



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



The Strategy for Older People in Wales

THE STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN WALES

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Foreword

Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Health and Social Services, Welsh Assembly Government

I am delighted to introduce this first ever Strategy for Older People in Wales. It is published at a time when we are all more acutely aware of the need to plan ahead for an "Ageing Society" and to do a lot more now to improve the life of many older people living in difficult circumstances.

The Strategy builds from the findings of 'When I'm 64.....and more' (May 2002) the Advisory Group report, and aims to provide a comprehensive, challenging and dynamic framework for progress. It will help us all to confront ageism and other discrimination against older people; tackle stereotypes of old age and improve the engagement with and participation of older people in our communities. Older people play a vital role in society and we must ensure this is recognised and that their contribution is both valued and further enhanced. We need to respect older people and realise that in Wales this means respecting their language.

There are many issues highlighted in this Strategy about how government at all levels affects older people and their lives. A significant agenda of work is set out to address the need for improvements for older people in key services such as health, housing, social services, transport etc.. We need to remove barriers to the employment of older people for their own self-fulfillment as well as to the benefit of the Welsh economy. We need to encourage healthy life-styles in earlier life so that added years can be active ones too. All of this work must of course build on the achievements and good practice already in place and not "re-invent the wheel" where it is already working well enough.

An important facet of the Strategy is that it does not deal with all these issues in isolation and a "joined up" approach to implementation is at its core. It reinforces our development of *Well Being in Wales* as an approach that cuts across all the Assembly Government's policy areas as part of an integrated approach to policies and programmes. A widely based "action orientated" partnership will be the only way to successfully turn these aspirations into

reality. The Older People's National Partnership Forum that I intend to establish will be the driving force behind the Strategy. The National Forum will in particular need to give early priority to the structures that will be required at national and local level to support the Strategy and also to advise on the monitoring and evaluation of the Implementation Plan.

The National Assembly has accepted the principle of free personal care on the basis of the Royal Commission's recommendation that this should be a matter for UK taxation, benefits and inheritance policy. At the present time, the UK Government maintains its position that the priority for spending on long term care should be investment in improving the range and quality of services for older people. In the absence of any change at the UK level, the National Assembly does not have the legislative powers to implement a policy of free personal care. The Welsh Assembly Government will continue to press the UK Government for the powers to consider the matter in Wales, but will however continue to explore opportunities for alleviating the burden of paying for personal care.

Over and above the money which will take forward the Strategy in mainstream Assembly Government programmes, we are providing £10 million over 3 years to ensure that the Strategy has a strong base from which to grow. But this is only a starting point and it is vital that over the next 10 years this framework is further developed by all interests across Wales working in tandem. Locally led action and initiative will be central to implementation. Our Ageing Society is an issue we all have a stake in whether we are already "older", nearing retirement, planning for its arrival or have parents or grandparents who are older people. So let's all make this Strategy a success for Wales!

2. Executive Summary and Strategic Aims

This Strategy is the product of extensive consultation, research and expert views about the lives of older people in Wales both now and in the future. The aims, objectives and more detailed programmes and projects reflect the findings of the report of the Advisory Group 'When I'm 64.....and more' published in May 2002 and over 100 responses to it. The Strategy recognises that:

- over the next 20 years demographic changes will significantly change the balance of the population and mean that future policies and programmes in Wales must reflect the needs of an ageing society;
- there is a need to improve the quality, quantity and responsiveness of services for older people.

Chapter 3 sets the context and background for the Strategy, explains its grounding in the United Nation Principles for Older People, summarises the conclusions of the Advisory Group report and outlines the main tenets on which the Strategy is based.

Chapter 4 deals with the role for older people in communities and public life in Wales. The evidence suggests there are continuing problems facing many older people ie age discrimination, ageism and stereotyping, poor engagement with and participation of older people, social exclusion, isolation, poverty and gaps between the generations. A series of objectives and policies are described to tackle these problems, with local government identified as key change agents. Particular actions include establishing an Assembly Cabinet sub committee for older people, setting up a National Partnership Forum for Older People, more effective strategic planning to address older people's needs and a new innovative approach to promoting inter-generational practice. The central role of transport in the lives of many older people is also highlighted.

Chapter 5 focuses on the contribution of older workers to building our economy in Wales. Their skills, knowledge and experience will remain an asset. Advantages for older people from continued employment, if they wish, includes better income, more active lifestyles, and reducing the risks of social exclusion and dependency later in life. A need to maximise income and pensions for retirement through more flexible approaches to employment of older people is described. Specific policies include tackling age discrimination in employment, '*Prime Cymru*' to support people over 50 into self-employment, encouraging learning by people over 50, development of IT skills and facilities in the community.

Chapter 6 says that with increasing numbers of people living a longer life it is important that the added years are accompanied by good health, and improved quality of life. Changes in living behaviours even later in life can bring benefits. We will ensure that the specific needs of older people are addressed through a Health Promotion Action Plan for Older People. The health service plays an active and important role in maintaining health and preventing ill health and a number of new strategies to improve primary and secondary care service are set out eg pharmacy, dental, optometry and nutrition. New health and well being Strategic Planning at local levels will be crucial in ensuring improved, integrated services for older people. A National Service Framework (NSF) for older people will address variations in standards of care and aims to achieve greater consistency in the availability and quality of services.

