted to hospital because of a fall, (of whom 44% were aged 85 or over). The number is set to rise to 1,645 by 2030; an increase of 54%.[15]

Binge drinking affects fall likelihood and general health. Of the 38,329 Carmarthenshire residents aged 16 or over predicted to binge drink in 2013, 10,355 or 27% were 55 or over. By 2030 the total for those 75 or over is expected to rise from 758 in 2013 to 1238 in 2030 – an increase of 63%.[16]

What older people have told us:

Consultation with the Carmarthenshire 50+ Forum undertaken in September 2014 revealed support for each of the three objectives.[17]

It is significant to note the very strong support for the first objective: ensuring falls prevention is an essential part of what health and social care do to help people 'age well'. This shows a clear expectation of the role of care services in preventing falls.
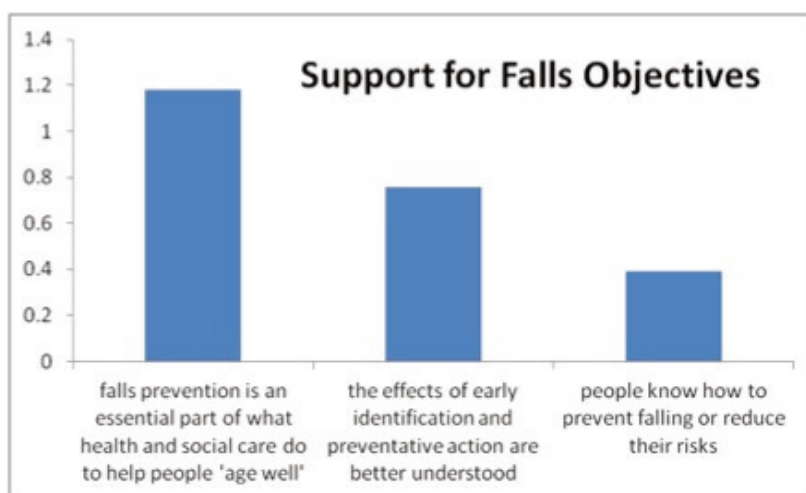
In addition, 218 comments were made (the most made about any of the five themes). Uneven pavements, roads, loose paving slabs, poor lighting and the role of street furniture were all noted as hazards. Improving public awareness may help ensure shops and other premises remove potential hazards. The role of strengthening exercise was noted as a way of making people less prone to falling.

Consultation on alcohol and substance misuse was undertaken with the 50+ Forum in March 2015. A key result involved the most preferred sources of information or advice, should people develop a substance misuse problem. 'GPs' were most preferred, followed by 'specialist drug and alcohol services' and 'a friend'. The least preferred was 'carer', followed by 'pharmacist' then 'older people's organisation'. Women were more likely to seek support from friends, while men were more likely to approach family members.

The consultation also asked how important a number of considerations were in encouraging older people to drink excessively. 'Stress' was the highest ranked consideration, followed by 'loneliness' and loss of a partner of loved one'.[18] This suggests that harm due to substance misuse can be linked to the loneliness and isolation theme of the Ageing Well plan.

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[15]   Source: www.daffodilcymru.org.uk
[16]   Source: www.daffodilcymru.org.uk
[17]   Values range from 2 (strongly positive) to -2 (strongly negative)
[18]   Other factors were illness or ill health, caring responsibilities, boredom and retirement. All were considered important in encouraging people to drink excessively.

About the National Exercise referral Scheme (NERS)

NERS is Funded by Public Health Wales and run in partnership with the Council. It aims to reduce those at risk of developing heart problems, increase physical activity, and improve mental health & wellbeing.

