

Age Alliance Wales (AAW) Pierhead Event October 20th 2015

Wales has an older people's strategy, a commissioner for older people and new legislation for social services and AAW believes that the focus now is for the Welsh Government to support the development of social networks and preventative initiatives that can underpin and stimulate community activity and enable all older people to live a full and active life.

AAW invited Assembly Members (AM's), and pan Wales representatives from Local Health Boards (LHB's), Local Authorities (LA's), County Voluntary Councils (CVC's), older people, and its members to discuss the challenges facing older people experiencing cuts to their local services, and share examples of good practice and identify ways to work with older people to build vibrant community networks and services.

Lindsay Whittle AM sponsored the event and spoke to the meeting which was well attended across the invitees, particularly older people, who took the opportunity to put questions to the AM's or their representatives as well as the representatives from member organisations.

As part of the general discussion, 4 break-out groups of cross sections from all of those represented, but in particular the older people, were asked "**What are the biggest challenges for older people in your area?**". Discussions were suitably varied, far reaching, and involved, and Transport – at national, regional and local levels, or the lack thereof, was cited as a major issue. The provision of transport is something that needs to be addressed via Welsh Government rather than the Third Sector organisations albeit that the Third Sector can be influential in lobbying for a service or an improved service.

NOTES

Q. What are the biggest challenges for older people in your area?

- 1) "Their houses and gardens are too big, especially the hedges. I paid £850 to a private gardener this week. From 10am to 4.30pm. Do you think this is too much?"

"There is a plot of land in Treboeth which housed the old 'Pines Country Club'. In Treboeth. Is there any hope for this land to be turned into flats for older people?* I have a petition of 60 names who would inhabit these straight away. I have a 1/3rd acre and it is a headache to me."

* "Tesco had an option on this property but have pulled out leaving it empty. Before long Japanese Knotweed might appear. Up to now there is none."

- 2) "Servicing of boiler costs £66."

- 3) "Transport to hospital."

"Lack of parking at hospital if driven. Signs on buildings often difficult to see, either on a coloured background or too high up. Often announcements over the tannoy are very muffled."

"Access to places e.g. hospital appointments, doctors' appointments, even using the local library through an inadequate bus service serving our local area of Ty Coch."

"No evening bus service so no opportunity for visiting hospital, visiting theatres or bank holiday service."

- 4) "Transport from our area after 6.15pm on Saturday. We get no bus transport till Monday morning and if it is a Bank Holiday nothing till Tuesday. We would be able to go places on a weekend when it can be very lonely when you are on your own. The service during the week is not very good. To go to appointments in doctor or hospitals etc. I live in Ty Coch."

- 5) "Transport – buses stop at 5.30. A regular enough service. Awareness of services. Doctors, easy to get appointments. Friends of Swansea group ?meet? every second Tuesday of the month. Listen to music – speakers. 'Feel'? of occupational pensioners. Mixed group. Escape – computers / Facebook / monthly statements.

Long wait (?for/at??) hospital appointments unless have cancer. Trouble getting cataracts. Private work. Insurance."

- 6) "Have affordable help for older people with quite large gardens. Amounts quoted by gardeners is quite ridiculous. Also painting and decorating is very expensive. Do not object to paying a reasonable amount but because you are elderly you are regarded as 'daft'.

Bus services are not good in Ty Coch. When the college is closed only one hour service is made and then one journey is missed - but no apology made.”

7) TRANSPORT

- Running things on a local level. Local cooperatives.
- 15mins > 30mins for Home Care. Is 30mins long enough?
- Little things in the community e.g. filling in a pill box, hearing aid repair etc.
- Loneliness of people – need more preventative projects in the community.”

8) More regular bus services. Integrated and reliable.

Continue with Lunch Clubs and Day Centres.

Accredited list of gardeners, handyman etc.”

9) “Asset approach – use skills and time offered by older people. Connect older people locally within their communities, listen to them and see what others can do to support and connect older people, especially the most isolated.

Have older people’s coordinators in every local authority to connect people and community services.”

10) “To be able to get to the Doctor – relies on taxis. Opportunity for community transport.

Care & Repair are extremely helpful.

Difficult to access the batteries for hearing aids (reliant on getting to the hospital).

People need to join in, need to join clubs and associations in their 60’s. Join local organisations.

Information on what’s available in your area e.g. a friend who only goes shopping once a week, important to provide support, encouragement and information.”

11) “Transport, cuts to service (Cwmbran), finding the right person to talk to.

Access (mobility) to get on coach and trains.

Housing, up-keeping houses (not enough properties to ‘down size’).

Sheltered housing not offering enough support.

Walking – cyclists on pavements are dangerous, more consideration to older people. Reduce brambles and overhanging hedges.

Where services are centralised leaving a gap in communities e.g. local clinic, hospital. Bus service – in Porthcawl a bus service went to the clinic. Fight for an alternative service.