

# AGEING WELL IN DENBIGHSHIRE ACTION PLAN

2024-2027



Sir Ddinbych  
CYMUNEDAU OED-GYFEILLGAR

Denbighshire  
AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

## Foreword

This is our Ageing Well in Denbighshire Action Plan for 2024 to 2027. Our work contributes to the Welsh Government Ageing Well in Wales Themes, the Older People's Commissioner for Wales' Work Programme and Denbighshire County Council's Corporate Plan priorities.

It has been prepared by our multi-agency forum, Ageing Well in Denbighshire, working to support intergenerational activities for our communities. We are fully committed to ensuring our Action Plan, and all the activities we undertake as a multi-agency group, continues to be implemented and monitored effectively in Denbighshire.

All members of the Ageing Well in Denbighshire network, unanimously commit to becoming a member of the World Health Organisation's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

To this end we have taken the following steps to develop and embed age-friendly principles within Denbighshire:

- Build upon and enhance existing mechanisms to involve older people in all stages of the age-friendly process, such as with our older people's fora and coordinated networks.
- Draw together the evidence from recent population-level needs assessment and the local Well-being Assessment to establish a baseline picture of the age friendliness of Denbighshire.
- Collaborate with partners to create opportunities for person centred, individualised support so that people can meet their potential irrespective of age or ability
- Harness and develop the objectives detailed within our local Well-being and Ageing Well plans to create a three-year Age-friendly Action Plan in collaboration with a range of partners and stakeholders.

- Use the learning, insights and data developed within our Public Service Boards and our Regional Partnerships Boards to identify indicators that reflect progress against the action plan.
- Implement and embed a culture of continual improvement within all those developing and delivering our age-friendly plan, capturing examples of good practice for sharing with the wider network.

We in Denbighshire want to encourage our older population to live full and healthy lives and be able to participate and contribute to their communities. We believe that Age-Friendly communities create the conditions within which people can age well, adding life to years – not just years to life.





## Current Status

Increasing pressures on funding create a need to adapt and reform services and practices that support and care for our residents in a sustainable way into the future. In Denbighshire, we have been actively working towards this goal. With the projected growth in our proportion of older people (65+) to over 30% by 2040 we recognise the urgent need to change our approach. Achieving this will require a culture change, encouraging people to take responsibility for their health and fitness, ensuring they stay healthy, happy and independent for as long as possible.

We are committed to working together towards this goal in partnership with member organisations of Ageing Well in Denbighshire, Denbighshire County Council departments, health services, the community, and individuals right across the North Wales region.

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## 1.0 Introduction

This action plan outlines the strategy for developing age-friendly communities in Denbighshire. It is intended to support Denbighshire's application for membership of the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities. This network aims to inspire and support cities and communities around the world in becoming more age-friendly, helping people live longer, healthier lives while promoting fairer and more sustainable societies.

The plan provides an overview of the Age-friendly Communities' concept, aims and objectives. The background of age-friendly community development in Denbighshire is outlined in relation to national, regional and local policies and plans.

We have identified the achievements, challenges and opportunities for ageing well in Denbighshire, structured around the eight domains of age-friendly action developed by the WHO in consultation with older people. Our objective is to create an environment where older residents in Denbighshire can live independently, contribute to their communities, and participate in activities they value for as long as possible.

## 2.0 Development of an Age-friendly Denbighshire

### 2.1 Ageing Well in Denbighshire – History and Background

The first strategy for older people in Wales was launched in 2003, the primary 10 year programme, in two phases. Phase 3 of the strategy was commenced in 2013, the *Strategy for Older People in Wales 2013-2023* programme, which recognised 3 principal challenges including:



These challenges were recognised and building on the first (2003) strategy Denbighshire identified 5 key aspects considered essential in supporting older people to age well:

- Creation of Age-friendly Communities
- Prevention of Falls
- Dementia Supportive Communities and Places
- Opportunities for Learning and Employment
- Reducing Loneliness and Isolation

Denbighshire established its first Older Peoples Reference Group (Ageing Well in Denbighshire) to implement the aims of the Strategy for Older People in 2003. With the introduction of the revised (2<sup>nd</sup>) 10 year Strategy in 2013, the group then re-launched in 2017 and an Ageing Well in Denbighshire Plan was then developed to identify actions needed to deliver on the above Ageing Well priority areas locally.

The Ageing Well in Denbighshire (AWiD) group is an independent body comprising representatives of many relevant organisation's and individuals. This group steers the work we do in Denbighshire to become an age-friendly community.

Our Ageing Well in Denbighshire Plan attempts to align to Denbighshire Council's Corporate Plan, Strategic Equality Plan and the local (Conwy and Denbighshire) Well-being Plan, as well as the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. One of the priorities of Denbighshire County Councils Corporate Plan is to support independence and resilience for our communities.

We regularly refresh our Ageing Well in Denbighshire Plan, aligning with the Older People's Commissioner for Wales' Action Plans, the Welsh Government's [Strategy for an Ageing Society](#), and with legislation from the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) (external website) and the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) (external website). Throughout the development of our Ageing Well Action Plan we have consulted with Denbighshire's older citizens to establish their priorities, both directly, where possible, and informed through our AWiD group members.

Members of AWiD have a shared vision of creating conditions for a county which is more age-friendly and accessible for all. Attendees are responsible for sharing information between their respective organisations and communities regarding issues

affecting older people and the actions of the group. Though attendance at our meetings varies, the group includes representatives from:

- Age Connects North Wales Central (ACNWC)
- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB)
- Community Councils
- Community Health Council
- Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA)
- Digital Communities Wales and Cwmpas
  
- Denbighshire County Council including the Lead Member for Health and Social Care, the Older People's Champion and representatives from the following teams:
  - Adult Social Care and Homelessness Service
  - Highways and Environmental Service
  - Human Resources
  - Housing and Communities Service
  - Libraries
  - Planning Public Protection and Countryside Services (including Nature for Health)
  - Strategic Planning and Performance
  - Working Denbighshire
  - Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Service
  
- Denbighshire Leisure Limited (Leisure Services, Community Sport and Community Art)
- Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC)
- Emergency Services
- Gogledd Cymru Actif North Wales
- Housing Providers
- Independent Sector representing the views of independent service providers
- Intergenerational representation
- North East Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS)
- North Wales Regional Equality Network (NWREN)
- North Wales Women's Centre
- Older People's representatives including those who represent their older people's forum
- Public Health Wales
- Voluntary and Third Sector representing the views of users, potential users, carers and service providers including:
  - Advocacy services including Dewis Centre for Independent Living
  - Alzheimer's Society
  - Age Connects North Wales Central
  - British Red Cross
  - Care and Repair
  - Carers' Trust
  - Citizens Advice Denbighshire
  - Community Transport Associations
  - South Denbighshire Community Partnership
  - The Flintshire Disability Forum (FDF)

Representatives of the Older Person's Commissioner attend when they are able, and the commissioner has attended herself on several occasions.

The aims of AWiD are:

- To implement the Ageing Well Plan in Denbighshire and to effectively influence and promote the health, social care and well-being of older people (50+).
- To engage with older people to inform the strategic planning and development of services in Denbighshire, ensuring that the needs of older people are being met.
- To develop and promote age-friendly communities through inter-generational activities within Denbighshire.
- To ensure that information, innovation and best practice is shared with all stakeholders.

