

Section 5.4a

Title: Draft 1 Ageing Well

1 Overview

Older people's concerns and interests have been raised throughout the wellbeing assessment. In this section there is a focus on creating a positive future for older people, using the five themes related to the Ageing Well in Wales programme (which defines older people as those aged 50+). These themes include:

- Falls prevention
- Dementia Supportive Communities
- Opportunities for learning and employment
- Loneliness and isolation
- Age Friendly communities



It is clear that the number and proportion of people aged 65+ is set to rise. It is important to recognise that the older population is very diverse in nature with many people remaining fit and active. Older people also provide a significant amount of their time and energy caring for others:

- Data from the 2011 survey shows that more than one third of unpaid carers in Blaenau Gwent aged over 65 provide 50 or more hours of care per week to people who are disabled or infirm.
- There are increasing numbers of people in their 80s caring for spouses / others who require support.
- Many people aged 50+ now have additional caring responsibilities, with working families increasingly relying on grandparents to care for younger children whilst at the same time caring for elderly relatives.

However, the prevalence of physical and sensory impairments and ill health does rise significantly with age:

- Around 45% of adults over state pension age are disabled, compared with 6% of children and 16% of working age adults.

It is vital to recognise this in terms of enabling people to age well - promoting healthy lifestyles, enabling the right support, ensuring that physical barriers are minimised and negative perceptions of disability are challenged.

The (draft) Gwent-wide Population Needs Assessment outlines the current position related to those in need of care and support (see Wellbeing Assessment section '*Care and Support*'). This overlap with the Ageing Well in Wales themes and the performance of Blaenau Gwent in relation to these is outlined in more detail below.

Falls prevention

Falls are estimated to cost the NHS more than £2.3 billion per year.

One indicator related to falls amongst older people is the number of recorded hip fractures. The table below (illustrating the most up to date comparable data) shows that the rate of emergency admissions for hip fractures in people aged 65+ years in 2013 for the Gwent region was 636 per 100,000 population, higher than other Local Authorities in the region.

Rate of emergency admissions for hip fractures in people aged 65+ per 100,000 population (European age-standardised) - 2013



Source: NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)

Dementia Supportive Communities

The number of people with dementia in Blaenau Gwent is estimated to be 869, increasing to 1110 in 2021, based on prevalence data provided by the Alzheimer's Society:

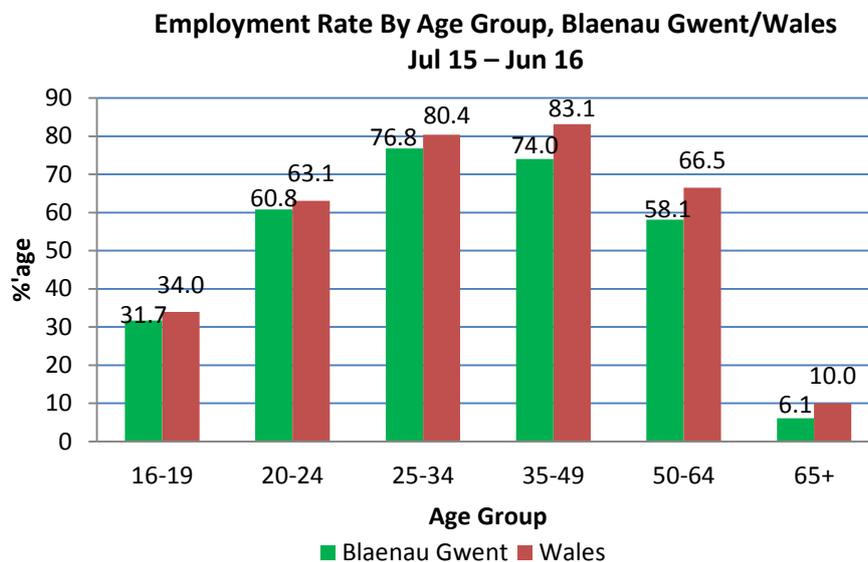
	Current						2021 projection					
	30-64	65-74	75+	Total	% of people 65+ with dementia	% of all people with dementia	30-64	65-74	75+	Total	% of people 65+ with dementia	% of all people with dementia
Blaenau Gwent	19	133	717	869	7.15	1.27	20	172	918	1110	7.13	1.53
Wales				36532						47995		

