

Age Alliance Wales

The role of the third sector in delivering integrated health and social care services for older people



A recent survey commissioned by Age Alliance Wales found that 59% of people aged between 55 – 64 are not confident that their local authority and health services will help them to remain healthy and have a good quality of life as they grow older. 19% of people over 55 have no confidence at all that public services will support them to age well.

Age Alliance Wales believes that older people must be able to access the services they need and that this should be achieved by:

- Protecting local services that support older people to age well and maintain their independence
- Innovating and developing better services (including through integration of health and social services)
- Ensuring prevention services are available

Recently published population projections¹ estimate that by 2030, the number of people aged over 65 living in Wales will increase from 601,000 to 804,000. An increase of 34%. The largest increase will be in the number of people aged over 85 which is forecast to rise by 80%.

It is also predicted that by 2030, the number of people over 65 in receipt of community based services will rise by 60%². However Welsh Government statistics show that since 2007, the number of people in receipt of these services has fallen by 6%. Although some local authorities argue that this fall is due to increased provision of preventative and reablement services³, there is a growing concern that local authority cuts to day centres, luncheon clubs, libraries, local transport services and adult community learning classes are drastically reducing opportunities for older people to access support in their local community.

Age Alliance Wales organisations provide a range of community based services that reduce the pressure on emergency care services by developing effective partnerships with the statutory and private sectors. Locally managed and coordinated services mean that third sector organisations are able to provide services that are agile and responsive to individual need. Organisations are well placed to support statutory health and social care services to adopt a more person centred approach.

For example, in Ceredigion, the Stroke Association provides support to stroke survivors, families and carers in the period following a stroke. Staff work closely with the stroke nurse specialist on the hospital ward, to provide family members and carers with information and

¹ Welsh Assembly Government (2014) Available online @ <http://www.daffodilcymru.org.uk/index.php?pageNo=1033&PHPSESSID=q63ko07gruk6hitdbg5bkje1l2&at=a&sc=1&loc=1&np=1>

² Welsh Assembly Government (2014) Available online @ <http://www.daffodilcymru.org.uk/index.php?pageNo=1079&PHPSESSID=q63ko07gruk6hitdbg5bkje1l2&at=a&sc=1&loc=1&np=1>

³ CSSIW - *Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2012 – 2013, Denbighshire*. Available online @ <http://cssiw.org.uk/docs/cssiw/publications/131028denbighshireen.pdf>

support. These meetings take place on a fortnightly/three weekly basis and then continue after discharge through 'Stroke Health Clinics' which are available at a number of GP surgeries across Ceredigion. Any further issues are addressed in the community by a Stroke Health Improvement Co-ordinator who, where appropriate, signposts people to social services, housing and third sector agencies. The Stroke Association staff work closely with a range of partners across Ceredigion to ensure the stroke survivor, carer and family's needs are met. Another example of integrated working is the *Life After Stroke* project in Gwent which is jointly funded by the local authority and local health board.

Age Cymru Gwent's Prevention of Admission to Hospital Service (PATH) is part of the Newport Frailty Team and aims to provide care to older people in their own home in order to reduce the number of inappropriate hospital admissions.

Many third sector organisations adopt a pro active approach to developing partnerships across the health, housing and social care sectors. Care & Repair Cymru works in partnership with a number of organisations including the Welsh Government, local government housing and social care teams, NHS, occupational therapists, other third sector organisations, the Older People's Commissioner and housing associations to ensure that older people have access to a range of housing and social solutions that enable them to live in housing that meets their individual needs.

AAW organisations provide services that meet an individual's social, emotional and practical needs. Research evidence shows that the majority of GPs believe that many older people visiting their surgeries would benefit from a non medical intervention⁴. In addition, over three quarters of the GPs surveyed by the Campaign to End Loneliness said they were seeing between one and five lonely people a day⁵.

