

Appendix 3
Case studies

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Outcome 1: Membership of the WHO Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities

Monmouthshire

As part of gathering evidence for our baseline assessment for our application to join the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Communities and Cities, I completed a 6-week survey across Monmouthshire. I went to more than 30 in-person groups, meeting the 50+ population where they meet, encouraging participation and making it as easy as possible for individuals to engage. I attended leisure centres at 6am in the morning, went to WI meetings in the evening, wherever people could be found, I took this opportunity to meet with the 50+ population. Paper copies were also provided across Monmouthshire's Community Hubs & Libraries, Integrated Health & Social Care facilities and community venues. The survey was completed over the phone with individuals who couldn't participate by other means. The survey was also provided and promoted online, via a social media campaign which ran throughout the duration of the engagement. Press releases were promoted across both of Monmouthshire's local papers, as well as in a local magazine as part of their campaign about working with older people.

The feedback received was shared with cabinet members and our senior leadership team. This has helped shape the principles for our Age-friendly commitment and as a result, cabinet has committed to embedding those principles within the policy framework and decision-making processes within the organisation. They are also encouraging partner organisations to adopt these principles within their respective organisations and will be forming an Age-friendly partnership to drive improvements in response to the needs of older people.

Laura Crouch

Outcome 2: Establishing age-friendly structures and strengthening partnerships

Denbighshire

The *Ageing Well in Denbighshire* meetis under the guidance of a steering group. In addition, a smaller planning group met fortnightly to plan activities to mark the International day of Older People and in recognition of our status as a newly approved Age-friendly Community. I have recently managed to attract several new members based on the priorities in our action plan. Examples include:

- North Wales Police who help inform of the dangers of scams.
- Active Travel who worked on Walkability audits to make sure the infrastructure of our communities meets the needs of older people and those with mobility challenges.
- Representatives of housing associations.
- A falls coordinator who is working on a care homes pilot and with schools and third sector partners to raise awareness of the dangers of falls.
- Charities to improve the variety of activities and support available to residential home residents and extra care housing tenants.
- Residential and domiciliary care providers to ensure that residents are able to receive support in their language of choice and that providers meet the requirements of 'Mwy na Geiriau'.

Membership of the Ageing Well in Denbighshire Network includes older carers, those living with sensory loss, older people with limited mobility, representatives of people with learning disabilities, neurodiversity and mental health challenges; people living with dementia and many more. Members of North Wales Regional Equality Network attend and challenge us to be as inclusive as possible. As members are involved in visiting and monitoring residential and nursing homes as well as sheltered and extra care housing schemes, we are able to include the views of people of all ages even if some are not able to attend all our events. Due to the age range from 50+ to 100+ everybody is encouraged to participate at their own level.

Alison Price

Carmarthenshire

Collaborating with internal departments and external organisations is a key part of the Policy Officer's role in helping to deliver an age-friendly Carmarthenshire.

The Public Services Board are supportive partners in this strand of work and new connections are continually being formed with a host of organisations, all of which will be important in achieving our aim of becoming an age friendly county. We aim to increase awareness and opportunities for involvement; ensure that the voices of older people are heard in the decision-making process and to facilitate a collaborative approach to developing an Age-friendly Carmarthenshire.

Through discussing the premise of age-friendly communities, more people and organisations are becoming aware of what it means to be an age-friendly community. Our older residents are better informed of the work that we are undertaking and are actively engaged in a number of projects and initiatives running throughout the county.

We have an active age-friendly network, with over 1,800 members and a discussion group for engagement and consultations. Our annual event has assisted a number of our residents to learn about the support, services and activities that are available in Carmarthenshire. These events help ensure that older residents are aware of opportunities to take part in key policy and planning decisions within the county and reinforce that their voices matter.

With the engagement that has taken place to date, it is evident that our older residents appreciate the opportunity to be actively engaged and have their say and it has also demonstrated to them that we very much value their opinions and importantly that we listen to their voices.

The officer has made connections and forged strong partnerships across departments within the authority as well as continuing to grow collaboration and co production arrangements amongst partners and third sector organisations.

Lisa Lewis

Pembrokeshire

Support is provided to the Pembrokeshire 50+ Forum by the council, both through financial contributions and the support of the dedicated post. The Forum meets monthly bringing older people together to discuss matters of important to them – a number of topics are covered and relevant stakeholders are invited to discuss topics of interest and relevance to them.

Pembrokeshire Age Friendly Strategy Board meets regularly throughout the year and membership consists of members of the Pembrokeshire 50+ Forum and multi-agency representatives.

Pembrokeshire Provider Forum brings public sector and VCS teams, services and organisations together on a regular basis to share practice, learning and relevant developments – 50+ Forum members are included as key members of the group.

There are also a number of other relevant forums and networks where older people and stakeholders come together to discuss issues that are relevant to them – this includes unpaid carers and people living with dementia, for example.

Rachel Gibby

Swansea

Swansea's "Ageing Well Engagement Programme" is an initiative devised to combat loneliness and isolation and to positively impact on the physical and mental well-being of the city's senior residents.