At a national level, dementia is the single most frequent cause of admissions to care homes; a quarter of hospital beds are occupied by people living with dementia and it forms the largest need for community care services for older people.

Opportunities for learning and employment

Older people will make up a greater proportion of the workforce in the future. Between 2014 and 2024 the UK will have 200,000 fewer people aged 16 to 49 but 3.2 million more people aged 50 to State Pension age.

In Wales, the graph below shows that the number of people in employment declines from age 35, dropping significantly from age 50. The gap between those in employment compared with the Wales average is also greater as people age.



Volunteering

As well as contributing to society and promoting individual wellbeing, volunteering can be a vital stepping stone into the workplace. Recent studies suggest:

- the annual value of regular formal volunteering is £23.9 billion
- the 'wellbeing value' to frequent formal volunteers themselves is around £70 billion per year.

There is evidence that those aged between 45 and 79 are the most likely to have volunteered in Wales (almost one third), and 12% of volunteers are people aged over 80. It is clear that older people form a considerable and

valuable part of the volunteering community, and this is likely to increase with changing demographics.

Loneliness and isolation

Loneliness and social isolation are harmful to our health: recent research shows that lacking social connections is as damaging to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Locally, the recent engagement exercise with service users related to the Population Needs Assessment showed that 47% of people aged 65+ said they did feel part of their local community; 20% said they did 'sometimes', and 20% said they did not.

Nationally, an Office for National Statistics survey in 2015 showed that those aged 80 and over are twice as likely to report feeling lonely (a rating of 6 or more out of 10) than those in the working age and the 65 to 79 age group (29.2% compared to 14.8% and 14.5% respectively). Those who live alone, rent or are widowed are most likely to report being lonely. This risk will be compounded by the likelihood of more single pensioner households due to increased divorce / changing lifestyles.

Age Friendly communities

Ageing Well in Wales has adopted the World Health Organisation model that describes the eight domains or aspects of life we need to consider in making places more age-friendly.



These domains are: outdoor environments; transport and mobility; housing; social participation; social inclusion and non-discrimination; civic engagement and employment; communication and information, and community and health services.

This underlines the significance of these themes to older people across the Wellbeing Assessment. It is crucial that this is recognised in the Wellbeing Plan, especially given the ageing population and the increasing proportion of people who are very old.

2. Story behind the data

Blaenau Gwent response to the Ageing Well in Wales objectives

Agencies across Blaenau Gwent have been working together for some time to address the objectives related to the National Strategy for Older People and the Ageing Well in Wales programme. Reporting to the Public Services Board, this work is overseen by the multi-agency 50+ Stakeholder Group and related 50+ Engagement Group. There has also been close working with the Office of the Older People's Commissioner since its inception.

Recently a fundamental review has taken place, in order to improve the governance and accountability of the 50+ Stakeholder Group. For this coming year the priorities of the group are to improve:

- engagement with older people
- information provision

Falls prevention

The impact of falls on individuals and the public purse is very stark. The data outlined above show an increase in falls in Blaenau Gwent, however, this does need to be regarded with some caution, as there has been a range of development work since the data was produced.

For people who have already had a fall, in addition to the falls service (within the local Community Rehabilitation Team), there is a specialist Falls Clinic and direct access physiotherapist (funded by a local cluster of GPs) based at Neville Hall Hospital.