Chapter 7 explains that housing; health and social care services inevitably become more important to people, as they grow older. Maintaining independence or making a transition to dependence requires these services to be delivered effectively to a high standard and in a joined up manner. The Assembly Government will lead a national debate about the priorities and strategies for meeting older people's housing needs. We will also work to promote a confident, flexible and viable care home sector and help ensure effective community services are in place to support older vulnerable people.

Chapter 8 sets out a framework for implementing the Strategy over the next decade and leads into the more detailed Implementation Action Plan that is annexed. The basis for a coherent and joined up approach across all devolved and some non-devolved policy areas will be achieved through "mainstreaming" older people's issues. Over and above the resources which will be provided for services to older people through mainstream programmes, the Welsh Assembly Government will make available £10 million over the next 3 financial years to support the implementation of this Strategy. A research, monitoring and evaluation plan is described as a basis for further development.

The 5 key aims of the Strategy for Older People in Wales are:

- Reflecting the United Nations principles for Older People to tackle discrimination against older people wherever it occurs, promote positive images of ageing and give older people a stronger voice in society.
- To promote and develop older people's capacity to continue to work and learn for as long as they want, and to make an active contribution once they retire.
- To promote and improve the health and well-being of older people through integrated planning and service delivery frameworks and more responsive diagnostic and support services.
- To promote the provision of high quality services and support which enable older people to live as independently as possible in a suitable and safe environment and ensure services are organised around and responsive to their needs.
- To implement the Strategy for Older People in Wales with support funding to ensure that it is a catalyst for change and innovation across all sectors, improves services for older people and provides the basis for effective planning for an ageing population.

3. Introduction and Background

1. The publication of this Strategy for Older People is a landmark for Wales. For the first time, we have systematically analysed the aspirations and needs of older people in Wales and produced this Strategy and implementation Action Plan to address priority issues over the next decade and beyond.

2. Over the last century the proportion of the population aged 60 and over has more than trebled. Over the next 20 years the overall population is projected to grow only slowly by just 3 per cent (less than 100,000 people), but the number of people of current retirement ages in Wales will increase by 11 per cent to 650,000. The number of very old people (85+) in Wales is projected to increase by over a third to 82,000. These demographic changes will significantly alter the overall balance of the population and will offer both opportunities and challenges. Future policies and programmes must reflect the needs of an ageing society. More generally there is also a need to improve the quality and responsiveness of services for older people. These factors led the Welsh Assembly Government to establish an Advisory Group in Spring 2001 to support the development of a Strategy for Older People in Wales.

3. The Advisory Group report 'When I'm 64.....or more', was published in May 2002. The process of developing the Group's report was underpinned by findings from literature reviews of research on older people's lives, contributions from subject "champions" and an extensive consultation programme including focus groups, a conference, Assembly Regional Committee sessions and a questionnaire. All told, this consultation programme resulted in direct contributions from over 1,000 people in Wales.

4. The Advisory Group recommendations were wide ranging, encompassing both devolved and non-devolved issues. The key conclusions include:

- To ensure that a higher profile is given to older people's issues throughout Wales and in all aspects of life and to ensure that older people's interests are represented in National and Local Government.

- To ensure that older people are able to participate fully as citizens in every aspect of society.
- To ensure that future consultation on new policies includes participation of and engagement with older people at all stages.
- To challenge and address ageism and other forms of discrimination against older people and promote more positive images of older people.
- To strengthen and promote participation in community activities and volunteering by and for older people.
- To remove barriers to employment, to support the recruitment and retention of older people, and encourage their participation in education and training.
- To develop schemes to secure improvements in mobility and to integrate transport services for older people.
- To combat poverty and poor housing among older people and promote greater uptake of benefits.
- To review the current strategies for tackling crime, their impact on the needs of older people, with particular reference to schemes to combat confidence tricksters, rogue trades-people and others who prey on or abuse older people.
- To promote the development and improved awareness of the benefits of links across all generations.
- To promote health promotion and preventive action for older people, including pre-retirement action to improve health and decrease dependency in old age.
- To promote health and social care policies which enable older people to live at home with appropriate help as long as possible.

5. The Welsh Assembly Government's formal response to the Advisory Group recommendations and the summary of consultation responses are available on request (029 2082 5191) and on our Website <http://www.wales.gov.uk/subisocialpolicy/content/ssg/contents-e.htm>

6. This Strategy builds on the main conclusions from the Advisory Group report and the comments received from the many organisations and individuals who responded during the consultation period. The Strategy also embraces the UN Principles for Older Persons -

- independence,
- participation,
- care,
- self fulfillment,
- dignity.

7. The Strategy will be an important agent for change. It takes as its starting point the principle that there is no "quick fix" to the challenges and opportunities presented by an ageing population. There must be sustained and serious effort over at least a 10-year period if we are to tackle the broad ranging and often inter-dependent issues where change is needed to benefit older people now and in the future. This will require a high degree of working together at all levels of Government, between all sectors and all partners.

8. It is clear to us from the work of the Advisory Group that defining need by reference to age is not always an effective strategic response. The Strategy therefore takes a holistic approach wherever feasible so that action across more than one boundary can be effectively joined up. However, where there are issues that do relate to age or ageing, we must ensure services respond in a way that is tailored to the users' requirements. Also promotion of intergenerational practice will help build cohesive communities and reduce social exclusion. The Strategy will also provide a high level framework to which other policies can relate e.g. local Community Strategies, and the National Service Framework for Older People. In this way the Strategy will influence more operationally focused policies and projects. On non-devolved issues impacting on older people in Wales (such as crime, pensions, benefits, consumer protection and employment law) we will continue to work closely with the UK Government so that there is cohesion with related Assembly Government policies. Our Strategy will complement the UK Government "Better Government for Older People" Programme.

