# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Creating an Age Friendly Wales** |
| **DATE**  | **2 December 2024** |
| **BY** | **Dawn Bowden MS, Minster for Children and Social Care** |

The Strategy for an Ageing Society was first launched in 2021 setting out our ambitious vision for an age friendly Wales that supports people of all ages to live and age well. We want to create a Wales where everyone can look forward to growing older. Today I am publishing a [report](https://www.gov.wales/strategy-ageing-society-progress-update-december-2024) of progress over the last 12 months

Three years since its launch, the Strategy has firmly positioned Wales as part of the global response to ageing populations. Since 2022, targeted funding of £1.1million per annum has been allocated to local authorities (£50,000 each) to work towards membership of the WHO Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities. The mission of the Network is to stimulate and enable cities and communities around the world to become increasingly age-friendly – membership currently includes 1606 cities and communities in 53 countries, covering over 330 million people worldwide.

To date 8 local authorities in Wales have gained membership with more to follow in 2025.

Supporting the development of age friendly communities was a strategic priority for the former Older People’s Commissioner for Wales, who supported local authorities from 2019 onward to develop age friendly communities and to apply for membership of the WHO Global Network. Although not yet confirmed, we anticipate the new Older People’s Commissioner for Wales will continue to prioritise this work.

Welsh Government is not prescriptive about how local authorities work with and support older people in their locality – we encourage local authorities to involve older people in the design and planning of local services, social networks and built environments.

An analysis of local authority reports shows a broad range of activity in collaboration with older people, statutory and third sector partners. Our initial scoping of the reports from local authorities indicates that older people are benefiting from the programme funding in the following ways:

* + - Increased awareness of local services and advice on a range of issues to support healthy and active ageing.
		- The ability to have a voice in the design and planning of local services and action plans.
		- The opportunity to participate in activities that combat loneliness, create social networks and promote intergenerational solidarity.
		- The opportunity to volunteer and contribute to the social, cultural and economic life of Wales.
		- The opportunity to be part of a global movement to create age friendly communities.

We recently asked local authorities to share their figures showing how many older people have participated in age friendly activities. We obtained figures from **19** local authorities, estimating that approximately 66,500 older people had benefitted in some way from the age friendly programme. Over 33,000 had taken part in, or attended, a face-to-face engagement event with 2000 taking time to respond to a survey or consultation. Direct information from the age friendly post holders has reached 23,000 older individuals.

These estimates are based on the last 12 months up to November 2024 and highlight how a relatively small annual investment of £1.1million is helping to seed the development of a broad range of preventative, locally led projects which are benefitting older people across Wales.

Through this collective effort, Wales has become part of a global movement towards improving policies and services for older people to the extent that we are now noted by the WHO as an international example of good practice.