The role of the group is:

- To contribute to and support the priorities within the Ageing Well Plan in Denbighshire and Wales and through that to the relevant parts of Denbighshire County Council's Corporate Plan and the Public Services Board's Well-being Plan.
- To develop and monitor targets for the Ageing Well Plan in Denbighshire, supported by robust qualitative and quantitative data thus providing a strong evidence base.
- To act as a collective point of consultation in relation to planning, commissioning and monitoring older people's services.
- To develop, review and report on the Ageing Well in Denbighshire work plan.
- To ensure the views, concerns and priorities of older people are heard and fully reflected within health, social care and beyond.
- To work collaboratively with existing groups and fora for older people within Denbighshire, exchanging information, innovation and best practice whilst taking older people's views into account and providing appropriate feedback.
- To promote and support age-friendly and dementia-friendly communities within Denbighshire.
- To review the Terms of Reference including evaluation of the engagement of all partners.
- To work towards the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Older People's Strategy, Ageing Well in Wales Plan and any other relevant policies or strategies.
- To agree issues of significance to be reported and recommended to the Regional Partnership Board, the Public Services Board and member organisations.

In addition, for many years Denbighshire County Council has commissioned Age Connects North Wales Central to run several fora around the county for older people.



One of our age-friendly engagement events, February, 2024.

## 2.2 WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Communities

The movement for Age-friendly Cities and Communities (AFCC) was advanced through the World Health Organisation (WHO) with the launch of their publication 'Global age-friendly cities: a guide' in 2007. The Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC) was subsequently established by the WHO in 2010, with the first international conference on the network held in Dublin (Ireland) in 2011. Many cities and communities around the world have since been working towards becoming more age-friendly, with currently (March 2025) 1705 cities and communities in 60 countries working to improve their physical and social environments to become better places in which to grow old (see [Age Friendly World](#)).

[Age-friendly communities](#) are places where **older people, communities, policies, services, settings and structures work together in partnership to support and enable us all to age well**. They are characterized by eight essential features, known as the 'eight domains':

Domains for Age-friendly Action	Category
Outdoor spaces and buildings	Physical Environment
Transportation and mobility	
Housing	
Social Participation	Social Environment
Social inclusion and non-discrimination	
Civic engagement and employment	
Communication and information	Municipal Services
Community and health services	

Age-friendly communities enable people of all backgrounds to actively participate and treat everyone with respect, regardless of age. 'The WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities' was established to bring together like-minded cities and communities committed to becoming more age-friendly.

The **mission** of the Network is to stimulate and enable cities and communities around the world to become increasingly age-friendly. The network seeks to do this by:

- **inspiring** change by showing what can be done and how it can be done;
- **connecting** cities and communities worldwide to facilitate the exchange of information, knowledge, and experience; and
- **supporting** cities and communities to find appropriate **innovative and evidence-based solutions**.

Membership of the network reflects cities' commitment to listen to the needs of their ageing population, assess and monitor their age-friendliness and work collaboratively with older people and across sectors to create age-friendly physical and social environments. Membership is also a commitment to share experience, achievements and lessons learnt with other cities and communities.

The Welsh Government in 2021 recognised the need to cater for the needs of an ageing society and published the policy and strategy document '[Age-friendly Wales: our strategy for an ageing society](#)' which recognised the value of the WHO movement for AFCC and committed resources to allow local authorities to work with the Older People's Commissioner for Wales to become age friendly.

This document outlines Denbighshire's plans to join the other Welsh counties in becoming part of the GNAFCC, supporting the aims of the Welsh Government.

### 2.3 Facing up to Challenges

In compiling our action plan document for Denbighshire and striving to progress age-friendly practices in communities throughout the county, we recognise that we have entered a period where the aspirations we have to develop age-friendly communities are challenging on many levels not least financially, politically and socially.

In the current and upcoming budget period (2024-26) financial constraints limit the capacity of initiatives from every sector, charitable, private and public.

Given these constraints, we recognize that some age-friendly practices identified by Denbighshire residents will be harder to achieve in the short or medium term and pursuit of some practices and provisions will remain a challenge.

We believe the stated objectives nevertheless provide a set of priorities which we can work to progress and develop through collaboration with, and the involvement of, our partners and stakeholders within Denbighshire.

## 3.0 Denbighshire Strategic Themes

### 3.1 Outdoor Spaces and Buildings (Domain 1)

*The goal of interventions in this domain is to plan and design the built environment and public spaces with awareness of the needs of – and in consultation with – older people, recognizing their diversity. To support ageing in place, initiatives to create age-friendly outdoor environments focus on retrofitting existing neighbourhoods in addition to following good practice in the design of new neighbourhoods.*

(World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Europe, 2017)

#### Where we are now

The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on our mobility, independence, and quality of life as we age. Outdoor spaces and buildings in an age-friendly community will strive to be safe, accessible, and comfortable for people of all ages. Denbighshire has many accessible, safe, and well-maintained natural spaces and plans are in place to improve the accessibility and facilities at several key public buildings. From the local Well-being Assessment, we know that people value community hubs, and groups would like to see these supported and sustained in the future. There are leisure centres across the county, with helpful links to community initiatives. Although some people have told us that regular use of leisure facilities is unaffordable, work is underway to make them more accessible to underrepresented groups, including older people.

We know that improvements in access to green spaces, the design of public buildings and spaces (including our high streets) and transport for older people can ensure they are able to benefit from positive health outcomes and continue to participate in society. We also know that key changes to making the environment more age-friendly include things such as: maintaining pavements; providing public benches; improving traffic related safety; having appropriate signal timings for pedestrians and cars; signal-controlled crossings; central pedestrian refuges; public transport stops that are well spaced and resourced with shelter and seating; ensuring communities are dementia friendly and incorporate dementia friendly measure's into new developments (see relevant sections in the [North Wales Population Needs Assessment](#) 2022).

In Denbighshire older people have told us that access to locations for their health, well-being and amenity is important and that they want more accessible parks and walking paths, age-friendly travel means and parking, public fitness facilities, public seating, litter bins, accessible toilets and better signage and information at and regarding locations (see the Denbighshire Baseline Assessment).

#### Things we are proud of

##### Accessible Natural Environments

The geography of Denbighshire offers a rich mixture of historic urban centres, coastal destinations and rural landscapes including the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Areas

of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which together represent approximately 40% of the area of Denbighshire (with approx. 75% of the Clwydian range AONB area within Denbighshire). This combined with the unspoilt upland areas of the west of the county mean it is a county with significant opportunities for outdoor activities and enjoying the natural environment, including by its ageing residents. This also means Denbighshire is an attractive county for migration of people who take up residence later in life.

To cater for people accessing the open spaces of Denbighshire various statutory, charitable, and voluntary organisations maintain and promote information regarding locations and their associated facilities. Principal organisations include:

- Denbighshire County Council
- Denbighshire Countryside Services
- Actif North Wales
- Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB
- Friends of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley

The organisations above promote well-being for people of all ages through the enjoyment of open spaces and the natural environment. They also support access by providing information through various web pages detailing the locations around the county with facilities catering for everyone. Examples include:

- <https://www.clwydianrangeanddeevalleyaonb.org.uk/enjoying-the-aonb/>
- <https://friends.cymru/events/>
- <https://www.denbighshirecountryside.org.uk/accessible-denbighshire/>
- <https://www.visitwales.com/destinations/north-wales/north-east-wales/exploring-clwydian-range-and-dee-valley>
- <https://gogleddcymruactif.cymru/>

Denbighshire Highways and Environmental Services work closely with farmers and landowners as part of their rights of way improvement plan to develop the accessibility of walking routes including removing stiles where possible for replacement with gates, with obvious benefits for people with reduced mobility.