9. Among adults, the highest proportion of Welsh speakers still tend to be older people and for the elderly whose first language has been Welsh, there can be added difficulties of communicating effectively in English. This has implications for the need to provide services through the medium of Welsh as well as English. Language, community and cultural issues may also be significant in defining the needs of older people among Black and Ethnic Minority communities in Wales. We need more research to identify and develop services that can respond appropriately to these as well as other groups who require distinctive or tailored support.

10. There are of course many areas where additional resources could help to improve services for older people. In developing this Strategy, the Welsh Assembly Government will take a view on what is affordable and achievable. Implementation over a decade provides the opportunity to establish realistic time-scales and priorities within the context of our available budget. In addition to relevant investment in specific programmes benefiting older people, the Implementation Action Plan will also be supported by £10 million over the first 3 financial years of its life. This will provide a sound basis from which action can be taken forward at national and local level. Robust monitoring arrangements will ensure that we and all our partners – including local government, health organisations and statutory bodies - deliver on the published objectives and actions. The voluntary and independent sectors and older people's organisations will be key partners in that process.

11 As the Strategy is taken forward, it will be important that it is periodically updated and reviewed using the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation. We will expect to engage the active support of Local Authorities (LAs), Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies (ASPBs), and other players in the Voluntary and Private Sectors to deliver the Strategy. LAs in particular have a key role in ensuring the needs of older people are placed at the centre of local services and strategic planning. We will be working with them to establish a Monitoring and Evaluation Programme. We will report progress after 3 years and at regular intervals thereafter.

12. If you have any comments about this Strategy or wish to contribute to its implementation then please write to: Steven Milsom, Social Care Policy Division, Welsh Assembly Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ Phone 029 2082 3206 or email Steve.Milsom@wales.gsi.gov.uk

4. Valuing Older People

Strategic Aim

Reflecting the United Nations principles for Older People, to tackle discrimination against older people wherever it occurs, promote positive images of ageing and give older people a stronger voice in society.

Strategic Objectives

- To enhance the engagement with and participation of older people in society and at all levels of government.
- To establish a National Partnership Forum for Older People that will include older people and will provide expert and informed advice to the Welsh Assembly Government and other statutory bodies.
- To develop approaches in Wales that will promote the image of older people and ensure greater understanding and respect between the generations.
- To increase the level and impact of older people's involvement in their communities through volunteering and incentives to participate actively in the planning and development of local services and infrastructure.
- To develop and promote policies and programmes to tackle poverty and social exclusion amongst older people.
- To develop joined up services that are tailored and integrated to meet the needs of older people, taking language needs into account, through strong partnership arrangements.
- To develop better community transport as part of an integrated transport system for Wales including planning, public information and availability.

Policies and Programmes

13. Older people have a wealth of experience and knowledge that can enrich the lives of the communities in which they live. But there are also negative images of older people, and some people believe that their contribution is less valued than it should be, or than it used to be. These perceptions translate in various ways: - age discrimination, poor engagement with and limited participation of older people, social exclusion, isolation, poverty and gaps between the generations. The Assembly Government's Strategy will challenge and change attitudes to older people. Wherever older people live in Wales or whatever their circumstances, they must get a fair deal and be able to contribute to society as equal citizens. A **programme of citizenship** is one of the key themes of this Strategy.

14. Discrimination on the grounds of age in all forms must be addressed. We will work with the UK Government, local government and other statutory and voluntary bodies to tackle this. Engagement and participation of older people in society is vital if their contribution is to be recognised and developed. At the national level we need new mechanisms to secure effective representation and consultation with older people in Wales. The Strategy will only be developed and delivered effectively if we succeed in putting older people closer to the centre of policy making and service delivery. The Assembly Government is committed to building the perspective of older people into policy development at all levels. The work of the National Forum will assist this process, but further commitment will be essential to drive the Strategy forward.

15. The Assembly Government will establish a **Cabinet Sub-Committee for Older People's Needs** – and ensure effective implementation of this Strategy continues to receive regular and high level profile. An advisory **National Partnership Forum for Older People** will be established. One of its first tasks will be to provide advice on the best way to achieve **improved engagement** with and **participation** of older people. The National Forum will want to discuss and agree its role, terms of reference, objectives and work programme. However, the initial aims that we will give to it will include:

- To provide expert and informed advice to the Welsh Assembly Government on the development of its policies for older people.

- To provide a focus and impetus for the debate of and support for the development of effective policies at all levels of government to benefit older people.
- To provide an effective channel of communication from older people and their representatives to local government and Assembly Government in Wales and through the Assembly to UK Government.

16. At local level, we want to see older people having an **effective voice** on a wide range of participative and planning issues. Their views must be heard in the new local Community Strategies, as well as in Local Health Boards (LHBs), Community Health Councils (CHCs), and other local consultative arrangements. In addition we will expect each LA Executive to designate an **Older Persons "Champion"**.

17. Older people have a significant part to play in their families and in their communities. We are committed to **promoting an enhanced image** of ageing for older people generally – and particularly those with disabilities – in the work of government at all levels. The Welsh Assembly Government will set the standard of good practice in our own publication and media work, and encourage others to do so too. We will also support new **approaches to inter-generational linkages**, for example, in areas like community development and support for voluntary action.