By actively seeking input and suggestions from community members, we have tried to ensure that all sessions are not only relevant, but also meaningful and enriching for those in attendance.

The programme started back in August 2021, under Welsh Government's Age Friendly Wales: Strategy for an Ageing Society. There are 4 main aims and objectives which shape our work, these are:

- *Enhancing well-being of our older community members*
- *Improving local services and environments*
- *Building and retaining people's own capabilities*
- *Tackling age related poverty*

How have we implemented these aims and objectives?

We started with the creation of an Ageing Well Steering Group, designed to bring together individuals and organisations who work with or support older people. The aim was to create a space for networking, collaboration, and the development of new working relationships. Today, the Steering Group includes over 80 organisations and charities from the private, community, and public sectors. We meet bi-monthly to shape our collective efforts in the community and support Swansea's ambition to become a WHO-recognised Age-friendly City.

As a result of this collaborative approach, our team has established ongoing partnerships with a wide range of local businesses, organisations, and charities. These relationships have enabled us to deliver a diverse weekly engagement programme, offering activities that span physical fitness, mental stimulation, creative expression, and opportunities for social interaction. These sessions help individuals build confidence, form new connections and engage more with community life, services, and projects.

Weekly Engagement Sessions

Alongside our regular, long-standing sessions, some of the other engagement sessions available on either a weekly or fortnightly basis to our older community members include:

- *Tai Chi*
- *Reminiscing & Ancestry Group – Local History*
- *Cuppa with a Copper*
- *Tech Tuesday with Gower College – Combating Digital Exclusion*
- *Dance to Health*
- *Ageing Well Choir @ Swansea Arena*
- *Aches & Lanes Bowling*
- *Disability Social*
- *Purls of Wisdom Knitting Group*
- *60+ Dance*
- *Upcycling Clothes Group with Gower College*
- *Boules on the Beach*

We work very closely in partnership with Swansea Council's Sport and Health team. Colleagues within this team co-ordinate the 60+ Active Leisure Scheme. Some of the activities available to older people through this scheme include:

- *Nordic Walking*
- *Trampoline Exercise*
- *Aerobics*
- *Paddle Boarding*
- *Mountain Biking*
- *Rock Climbing*
- *Pickleball*
- *Canoeing/Kayaking*

All of these sessions are fully booked on a regular basis and there is a huge demand for more.

Rhys Ananicz

Rhondda Cynon Taf

The objectives of the funding, to support the development of an Age-friendly RCT, actively encourages a partnership approach. Having successfully applied to the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities, this partnership approach has been adopted and integrated into practices locally including via the Community Support Steering Group (CSSG).

The CSSG is a partnership of key stakeholders involved in providing services to local communities across RCT. This includes Council departments such as Adult Services, Children's Services, Community Services, South Wales Police, Registered Social Landlords, University Health Board, Citizens Advice, Interlink RCT, Third Sector, DWP. This group provides a key mechanism for engagement with partners for collaborative planning and implementation sharing in the vision of an Age-friendly RCT. The group is reflective of older people's voices with members of OPAG sitting on the group. The Rhondda Cynon Taf Older Persons Advisory Group (OPAG) overarches five local 50+ Forums which were developed from 2004 and continue to thrive today, acting as a key voice of older people in our local communities and feeding directly into our engagement work in support of an Age-friendly Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Hannah Watson

Gwynedd

During the engagement work carried out by the former Age Friendly Officer 'Transport' came up time and time again, especially in the more rural areas of the county. We conducted some research and visited two Community Transport Schemes in Ynys Môn, as well as gathering Information about the schemes already operating in Gwynedd through community enterprises (mostly relying on paid drivers).

At the same time, our Dementia Active Team carried out a 'Listening Campaign' as part of a regional initiative in Tywyn, South Gwynedd, where again lack of transport came up as one of the main priorities.

A Steering Group has since been set up in the town to work towards becoming a dementia friendly town.

We worked closely with our regional colleagues to access a grant from the Regional Integration Fund for a Community Transport post for 12 months. The post holder works primarily in Gwynedd on developing volunteer based schemes – learning lessons that could be shared elsewhere. The post is hosted by the Carers Trust.

The officer is currently working with the Tywyn Steering Group as well as several other local partners, including the Council's Local Community Officer, National Park Community Officer, Community Transport Wales Officer, Dementia Active Local Officer and Age Friendly Officer.

A similar scheme is anticipated in another area also – Y Bala, and links are being made between the two areas. Both schemes are rooted in the community and have come out of real community need and interest. We have helped to facilitate discussions, bring in partners and ensure the co-production of solutions.

Bethan Williams

Neath Port Talbot

We have three schools hosting intergenerational projects, 2 of which are primary schools. Arwel y Mor take part in the community garden project in Sandfields and also host two older persons who visit the school to listen to the children read. St Theresa's in Baglan Moors started an intergenerational boards games group in September 2025.

I'm especially proud of the link within Rhos coffee morning group as through this partnership, we identified an allotment adjacent to the hub location. The allotment was in need of work so we put the older allotment members in touch with individuals from our Adult Learning Needs setting in Neath Abbey. The groups are now working together to maintain the allotment.

