

Becoming an Age Friendly Vale

Age Friendly Communities are defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a place where 'policies, services, settings and structures support and enable people to age well'. In April 2021 partners made a commitment to work together with support from the Older People's Commissioner to progress work to achieve World Health Organisation Age Friendly Status.

The Well-being Assessment sets out current and future demographics. The population in the Vale of Glamorgan aged 65-84 is projected to grow between 2019 and 2039 by 5,266 people and the population aged 85 and over by 2,904 people. The Assessment's Health and Communities report highlights research and information against several factors that have a particular impact on people as they grow older under the Ageing Well section, and the report can be viewed [here](#).

We know that although loneliness and social isolation can be experienced at any age, older people are found to be more at risk. The number of people living with Dementia in the Vale of Glamorgan is also expected to increase year on year to 2040. In addition, the number of unpaid carers is predicted to increase across all age groups, and is growing fastest in those aged 65 and over. These are just some of the factors that highlight why it is so important to ensure that as a partnership we are working together to make the Vale age friendly.

Work to make the Vale more age friendly and a better place for people to grow old will make the Vale a friendlier place for all and will help ensure we continue to respect and value older people within our communities recognising their contribution, needs and aspirations actively involving older people in local decision making and service design. This work will also benefit those who are caring for people and help with their well-being and will be undertaken in conjunction with the work of the Regional Partnership Board and in particular their focus on Ageing Well. This work is also consistent with priorities in the [Strategy for Unpaid Carers Strategy Delivery Plan](#).

The WHO identifies 8 domains or features that are central elements to age friendly communities and these have been identified by older people themselves:

To date we have mapped what services and opportunities are already in place across the Vale aligned to the 8 WHO Age Friendly Domains and we have also undertaken a joint survey between the PSB and the Vale 50+ Strategy Forum to capture residents' views on how age friendly the Vale currently is. As part of the PSB's application for the WHO Age Friendly Community status showing our commitment to this work, we are developing a charter highlighting the areas of focus in the Vale we are committed to improving alongside a more detailed action plan that will set out the steps we need to take to become more age friendly in the Vale.



To develop the action plan we will be engaging directly with older people to ensure we focus on the areas of most importance locally. The action plan will also consider the findings

from the mapping work, the joint engagement survey, the Well-being Assessment and the Population Needs Assessment. Alongside this work we will be working in partnership with the Vale 50+ Strategy Forum to increase membership and awareness of the Forum and enhance opportunities to engage with this agenda.

Work to become more age friendly will help address a wide range of issues identified under the Well-being Assessment especially those linked to the ageing population and will help us achieve our Objectives, to be A More Active and Healthier Vale, and A More Equitable and Connected Vale. This work will also assist in developing a better understanding of cultural well-being across the Vale and how cultural activities can support work to be age friendly. Welsh language learning activities provide many affordable opportunities, combining learning and socialising together and learning a second language is known to reduce the risk of dementia.

To make the Vale more Age friendly we will:

- Develop a better understanding of and respond to the diverse needs of our communities, including those living in more rural or more deprived areas, to ensure that services and facilities are accessible in terms of design, transport, affordability and technology and are available when people need them to prevent needs escalating.
- Support the third sector and promote volunteering opportunities recognising multiple benefits for individuals and our communities.
- Increase levels of engagement and involvement at all ages, particularly with those who may be disengaged and those who may be seldom heard, including through cultural activities.
- Improve health and well-being across the Vale with a particular focus on prevention and levels of physical activity, diet, vaccine take up and screening.
- Tackle health inequities as part of an integrated and collaborative programme of work, ensuring greater engagement and a more targeted preventative approach to reach those most in need.
- Work in partnership to make the Vale more Age Friendly, ensuring older people have access to the right services, support and opportunities locally and are able to engage and participate in activities and events, influence service design and improve well-being
- Provide information and support to assist our communities and our staff to deal with the impacts of the costs of living e.g. rising food, energy and travel costs.

Steps detailed in Making a Difference section will also contribute to work to be more age friendly

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is taking a lead on this work on behalf of the PSB, utilising funding being made available by Welsh Government up until March 2025 to support the Age Friendly agenda.

More information about our work to make the Vale age friendly is available on the [PSB website](#).