18. Active involvement of older people in the community has many benefits. Not least it improves quality of life, helps to tackle exclusion, isolation and loneliness and ensures older people can influence the development of the villages and towns in which they live. Local Government and the voluntary sector will be encouraged to build on current practice and working with others establish **local development centres** for volunteering activities, and to provide incentives for more older people to participate in their communities and share knowledge and experience with other generations. The Welsh Assembly Government already funds a scheme to promote **volunteering** among older people as part of the Active Community Initiative. We recognise the role language plays in encouraging involvement and that people are more likely to participate if they are able to do so in their chosen language.

19. Many older people in Wales are living in difficult economic circumstances. These problems can be worse for those in rural areas. There are a number of policies, initiatives and schemes at UK, Wales and local level to address poverty amongst older people and to maximise their income and support. Through our **social inclusion programmes**, we will work closely with the UK Government and local government to build on these measures. One way to address these issues will be to improve access to and information on services for older people through the development of **integrated "one stop" service centres** that also helps maximise incomes and pensions and increase benefit take-up. We have secured free local bus travel for pensioners and disabled people (and an escort, where appropriate). We plan to extend **free bus travel to male pensioners over 60**.

20. We are already tackling exclusion and deprivation in our most deprived areas through our flagship **Communities First Programme**. This will have a strong impact on the Strategy by encouraging older people to become involved in developing and implementing regeneration projects in their areas. Under the programme, a number of initiatives will be taken forward which will directly benefit older people.

21. We know that older people are particularly concerned about **personal and community safety** and experience a high level of anxiety about crime. The Assembly takes this very seriously. The Community Safety Unit in the Assembly is taking forward programmes and policies on crime and disorder reduction. We are taking action to extend and integrate services for older people through sub post offices (especially in rural areas and areas of high social deprivation) and to maximise the potential role of Post Offices as a community resource. Together with our programmes already announced to improve **Community Transport**, this is especially important for older people living in rural and other non-urban areas.

5. Changing Society

Strategic Aim

To promote and develop older people's capacity to continue to work and learn for as long as they want, and to make an active contribution once they retire.

Strategic Objectives

- To work with the UK Government to support the recruitment and retention of older people in employment.
- To work with the UK Government in the implementation of legislation to tackle discrimination in employment on the grounds of age.
- To help more older people to set up their own businesses and to encourage the transfer of knowledge and experience from older/retired business people to new entrepreneurs.
- To promote the benefits of learning and to provide readily accessible information and advice to potential learners of all ages on learning opportunities available.
- To create a network of community learning centres throughout Wales in line with local need.
- To promote and develop the availability of IT facilities in communities and IT skills for older people.

Policies and Programmes

22. The demographic changes mean a higher proportion of the population in Wales will be post-retirement age and this shift in the relative size and age profile of the working population raises fundamental economic issues for Wales. The potential contribution of older workers will continue to be a major resource. Their skills, knowledge and experience will remain an asset that needs to be utilised if economic growth, labour supply and sound public

finances are to be maintained. There are of course advantages for older people from **continued employment**, if they wish, including income, lifestyles, and reducing the risks of social exclusion and dependency later in life.

23. This Strategy will contribute to measures which aim to **increase employment activity** levels amongst those over 50 to the benefit of both businesses and individuals. To do this, **employment barriers will need to be removed**. The New Deal 50 Plus targets the older unemployed by offering access to training, work experience and funding. There needs to be a greater use of measures to retain and motivate older workers and enable them to make a transition to new job opportunities. Employment practices for older workers need to become more flexible in terms of work patterns, recruitment, re-instatement, learning and training, gradual retirement, caring for dependants etc.. The significant increase in over 85s will also increase demands for health and social care workers – both formal and informal.

24. The UK Government is committed to introducing employment legislation **prohibiting direct or indirect discrimination** on the grounds of age by December 2006. This – together with the economic imperatives – will require businesses in Wales to take a positive approach to the employment of older workers. Choice for the individual in determining work aspirations will be essential. The UK Government will also have a role in aligning benefit and pension regimes accordingly so that older workers are not penalised from staying on in the labour market. A lead will be needed by Government at all levels to change ageist attitudes and promote a positive culture towards older people in employment. In Wales, the Assembly is supporting work on extending support for carers in work and has removed the retirement age of 60 for its own mainstream employees.

25. Encourageing Entrepreneurship is a key theme in '*A Winning Wales*' – the Welsh Assembly Government's national economic development strategy. Wales has relatively fewer people engaged in business activity when compared with other regions in the UK and older people are particularly under-represented. The *Wales Entrepreneurship Action Plan* includes programmes aimed at helping to create the right kind of climate for business start-ups, reducing barriers to enterprise and making sure that the right kind

of business support is available to new and growth businesses. As part of this, 'Prime Cymru' has been established as an autonomous Welsh arm of the Prime Initiative for Mature Enterprise to support people over 50 into self-employment. Prime Cymru works with older people during the initial stages of setting up in business and is helping mainstream business support providers to develop services which are accessible, understandable and tailored to meeting the individual needs of people in this age group. Business Support organisations are also being encouraged to optimise the involvement of older and retired business people in transferring knowledge and experience of running businesses to new entrepreneurs and working as **business mentors** across a range of start-up and business development programmes.