David Garnell

Caerphilly

Caerphilly's Arts Development team is delivering innovative and intergenerational arts initiatives in care homes and supporting creative apprentices to run local schemes.

Cultural well-being is as important as economic, environmental, and social well-being and has a significant impact on people's lives, including health and well-being. The challenge is not everyone in Wales can access culture and the arts

Caerphilly County Borough Council's Arts Development team is using the arts to bring people together, foster well-being, and support creative professionals. The team runs an apprenticeship scheme focused on music and health and delivers innovative arts initiatives in care homes including silent discos and seated exercise classes, projects designed to reduce loneliness, keep people active and improve well-being through bringing people from the community together.

One of their standout projects is the Guided Movement Silent Disco. First of its kind in Wales, the discos promote physical, emotional, and social well-being in Caerphilly care homes by encouraging movement, lifting moods, and fostering shared experiences. The discos take a person-centred approach and tailor playlists and sessions to meet the needs of each care home. Through using silent disco headphones, the sessions allow people in other rooms to take part, ensuring everyone, regardless of mobility or confidence, can engage with the music. They also vary the music played; rather than just playing old war songs, residents experience new music and are introduced to songs they may not have heard otherwise. The success of this project has relied on strong relationships between care homes, schools and the Arts all coming together to deliver on wellbeing and social engagement.

The Age Friendly Communities Officer worked along side the Caerphilly Arts Development team in spreading information about these discos to the Age Friendly Hubs in the Caerphilly borough. As well as residential homes, community hubs ran silent discos where attendees of various ages enjoyed an eclectic mix of music and at one point even formed a Conga line in Blackwood town centre shops.

Outcome 3: Amplifying Older People's Voices

Ceredigion

To ensure that older people across Ceredigion have an opportunity to have their voices heard, we have developed hybrid Age-friendly Forum meetings across the county.

Ceredigion is a rural county with two main towns—Aberystwyth in the north and Cardigan in the south—alongside four smaller market towns: Lampeter, Aberaeron, Tregaron, and Llandysul. Given the county's geography, it is essential to provide accessible, inclusive opportunities for older people to engage in discussions and access support.

With our partners at Barcud Housing Association, we have established a forum model that operates across three physical locations:

- The residents' lounges at Barcud Housing developments.
- The Local Authority's newly established Centre for Independent Living in Aberaeron.
- The main Council offices in Aberystwyth.

Having the option to use Barcud locations means we can extend the forum to nine additional areas of Ceredigion at no extra cost.

Alongside the in-person meetings, the forum is also accessible online, ensuring that as many people as possible have the option to attend. Presentations can be displayed on large screens, and sound levels can be adjusted for each location, making sessions more accessible. The online format has also been particularly beneficial for those in rural areas without reliable transport links.

As chosen by forum members, the forums are currently held quarterly, with each meeting focusing on a specific topic for discussion. Forum attendees select the topics, giving us the opportunity to work with partners to ensure that presentations are relevant and informative.

Each forum's content is used to develop a newsletter, which signposts readers to the speakers and organisations that presented. The newsletter is sent electronically to members who have opted for email communication, and a paper version is posted to those who prefer a physical copy.

Staffing these forums is a team effort, and the presence of Community Connectors and Carer Development Officers is key to making them work. Their role in facilitating the meetings at each physical location ensures that attendees can take part in discussions, access information, and stay engaged. Without them, many of those attending in person would likely be unable to participate in a hybrid format and would be unlikely to attend a meeting in person.

The hybrid format has led to increased engagement from local councillors, who now attend the forums and hear directly from attendees.

Among other regular attendees are health professionals, local authority colleagues, and third-sector organisations, who then disseminate the information further across the county, ensuring that vital knowledge reaches an even wider audience.

Sarah Griffiths

Powys

To gather feedback from older people in Powys we held 17 engagement events that have been carried out throughout the county in various settings, utilising existing groups already running. These have included coffee mornings, luncheon clubs, warm hubs, well-being groups, a livestock market, sports sessions and social groups. We also attended engagement sessions that PAVO and other partner organisations, including Farming Fit and Age Cymru Outreach Bus had organised. We engaged with over 427 residents aged 60+ living in Powys, allowing them to share their views, opinions and issues. The partner organisation groups have also promoted the opportunity to their regular attendees.

We invited local representatives of the Older People's Forum, our Community Connector, Town and Community and County Councillors, representatives from Powys County Council, Powys Teaching Health Board and the voluntary sector to attend the engagement events.

A co-production workshop with the Older Person's Forum regarding its future configuration was held in September. Further workshop activity to its refine structure, focus, grow ownership and direction. An 'issues log' has been developed and is

being refined following review by the Leadership Group. It will be used to inform future engagement on agreed topics.

Intelligence gathered through the AFC engagement continues to feed into the Regional Partnership Board (and subsidiary bodies), as well as directly to individual public sector and third sector organisations/services to inform and remove system barriers getting in the way of older people living a good life. Intelligence and citizen experiences will also be shared with third sector and strategic partners to support all agencies to gain a broader collective understanding of older people's experiences and needs.