Activity within Blaenau Gwent related to falls prevention includes, for example:

- A Care Home Resource guide has been developed through the Gwent Frailty Programme: *'Action to Reduce Falls and Fractures in the Care Home'*
- Blaenau Gwent Care and Repair offer advice on trips and falls prevention and through their 'Managing Better' service.
- An Exercise Referral Programme is managed by Aneurin Leisure. However, there is evidence this might be under-utilised.

There is still much work to be done to reduce falls. Raising awareness of falls prevention across sectors and within the community needs to be a priority, though additional resources may be required for this.

Dementia Supportive Communities

A dementia supportive community is an essential component in providing a safe accessible environment and improving the quality of life for people with dementia and those who support and care for them. We are building on good foundations in Blaenau Gwent:

- from April 2015 to September 2016 there has been a focus on Tredegar in building a dementia supportive community:

Training Awareness &	Target 15/16	Actual 15/16	Target 16/17	Actual Q1 & Q2	TOTAL
Dementia Friends	500	1209	1000	608	1817
Dementia Friends sessions	-	35		50	85
Dementia Champions	8	19	10	3	22

This is already extending beyond Tredegar and development work is underway in other communities. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council also has plans to introduce dementia awareness training for staff.

- There have been wider initiatives that benefit people locally, such as the training of all police as dementia friends, and training amongst Melin, Tai Calon and United Welsh Housing Association staff.
- There are more places for people to dementia and carers to get together for support, such as dementia cafes.
- A new user-led group has also formed: 'Blaenau Gwent Friends of Dementia', which is chaired by a person living with dementia. This is an excellent example of co-production in practice.



Dementia has been highlighted in the Gwent Population Needs Assessment. A Gwent- wide Dementia Strategy is about to be released for consultation. A national Dementia Strategy has also just been made available for consultation: *Together for a More Dementia Friendly Wales 2017-2022*.

Loneliness and Isolation

In Blaenau Gwent tackling loneliness and isolation is a high priority and this is also reflected in the Gwent Population Needs Assessment. There are a number of local activities and services, for example:



- Community Connectors are expanding their role to work with older and disabled people within Extra care environments
- Age Cymru Hospital Discharge Service gather information on people who live alone and any relevant risk factors
- Sight Cymru enables mutual support groups for people with sight loss
- Care & Repair are running a project “Staying Healthy at Home” working with GPs to access people who may not be in contact with services - offering them advice, information and signposting.
- Work is ongoing to implement the DEWIS information service.
- Community Connectors are mapping the range of befriending services and other services that can connect people to their local community.
- Improving information delivery to older people is a key priority action for Blaenau Gwent’s 50+ Stakeholder Group for 2017/18, especially those who have difficulty accessing information. This work will involve staff from the Information Advice and Assistance team, Community Connectors, representatives from Registered Social Landlords and across the voluntary sector.

It is, however, clear from local consultation and wider research that key building blocks to reduce isolation and loneliness include:

- Accessible housing / supported housing and care homes in ‘connected’ locations
- Effective, affordable public transport
- Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour - and the fear of these

Many of these issues affect the whole community, but have a particular impact on older people with a huge cost to society - they need to be a high priority in building a connected community.

Opportunities for Learning and Employment

Employment

It is clear that employment levels in Blaenau Gwent amongst those aged 50+ are not what they should be. Whilst there has been a slight increase over the last 3 years, this lags behind the higher increase of people aged 50+ in employment across the whole of Wales. There are local programmes of work in place that seek to address this, for example:

- The DWP are currently undertaking work with employers and shifting their focus to people aged 50+, as there is evidence that those on Job Seekers Allowance are slower to move off this compared to younger adults.
- There is a 50+ Working Links programme
- Groundworks programme 'Future Steps' is targeted at particular groups including 50+
- Aneurin Leisure provide some basic skills training
- Community connectors, supporting people programmes and RSLs are also providing services concerned with providing support for people into work.