## **Denbighshire Countryside Services**

Denbighshire Countryside Service are a dynamic team that strive to improve and promote the special landscape, wildlife and heritage of the County. They manage over 32 Countryside Sites, including 2 Country Parks and 3 Local Nature Reserves, as valuable places for wildlife to thrive and for the public to explore and enjoy.

There are plenty of opportunities for public participation to get more out of Denbighshire's countryside. Each year the team organise a range of activities like family events, guided walks, and practical projects, providing people with exciting things to do and beautiful places to go to get the best out of the Denbighshire fabulous Countryside.

The Countryside Service, in tandem with the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB promote locations throughout the county for walking, cycling and other activities, including a range of local community walks and accessibility information (see

<https://www.denbighshirecountryside.org.uk/rural-walks/> and <https://www.denbighshirecountryside.org.uk/accessible-denbighshire/> ). A popular destination at Loggerheads county park has recently introduced free hire of an all-terrain mobility scooter to support those with limited mobility to enjoy the country park. (<https://countyvoice.denbighshire.gov.uk/english/county-voice-july-2024/area-of-outstanding-natural-beauty/tramper-all-terrain-mobility-scooter>).

In addition, the service also produces a Volunteer Programme that is packed with a variety of practical events from dry stone walling to heather burning. Volunteers are regularly invited to assist with all sorts of activities – anyone is welcome to come and have a go.

The Countryside team has a broad range of expertise and can offer advice on the following areas:-

- Biodiversity
- Trees and Hedgerows
- Geology
- Archaeology
- Access and Recreation
- Community Projects
- Land Management

### Nature for Health

Nature for Health is a collaborative project that engages with individuals and communities to promote the role access to nature can play in improving health and wellbeing. The programme welcomes people of all abilities to get involved with conservation and healthy outdoor lifestyle activities.

Feedback from our residential homes is incredibly positive. Residents report huge enjoyment of the activities arranged by nature for health which are accessible to all including those with limited mobility. Evidence of the gardening work can be seen by all visitors and residents even enjoyed a recent cider press activity which provided them all with freshly pressed apple juice!

Nature for Health offers opportunities to take part in activities helping to create lifelong physical activity habits using our natural resources, and for everyone to continue benefitting from the positive impact green spaces have on stress, anxiety, and our overall mood.

Physical activity combined with access to green spaces is a recommended non-pharmacological method which can aid recovery from illness, and is associated with reduced levels of depression, anxiety, fatigue, and improved quality of life in children and adults.

Spending time in the outdoors can help to manage many chronic conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, mental health, isolation, and loneliness, while also benefitting people physically by lowering risk levels of cardiovascular disease through maintaining a healthier and active lifestyle. Nature for Health activities offer short bouts of movement which are recommended to increase physical activity (see also 3.4 Social Participation).

There are a range of activities designed to engage with nature in numerous ways which are scheduled and promoted via a website and facebook site, and include:

- Guided walks
- Hedge Laying
- Willow Weaving
- Wildlife walks
- Crafting
- Volunteering

**Events**

Upcoming (16) Past (112)

**Taith Gerdded / Guided Walk - Pen Y Piggyn, Corwen**  
Tomorrow at 11:00  
Corwen Car Park  
Free

**Taith Gerdded / Guided Walk - Wenffrwd & Llangollen Canal**  
Tomorrow at 13:00  
Wenffrwd Nature Reserve  
Free

**Arllunio Gyda Jude Wood - Art with Jude Wood**  
Tue, 16 Jan, 13:00  
Pias Newydd Historic House & Gardens  
Free

**Creu Blychau Adar - Bird Box Making**  
Wed, 17 Jan, 11:00  
Corwen Community Garden  
Free

**Naddu Gyda Jamie - Whittling with Jamie**  
Wed, 24 Jan, 12:00  
Corwen Community Garden  
Free

**Gwehyddy - Weaving**  
Thu, 25 Jan, 10:00  
Corwen community garden  
Free

**Feltio â nodwydd gyda Calon Wlân Wylit-Needle Felting with Wild Heart Wool**  
Thu, 25 Jan, 13:00  
Llygaded Community Room  
Free

**Gosod Gwrychoedd - Hedge Laying**  
Wed, 21 Jan, 10:00  
Corwen Community Garden  
Free

**Gosod Gwrychoedd - Hedge Laying**  
Thu, 1 Feb, 10:00  
Corwen Community Garden  
Free

**Taith Gerdded Fer Eirysiau - Snowdrops at Llantysilio Church Short Walk**  
Fri, 2 Feb, 10:00  
Horseshoe Falls  
Free

**Amddifyniad coed naturiol - Weaving Tree Guards**  
Wed, 7 Feb, 11:00  
Corwen Community Garden  
Free

**Naddu Gyda Jamie - Whittling with Jamie**  
Wed, 21 Feb, 10:00  
Corwen Community Garden  
Free

Nature for Health enables participants to:

- Increase the amount of time spent outdoors
- Meet people
- Improve health and fitness
- Engage in conservation-based activities for all abilities

### Denbighshire Leisure Ltd

Denbighshire Leisure Ltd (DLL) operates a portfolio of leisure facilities and creative arts opportunities across the county, recognising the importance of community and with a mission to provide high quality, accessible leisure opportunities which attract high levels of participation, and improve the wellbeing of Denbighshire’s residents and visitors. The Denbighshire Leisure Active Communities team plays a key role in promoting participation in activities to improve both physical and mental wellbeing. This includes supporting local sports clubs and teams, coordinating community arts projects and working with our primary and secondary schools to promote sport and physical activity.

Examples of the opportunities provided for older Denbighshire residents include:

- Subsidised physical activity sessions for over 60's, provided as part of the Welsh Government's Health Weight Healthy Wales (HWHW) Action Plan to encourage physical activity and healthy life choices for those people not currently active. Suitable activities could include walking, swimming, low impact fitness classes, a personalised gym programme, yoga and pilates.
- Over 60's (resident in Wales) have access to [free swimming](#) for selected sessions ([see timetables here](#)).
- National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) – DLL operates the NERS programme in Denbighshire. The National Exercise Referral Scheme is a chronic condition prevention and management programme which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of sedentary and inactive adults who are at risk of developing or who have an existing chronic condition. It provides a 16-week programme of physical activity to individuals referred by NHS health professionals, using behaviour change techniques to embed positive physical activity habits. Once referred on one of the pathways, patients that meet the criteria are invited to their local leisure centre for an initial assessment with a qualified exercise referral professional. They will be offered a tailored, supervised exercise programme for 16 weeks and their progress will be reviewed at key points. Pathways that are offered in Denbighshire are Falls Prevention, Cardiac, Pulmonary, Mental Health, Weight Management, Cancer, Stroke, Back Care and Generic.

DLL Community arts work in partnership with others to provide a comprehensive timetable of arts activities for those who are over 50 and living in Denbighshire. Examples of these include the following:

- Lost in Art – using visual art forms to improve wellbeing for people living with dementia, their family and carers
- Vale of Clwyd MIND – workshops using visual arts and dance
- KIM-Inspire – workshops using various art forms to support mental health and wellbeing.
- South Denbighshire Community Partnership – creative sessions led by professional artists to support social interaction and wellbeing.
- Inter-generational projects – working with Ruthin and Denbigh High Schools in collaboration with community hospitals.