Activity to involve older people in co-producing and designing the Early Help and Well-Being offer across Powys has primarily focused upon the Council's programme for extensive redesign of daytime opportunities. The engagement of older people was integral to the initial scoping and design of the service transformation and is now central and influential within the present process of refinement of changes and their implementation. Preliminary planning has begun for the engagement of older people in the Powys Owned Care Homes (POCH) programme to co-produce and design the development of Sustainable Dual Registered Area Homes.

Rachel Evans

Conwy

The Age Friendly Grant in Conwy funds older people's forums, bringing in speakers such as LLAIS, Alzheimer's Cymru, Vision Support, North Wales Police, local councillors and the BCUHB Falls Prevention Team.

With support from the coordinator, members attend events across North Wales, learning about current issues, networking with organisations and sharing information with their communities. They provide feedback which is discussed at forums and published in the Older People's Newsletter. The coordinator also follows up with organisations to obtain materials or invite them to speak.

Members often need help with both major issues—such as caring responsibilities or dementia—and everyday challenges like utility disputes, transport or housekeeping. The coordinator offers support and refers to services including Advocacy, Citizens Advice and Care & Repair, and may involve councillors, the Older People's Commissioner, MSs or MPs where needed. The Commissioner's office has provided valuable assistance on issues such as housing and cancer support.

Forums are a vital part of Age-Friendly communities, ensuring older people's voices influence decisions, policy and local services.

Joanna Roberts

Outcome 4: Coproduction - supporting the development of community projects

Flintshire – Men's Room and Women's Room

Loneliness can creep in, impacting mental well-being and overall happiness. The Men's Room aims to help change that. Locally, there were a growing number of isolated older men with preconceptions that groups and activities are for 'vulnerable'

people, 'not for me' and who also engage with formal services and support far less than women.

Improving the well-being of Rhydymwyn's older men lay in bringing them together to reduce isolation and loneliness – step forward: The Men's Room. A warm, welcoming, and relaxed space in the heart of the village where men can simply be themselves, forge new friendships, and combat loneliness through genuine human connection.

The Men's Room is a supportive environment to discuss anything from the day's news to old hobbies, family stories, or just enjoy some good-natured banter. The age of attendees goes up to 90 years which fosters a rich tapestry of perspectives, experiences, and wisdom. Participants come from all walks of life, some widowed, married, retired or lonely.

The Men's Room improves mental fitness through consistent and positive social engagement. Regular interaction, feeling valued, and being part of a community are all vital ingredients for well-being. It is a place where men can come together, feel a sense of belonging, enrich their lives, no fuss, no activities, just men being themselves in a safe environment with a bacon bap and a mug of tea.

The men have connected with villagers across neighbouring small villages too. The area is becoming 'joined up' and better connected to develop a stronger, sustainable and a better-informed age-friendly and inclusive community. Overall, the men are much more in tune with identifying, sharing and addressing their health and wellbeing needs at the Men's Room.

The Women's room:

In our bustling lives, the need for connection and community often goes unmet. We have created a women's group, designed to nurture friendships, spark creativity, and foster a sense of belonging among women from our village and its surroundings. This isn't just a weekly meeting; it's a dedicated space where women can truly come together to share, to learn, to inspire, and to simply be.

Every week, our doors open to a welcoming atmosphere for women to connect and form new friendships. The core of our group revolves around shared interests and lively conversation. Whether it's discussing the latest book, sharing gardening tips, exploring local events, or simply enjoying the comfort of good company, the focus is always on genuine interaction and mutual support.

The Women's Room is a place where every voice is heard, every opinion valued, and every woman feels truly seen. Our gatherings offer the opportunity for creativity, a space where women can engage their artistic sides, whether they are seasoned crafters or complete beginners. The emphasis isn't on producing masterpieces, but on the joy of the creative process itself, the therapeutic benefits of the shared experience of creating alongside like-minded women.

Ultimately, this women's group is more than just a weekly gathering; it is a vibrant hub of female empowerment and a safe space for women.

Sandra Donoghue

Torfaen – Veterans Hub

Support for veterans in Torfaen was identified as a priority. There is a significant veteran's community here with the highest percentage of veterans in Wales (2021)

who had previously served in the reserve armed forces. The setting up of the Veteran's hub was challenging and we met several barriers before it became a success. For example the building we initially began the breakfast hub in had a gym upstairs and the sudden bangs were triggering for some.

We moved to the Army Reserve Centre (ARC) in January 2024 where the environment proved to be the change that the veterans needed for them to feel safe and comfortable. The hub continues to thrive, we cater for 50 people but on occasion have had to go out for more food as they exceed that limit. The group has a management committee to make decisions, and organise trips, flag raising events, celebrations, commemorations, attend military funerals and organise social evenings and fundraisers.