RSVP's Welcome Friends project reduces loneliness and isolation among older people by providing opportunities for social interaction. The service improves wellbeing and raises self esteem while supporting people to make positive choices about their lifestyle and personal development. The project offers volunteering opportunities, provides tailored support to encourage older people to join an existing group, establishes new groups based on local interest and offers one to one befriending in the home.

In Wales, cuts to local services and the drive to create a more integrated health and social care service mean that there is a pressing need to develop new ways of working that deliver outcomes for the individual at a minimum cost. In its written statement on Integration for Older People with Complex Needs, the Welsh Government states:

*We must direct resources increasingly to the community and to capacity building within it and to enable people to stay at home as independently as possible.*⁶

Creating a more joined up approach between housing, health and social care is vital to ensure that gaps in the provision of care do not lead to the worsening of a condition or

⁴ Nesta 2013, available @ <http://www.nesta.org.uk/news/social-prescriptions-should-be-available-gp-surgeries-say-four-five-gps>

⁵ <http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/blog/lonely-visits-to-the-gp/>

⁶ <http://wales.gov.uk/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2013/olderpeoples/?lang=en>

illness. Older people must be able to access a seamless service that ensures relevant information and advice is easily available when needed. Collectively AAW organisations are very well placed to provide community-based, integrated services tailored to meet an older person's health, housing and social care needs.

In order for Wales to become a good place to grow old, people must be confident that they will get the help they need to age well in their local communities. By supporting the third sector to continue to deliver preventative services and develop sustainable partnerships with the statutory and private sectors, the impact of local authority cuts on older people can be mitigated.

AAW is calling on the Welsh Government to:

1. Ensure that older people are able to access local services that support them to age well and maintain their independence
2. Involve older people in the design, planning and delivery of services
3. Involve the third sector in the design, planning and delivery of services for older people
4. Fully consider the long term impact of local authority cuts to community services for older people

Age Alliance Wales is an alliance of 18 national voluntary organisations committed to working together to develop the legislative, policy and resource frameworks that will improve the lives of older people in Wales. The following organisations are members of Age Alliance Wales:

Action on Hearing Loss Cymru; Age Cymru; Alzheimer's Society Wales; Arthritis Care in Wales; The British Red Cross in Wales; Care & Repair Cymru; Carers Wales; Contact the Elderly; Carers Trust; Cruse Cymru; CSV-RSVP Wales; Deafblind Cymru; Disability Wales; NIACE Dysgu Cymru; PRIME Cymru; RNIB Cymru; Royal Voluntary Service Cymru; The Stroke Association Wales

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Examples of integrated health and social care services delivered by Age Alliance Wales organisations

RNIB Cymru Eye Clinic Liaison Officers

Integrating health, social care and community support services

Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLOs) support clients to navigate their frightening and complex sight loss journey. They provide the time, information and emotional support required for eye clinic patients to make informed decisions about their health care and their lives beyond the eye clinic.

The eye care journey is complex and disjointed and can involve health, social care and community support interventions from professionals working across multiple sectors and sites. The ECLO is the signpost towards and the bridge and safety net between the different support services patients may need to access.

Within the clinic setting ECLOs increase overall service quality and decrease patient trauma. Beyond the clinic the ECLO is the link to information, advice and support services which can enhance longer term quality of life, improve understanding and self care of eye conditions, support independent living and enhance wellbeing.

The ECLO service embodies the principles of integration, cooperation, collaboration and partnership and effectively bridges the gap between health and social care for the benefit of people with sight loss.

There is much evidence regarding the economic and social costs associated with depression, falls, loneliness and poverty. Through working in partnership within and beyond the health setting, the ECLOs identify and refer clients to counselling and mental health support, falls prevention services, rehabilitation, mobility training, the Wales Low Vision Service and to local societies for peer and social support. ECLOs help to reduce the risk of future health and social care expenditure by providing the emotional and practical support clients require to live well with sight loss.