NERS also focuses on increasing the health and physical activity levels for referrals with a wide range of medical conditions, including: asthma, muscular skeletal, diabetes, obesity, cancer, and those at risk of falling. In 2012 Carmarthenshire was voted best scheme in Wales

NERS Scheme exit survey data (2014) shows:

- 70% of referrals reported they had improved their health & wellbeing and felt happier
- 60% of referrals reported they had more energy/walking better/enjoy meeting new people
- 80% of referrals reported they had achieved one or more of their goals

Between 65 and 75 sessions a week are run (depending on the time of year). The sessions give the opportunity to exercise in a structured, safe, appropriate and enjoyable environment. The sessions take place in both leisure centres and community venues, which allows all residents, (provided that are medically safe to exercise), to access the scheme. Up to 15 sessions each week are delivered in community venues, such as church and village halls.

Sessions are delivered by highly qualified exercise professionals. NERS is initially a 16 week programme but referrals are encouraged to remain active long term and a 12 month follow up appointment is carried out.

Action – we will:

- Continue to offer between 65 and 75 NERS sessions per week (depending on the time of year)
- Inspect Highways, footways and lighting infrastructure on a regular basis to identify any defects posing a danger or hazard to the public. Safety defects are rectified as soon as practicable and less serious defects are programmed for maintenance work within the scope of available budgets.
- Support the all-Wales 'Steady on' falls prevention campaign by distributing leaflets and posters to the 50+ Forum and other networks.
- Continue to implement our protocol for dealing with falls in care homes
- Give information about how falls can be prevented to members of the 50+ Forum and other networks of older people
- Take action on alcohol misuse by working with Public Health Wales to deliver Make Every Contact Count (MECC) and Alcohol Brief Intervention (ABI) training to domiciliary staff across the sector
- Provide specialist training to identified Community Resource Team (CRT) staff, with other CRT staff receiving general awareness training and briefings

About the Transfer of Care Advice and Liaison Service (TOCALS):

The service helps avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and delayed discharges of older people, particularly the frail elderly.

TOCALS aims to provide an advice and liaison service to support decision making at the 'front door' of the hospital and discharge planning on the ward to help timely and efficient 'transfer of care' of frail older adults back to their community. It also aims to introduce a frailty pathway within the hospital which focuses on functional gain and maintenance of independence.

The service is now operational in Prince Phillip and Glangwili Hospitals. The TOCALS team comprises multi-disciplinary professionals including Social Workers, Physiotherapist, PT-OT Technician and District Nurse all of whom have experience working within the community.

Opportunities for Employment and New Skills:

"To make Carmarthenshire a county where older people can contribute fully"

Older people have much to contribute, yet are often cast in the media as a burden. In an employment sense, older people need new opportunities to learn new skills, whereas learning can have wider benefits for wellbeing and sense of worth. Learning can help overcome loneliness and isolation as well as helping with challenges such as the move to 'digital by default'.

Importance to the Ageing Society:

• Older workers have a wealth of skills and experience to contribute to the workplace

• An age diverse workplace is a productive workplace

• Older people need opportunities to learn new things

• The contribution of older people as volunteers and carers should be supported and celebrated

Evidence:

A total of 2,150 people claimed Job Seekers Allowance, of whom 505 people were aged 50-64 (July 2015). Of long term claimants (over a year), 165 or 29% were 50 or over.

2150
people claimed Job Seekers Allowance

505 people were aged 50-64

165 or 29% of long term claimants were 50 or over

1,430 people in Carmarthenshire receive Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance, of whom 870 or 61% are aged between 50 and State Pension age (November 2014 data). [19]

15,320 people in Carmarthenshire receive Disability Living Allowance, of whom 10,670 or 70% are 50 or over (November 2014 data).[20]

40,334 people in Carmarthenshire have no qualifications, 30,645, or 76% are 50 or over (2011 Census).

[19] Source: Nomis
[20] Source: Nomis

What older people have told us:

Consultation with the Carmarthenshire 50+ Forum undertaken in September 2014 revealed support for each of the three objectives.[21]

Strongest support was given to the objective: 'older people continue to participate in things like work and learning opportunities'. The second most supported objective involves income maximisation whereby older people can maintain their standard of living. Third, though still having support, is the need for older people to plan for their futures.

