

Framework for Engagement of Older People in Development of Age Friendly Communities

How is Wales to move forwards in the development of Age Friendly Communities (AFCs) and take its place in the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities? Growing numbers of Local Authorities (LAs) have embarked on the first steps of their journey which starts with accreditation to the programme. There is no prescriptive process and there is probably much to be learned from the range of approaches being adopted.

It is widely recognised that 50+ Forums have struggled through the period of austerity, and this has been severely exacerbated through the pandemic. For the last 2 years Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA) have sought support for Forums. It became obvious that there was a significant synergistic opportunity to rejuvenate Forums as a key vector for developing AFCs. In discussions with the Deputy Minister, Julie Morgan, she fully supported the need to rejuvenate Forums and agreed with our proposal to create Age-Friendly Champions in LAs.

Key to the strategy of involving Forums is the recognition by LAs that older people should be engaged and that Forums provide an obvious means of doing just that. So COPA created a Framework document to provide a broad basis for Councils and older people to collaborate on AFCs. Without being prescriptive, it aims to provide some consistency in the approach taken by Councils to engaging older people, a requirement of the World Health Organisation (WHO) AFC guidance.

Caerphilly Over50 has been involved in developing this Framework together with other Older Peoples Forums and Groups in Wales and in collaboration with the Older People's Commissioner. The Commissioner, Hélène Herklots, commented on the Framework,

"I welcome the publication of COPA's new Framework for Engagement, which has been developed by older people and draws upon their extensive knowledge and expertise about what good engagement looks like.

The Framework provides a great deal of useful and practical information that will support public bodies and organisations to collaborate and engage with older people throughout Wales more effectively, which will be hugely important as they develop their plans to make our communities more age-friendly.

Resources like the Framework are crucial to help ensure that older people's voices and experiences are not only heard but are also used to guide decisions and support action to make Wales an age-friendly nation."

The Chair of COPA (our Vice Chair) has published a document that gives a detailed explanation of why it is important for organisations, such as local Councils, to involve older people in policies that affect them.

The Benefits of Independent Older Peoples Representation And Why Its Development Should Be Supported