Within the hub the ethos is peer support and as such the veterans are accessing training to gain the knowledge to help others that might not access external support. They have completed trauma informed training, become dementia friends, mental health training, defibrillator training, first aid and are currently collaborating with ABHB and Recovery College to roll out mental health and well-being for veterans training. This will involve two of the veterans becoming a 'trainer' in this field.

The veterans Hub is situated in Cwmbran, which is the south of the borough, this continues to be a success and well attended.

I work in the community and consult groups face to face to identify needs in Torfaen. I also work alongside Community Connectors and Building Resilient Communities to enhance the support and access grants and funding opportunities. I also support individuals, for example Adferiad, who support unpaid carers, reached out to me as an older gentleman was visiting their office who was isolated and lonely and had no direction or transport. We discovered that he was a veteran of 80 years of age, so the Community Connectors and I arranged for him to be transported to the Torfaen veteran's hub where he felt welcomed and enjoyed the comradery with fellow veterans. He has now made new friends and shares a lift home. He can also access services, is no longer social excluded and has respite from his caring role.

An example of designing and tailoring an activity would be one of our regular veterans who finds painting pebbles therapeutic for his diagnosed PTSD. The Age-friendly work in Torfaen, and specifically the veteran's hub, has focussed enabling on peer support, empowering and upskilling within the groups. We secured funding for this veteran to facilitate workshops fortnightly in the hub, this has not only benefitted his mental health and confidence but given other veterans a space to relax and be creative.

Through conversations and observations, it was also identified that music is therapy for many veterans, we now have weekly guitar lessons and fortnightly harmonica lessons.

We have successfully accessed funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to sustain Torfaen Veterans breakfast Hub for a further 12 months, this is also used for training, upskilling and trips.

Zoe Gibbs

Blaenau Gwent – support to access funding

In 2021, an application was made by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council on behalf of the 50+ Network of stakeholder/partner organisations to Welsh

Government's Loneliness & Social Isolation Grant, intended to support local grass-roots third sector organisations to access revenue to help deliver activities to tackle loneliness and isolation. The 22/23 and 23/24 grant programmes were coordinated by the Age-friendly Communities grant-funded postholder to help target support for older people. Following the first two grant programmes, the percentage of adults who are lonely (National Survey for Wales) fell from 16% in 21/22 to 11% in 22/23.

Improved connections with a large number of groups within the borough has helped raise awareness of the Warm and Safe Spaces funding stream and given groups an opportunity to apply. Many older people's groups are less, or even non, active on social media and therefore less likely to be informed about services and funding available to them.

Local older people's groups are also continually supported with regular signposting to grant opportunities via the Age-friendly Communities grant-funded postholder.

The Age-friendly Communities postholder has played a central role in strengthening funding access, widening engagement and supporting individual residents. Most recently, the postholder coordinated the awarding of Warm and Safe Spaces grants. Many funded venues and groups are frequented predominantly by older residents. Ongoing monitoring visits have not only ensured compliance but have also fostered trust and built long-term relationships with volunteers, group leads and attendees.

The postholder is able to access the Access Elemental system through the Happy Healthy Blaenau Gwent initiative—a secure, cloud-based social prescribing platform enabling referrals, coordination and reporting.

During a recent community event, an elderly resident approached the postholder for help with several personal challenges, including housing issues, ongoing health concerns and their partner's recent dementia diagnosis. The postholder was able to offer immediate support and has since made an appropriate referral through the Elemental system to ensure the resident receives tailored, ongoing assistance. Many residents have commented that their local groups—whether Warm Space venues, craft sessions, coffee mornings or other community activities—are vital lifelines. They consistently report that without these opportunities they would become socially isolated very quickly.

One resident who had recently lost their partner shared that they had been encouraged to attend a local coffee morning. There, they reconnected with old friends, regained confidence and began to rebuild a social routine. Similar stories are frequently heard during group visits, highlighting the profound impact that small, accessible community spaces can have on wellbeing.

David Arnold

Ynys Mon – Nifty 60s

J Lee MBE and Ray Williams established Nifty60s in August 2019 with the ambition of reducing slips, trips and falls among older people, helping to relieve pressure on GP surgeries and A&E departments. What began as a small community effort grew steadily through word of mouth. Although the Covid-19 pandemic brought in-person sessions at HAWFC to a halt, Ray ensured members could continue exercising by loaning equipment—James himself received a rowing machine.

After lockdown, membership expanded to several dozen regular participants. This growth prompted the group to formalise as a constituted group with elected officers and a bank account, enabling them to apply for grants. At this point, James first connected with Sioned Young, Development Officer at Isle of Anglesey County Council. Her support was instrumental in securing a £1,000 grant for essential equipment and in connecting Nifty60s to Age-Friendly Communities Anglesey and the Older People's Forum—an important turning point for the group.

From 2022 onwards, James and Ray worked closely with Sioned and colleagues Ellie and Seiriol, presenting regularly at Older People's Forums and engaging widely with partners across the island, including Cllr Gwilym Jones, who is now also a Nifty60s participant. Networking through these forums opened doors to further collaboration with organisations such as BCUHB and Bangor University. Support from figures including Lisa Hother and trauma surgeon Mr Oliver Blocker contributed to the group's successful Lottery bid of £288,000.