Adult Learning

The Essential Skills Team are working with a range of partners, linking Jobcentre Plus, Aneurin Leisure, the Local Authority Education and Regeneration departments plus Communities First, to provide local opportunities at a variety of levels and in a variety of places such as Libraries.

Apprenticeships are also open to anyone aged 16+.

In addition, there is a range of learning activities across the Borough that are not necessarily connected to employment (for example, Welsh language courses). Some of the feedback from local engagement suggested older people wanted to see more learning activities of an informal nature (such as crafts) at more accessible times and places. More work needs to be done to see whether there is a real gap here or whether it is an issue of lack of information or other barriers to access, such as transport.



Volunteering

A mapping exercise undertaken in Blaenau Gwent in 2012 showed that older people are involved in a very wide range of roles, from supporting lunch clubs to legal work, from reading in schools to supporting people in prisons.



Here to help

- The average of volunteers aged 50+ was 42%; for half of these over two thirds were 50+, and four agencies said the proportion was over 90%.
- Welcome Friends (formerly the Retired & Senior Volunteer Programme) said 95% of their volunteers are older people. This project placed almost half of all older volunteers amongst the agencies who were mapped, underlining the value of targeted volunteer programmes.
- One of the key barriers to volunteering identified is travel – either because some voluntary organisations cannot afford to pay for travelling expenses, and/or public transport systems do not enable people to travel from their home to their placement.

Age Friendly Communities

In 2013, Blaenau Gwent's Local Services Board signed up to the Dublin Declaration, which includes a commitment to work towards adopting the World Health Organisation principles to make communities age friendly.

Developing Age Friendly Communities requires an inclusive approach to all forms of current service provision and future planning. It relies on multiple strands of work to address attitudes as well as physical barriers. There needs to be a strong focus on co-production, community empowerment and participation with older people across all of the wellbeing themes.

The Gwent Population Needs Assessment also sets out how the needs of older people requiring support will be addressed.

Performance information

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales has set out guidance for Public Services Boards, including a range of wellbeing indicators for older people. Some of these indicators are available and have been included in this assessment. Other recommended indicators are not readily available in an age based format and targeted work needs to be undertaken to ensure this information is available for the Wellbeing Plan.

3. What we know from engagement



Learning from experience about wellbeing

Older people involved in the Wellbeing engagement living in residential accommodation and supported housing were asked what they had learned about Wellbeing that they would like to pass on to future generations.

Many of their responses related to the importance of personal resilience:

You don't feel sorry for yourself

*If you don't like something,
then change it*

*Learn lessons, learn from
problems - as well as what works*

You need to use your imagination

*Don't expect to have
everything at once*

*Be happy in your own
company – it's a blessing*

You need a good sense of humour

4. What we know from existing research

Some research has already been undertaken and is featured within the body of this document. Further research will be undertaken dependent on priorities determined by the Public Service Board on 21 March 2017.

5. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent

The Wellbeing Assessment has highlighted a range of issues pertinent to older people, who form a very significant and growing part of the population. Work is underway to improve ongoing engagement with older people so that they can have a stronger voice in the community. Work is also underway to look at how information can be communicated more effectively to older people, in particular those who are alone and those who are not digitally connected.

It is important that the key themes of Ageing Well in Wales continue to be progressed through the Wellbeing programme:

- Value older people for their contribution to society
- Continue the roll out of Dementia Friendly Communities and implement the Dementia Strategy
- Spotlight the needs of people aged 50+ in employment and adult learning
- Recognise and support the invaluable contribution of older people as carers and in volunteering
- Profile falls prevention wherever possible
- Make the prevention of loneliness and isolation a priority
- Promote inter-generational work
- Ensure that all aspects of Wellbeing development take into account the needs of older people, to develop an Age Friendly Blaenau Gwent
- Undertake targeted work for the Wellbeing Plan, to ensure necessary data is available in line with the wellbeing indicators for older people outlined by the Older People's Commissioner.