26. 'The Learning Country', the Welsh Assembly Government's comprehensive programme for education and lifelong learning to 2010, sets out 3 key priorities: removing barriers to learning; widening participation; and, developing the skills of the workforce. **Encourageing people over 50 back into learning** will offer ways for them to gain new confidence and skills, to become economically active or to become involved in community activity and improvement. Promoting learning for older people can provide a range of personal benefits such as improved social opportunities and enhanced quality of life, independence and health.

27. Development of **community Information Technology centres and resources** is underway that will increase and improve access for older people. Through "Cymru ar Lein" we want Wales to be a place where our local communities are actively using ICT to help remove physical, geographical and linguistic barriers, where ICT is used to combat social exclusion and reduce existing social divisions. We want to ensure that everyone in Wales can acquire the skills and understanding to participate in and benefit from the Information Age. This will include action to encourage the development of essential ICT skills throughout local communities. To discover full details of our progress or feedback your thoughts on how we are doing, see the website at: <http://www.cymruarlein.wales.gov.uk>, visit your local library to view "Cymru ar Lein" or ring: 0800 100 900 to find out where you can log-on for free.

6. Living Longer and Healthier Lives

Strategic Aim

To promote and improve the health and well being of older people through integrated planning and service delivery frameworks and more responsive diagnostic and support services.

Strategic Objectives

- To develop a multifaceted evidence based action programme of health promotion for older people.
- To implement a National Service Framework for Older People in Wales that addresses variations in standards of care and achieves greater consistency in the availability and quality of both health and social care services.
- To prevent and delay the onset of, and reduce the impact of, illness and disability for older people through policies and programmes that address the risk factors and promote healthy living.
- To promote the health and well-being of older people through strong partnership at local level between local authorities, local health boards, NHS Trusts and other statutory and independent partners.
- Strengthen and develop Primary Care and Community services to meet the changing needs of patients - including older people - their families and communities in which they live.
- To develop high quality services that are responsive to the needs of older people through development of strategies and programmes for optometry, dental care, nutrition, hearing and pharmacy services.

Policies and Programmes

28. As people get older it is important that the added years are accompanied by good health. The benefits of good health are clear – improved quality of life for individuals, more opportunities to remain active in family and community life – and reduced call on health and care services. Individuals and Wales as a whole have good cause to put a high priority on health promotion. Changes in living behaviours even later in life can bring benefits. Health promotion for older people is therefore a key theme of this Strategy, and will be delivered through a **Health Promotion Action Plan for Older People**. This will cover issues such as pre-retirement action to improve health, encouraging exercise, and diet and tackling negative factors like smoking, alcohol use and depression. A multi-faceted approach to encouraging healthy life styles will be taken.

29. *Well Being in Wales* launched in September 2002 is the Welsh Assembly Government's new strategy to achieve improvements in personal and public health across Wales. It highlights the importance of health to the economy and sets out proposals for more action to reduce health inequalities across all the Welsh Assembly Government's policy areas. This overarching approach is especially relevant to older people.

30. Older people are increasingly frequent users of general and primary health services, and they are also the major users of local authority community care and social services. For many older people, these services need to work together and often with Housing services too - to help address problems which arise when older people (or their partners and families) fall ill or simply grow increasingly frail with advancing years. There have been significant advances in health and social care provision for older people in recent years. One of the biggest challenges, however, is to secure effective co-operation across the whole range of health and care services for older people.

31. The new LHBs will bring health service planning and commissioning closer to the local community. From April 2003, LHBs and LAs will have a statutory duty to work together to plan and deliver services, through a Joint Strategy for Health, Social Care and Wellbeing. Older people's needs will have a central place in these new partnership arrangements, which will

ensure co-ordination between the full range of health and social services, together with housing and other local authority services. The health, social care and well-being strategies will be a central part of the broader community strategies being developed in each part of Wales

32. Many older people have regular contact with primary care services. It is a vital part of the health service and plays an active and important role in **maintaining health and preventing ill health**. Its success is vital, as our society becomes older. A key element of the Assembly's **Primary Care Strategy** is the prevention and early detection of disease and ill-health, particularly important for older people who are more at risk. The Primary Care Strategy will address the requirements of the changing population including older people who have high levels of need, to access and use primary care services more effectively. Research and consultation suggested that this was a particular problem for older people, especially in rural areas. In addition to education, equal access to high quality services across Wales and premises which are of a high standard and using the latest equipment are important objectives.

33. National Service Frameworks (NSFs) are being developed to address variations in standards of care and to achieve greater consistency in the availability and quality of services, by putting in place mechanisms which will enable best care to be provided to all. In the light of the Advisory Group Report and this Strategy, we will develop an **NSF for Older People in Wales**. The NSF will reinforce the work already in progress and will take account of how this Strategy will address discrimination, unified assessment and health promotion and it will be tailored to the needs of older people in Wales. **Mental Health of Older People** will be another priority for the NSF. The **Fundamentals of Care** initiative aims to tackle inconsistency across service settings and improve the quality of the most important aspects of health and social care for vulnerable people.