Themes in relation to employment included: perceived employer discrimination; the need for skills and knowledge transfer; older employee requirements in terms of health and caring responsibilities; and the need for specific support for older job seekers.

The availability of learning opportunities was stressed, with a greater range beyond computing and Welsh. Many supported the value of volunteering and the need to promote the benefits to a greater extent.
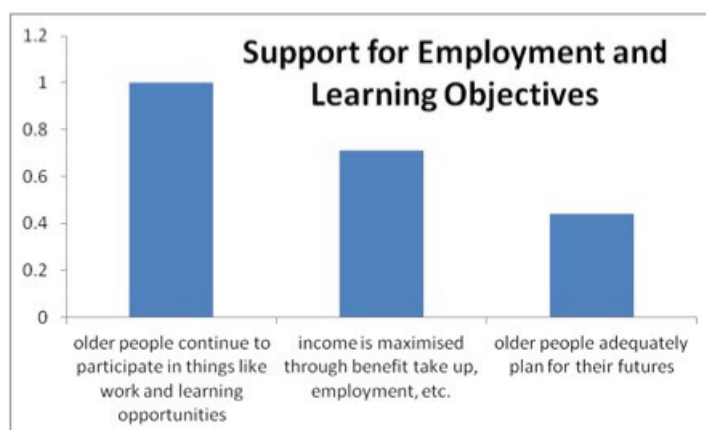
Action – we will:

- Pre-retirement planning sessions – highlight the benefits of continued employment, volunteering and learning

- Recognising that the majority of learners are 50 or over, continue to deliver the Adult Continuing Learning programme for 2015-16

- Deliver computer classes at libraries throughout the County

- Develop comprehensive information about providers in order to 'signpost' older people to suitable digital inclusion training sessions

- Support volunteer-led digital inclusion sessions in sheltered housing schemes

- Consider the feasibility of using mobile libraries to run digital inclusion sessions

- Consider the feasibility of installing superfast broadband in community venues throughout the County

- Encourage commissioned services to recruit and value volunteers

- Develop a county-wide time banking scheme to support voluntary participation in beneficial activities

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[21]   Values range from 2 (strongly positive) to -2 (strongly negative)

About Time banking:

The Council's Housing Section works with an organisation called Spice, which delivers a time credit project. This gives people a credit for contributing time to their community or service. They then 'spend' Time Credits to access events, training and leisure services. The system is sustainable as spending opportunities often make use of spare capacity of facilities such as theatres and swimming pools.

Lis Duffy, a resident of Yr Aelwyd Sheltered Scheme, is part of the Taf/Myrddin Tenant network. She has earned Time Credits by putting on a monthly film night for other residents in the sheltered scheme, and sharing her views and experiences in meetings with the Tenant Network and Council Housing department. Last year, with the help of the Carmarthenshire Time Credits Facilitator, she also hosted a Big Lunch.

"Holding a Big Lunch seemed the ideal vehicle to engage the community, break the ice and for people to volunteer and earn credits in the process. It was great to meet so many new people and encourage the tenants to get involved in more events.".

Time Credits can work to encourage volunteering, but can also encourage people to become more involved – potentially making them less likely to become lonely or isolated.

Loneliness and Isolation:

"To reduce levels of loneliness and isolation in Carmarthenshire"

Loneliness and isolation seriously impact upon personal health and wellbeing. While the issue can be complex, attention needs to given to identifying and tackling root causes. Loneliness is associated with mortality, morbidity, depression, suicide and health service use.[22]

Importance to the Ageing Society:

- Loneliness is a public health issue - as well as being a personal tragedy
- Poor health can be a trigger that is associated with further loneliness and isolation
- Isolation (and loneliness) can be made worse by rurality
- The lack of community facilities, including shops, public toilets and benches can encourage people to 'cut themselves off'
- Changes in family organisation (location and generational relationships) may make the issue more common in future

Evidence:

2580
Carmarthenshire
residents receive
Carers Allowance
1150 or 46% are 50 or over
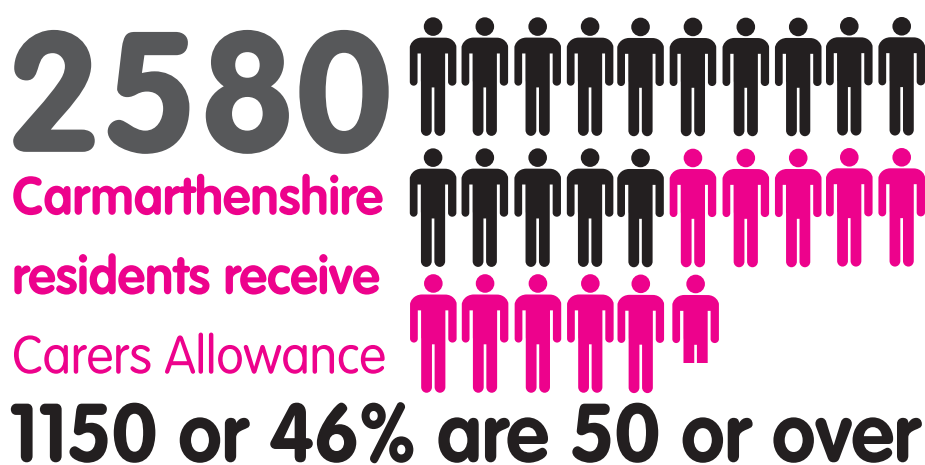
2580 Carmarthenshire residents receive Carers Allowance, of whom 1150 or 46% are 50 or over (November 2014 data).[23]

23989 people provide unpaid care in Carmarthenshire, of whom 14,573, or 61%, are 50 or over (2011 Census). Of those Carers who are 50 or over, 35% provide at least 50 hours of care a week.

36,064 Carmarthenshire residents 50 or over have a limiting long term illness (2011 Census). Of those, 67% are 65 and over.

Overall, 10,928 people 50 and over are widowed, while 24,578 are married (2011 Census). For the 75-84 and 85+ age categories, there are more people widowed than married.

17,534 people 50 and over live in single occupancy households.

[22] See: www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/threat-to-health/
[23] Source: Nomis

About support for community assets:

Community assets are essential for helping older people continue to live well where they live, giving opportunities to socialise and undertake beneficial activity. Where the Council can no longer afford to run facilities, it successfully works with community organisations to help ensure the asset can continue to meet the needs of older people.

Ysdradowen Day Centre is a good example of where the Council has worked collaboratively to ensure the continuation of the service. Through the opportunities this has opened, the community group have expanded their services to include keep fit classes. Members have developed new skills, have produced a business plan and are contributing directly to the development of their local community.

Men's Sheds – an organisation giving purposeful opportunities for men to work together on projects of interest – has been accommodated in Ferryside at the site of former community education facilities.

Further work has included an agreement with the Bowling Association to continue the provision of bowling green's in the County.

What older people have told us:

Consultation with the Carmarthenshire 50+ Forum undertaken in September 2014 revealed strong support for each of the three objectives.[24]

The response shows that people think new ways must be found to tackle loneliness and isolation (objective 1) and that the significance of loneliness and isolation to personal wellbeing should be recognised (objective 2). There is also support for the third objective to develop greater understanding of the main causes of loneliness and isolation.
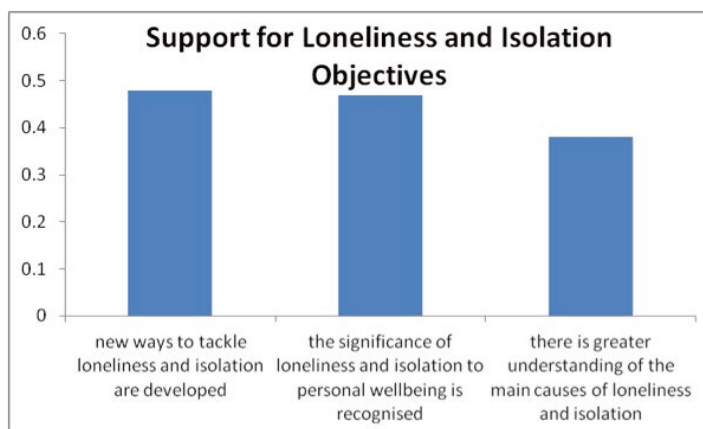
194 comments were made on the topic. Local opportunities for socialising, together with available transport were important themes, as was the need for befriending opportunities. Suggestions included good neighbour schemes, encouraging pet ownership, using the Internet, and supporting churches to expand their role in the community.