Public recognition grew, with visits from the BCUHB Chair, Senedd Member Rhun ap Iorwerth, MP Llinos Medi, county councillors, GP surgery managers and others who observed sessions first-hand. Membership now approaches 600 across seven venues, with plans to expand to nine.

James reports extensive evidence that Nifty60s is transforming lives—improving physical and mental health, building confidence, and fostering friendships. The group champions the message that “muscle is medicine”, and that age is no barrier to improved strength, wellbeing and quality of life.

Age-Friendly Communities Anglesey and the Older People's Forum continue to thrive, producing a well-received bilingual newsletter and strengthening partnerships across the island. Both the current and former Older People's Commissioner for Wales have visited and participated in sessions, later praising Nifty60s in their work across Wales.

James has since been invited to join the Older People's Council in Llangefni, a role he undertakes with pride. He expresses deep appreciation for the ongoing support provided by Sioned, Ellie and Seiriol at the Local Authority, acknowledging their contribution to the success and growing impact of Nifty60s.

Sioned Young and James Lee MBE

Cardiff – Volunteering

C is an unpaid carer who cares for her husband who is living with Alzheimer's; the stress that came from this responsibility has affected her wellbeing as she was finding it difficult to open up to close family and friends. The Carers Assessment Team referred C to Caring Friends where she was matched with a volunteer befriender who calls her weekly. C stated 'we have a chat, and I enjoy it, and she enjoys it, so it's great' and the conversations are 'so distanced from her everyday routine'. C feels that the volunteer befriender is a chance of escapism from her everyday routine, gives her a break and has transformed her week.

D is an unpaid carer for her son and has her own health conditions that limit her mobility; this left her feeling 'alone and isolated'. Following a referral from the Carers Assessment Team, D was put in touch with a volunteer befriender. Since being in contact with a volunteer befriender, D has stated, “We are the perfect match; you

could not have found a better match” and “[The Volunteer] is so friendly and lovely to talk to, she’s teaching me a few words in French and Spanish” and “I feel uplifted after conversations, it helps to have someone to talk to when you would otherwise be alone”. When D was asked if there were any changes to the service that would be helpful she said “this support is just what I want, I don’t need anything to change at all!”

“Having a routine is amazing. It’s amazing to have a weekly thing to do. It’s lovely to get involved in different aspects of the community which I wouldn’t interact with before. It helps me wake up in the morning and it’s been helping me enjoy my whole day more. I’ve been making friends, which is really nice.”

An update on a previous client, Chris from Wellbeing Mentor Hazel: I have heard about Chris's progress on two occasions now since we stopped working together. I introduced him to Feel-good Friday in Ely and him register for an event mailing list. I heard from Community Inclusion Officer Jane that he had joined them for a walk around the Bay and then gone on an impromptu adventure with some of the other walkers who managed to get on the wrong bus together, which they all found very funny. The second time I had an update, I found out that Chris had attended the Inky Quills writing group run by Community Inclusion Officer Cathy at Capel i Bawb. I asked how he had found out about the group and she said he had been invited by one of the other attendees. I asked how he had met the other attendee and she said they met at a Dungeons and Dragons game. This is fabulous because he has found the D&D group independently, made a friend, who has then invited him along to another of our activities. That means he has been connecting with other people, physically active and learning new skills all without the support of a mentor

Chatty Cafe

Centre Jo Davies began working with Pontprennau Church Community Centre to set up a new ‘Chatty Café’. This session is now successfully being run by volunteer June Bailey and has 10-14 members a week. Some members have now also started Tai Chi and are really enjoying it. Rev Lee who runs the centre stated that: “Wednesdays are now fantastic at the centre with a real buzz and atmosphere and people now taking up this new activity and staying for lunch is brilliant to see.” June is enjoying volunteering so close to her house as she can walk there and is looking forward to new people attending each week with our support too.

Tai Chi

Every Tuesday morning Ely Hub transforms into a space of calm, movement, and connection, thanks to Ben, a passionate and committed volunteer who leads a weekly Tai Chi session. With around 12 to 17 regular attendees, the group practices a variety of Tai Chi exercises that promote relaxation, flexibility, and overall wellbeing. Ben has shared how much he values the experience: “I really enjoy running the session. It makes me happy to use my skills and see people relaxing, stretching their bodies, and doing gentle exercise.” The impact of Ben’s sessions is clearly felt by those who attend. One participant said: “This session is useful and wonderful, that’s why I’ve been coming for around two years.” Another attendee, who had previously undergone physiotherapy in hospital, reflected: “I didn’t benefit from hospital physiotherapy like I have from these Tai Chi sessions.” A third participant added: “I’ve found what I was looking for. It’s really relaxing and enjoyable. I’ve been attending this session for the last two years as well.” The positive feedback extends

beyond the participants. A member of the Hub staff, shared: “We’ve received very good feedback from the community about Ben and the Tai Chi session, which is great news to share.” What makes this group even more special is the sense of community it fosters. After each session, attendees head to the Hub Café together to enjoy a coffee and a friendly chat, building not just physical wellbeing, but social connections too.