For further details of the above projects see section 3.4 Social Participation below.

## Public Toilets

Publicly accessible toilets in Denbighshire are situated throughout the county operated and maintained by a variety of organisations including Denbighshire County Council, District and Community Councils, Denbighshire Leisure Ltd, AONB, businesses and community organisations. During 2024 Denbighshire County Council has undertaken a review and consultation on public toilet provision within the county, which has yielded some interim findings, but the revised strategy for Denbighshire is still to be published (see <https://countyconversation.denbighshire.gov.uk/denbighshire/KMS/DMart.aspx>).

Currently all Denbighshire County Council toilets have disabled facilities and baby changing facilities (except Barkby Beach) and most are fitted with RADAR National Key Scheme (NKS) locks. RADAR keys can only be used for the disabled toilet during its opening hours. RADAR keys have been made available to a variety of community walking groups following their participation with AWiD and discussion of the benefits access to toilets has for encouraging older people to participate in outdoor activities.

There is an ongoing campaign to raise the profile of the need for accessible toilet facilities in Denbighshire through the Changing Places Consortium and there are currently three changing places facilities operational in Denbighshire at Glan Clwyd Hospital (Bodelwyddan LL18 5UJ), grocery Superstore in Prestatyn (LL19 9BJ) and the Pavillion in Llangollen (LL20 8SW). SPF funding has also now been allocated to Denbighshire to site two more Changing Places toilet facilities in the county.

The availability of toilet facilities is recognised as a significant consideration to older people supporting their confidence and ability to plan and execute visits to public locations be these urban or rural. In addition, therefore, to working with the public authorities, Denbighshire organisations and businesses are also being encouraged to allow and promote the availability of toilets as a beneficial age-friendly practice benefiting their public profile.

Mapping the locations of public toilets is stated as an important part of Denbighshire County Council strategy so that people who need to visit a toilet can easily access information about the location, opening times, accessibility, and type of facilities available.

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/community-and-living/public-toilets.aspx>

Locations of toilets will be promoted via a mapping app specifically designed for mobile technology and smart phones. Participating premises will also display a sticker in a prominent place, indicating that toilets are available for the public. The sticker will display the logo stipulated by Welsh Government.



### **Walkability (or Wheelability) and Active Transport Routes**

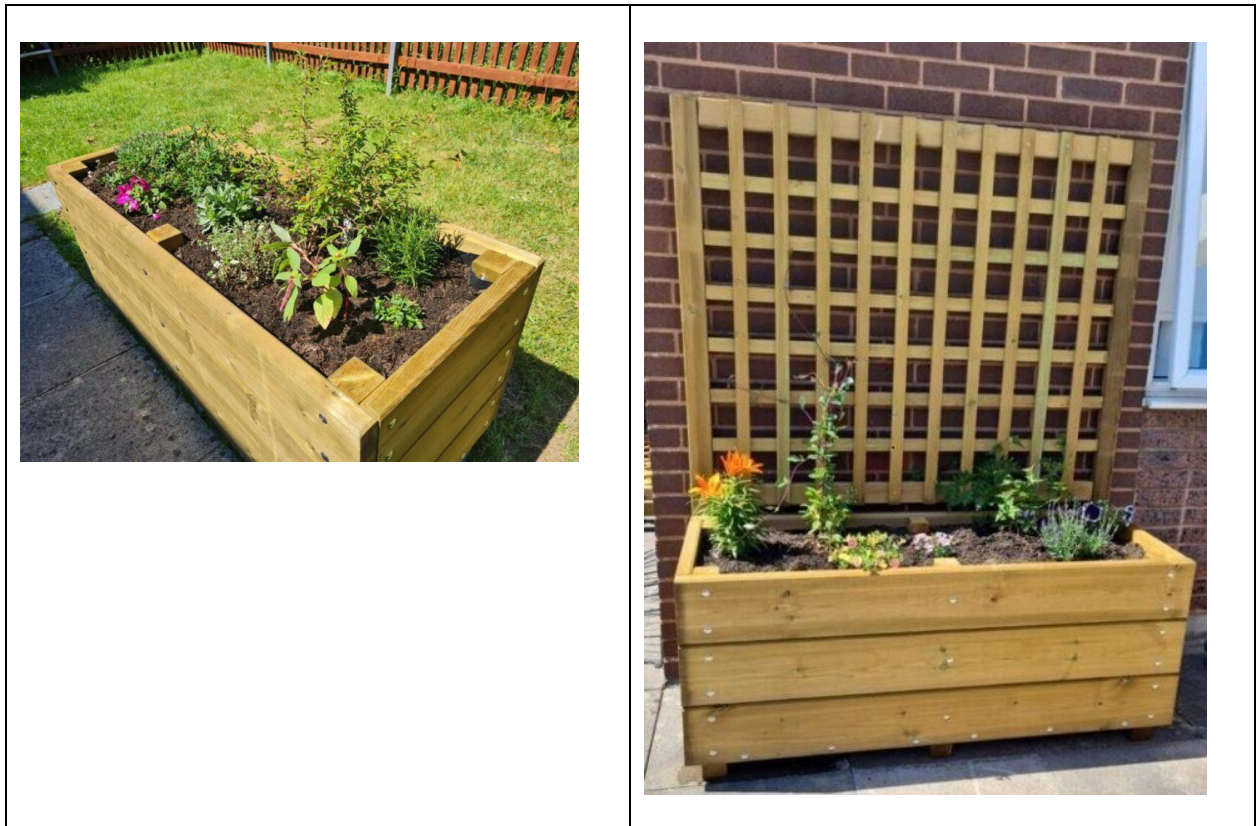
Linked to this area of work, please see the later section on Denbighshire Friendly Benches, which has been a partnership initiative involving Denbighshire County Council (DCC), Denbigh Town Council, DVSC, DLL, and Grŵp Cynefin. Having benches appropriately placed along active transport routes increases inclusivity.

Members of Ageing Well in Denbighshire have worked closely with DCC's Active Travel team to ensure that as far as possible our towns and public areas are accessible to all including those with mobility challenges or sensory loss. To this end we have conducted and written reviews on our walkability(or wheelability) audits. In January 2024 representatives of Age Connects North Wales Central, British Red Cross, Flintshire Disability Forum, wheelability, representatives of Dolwen, a local care home and the contracts and commissioning team conducted a walkability (or wheelability) audit of

Lenton pool as part of a larger consultation run by the Active travel team and further plans are underway for Llangollen and other parts of the county.

### **Dolwen Care Home Memorial Garden**

During early 2023 residents and staff at Dolwen, the local authority's care home in Denbigh raised funds to create an attractive garden in memory of those residents lost during the pandemic, which was completed in August 2023 with residents involved in its installation and choice of plants. When the weather is warm residents, their visitors and staff can relax in this attractive setting.



### **Denbigh Friendly Benches - Grŵp Cynefin ([grwpcynefin.org](http://grwpcynefin.org))**

Grŵp Cynefin and Denbighshire Leisure Active Communities worked together on a special project 'Denbigh Friendly Benches'.

The partnership involved working with local artists to transform some of the benches in Denbigh. The idea was to create social spaces where people will instantly recognise the benches as somewhere to connect with each other – encouraging friendship across the generations and reducing loneliness.