34. The NHS in Wales is trying to secure improved services and standards. At the heart of our plans the National Service Framework for Older People will set overall guidelines on service quality, accessibility and delivery for all relevant services. It will cover social care too. Alongside the NSF, there are a range of other, more detailed service strategies, many of which will have special relevance to older people. These include stroke, diabetes, incontinence, palliative care, preventing falls, but the most important are:

- The **Pharmacy Strategy** sets out a 10-year vision to provide people with fast convenient access to pharmaceutical care, and aims to build public understanding of the role of pharmacy, access and the support it can provide to people, especially older people.
- The Welsh Assembly Government needs **primary dental care** to be a central performer in the development of a healthier Wales and the primary dental care strategy sets out how we can improve the oral health of Wales.
- We have already taken innovative action in optometry. For example, we have introduced free eye health examinations to those at risk of eye disease. The draft **strategy on optometry** looks at the future development of optometry and deals with the increasing demand on the profession and pays particular attention to meeting the needs of an ageing population.
- The **Nutrition Strategy** tackles the problem of dietary inadequacies in the Welsh population generally but particularly in disadvantaged groups. Following consultation on the strategy an action plan has been drafted. This aims to improve nutrition among the whole population of Wales, but also targets action among key population groups, including older people, who stand to gain the most benefit from improved nutrition. To a large degree the success or otherwise of the strategy will depend on effecting behavioural change across much of the population. Much of what the strategy will seek to achieve will be underpinned by education initiatives. The needs of older people in respect of nutrition and diet are key issues to be addressed within the overall approach.
- The **Arthritis Strategy** will address the need to ensure proper services and support and to work with individuals to minimise the impact of their disability. The new strategy will set Wales wide standards for treatment and rehabilitation.

35. The Welsh Consumer Council's report '*Welsh in the Health Service (2000)*' concluded that Welsh language provision in the NHS in Wales was poor, and that older people are one of the four key groups of Welsh-speakers that cannot be treated effectively in many instances unless it is in their first language. As a result of the report the Minister for Health and Social Services set up in August 2001, the All Wales Task Group for Welsh Language Services to look at **Welsh language issues in the NHS**. The Task Group has formulated a National Strategy to tackle the issues raised in the Welsh Consumer Council's report. The Welsh Language Unit within the NHS Wales Department was set up in January 2002 to co-ordinate implementation.

7. Coping with Increasing Dependency: Housing, Social Care and Health

Strategic Aim

To promote the provision of high quality services and support which enable older people to live as independently as possible in a suitable and safe environment and ensure acute, primary and specialist services are organised around and responsive to their needs.

Strategic Objective

- Promote an adequate supply of special forms of housing which meet the varying and changing needs of older people and ensure they can remain independent as long as possible.
- Ensure that older people – especially those with disabilities - have access to the help they need to remain in their own homes including timely access to adaptations and repairs.
- To establish effective unified assessment procedures for health and social care.
- To develop the provision of intermediate care services to meet the need for short and long term care of older people close to their homes whenever appropriate.
- To promote the development of a range of domiciliary care services in Wales to offer older people choices in accessing effective, user-centred support to maintain their independence.
- To promote the development of a viable, confident and responsive care sector to deliver quality services in Wales that include more flexible models of care.
- To maintain and extend robust regulation of care services for older people by the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales and through National Minimum Standards.

Policies and Programmes

36. Housing, health and social care services inevitably become more important to people as they grow older and need support to maintain independence, mobility and health. Maintaining independence or making a transition to dependence requires these services to be delivered effectively to a high standard and in joined up manner. This strategy aims to support continual improvement in these services so that older people can rely on receiving high quality support wherever they live in Wales.

37. The housing requirements of older people vary considerably. Most older people feel strongly that they would like to remain independent in their own home as long as possible. We will lead a **national debate** about the priorities and strategies for meeting **older people's housing needs**. This will take account of existing and new research models of supported housing and other solutions required to meet the diverse needs of an ageing population. The process will help identify clear policy options and a framework for the future. We will consult on our proposals for change. '**Better Homes for People in Wales - A National Housing Strategy**' provides the overarching framework and sets out our unequivocal vision for housing in Wales. The constituent aim of "helping older people find the housing and support services they need in the most efficient way" and "to remain in their own homes for as long as is practicable" is actioned through complementary programmes, detailed in the Strategy Action Plan, and cascaded through Local Housing Strategy guidance.

38. Housing and the availability of support to live at home is often a crucial factor in the choices older people have to make when they face illness or increasing frailty. We are committed to close partnership between policy development, strategic planning, and service delivery for housing, health and social care services. The interplay between these is particularly important when older people are facing admission to, or discharge from, hospital; we are tackling this through a number of new Assembly led initiatives to improve services including:

- Emergency Care.
- Effective discharge/planning.
- 6 weeks free home care.
- Rapid response housing repairs and adaptations.

39. Social Services provide vital support and protection for many older people in Wales. It is imperative therefore that they can deliver the highest standards of service, through a well led and managed regime that works well with others, is person centred and seeks continuous improvement. We will increase our **investment in social care services** by £212 million by 2005 to help local councils to achieve these aims. Our Inspection and Review arrangements will also continue to monitor and evaluate the outcomes for service users, placing appropriate regard on the importance of Welsh language provision. Local determination of priorities and needs will still be essential but effective management and use of available resources will need to secure improvements and greater consistency in the availability and quality of services to older people and others.

40. Individuals who need help have typically in the past been assessed by a variety of different health and social care staff working independently of each other. We have introduced new **Unified Assessment** procedures which instead take a holistic approach to assessment with benefits for people who use services, for agencies and for professionals. Unified Assessment procedures will ensure more effective joint working and prevent people being serially assessed and asked for the same information by different agencies. Information on language choice should be an integral part of such effective joint working. We have issued both statutory and professional guidance to support implementation of these new arrangements for older people by 2005.