Wales is currently well provided with ECLO coverage, with 94 per cent of eye patients attending a clinic which has some level of ECLO support available. There is a very real risk over the next year that ECLO coverage in Wales will diminish significantly due to the end of Big Lottery funding in November 2014. In total 9 out of 15 clinics are at risk of losing their Eye Clinic Liaison Officer in the next twelve months.

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The British Red Cross in Wales

Wrexham care in the home services

The British Red Cross in Wrexham provides a holistic set of support services which focus on the specific needs of the individual in order to facilitate hospital discharge, prevent admission, and support improved independence and resilience. By working closely with health and social care and other Red Cross services, it is possible to provide an integrated approach to citizen centred support.

Based at the Wrexham Maelor hospital, our volunteer led services receive funding from several sources including the Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board and Wrexham Local Authority.

In the majority of cases, hospital staff contact Red Cross when a patient is to be discharged. Where appropriate, staff visit the patient on the ward to plan what they will need to ensure a safe and comfortable discharge from hospital. During the support visits, volunteers and staff liaise with health and social care professionals.

There are four support streams which include a home from hospital service, community equipment, carers support and befriending:

- **Home from hospital**, funded by both health and social care, provides short-term care and support in the home for people after an accident or illness, giving them the confidence to continue their daily lives. This service works with health and social services to enable hospital discharge and support the individual for four weeks following to improve their resilience and independence, reducing the likelihood of unnecessary readmission or need for social care.
- **Community equipment**, funded by health, local authority and Red Cross, provides short term loans of equipment such as wheelchairs, commodes and walkers to facilitate hospital discharge and improve well-being and independence.
- **Befriending service**, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, offers a befriending and enabling service to people over the age of 50. The Gofal service aims to alleviate isolation and loneliness.
- **Carers' support**, funded by the local authority, helps to relieve the stress and anxiety of carers, providing respite to both the carer and cared for person and the security of an emergency card support service. Volunteers also help to build the capacity of carers to cope in an emergency by teaching first aid skills appropriate to the person they care for.

Most individuals are referred to Red Cross services by health and social care, but self-referrals are also accepted. Often Red Cross is the patient's first point of contact with the third sector after discharge and the organisation acts as a single point of access by referring onto local partners and other Red Cross services to ensure the person receives the support they require.

Royal Voluntary Service Cymru

Case study: Mrs H and Edith

The Royal Voluntary Service Hub team covering Anglesey and Gwynedd have worked hard to promote its various services to other service providers in the area. The team has met with the local Community Psychiatric team (Dementia Care Services) which is a partnership between Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and Anglesey County Council. Both are keen to develop ways in which RVS' Good Neighbours, lunch and community clubs can support people with dementia and their carers.

Mrs H is aged 88 years and is cognitively impaired. A Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) contacted RVS to see if the organisation could provide a 'sitting service' as Mrs H has not left the house since sadly losing her daughter to cancer five years ago.

The Royal Voluntary Service Hub Team visited Mrs H and carried out a structured conversation to ascertain whether there is anything Mrs H would like to do that would improve her quality of life. Following the visit, a volunteer was selected who works for the organisation's befriending service. This service is funded through gifting from RVS work in Ysbyty Gwynedd and links closely to the discharge services in the hospital.

The volunteer, Edith, visited Mrs H once a week for about a month, building up her trust and becoming a friend to her. Edith suggested that Mrs H might like to go shopping with her one day. Much to Edith's surprise Mrs H agreed and thoroughly enjoyed her day out.

Edith and Mrs H now go to Morrisons once every two weeks. There has been a marked improvement in Mrs H's spirits and she enjoys Edith's visits. This has certainly enriched Mrs H's life and helped reduce her feelings of isolation and loneliness and this in turn reduces her reliance on other social and health services.

When the time is right Edith will suggest to Mrs H that she might like to visit one of our lunch clubs in the area and will accompany her on her first few visits. Edith alerted our community car service to the possibility that Mrs H may need transport from her home to the lunch club and a potential volunteer driver has already been identified who would be able to take Mrs H to the club if she decides to give it a try.