Five benches were transformed as part of the project, with a different local artist working together with various groups or local schools, each bench with a different theme.

## Denbigh Friendly Benches

Colourful benches dotted around Denbigh to encourage conversations about dementia, isolation and friendships

The benches are a symbol of friendship. The hope is that each bench invites conversation and encourages people to come together forming friendships across the generations and reducing loneliness.

**1** **Artist: Eleri Jones**  
**Location:** Awel y Dyffryn, Middle Lane  
**Group:** 11 local primary schools

**2** **Artist: Rhi Moxon**  
**Location:** Caledfryn, Smithfield Road  
**Group:** HWB Dinbych Art Group

**3** **Artist: Tara Dean**  
**Location:** Whitchurch Road, near St Marcellas Church  
**Group:** Twm o'r Nant + Awel y Dyffryn Residents

**4** **Artist: Georgina Haf Robertshaw**  
**Location:** Brookhouse Road, next to ystrad river  
**Group:** Denbigh Forget me not Group

**5** **Artist: Chloe Dymond**  
**Location:** Henllan Street next to St Mary's Church  
**Group:** Ysgol Pendref

**Can you find all 5 benches around Denbigh?**

Don't forget to tag us on social media  
#DenbighFriendlyBenches

### Walking Clubs and Outdoor Activities

Pen y Bryn Outdoor Learning CIC created a walking group funded by the Age-friendly Communities funding as an opportunity for older people to gather and enjoy the health benefits of Denbighshire's natural resources, whilst being led by an experienced and qualified guide.

### Where we want to be – Action Plan for Domain 1

Denbighshire is blessed with a variety of attractive natural landscapes and dispersed urban centres, many of which are considered as destinations for outdoor enjoyment, historic interest, and tourism. These resources provide a significant opportunity for people to age well which we want to embrace and encourage through ensuring that relevant locations and facilities are accessible and age friendly. We will work in collaboration with organisations and communities to understand and overcome barriers preventing people from all walks of life from accessing and being able to enjoy Denbighshire's outdoor environments and buildings. Our objectives are to:

- Continue to engage with AONB management authorities, Denbighshire Countryside Services and with Denbighshire Highways to enhance access to Denbighshire green spaces and footpaths for people of all ages and abilities.
- Support and promote initiatives to encourage participation in activities indoors or outdoors to enhance wellbeing, such as Lost in Art and Nature for Health.

- Support the implementation of the local development plan to ensure that communities have access to a range of services that promote positive wellbeing and meet the needs of different groups including older people.
- Continue to work with partners to maintain and expand the network of toilet facilities and encourage other organisations and businesses to make toilet facilities accessible to the public, encouraged through promotion of this being a positive age-friendly practice.
- Maintain and deepen involvement with Denbighshire Planning & Public Protection Service active travel team to ensure that age-friendly features are assessed during walkability (or wheelability) audits and considered for active transport activities, and subsequently that relevant features are installed and incorporated into Denbighshire environments.
- Work with relevant partners to maintain Denbighshire's urban areas as accessible to all users, including people who use mobility vehicles and wheelchairs, and who rely on accessible parking and uncluttered pavements or pedestrian areas to support their journey.
- Continue to explore the development of indoor communal spaces and outdoor garden spaces within Denbighshire's various housing facilities catering for older people, including Extra Care Housing, care homes and other social housing facilities.
- Continue to collate relevant information to inform AWiD members (and via AWiD, wider Denbighshire communities) on issues related to outdoor spaces and buildings.

## 3.2 Transport and mobility (Domain 2)

*The goal of interventions in this domain is to promote safe, accessible, appropriate and reliable transport services and infrastructure for active living. The aim is to enable people to maintain their mobility, independence and connections as they get older.*

(World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Europe, 2017)

### Where we are now

Transportation, including accessible and affordable public transport, is a key issue for people in later life. We know from the well-being assessment that key changes to making the environment more age-friendly include having more available and accessible public transport, having short distances between bus stops, sheltered bus stops, good signage and seating in well-maintained areas and also having access to priority vehicle parking at key locations such as town centres. We also know that regular and reliable transport services are not always available in every community in Denbighshire, and that they are sometimes inaccessible, unaffordable or do not take people where they need to go, at the time they need to go. Taxi and other coach services can be unaffordable to many older people. Some schemes are in development to assist (e.g. the Fflecsi bus providing links from rural communities to nearby towns). Rural villages have limited access to rail networks without the need for additional transport to stations.

People have told us that older people experience unique challenges with transport, and particular barriers to accessing healthcare. Some innovative solutions are being developed through collaboration between members of the older people's fora, Denbighshire County Council's transport managers and wider transport providers and organisations. We recognise there are challenges around provision of transport to and from hospital appointments. All hospitals are on bus routes, however timetables do not always accommodate the needs of patients across the county. A limited Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service is available but they are over-subscribed.

### Things we are proud of

As previously stated, transport for older people and the ability to travel confidently across the region is paramount. Denbighshire works with partners to try and alleviate some of the problems facing older people and look at ways of improving existing services.

### Community Transport

Members of the Ageing Well in Denbighshire network including the Edge of Care Team will be attend the Dial- a- Ride meetings to further explore Community Transport options, share learning and feedback to the Community Development Group and the AWiD steering group. We recognise what a valuable resource this is, and we endeavour to share community intelligence to best influence any potential opportunities for development.

This is a priority for all members of the North Wales Age-friendly Communities group to share feedback from older people and share details of the Age-friendly Communities Action Plan and Transport Domain, and how local authorities across Wales are working to support the community transport service in their area.

### The South Denbighshire Community Partnership Transport Scheme

The South Denbighshire Community Partnership has been particularly successful in its innovative work in this area, now boasting a community minibus, and electric cars available for hire, based at their Community Centre in Corwen, 'Canolfan Ni'. These vehicles, with their volunteer drivers, enable older people in particular to attend hospital appointments which can be over an hour's drive away, as well as giving residents a chance to go on outings, to go shopping and have meals on wheels delivered.

### Fflecsi Bus Service

Fflecsi is a demand-responsive bus service administered by Transport for Wales (TfW) and local authorities, operated by local bus operators across Wales.

Passengers book and pay for journeys via an app (or telephone call), which then matches passengers travelling between similar points, calculating an ad hoc route to the destinations required within the route's service area. The buses pick passengers up at a convenient location as close as possible to where they are, rather than at a designated bus stop. The bus will change its route once passengers are onboard to drop them off as close as possible to their chosen destination. The bus will travel anywhere it's safe and practical for it to go.

In direct response to requests from the public via the older people's fora the following changes were made to the local Fflecsi bus services:

- Printed timetables were introduced to allow older people to plan their journeys. The timetables were available in various locations located through the community including libraries.
- Routes were re-instated to accommodate passenger accessibility.
- Discussions have taken place regarding the timing of journeys to allow older people to travel at 'off peak' times when the services are less crowded.
- Ongoing training **was provided** for drivers to understand the needs of older people when entering and alighting from the bus.
- Lanyards and travel cards that alert drivers of public transport that people using the service may need some assistance.

