

Introduction

Age Cymru is the leading charity working to improve the lives of all older people in Wales. We believe older people should be able to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, have adequate income, access to high quality services and the opportunity to shape their own future. We seek to provide a strong voice for all older people in Wales and to raise awareness of the issues of importance to them.

We are pleased to respond to the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee's consultation on the future development of Transport for Wales.

The future role of Transport for Wales in delivering transport policy. What additional responsibilities should it take on and how should these integrate with the role of the Welsh Government, local government and emerging regional transport authorities?

1. In terms of delivering transport policy we believe that Transport for Wales (TfW) should aim to ensure good access to reliable, accessible and inclusive transport for all the people of Wales, especially those who need it most, and to maximise social connectedness and productivity through the best possible transport arrangements across the country.
2. Public and community transport are vitally important in helping older people to maintain independence and well-being. Such transport networks can ensure communities are well-connected and that services, facilities and amenities are accessible to older people. Without these, there is an increased risk that isolation and loneliness will impact upon people's well-being. It is essential that older people in all areas have the means to get out to buy food, get medical attention, get money and pay bills, and have social contact.
3. Accessing public transport can present significant physical problems for many older people. For older people with limited mobility, getting to the

bus stop and on and off the bus are significant issues which are compounded by a lack of facilities at bus stops. Some older people are able to walk short distances and stand for short periods only, so more bus stops and shelters with seating would help to make public transport more accessible. Age Cymru research¹ highlighted concerns over the absence of seating at bus stops, with many rural bus stops having no effective shelter from adverse weather. Accessibility problems at railway stations include stairs to platforms, a lack of lifts, and difficulties in negotiating the gap between the train and the platform edge. Older people who can and want to use trains require reliable rail travel supported by adequate infrastructure, including seating and accessible toilet facilities in stations.²

4. We welcome the publication of the Welsh Government's accessible and inclusive public transport objectives,³ developed in collaboration with the Accessible Transport Panel, of which Age Cymru was a member. In terms of the future role of Tfw in delivering transport policy we would envisage that this would include overseeing the implementation of these important objectives.
5. Age Cymru supports the aims of active travel for older people, in light of the documented health and social, as well as environmental, benefits that this can bring to individuals. An age friendly Wales would see the development of a fully integrated sustainable transport network, with trains and buses linked to other forms of transport including pedestrian and cycle routes, and better integration between transport and key services.⁴
6. Studies relating to accessible and inclusive age friendly environments identify a number of barriers in the physical environment for older people, including a barrier related to the issue of shared space, whereby such 'shared space' is often not segregated between car and pedestrian.⁴ Older people have also expressed concern over shared space for cycling and walking. We would suggest that Tfw liaises with local authorities to ensure meaningful consultation with disabled and older people about proposals for shared spaces, to avoid exclusion as a result of poor design.

¹ Age Cymru (2013) Buses – a lifeline for older people. Older people's experience of bus services in Wales.

² Older People's Commissioner for Wales (2014) The Importance and Impact of Community Services within Wales.

³ Welsh Government (2017) Policy Statement – Accessible and Inclusive Public Transport Objectives. <https://beta.gov.wales/accessible-and-inclusive-public-transport-objectives> ⁴ Age Cymru (2015) Creating an age friendly Wales.

⁴ Age Cymru (2016) EnvisAGE. Towards an age friendly Wales. Article by Judith Phillips 'Accessible and inclusive age friendly environments'. <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/policy/age-cymru-policypublications-1/envisage-1/>

7. We believe that it is vital that the built environment enables, rather than prevents, older people taking an active part in their communities and that there should be appropriate infrastructure to facilitate older people to access community spaces safely. Barriers in the built environment can exclude older people from becoming fully inclusive members of society, for example: pavements in a poor condition and street 'clutter', which can be hazardous and pose an increased falls risk; a lack of public seating; inadequate street lighting; and a lack of safe pedestrian crossings that allow sufficient time to cross roads.

8. We believe that TfW should work in collaboration with local authorities to consider the accessibility of a person's journey from 'door to door' which takes into account the accessibility of the built environment and transport infrastructure in addition to the accessibility of transport services.

We hope that these comments are useful and would be happy to provide further information if requested.