41. Many older people are able to live independently at home through the invaluable support they receive from informal carers. Our **Carers Strategy** will continue to provide a strong focus for recognition and help for them. Providing choice means offering a range of options. Better and more flexible domiciliary services are the first step to providing support for older people to live independently at home. **Domiciliary Care Services** provided by local authorities are important for older people in maintaining their independence and achieving successful recovery following a stay in hospital. New Regulations and National Minimum Standards will be introduced for this sector. We have also issued statutory guidance to assist councils to ensure **charging policies for home care are designed to be fair** and operate consistently between different services. A new scheme to provide up to **6 weeks free home care** has also been funded by the Assembly Government.

However, more needs to be done to re-invigorate this sector and the Wales Care Strategy Group will advise on a new **strategic direction** for these important services as part of its objectives.

42. For some people, increasing frailty coupled with ill health or other high dependency needs means that living independently at home cannot be sustained. For them, transfer to residential or nursing care is the next stage in the journey to higher dependency. Moving out of your own home and accepting the inevitability of long term care, is a major change in lifestyle. The decision to move into care, the choices open to people, and the quality of care they receive, all need to be well planned and sensitively managed. The Assembly Government recognises that both local government and the voluntary and private sectors, have a vital role to play in the provision of well planned, high quality and responsive care home services.

43. The Assembly Government wants to see the sustainable growth of a confident, flexible and viable care home sector for the future, to ensure that services are in place to support older vulnerable people. We have established a **Wales Care Strategy Group** with a range of partners to address the inter-related problems facing the care sector as a whole. Our aim is to secure the development of a comprehensive high quality Care Sector in Wales over the next decade and introduction of more flexible models of care.

44. Work is currently being undertaken by the Welsh Assembly Government, in conjunction with Swansea University, on the **prevalence of disability** in Wales. The project focuses on maximising the use of existing sources of information. We will consult with disability groups, including Disability Wales and the Disability Rights Commission, about the outcome of this research, which will help determine priorities for future disability research. We are also committed to undertaking research into the needs of **older people from minority ethnic communities**.

45. A **new regulatory regime** under the Care Standards Act is being introduced for the first time to ensure high quality care services including for older people. **The Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales** has been established in the National Assembly (with regional offices throughout Wales) to ensure compliance with regulations and national standards.

8. Implementation – Making It Happen

Strategic Aim

To implement the Strategy for Older People in Wales with support funding to ensure that it is a catalyst for change and innovation across all sectors, improves services for older people and provides the basis for effective planning for an ageing population.

Implementation Framework

46. The implementation of this Strategy will not happen overnight. Indeed the process must be one that builds from local needs as well as national aims and is responsive to change. The Strategy is therefore set in a **10-year framework** of action that has a starting point in this document and the **Action Plan** that follows this section. The more detailed objectives and programmes that underpin the Strategy are outlined. This is only a starting point and it will be essential to maintain momentum and monitor progress on the range of activities described and to periodically review and extend the Action Plan on a prioritised basis. The National Partnership Forum for Older People will be well placed to provide advice to the Assembly Government on this.

Funding

47. Resources already exist in a wide range of funding programmes and mainstream services throughout the Assembly Government programmes. In many cases it is not possible to dis-aggregate funding exactly, however, older people will be a significant part of the target group in, for example, reform of the NHS, Primary Care action plans, Free Bus Travel for Pensioners, Employment of over 50s, Volunteering Initiative, Health Promotion Strategy, 6 weeks free home care, Carers Strategy, Communities First etc..

48. Over and above this, the Welsh Assembly Government will make available **£10 million over the next 3 financial years** to support the implementation of this Strategy. This will comprise:

2003-4 - £1m

2004-5 - £3m

2005-6 - £6m

Details of the arrangements for distribution and access to this funding will be published separately.

Research, monitoring and evaluation framework

49. A co-ordinated approach to research and development on ageing and older people will ensure that both the Assembly Government and the National Forum have access to robust information and advice. It will be essential that this is integrated with the implementation of the Strategy. Further details about measures and procedures for managing implementation and involving all the interests will be discussed through the National Forum and published. The key features of our approach to research, monitoring and evaluation will be:

- Selecting and agreeing baseline and performance indicators for the Strategy.
- Developing an overarching programme of research which joins up the various research projects in the Strategy and ensuring this research is used to make on-going decisions.
- Identifying and filling gaps in the information and evidence base to support the Strategy e.g. health promotion, disability, housing, Black and Minority Ethnic Elders.
- Developing the evidence base and ensuring it is used to inform the implementation of the Strategy at key stages.
- Commissioning an overarching evaluation which would: run alongside the implementation of the Strategy; inform development and implementation at key stages; and provide an analysis of the outcomes and impact of the Strategy.

50. The National Partnership Forum for Older People will have a key role in regularly monitoring progress on how the Strategy is implemented. Additionally, an interim Report on the first 3 years of the Strategy will be produced for discussion by the National Forum and subsequently it will be published.