### Public Transport

We are keen for everyone to be able to travel safely by a variety of means. Due to the rurality of the county very often a journey relies on a variety of modes of transportation. As a result of working in partnership with Transport for Wales, 32 members of the older people's fora took part in a 'Confidence to Travel' programme whereby they made the initial part of the journey by coach, then transferred to train and were given advice and information on how to book tickets online, by phone and by attending a station. They were also given information on what services were available to them including physical

assistance whilst they were travelling. This has resulted in several members of the group now arranging to travel by train in the future.

Concessionary travel passes are available to older people wishing to travel on public transport across the region.

### **Walking and Cycling**

There are a variety of options available throughout the county that range from organised walks led by Denbighshire Countryside staff and others and are aimed at all abilities. The Countryside Service, in tandem with the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB promote locations throughout the county for walking, cycling and other activities, including a range of local [community walks](#) and [accessibility information](#). A popular destination at Loggerheads County Park has recently introduced free hire of an all-terrain mobility scooter to support those with limited mobility to enjoy the country park.

### **Active Travel**

Active Travel means walking and cycling (including electric wheelchairs and mobility scooters) for everyday short-distance journeys, such as journeys to school, work, or for access to shops, services and bus or rail stations. DCC are working with Sustrans as part of Welsh Government Active travel<sub>1</sub> Network Map consultation. These maps are available on the Denbighshire County Council website.

Members of Ageing Well in Denbighshire have worked closely with DCC's Active Travel team to ensure that as far as possible our towns and public areas are accessible to all including those with mobility challenges or sensory loss. To this end we have conducted and written reviews on our walkability and wheelability audits.

## **Where we want to be – Action Plan for Domain 2**

Denbighshire is a largely rural county with its population heavily oriented in the north of the county, particularly within the northern coastal strip. Inland our urban centres and smaller villages and hamlets are highly dispersed, making transportation within the county a challenge. We want to work in collaboration with organisations and communities to understand and overcome the barriers preventing people from accessing safe, reliable, and affordable transport. Our objectives are to:

- Work with transport providers in Denbighshire to consider the needs of older people travelling within the county, including aspects relevant to ease of access, availability, and access to timetable information, and a range of payment options.
- Support and raise awareness of organisations and initiatives which make available travel options to and from medical appointments, including schemes like the Welsh Ambulance Service's Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS), Private Ambulance Services, Accessible Transport Collectives, and Travel planning Services like Traveline Cymru.
- Work with transport providers to provide relevant transport information to people regarding transport to destinations inside and outside the county, particularly

associated with timetables, journey cost and options for linking with other transport connections.

- Work with Denbighshire Planning & Public Protection active travel team in assessment of active transport routes and walkability and wheelability studies, with the objective of raising awareness of facilities and features supporting older people including provision for mobility scooters, accessible vehicle parking, positioning of road crossings and pedestrian areas, provision of signage to key locations and maps to indicate current location and local facilities.
- Continue to work with Transport for Wales and transport providers to develop the 'Confidence to Travel' initiative to develop awareness and confidence in people being able to purchase tickets and subsequently travel safely.
- Encourage the provision of community and volunteer transport schemes within Denbighshire to support the ability of older people to travel, and work with bus operators to develop and expand the availability of the Fflecsi bus service.
- Continue to collate relevant information to inform AWiD members (and via AWiD, wider Denbighshire communities) on relevant transport options and developments associated with Denbighshire.

### 3.3 Housing (Domain 3)

*The goal of interventions in this domain is to provide adequate, accessible, safe and affordable housing; a more seamless continuum of housing choices; and support for ageing in place through measures modifying the existing housing stock and making newly built houses better adjusted to older people's needs.*

(World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Europe, 2017)

#### Where we are now

The right housing and support can allow people to age comfortably and safely, in their community. From the well-being assessment, we know that the majority of older people in Denbighshire live in mainstream rather than specialist housing. Many mainstream homes in Denbighshire have accessibility issues and are contributing to poorer health in older people due to them being cold and damp or having hazards that risk trips and falls. Upgrading and refurbishing housing can significantly reduce these risks around falls and generate a saving to the NHS and social care. However, inflation has led to significant increases in costs associated with building or renovating houses and there is increasing pressure on all budgets. We also know that most single person households are pensioners living alone. As life expectancy increases, we can expect to see the number of lone pensioner households increase.

There are a number of ways in which people can access support with regard to housing, including Citizens Advice Denbighshire, and community navigators, offering support and signposting for people to secure their entitlement to housing interventions and initiatives. There is also partnership working with high levels of engagement in order to develop specialist housing (including Extra Care Housing schemes) that meet older people's needs. For those wishing to remain in their own homes, there are residential and domiciliary care schemes across the county, though these are under pressure. There are grants for housing adaptations enabling people to remain in their homes where possible and third sector partners, such as Care and Repair, provide access to additional affordable maintenance and adaptations.

#### Things we are proud of

##### Denbighshire County Council Supporting Housing in Partnership

Denbighshire County Council are committed to a [Corporate Plan](#) comprising six objectives, the first of which is 'A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs'.

With respect to the first objective to support a [Denbighshire of quality housing](#) that meets people's needs, the plan aims to achieve the following:



- i) Ensure that there is quality housing that meets the needs of vulnerable people, assisting them to lead independent lives in appropriate accommodation for as long as possible.
- ii) Prevent homelessness, and ensure that any instances of it are rare, brief, and unrepeatable (including for young care leavers).
- iii) Upgrade the council housing stock to ensure it is:
  - o Safe, secure, and well-maintained.
  - o Where possible, suitable for the needs of residents, for example, those with disabilities (see also Denbighshire Equalities Commitment).
  - o Energy efficient and well-insulated.
- iv) Deliver more homes to meet local need and demand, including:
  - o 300 affordable homes subject to the availability of Welsh Government funding
  - o 35 specialist homes through Extra Care Housing schemes.
  - o 170 council homes subject to the availability of Welsh Government funding
  - o Working to minimise the number of empty homes in Denbighshire
- v) Ensure that Denbighshire residents are informed about available housing options and routes to housing, seeking also to reduce the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) waiting list. This includes engaging with those already living in council houses, and those on low incomes.

The above aims are supported by partners within the housing sector, including the principal Housing Associations in North Wales (Registered Social Landlords), as well as adjacent housing authorities in Conwy and Flintshire.

[Extra Care Housing schemes in Denbighshire](#) are operated by Grwp Cynefin, Clwyd Alyn and Wales and West Housing Association, while applicants for social housing in Denbighshire do so through SARTH (single access route to housing), a partnership between:

- Adra
- Conwy County Borough Council
- Denbighshire County Council (via Denbighshire Housing aka Housing Solutions)
- Flintshire County Council

- Cartrefi Conwy
- Clwyd Alyn Housing Association
- Grŵp Cynefin
- North Wales Housing Association
- Wales and West Housing Association

## Extra Care Housing

Extra Care Housing has been a key feature of Denbighshire's strategy to meet the housing needs for older people for many years through the establishment and subsequent development of schemes in Rhyl (Gorwel Newydd), Prestatyn (Nant y Mor), Ruthin (Llys Awelon) and Denbigh (Awel y Dyffryn). In 2024 these Extra Care Housing facilities provide 246 dwellings (mix of one and two bedroom apartments), of which the most recent development, was the opening of 35 one and two bedroom modern, energy efficient apartments at the Llys Awelon Extra Care Housing scheme in Ruthin just before Christmas 2024.

Extra Care Housing gives people a balance between living at home and having on-site, dedicated care available if needed. The aim is to support individuals who wish to remain independent and in control of their own life for as long as possible in an environment that draws upon care and support and housing amenities together.