The need to provide social activities for older age cohorts was strongly emphasised in the Council's recent older people's services consultation, with respondents noting 'opportunities to socialise', 'trips and outings' and 'clubs' would be of value in old age. All have in common spending some time away from the everyday surroundings of the home and interacting with others, and can be taken as preventative measures to combat loneliness and isolation.

About Carmarthenshire Therapy Dogs:

With support from the Carmarthenshire Third Sector Broker project, the Therapy Dogs initiative involves volunteer dog owners undertaking visits to older people's care homes. The visits involve suitable dogs interacting with residents and can act as a catalyst for people to re-engage. As Sue Smith, third sector broker, comments:

"There was evidence to show the therapeutic value of cuddling and petting a receptive dog had amazing benefits for those unable to own a dog themselves. There are opportunities to visit residential homes or even people in their own homes for those prepared to share the love of their pet dogs. Dogs big and small have this calming and nurturing affect and build up a wonderful rapport"

[24] Values range from 2 (strongly positive) to -2 (strongly negative)

Action – we will:

- Continue to offer theatre concessions to people 60 or over and further develop our loyalty and concessionary offers

- Further develop activity of interest to older people at Council theatres, including: matinee performances; tea dance sessions; and a programme of classic and vintage films

- Based at leisure centres, develop the Actif Sir Gar programme to support healthy lifestyles and provide opportunities to make friends and socialise.

- Continue to support community transport, Bwcabus and Country Cars

- Support inclusion by ensuring all sheltered housing residents continue to benefit from wifi internet provision and IT training

- Continue to provide extra care accommodation, including 61 self-contained flats in Carmarthen and 50 in Ammanford

- Further develop the Third Sector Broker project to support the social and activity needs of people who do not require formal social or health services

- Continue to raise awareness of adult safeguarding and take action when rights are violated

Cynllun Diogelu Rhag Camfanteisio Ariannol
Diogelu ein Cymuned rhag Sgamiau a Chamdriniaeth Ariannol
Financial Exploitation Safeguarding Scheme
Protecting our Community from Scams and Financial Abuse

Sir Gâr
Carmarthenshire Safonau Masnach
Trading Standards   Heddlu·Police
DYFED POWYS

About the Financial Exploitation Safeguarding scheme (FESS):

Though there are many other factors, scammers may focus financial abuse upon those people who are lonely or isolated. FESS is a partnership between the Council's Trading Standards section and Dyfed Powys Police and has a key role in supporting independent community living.

FESS works with susceptible people to protect them from financial abuse, which may take the form of telephone filtering, intelligence-led home visits, and no cold calling zones. The issue of 'rogue traders' is tackled through the Registered Handyperson and Gardeners Scheme, where the details of vetted companies are made available.

Further initiatives include the Don't Get Caught scams awareness campaign and Vulnerable Consumer Advice Interventions, where specialist consumer advice and advocacy is made available to vulnerable people.

FESS and other Trading Standards services help maintain personal resilience and the ability of older people to remain independent – a 'helping hand', where personal support networks may be lacking. In protecting people from financial abuse, the Scheme plays an important safeguarding role.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring will be achieved through annual progress reports to the 50+ Forum and relevant Council scrutiny committees.

This Ageing Well plan will be reviewed in 2018, in line with the revision of the overarching Ageing Well in Wales programme.