51. There are clear aims and challenges to address in this Strategy. Some look to build on existing policies and achievements, others to change the direction or increase the pace at which services are developing. Essentially, there are also a number of areas where the Strategy looks to break new ground or take an innovative approach. All are important and will require time and commitment to achieve. Together with the Welsh Assembly Government, all partners, in all sectors are invited to help make these aspirations a reality for the benefit of older people now and in the future.

Welsh Assembly Government

January 2003

THE STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN WALES - ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan describes the main projects and activities that support the Strategy for Older People. It does not include everything that the Assembly Government is already doing or is planned for older people but concentrates on the key areas where action has just commenced or will be focussed for the first time. Detailed project plans, objectives and milestones for each action area are being developed.

Issue	Assembly Government Action
1. Establish a Cabinet Sub – Committee for Older People.	A Committee will be set up by Summer 2003 to ensure a co-ordinated and holistic approach is taken to the implications of an ageing population and the changing needs of older people.
2. To establish a National Partnership Forum for Older People to advise the Assembly Government.	To establish by end 2003 a representative and effective National Forum that provides expert advice on issues affecting older people in Wales.
3. Improve engagement with older people in their communities.	Local Authorities and other statutory bodies to build engagement and participation of older people into their planning and consultative systems by April 2004.
4. Develop Post Offices as community economic development centres.	To develop a Fund to support and develop Post Offices in deprived and/or isolated parts of Wales.
5. Actions to assist elderly and retired people in rural Wales.	Community regeneration measures funded under the LEADER+ Programme including good access to retail and other services in rural areas. Implementation of proposals under development by 2003-4.

Issue	Assembly Government Action
6. Support Community Transport schemes across Wales.	Revenue funding under Rural Transport Grant Schemes.
7. Free Bus Travel for Pensioners.	Free Travel on local buses for pensioners (and disabled people) from April 2002 will be extended to men aged 60-64 from April 2003. This will improve access and mobility for older and disabled people.
8. Research into the experiences and future needs of Black Minority Ethnic elders.	Consultation with Black Minority Ethnic (BME) organisations is being undertaken to determine priorities for research.
9. A development programme to promote intergenerational links.	Develop a Plan of Action by April 2004 to promote intergenerational links based on evidence and best practice, building community regeneration. This will need to involve older people directly and command support of all key partners.
10. Encouraging people over the age of 50 to consider self-employment and providing support during the initial stages of business start-up.	Through the PRIME initiative and Cyfenter project: Programme of action research into the barriers to enterprise facing people over 50 and other under-represented groups. Ensure awareness of the needs of older people by business support providers and the provision of more accessible and relevant services. Provide business start-up support to 1000 older people (by end of Dec 2004), bringing about the creation of 250 new businesses.

Issue	Assembly Government Action
11. Action to widen participation in learning.	Promote the benefits of learning and provide readily accessible information and advice to potential learners of all ages on learning opportunities available. ELWa and Careers Wales to have regard to the needs of older potential learners in the design of their marketing and information campaigns.
12. Action to support the recruitment and retention of older people.	Consultation with Department of Work and Pensions on the Age Positive Initiative. 20,000 more over 50s of working age into employment by 2002/03 and an overall target to increase participation in employment amongst the over 50s by 2010.
13. Health, Social Care and Well-Being Strategies formulated by Local health boards and local authorities.	Health, Social Care and Well-Being Strategies that take account of older people's needs should be in place by April 2005.
14. Health promotion action framework for older people.	Produce a 3-year health promotion action framework, which reflects available resources.
15. Develop and publish a National Service Framework (NSF) for Health and Social Care for Older People in Wales.	Consult on draft NSF – May 2003. Issue NSF Summer 2003.

Issue	Assembly Government Action
<p>16. Conduct a wide-ranging debate about the options for meeting the future housing needs of older people.</p>	<p>i. Compilation of a comprehensive evidence base on the housing needs of older people by late 2003.</p> <p>ii. Monitor and evaluate by 2004 the new changes to the private sector renewal system to ensure that they are capable of being used to best effect to improve the living conditions of older people.</p> <p>iii. Monitoring of the network of handy-person services and action to strengthen the quality of service by 2004.</p> <p>iv. Interim evaluation of the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme for Winter 2002/3 and identification of any unnecessary barriers for participation by older people.</p> <p>v. A study on rural housing markets, as part of the Housing Research Programme to identify ways in which the Assembly Government's rural housing policy should be adapted to counter any adverse consequences.</p>
<p>17. Develop services for Carers through the Carers Strategy.</p>	<p>Effective communications on best practice for assessment, training and wider support and services to carers.</p> <p>Develop initiative to support carers in the workplace.</p>
<p>18. Promote the Care Sector in Wales.</p>	<p>Report of the Wales Care Strategy Group (WCSG) and recommendations for the future of the sector.</p>
<p>19. To strengthen regulation and inspection of care services impacting on older people under the Care Standards Act 2000.</p>	<p>Introduce Regulations and National Minimum Standards for Domiciliary Care by January 2004 and Day Centres by end 2004.</p>

Issue	Assembly Government Action
20. Promote Intermediate Care within integrated Health and Social Care planning.	Issue Guidance on developing Intermediate Care services to meet the need for short and long term care of older people.
21. Action to avoid prolonged hospital stay and unnecessary hospital admission.	<p>Reduce the incidences of delayed transfers of care and avoidable admissions by :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delayed Transfers of Care Grant Scheme. • Guidance for discharge processes. • Rapid Response Adaptations Programme. • "Change Agent" activity to help local partners develop/improve services.