

Pensioners Forum Wales

Pensioners Forum Wales is a national forum of older people made up of representatives from various national pensioners organisations and retired members' sections of trade union organisations.

► Manifesto

The aims of Pensioners Forum Wales are:

- To work together for the benefit of all pensioners in Wales
- To add equality, dignity and respect to ageing and enhance the quality of later life.

Key Facts:



- Around 88,000 people aged 65 or over in Wales rely on the State Pension and state benefits and have no other source of income.¹
- The number of people in Wales aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 50%, or 292,000 people, between 2012 and 2037.²
- Average household energy bills have increased by £800, or approximately 151%, between 2004 and 2012.³

References:

- 1 The Pensioners' Incomes Series 2012/13, Department for Work and Pensions, 2014
- 2 National Population Projections for Wales, Welsh Government, 2013
- 3 USwitch <http://www.uswitch.com/gas-electricity/guides/gas-electricity-prices/> (accessed 4th August 2014)

Our Key Calls:

An adequate State Retirement Pension for current pensioners.

The new proposed level of future State Pension needs to include all existing pensioners and must match inflation. This will protect people from poverty and provide an income that allows choice, opportunity and quality of life, without reliance on benefits.

An end to all means testing.

Means testing is costly and demeaning, it discriminates against people who have occupational pensions and those who have saved all their lives.

An end to fuel poverty.

This will never happen while profits are more important than people. Older people need access to affordable energy to enable them to live in comfort. Consideration should be given to older people's limited fixed income, health needs and the amount of time they spend at home. More information should be made available on insulation.

Further action to end all age discrimination.

Age discrimination is not being given the same status as other forms of discrimination. There are still too many examples of:

- Discrimination in financial services, e.g. non-access to even limited mortgages, etc.
- Lack of choice and quality in goods and services
- Unequal treatment when accessing health and social services, e.g. patronising attitudes by the medical profession
- The poor representation of older people in the media.

Good quality information and advice which is produced in a way that is easy to understand.

This needs to be improved quickly to enable people to become better informed on issues which affect them. Cut out bureaucracy and provide forms and information in plain, everyday language. Telephone and paper alternatives to online services should always be available.

Retain the NHS as envisaged at its inception: free at the point of delivery.

The dignity of, and respect for, older people to be placed at the centre of all care services.

- Dignity should be the norm and abuse should not be tolerated. Dignity should include respect for privacy, support in eating, drinking and using the bathroom, independent advocacy services in hospitals, and the choice of a male or female assistant to help with care.
- All staff should be trained to NHS standards and monitored at regular intervals. There needs to be recruitment of sufficient Welsh-speaking staff in Welsh-speaking areas, to care for Welsh-speaking older people.
- Older people must be consulted in decision-making.

Positive action to help older people to lead long and active lives by promoting healthy lifestyles and lifelong learning through leisure centres, libraries and adult education centres.

Improved integrated and accessible transport services in all areas.

The extension of the free bus pass scheme to include free nationwide public and community transport. Some form of public transport to be available free in all areas and better subsidies provided to support financially non-viable services at evenings and weekends.

Increased availability of affordable and appropriate homes.

This will never happen without rent control and help for older people to downsize if they wish. All older people should be able to live in safe and comfortable accommodation. Funding must be provided for adaptations for older home owners and tenants.

Access to local community services, post offices, shops, health services and places to socialise to ensure local communities remain vibrant.

There needs to be a mindshift towards community cohesion and neighbourliness as seen in past generations. Post offices need to be more fit for purpose, employ more staff and reduce postal charges, which are becoming far too complex and prohibitive. Older people need to be able to choose whether they wish to become part of the digital revolution; and training should be more readily available, for those wishing to participate.

For further information please contact:

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