Robert Sadler

Vale of Glamorgan – St. Athan Strollers

Following an inspiring visit to Swansea Marina to meet the Age Friendly Swansea Team, the Vale of Glamorgan’s Age Friendly Officer was motivated to explore how a similar initiative could support older residents locally. At the time, while several walking groups operated in Barry and Penarth, there was a clear gap in provision within the Western Vale, a rural area that is home to a significant proportion of the Vale’s older population, yet opportunities for regular, social physical activity were limited, particularly following the pandemic when centres and services ended.

Working closely with the Vale of Glamorgan Council’s Healthy Living Officer, St Athan Community Council, Valeways (a volunteer-led walking charity), and a local business owner, a pilot stroller group was developed in St Athan. Valeways’ involvement was particularly important. As an established local walking charity with trained volunteer leaders and existing community trust, Valeways provided the infrastructure, expertise and long term sustainability needed to embed the group within the wider walking programme. The local Council also funded free hot drinks which were served at the meet and end point, a local public house known locally as ‘The Shoes’. The business had closed during the pandemic and were grateful to see regular patrons coming through the doors once again.

Promotion of the pilot group prioritised accessibility and inclusion. Information was shared via social media, alongside printed posters displayed throughout St Athan to ensure those who were digitally excluded were not overlooked. In addition, a “taster stroll” was offered as part of a wider Age Friendly community event in St Athan. The community event itself was a key mechanism for building connections. Organised by the Age Friendly Officer, it brought together 18 stallholders, including Age Connects, Care & Repair, Digital Communities Wales, the Vale Council, the 50+ Forum and others. The event created space not only for older residents to access information and support face to face, but also for organisations to network, collaborate and strengthen local referral pathways. To encourage social interaction, the event included a free raffle, Welsh language tasters, craft activities and complimentary home baked cake and refreshments.

The 10-week pilot stroller group proved highly successful, demonstrating clear demand for a local, social walking opportunity for over 50s in the Western Vale. As a result, the pilot was extended and has become a permanent fixture within the Valeways walking programme. Crucially, the Age Friendly Officer and Healthy Living Officer continue to attend walks as “friends of the group”. This ongoing presence helps to sustain relationships with both Valeways and participants, reinforcing trust and ensuring continued communication. Through these informal interactions, officers are able to share information, signpost support, and stay connected to the issues that matter most to older people in the community.

Outcome 5: Improving inclusion, accessibility and wellbeing

Bridgend – Generation Games

As a community coordinator, I believe it is important to build strong relationships and create a supportive environment for residents. Over recent months, I have worked closely with Pencoed Primary School and the family liaison officer, Julie Jenkins, linking community groups to provide a more holistic approach. For example, I arranged for clients who enjoy knitting to make dolls' clothes and blankets for the school, which has given them pride and strengthened community spirit.

Building on these links, I launched a project called *Generation Games* to bring together three generations. I selected 10 older clients who are lonely and isolated, and Julie chose 10 four-year-old children with parents or guardians who could commit an hour a week.

We met at the local church hall every Wednesday for five weeks. The hall was chosen because it is directly opposite the school, meaning no transport was needed for the children. It is on level ground, has car parking facilities, and is fully accessible for those with disabilities, making it an ideal venue for older participants. Holding the sessions off school premises also made the experience feel special for the children, like a trip, and helped create a sense of equality among all participants.

Each session included activities such as crafts, photo sharing, and games, which encouraged conversation and respect. The children and my clients referred to each other as "friends", breaking down barriers and forming strong bonds. One of my favourite moments was during the photo-sharing session when a 92-year-old client showed a picture of her mother and said, "*She would be over 120 now.*" The child she was paired with was amazed and asked so many questions. Another memorable quote came from a young boy proudly telling his new friend, "*These are my twin sisters – they're the best!*" These conversations sparked genuine interest and laughter across the generations.

After Easter, my clients were invited to the school for afternoon tea and a singing session with their new friends. The respect and care shown by the children have been incredible. When one client was ill, the children were genuinely concerned, asking where their friend was.

The project has been a great success, reducing loneliness and promoting intergenerational learning. We are starting another group in June and planning a summer trip to Bryngarw Park. The model has worked flawlessly and could be replicated across the county.

Ady Hayhoe

Swansea – Collaboration Station

To enhance our visibility, approachability and accessibility, in August 2023 we opened a small office space inside the National Waterfront Museum. Located in a high-footfall area of this beautiful and accessible venue, the space offers a welcoming environment where community members can drop in for advice, or as

often happens, simply for a cup of tea and a chat. The space was named by members of the Ageing Well Community, and so, *The Collaboration Station* was born.

Building on the success of our space at the Waterfront Museum, we opened a second, significantly larger venue in the city centre in November 2024 - *The Collaboration Station @ St David's*. This new space gives us the opportunity to host engagement sessions in our own dedicated venue, marking an exciting step forward. Designed with the entire community in mind, it aims to provide a safe, welcoming, and relaxing environment for people of all ages.