Extra Care Housing provides accommodation in developments of self-contained homes with design features and support services available to enable self-care and independent living. It allows people to maintain and where possible, build on their independence. Developments are designed and situated within the heart of the local neighbourhoods recognising the importance of maintaining and developing strong community links.

Some of the benefits arising from the Extra Care Housing model include:

- couples and friends can stay together
- residents keep their independence
- opportunities to join in social activities
- residents have control over their finances
- residents gain security and peace of mind
- residents have a home for life

The provision of onsite carers allows the delivery of person centred, reablement focussed support – “doing with, not doing for” – which in turn allows individuals to stay as independent as possible for longer. Tenants from our Extra Care Housing schemes have long been involved with AWiD's Age-friendly Communities activities, benefitting from grants, and contributing ideas, suggestions and materials including some marvellous poems. Vibrant communities in Extra Care Housing schemes in Rhyl, Prestatyn, Denbigh and Ruthin work in successful partnerships with social housing providers and with local schools.



Students from Prestatyn High school have been working with tenants from Nant y Mor Extra Care Housing scheme for more than a decade on a variety of innovative projects.

### Over 55's Community Housing

Denbighshire Community Housing manages a 'sheltered' housing stock of over 1150 dwellings located in over 36 different Denbighshire communities. A mixture of 1-bedroom bedsits, bungalows, and flats, 2-bedroom flats and bungalows and a couple of 3 bed flats.

Denbighshire community housing stock has been increased in 2024 through the opening of two significant developments designated for the over 55's, including Llys Llen in Prestatyn featuring 14 one-bedroom apartments over 3 floors, and Llys Elizabeth in Rhyl providing 12 self-contained 1 and 2 bed apartments.



Llys Lien apartments - Prestatyn



Llys Elizabeth Apartments, Rhyl

All social or community housing is administered through a process known as SARTH (Single Access Route to Housing), whereby applicants make a single application for housing which is then assessed by the Denbighshire Housing Register Team, who will allocate the applicant into one of four priority bands.

### Care and Repair North East Wales

Representatives of Care and Repair for founder members of AWiD and remain on the steering group.

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd.

The aim of Care and Repair or Gofal a Thrwsio Conwy a Sir Ddinbych is to enable older people to remain living independently in their own homes through the improvement of their housing conditions and therefore their levels of comfort, safety, security, and wellbeing.

Care and Repair are a Wales based charity providing a range of services principally to older people in age categories either over 50 or over 60. The organisation is divided regionally, with Denbighshire services provided by the Conwy and Denbighshire division, funded in various means, both public and private, including Welsh Government and Denbighshire County Council.

The service has various elements including:

- i) Core Services (support homeowners who are older or vulnerable to live as independently as possible with increased safety, security, warmth, and comfort, by providing advice about wellbeing, home repairs and adaptations to their homes.)
- ii) Advice Services (provides free information and practical help for older people, particularly with hearing or sight loss, dementia or if you just need help to stay safe at home and manage better.)
- iii) Rapid Response Service (a Welsh Government strategic initiative, to help older people return home from hospital and make their homes safer, by providing a small-scale, quick adaptation or repair service, preventing hospital admission.)
- iv) Home Improvement Service (homes can easily fall into disrepair as income levels decrease, this service enhances the quality of life of older or vulnerable people. It is delivered by a team who carry out private works, adaptations, small repairs in the home and garden, fit bathrooms or wet-rooms and complete skilled joinery work. They are trained to spot the needs of clients and refer them for help from our Core or RRAP services.
- v) Hospital2HealthierHome Service (The Hospital to Home Scheme for people over the age of 50 to ensure that essential adaptations are made to a patient's home so that they can be safely discharged from hospital.)

### **Denbighshire Care Homes and provision for older people**

There are 67 Care Homes in Denbighshire, including 12 Nursing Homes and 55 Residential Care Homes providing approximately 1434 rooms. About 200 of these specialise in supporting adults with learning disabilities, on the autistic spectrum or managing mental health challenges. Some of these are younger adults. In addition, several older people live in supported housing or community living settings. These are often chosen by adults living with mental health challenges and complex disabilities. Members of AWiD are involved in supporting and monitoring these homes, arranging training or assistance where needed. Health and Social care practitioners work closely with the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Social Care Wales (SCW) to ensure that standards in these homes remain high and that residents are safe and well provided for. Residents and care home staff have attended Age-friendly Communities engagements events. Their input continues to be invaluable.

Currently two schemes are in the pipeline to develop in house residential services for older people in Denbigh and Corwen. Older people's views have already influenced the



## Home Adaptations to Support Independence

Denbighshire operates a comprehensive scheme to support the continued independence of people living in their own homes delivered through Conwy and Denbighshire Care and Repair. In addition to home adaptations the introduction of technology and equipment to support communication and completion of everyday tasks can also help with independence aspects which are facilitated by the local Health Board (Betsi Cadwaldr University Health Board), Denbighshire County Council and Digital Wales.

## Community Equipment Integrated Service (CESI)

CESI is a partnership between Denbighshire County Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB). It provides equipment for people of all ages to help them live their lives to the fullest and to maintain their health and independence. This ranges from simple aids for daily living to more complex equipment that helps people to stay in their homes for longer.

The partnership aims to maximise the effectiveness of local arrangements for the supply of community equipment and to ensure the most cost-effective use of resources across the county of Denbighshire.

CESI has a comprehensive list of standard and specialised stocked equipment that is available to all approved prescribers; generally social care practitioners, occupational therapists and other social services or health professionals. Most stock can be supplied within 5 days of the request, but orders can sometimes be delivered on an urgent basis, for example, equipment to facilitate a hospital discharge or to alleviate an immediate health and safety risk to the person or their carer.

## Technological Support and Digital Infrastructure

There are a variety of ways in which technology is being used to support older people and those with disabilities to live independent lives in Denbighshire including through automation of physical actions in the home like closing and opening curtains, door entry systems, switching on and off lighting and electrical appliances. Telephone systems have long been used to alert in the event of ill health and falls, and newer digital communication systems are now replacing older analogue equipment.

## Where we want to be - Action Plan for Domain 3

We believe that capability (and opportunity) to live in settled accommodation is a pre-requisite for the potential to age well in Denbighshire. Our population demographics demonstrate an increasingly aged population with over 65's predicted to increase to over 30% by 2040: In parallel the availability of housing relative to the population has decreased in recent years, with a decrease in home ownership, a rise in private rental and housing generally becoming increasingly unaffordable. We will work in collaboration with organisations and communities to understand and overcome the barriers encountered by (older) people to live in settled accommodation which suits their needs. Our objectives are to:

- Make information regarding housing options and routes to housing readily available and accessible to people, covering the spectrum of accommodation types both public and private.
- Maintain collaboration with service providers in Denbighshire to support older people to maintain independence and remain in their own homes. Supporting volunteer tenant support coordinators in supported housing schemes to organise activities and to get tenants' voices heard.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to promote housing solutions which meet the needs of older people, including those with a range of health needs.
- Evaluate the range of Denbighshire community housing stock to assess suitability for older people and categorise appropriately to support allocation process.
- Take account of feedback from Housing officers in developing new and monitoring existing housing solutions.
- Continue to collaborate with colleagues in the health board, the voluntary sector and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to ensure that residential care and nursing care homes in Denbighshire provide safe and appropriate accommodation, able to meet the needs of their residents.
- Continue to collaborate with housing associations in developing new and monitoring existing Extra Care Housing facilities and ensuring that they meet the needs of their tenants.
- Continue to support the work of Community Resource Teams (CRTs) in providing the care and support needed to enable residents to remain independent and to stay at home as long as they choose.
- Support existing mechanisms for ensuring that people can access reliable, trustworthy sources of support from local trades people.
- Continue to partner with Care and Repair Conwy and Denbighshire to support older people with their home adaptations and associated services which enable them to live independently.
- Continue to engage with people of all ages in the development and monitoring of existing housing solutions.
- Continue to collate relevant information to inform AWiD members (and via AWiD, wider Denbighshire communities) on relevant housing related matters from all sectors private, rented, community or care.

