

GROWING OLDER WITHOUT CHILDREN



Comisiynydd
Pobl Hŷn
Cymru
Older People's
Commissioner
for Wales

Taking action to improve policy and practice

As highlighted in the Commissioner's recent [Older People Without Children](#) report, which examined a wide range of available evidence and research, growing older without children can bring many benefits, including strong social lives and connections with friends, neighbours, and community organisations; opportunities to build rich, diverse support networks and engage in community activities and volunteering; and financial stability.

However, the report also found that action is also needed to tackle the barriers people can face and ensure that services and support are inclusive and recognise the needs of all older people.

Having examined the issues set out within the report, the Commissioner has identified ten key practical actions to better support older people without children and improve their experiences of growing older.

Ensure the needs of older people without family support are reflected in planning, policy and practice

Undertake robust engagement and consultation with older people without family support to ensure their voices and experiences are heard and responded to, and that they have opportunities to shape the decisions affecting their lives and communities in a meaningful way.

Collect data on the needs and circumstances of older people without family support to ensure that policies and services are based on clear evidence and reflect their experiences.

Provide easy access to advice and support

Offer clear information and advice on planning for the future, including legal, financial, and care decisions, as well as support to deal with day-to-day issues and challenges people may be facing.

Help with digital skills and access

Provide consistent, ongoing support for using phones, tablets and the internet to stay connected and access services.

Make it easier to get around

Improve transport options so people can get out and about and do the things that matter to them.

Help people stay socially connected

Create / support local groups and activities where older people can make friends and avoid loneliness and social isolation, including dedicated groups for people growing older without children.

Ensure older people can access activities such as volunteering or lifelong learning so they have opportunities to meet new people, including people from other generations, and make new connections.

Offer companionship services

Provide support for schemes that connect older people with trained volunteers for regular chats or visits.

Offer suitable housing choices

Develop housing that's safe, affordable, adaptable and allows people to live with or near others if they wish.

Support independent living at home

Offer practical help at home – such as cleaning, shopping, or personal care – to help people stay independent.

Ensure older people without family support have a voice in decisions about their care and support

Avoid making assumptions about an older person's circumstances and the support they might have available when considering their care needs, and ensure that independent advocacy is offered to older people who may struggle to make their voices heard.

These actions provide a high-level framework for more inclusive policies and practices that recognise the diversity of older people's lives and circumstances. They also align closely with the principles of [age-friendly communities](#), helping to build places where people of all ages are enabled and supported to live and age well.

By ensuring that those without children are visible, valued, and properly supported, we can create communities and services that enable all older people to age with dignity, independence, and connection.

Growing older without children should never mean growing older without support, and by working together to design inclusive services and communities, we can make this a reality.