Since opening, the space has hosted over 50 events, delivered by both internal Council teams and external partners. Several of these have been dedicated to the Ageing Well initiative, all of which have been warmly received. The most recent, a Mid-Summer Party, welcomed 150 attendees, making it one of our most successful events to date!

Rhys Ananicz

Wrexham – outreach work

Significant work is underway to engage older people who do not wish to join a formal forum. This includes reaching out to those involved in existing groups, such as lunch clubs and library groups, as well as working with established community projects, Community Agents, Community Councils and local volunteers who already have trusted relationships with isolated or less-engaged older people.

Older people in rural areas and urban areas identify and design groups / activities through community engagement; in rural areas, there is a reliance on local networks for information gathering. In contrast, in urban areas the infrastructure provides access to facilities that enable a wider variety of activities. In both areas older people are encouraged to actively participate in planning to ensure activities reflect their interests and promote a sense of belonging and that their input is valued. We recognise that there is a difference in accessibility between urban and rural areas, with urban areas generally offering more accessible services. To address this disparity, we are working to increase accessibility in rural areas through outreach sessions. Consultations and general feedback from rural communities about the needs in these areas will help aim to involve stakeholder in helping design future services that are tailored to their specific requirements.

Vicki Lyndley-Jones

Outcome 6: Raising awareness and sharing information

Swansea

Our Ageing Well newsletter is distributed every Friday via email and serves as a key tool for sharing information with the community. It highlights not only Swansea Council's Ageing Well engagement sessions but also a wide range of activities for older people taking place across the city. Many of these opportunities are submitted by partners from the Ageing Well Steering Group. With nearly 3,000 subscribers, the newsletter consistently generates strong community interest and uptake in the events and initiatives it promotes.

We also manage an Ageing Well WhatsApp Group, which now includes over 700 members. The group is set to “admin only,” meaning only staff can post updates, making it an effective method of sharing timely and accurate information. It has proven especially useful for notifying community members about changes to session times, venues, or, on rare occasions, cancellations. As a team, we regularly inform older community members about both the newsletter and the WhatsApp Group, and we’re always happy to support anyone interested in signing up to either.

We recognise that not all older community members are active online - for a variety of reasons. Some may lack access to technology, others may not feel confident using it and some simply prefer not to. As a result, we continue to rely heavily on printed flyers and perhaps most effectively, good old-fashioned word of mouth!

Every week, we meet and speak with new people, many of whom tell us they heard about our work through a friend who already attends. This reinforces that word of mouth remains a powerful tool for community engagement, working hand in hand with our digital communication efforts.

A key factor in our success is that a team member is always present at our engagement sessions. This consistent presence helps build trust, familiarity, and strong relationships with community members. As a result, conversations are more meaningful, and we’re often approached for advice or support on other issues. Thanks to our collaborative approach, even when we can’t help directly, we’re usually able to connect individuals with organisations that can.

Rhys Ananicz

Merthyr County Borough Council

Merthyr County Borough Council recently hosted a well-received Carer’s Rights Day event at the Town Centre Hub in Merthyr Tydfil. The event was co-produced by a small group of professionals to recognise and celebrate Carer’s Rights Day, while also complementing the Older People’s Commissioner’s week-long visit to the county borough.

The event attracted 108 attendees, including members of the public and professionals from a range of sectors. Participants benefited from meaningful networking opportunities, and the programme featured performances from a local choir and brass band, supported by community refreshments.

It is important to acknowledge the significant progress made over the past three years. Earlier events saw limited engagement from the public, whereas this year’s attendance demonstrates a marked increase in community involvement and awareness. This growth reflects the impact of the collaborative work taking place across Merthyr Tydfil.

The initiatives being developed and co-produced within the county borough highlight our continued commitment to the Age Friendly Communities agenda. We remain focused on ensuring that the voices of older residents and carers are heard, and that local services are shaped around the needs and experiences of the population they serve.

Natalie Flowers

Newport City Council

At the Christmas Chatty Café, the Age Friendly Policy Officer engaged in a discussion with an elderly female and her daughter. The daughter had recently assumed the role of the primary carer for her parents, following one parent's recent diagnosis of dementia. The Policy Officer listened as they expressed the challenges, they face in adjusting to the diagnosis and the daughter's experience in providing ongoing support to both parents. In response, the Policy Officer provided the daughter with information on a carers assessment and gave her a carers pack.

Policy Officer introduced her to one of the community connectors who initiated a conversation with the daughter to identify their specific needs and to explore the "What Matters" Conversation. The daughter has been added to the carers network to receive monthly information specific to the needs of unpaid carers, her mother has been given a community directory of social groups by the connector to help reduce some of the loneliness and isolation she has been feeling and identify potential groups that all the family can attend.

During the session, the Policy Officer also connected them with a Dementia Hub advisor, who was able to offer targeted information regarding dementia-specific support services and local groups.

The daughter is scheduled to receive a formal carers assessment, and the family has been signposted to appropriate services for ongoing support.

Katherine Hawkins