### 3.4 Social Participation (Domain 4)

*The goal of interventions in this domain is to promote older people's participation in social life and to combat loneliness and isolation. This can be achieved by creating, maintaining and promoting supportive environments that enable social interaction and active lifestyles and by providing opportunities for meaningful social activities that encourage older people to leave their homes and maintain supportive social networks.*

(World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Europe, 2017)

#### Where are we now

We are proud of the range of activities available, providing options for social participation for members of its population of all ages. These include groups specifically designed for older people, such as our older people's fora, and groups run in older people's housing schemes – including Extra Care Housing and residential homes, as well as activities open and accessible to all such as 'Nature for health' who provide options for walks, gardening and country crafts and sports facilities available in leisure centres which include options for wheelchair users and those with limited mobility and provision offered by services such as libraries.

AWiD is increasingly engaging with representatives of faith groups who are keen to help with our work to create age-friendly communities. Faith leaders have collaborated and offered churches to be used as venues for awareness raising and one particular church leader has arranged dementia friendly awareness training for her congregation in order to adapt to their changing needs. People have told us the importance that church, chapel or Quaker meetings have for them and volunteers have worked hard to make sure no one is prevented from attending. Churches have worked creatively with schools and older congregation members using crafts and story telling and doors have been opened widely to all.



Members of an Age Connects North Wales Central forum in discussion with Sion from the Older Person's Commissioner's team

The older people's fora, coordinated by Age Connects North Wales Central are gaining in popularity and numbers in groups across the county and there are several examples of their member influencing policy particularly in relation to transport. As well as a range of activities available designed to increase physical activity, there are many options to engagement in 'lifelong learning. There are a wide range of (free) routes which people of any age or ability can choose to increase their digital inclusion, in many different venues and many older people's housing schemes offer classes such as art, gardening, history clubs etc. Denbighshire also boasts a thriving 'University of the Third Age', running an extremely wide choice of activities and classes to large numbers of older people. We are lucky to have a range of brilliant voluntary and social value organisations who are available to support, befriend and train older people, in community venues, in residential settings and in their own homes. Many are members of Ageing Well in Denbighshire and many might be regarded as older people themselves.

Initiatives in this domain are amongst the most popular with older people and there is evidence of their contribution to increased physical and mental health. Nevertheless, there is also concern that they do not reach out to all older people in the community in the same way, including groups at risk of social isolation less likely to get involved.

## Things we are proud of

Members of AWiD continue to work hard to combat the risks of loneliness and social isolation for people of all ages. As a result of joint work with Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC) we have been able to direct Welsh Government grants designed to reduce loneliness and social isolation and to help create an age-friendly community to support initiatives toward this end. We have also worked with carers'

organisations used some of the carers respite grant to help to support these projects. Beneficiaries include the following:

- British Red Cross
- Book of You
- Community Councils
- Llandyrnog Sports Association
- STAND North Wales CIC
- Denbigh Men's Shed Limited
- Extra Care Housing schemes
- Gobaith Galeri
- Tŷ Môr Day Centre
- South Denbighshire Community Partnership
- Gig Buddies Cymru North Wales
- North Wales Women's Centre
- Brighter Futures
- Vision Support
- West Rhyl Young Peoples Project
- The FDF Centre for Independent Living
- Rhyl South West Central Residents Association
- Age Connects North Wales Central
- Prestatyn and Meliden Community Action Group
- 4X4 Response Wales
- The Willow Collective
- Gofal Dydd Y Waen Day Care
- Bedford Street Community Company Ltd and
- ConneXions community group.
- North Wales Police – Herbert Protocol leaflets
- Pen y Bryn Outdoor learning

Beneficiaries have included people with protected characteristics, and projects have been selected to ensure that people have been able to get involved regardless of age, race, gender, background, sexual orientation, physical and mental health, sensory loss or learning disability.

Organisers have submitted monitoring information about the funded activities and numbers of participants. This information has sometimes been complemented by photographs and case studies that provides a broader picture of both participants and non-participants in the population. This has helped us to understand motives for or barriers to getting involved.

### **Denbighshire Libraries**

Denbighshire Libraries have developed in recent years into 'hubs' providing opportunities for engaging with a range of services for people's enrichment and health and wellbeing including:

- Reading (physical or eBooks)
- Access to digital services via free internet access, tablet, eReader or chromebook loans, cloud printing,

- Dementia and age-friendly trained staff
- Loan of jigsaws, memory boxes or Memory bags
- Welsh language services
- Local and family history services
- Talking Points – regular scheduled surgeries providing free access to advice information from trained staff

A range of social activities are conducted in Denbighshire Libraries, including reminiscence sessions, Pened a Sgwrs Welsh Conversation Groups, author visits and reading groups.

Libraries in Denbighshire deliver the statutory public library service and the One Stop Shop face-to-face customer service for the Council from eight libraries located in Rhyl, Prestatyn, Rhuddlan, St Asaph, Denbigh, Ruthin, Corwen and Llangollen. A Home Library Service provides a tailored service to people who are unable to access their local library due to infirmity, disability or caring responsibilities. Libraries also provide a 24 hour digital service for downloading books, accessing information and ordering physical books; and provide facilities for people to access a range of support and advice services in their local community.

### South Denbighshire Community Partnership

The South Denbighshire Community Partnership (SDCP) is not for profit company and registered charity, providing assistance, support and opportunity to the people of South Denbighshire. The partnership operates from two principal hubs in Corwen and Llangollen, but also provides outreach activities at smaller village communities including St.Mael, St Collens and Glyndyfrdwy.

The partnership supports the South Denbighshire region in various ways including:

- Provision of a 'Meals on Wheels' service
- Provision of a 'Community Transport Service' including via buses or cars
- Hosting of Citizens Advice Services and support workshops
- Hosting of local wellbeing and mental health support services
- Working collaboratively with and hosting various DCC services including community housing, countryside services, nature for health and working Denbighshire
- Organisation of community activities

Full details are available through the SDCP website <https://www.canolfan-ni.org/>

### Nature for Health

Nature for Health is a collaborative project that engages with individuals and communities to promote the role access to nature can play in improving health and wellbeing. As well as encouraging involvement in conservation and health outdoor lifestyles (see 3.1 Outdoor Environments), the project also promotes physical and mental wellbeing through engaging with various Denbighshire communities, support organisations and charities providing craft sessions, indoor seated exercise classes as

well as regular outdoor activity sessions. A large proportion of the clients are over 60 years of age.



Seated exercise Class - Prestatyn



Felting Craft Session - Rhyl

### Denbighshire Leisure Limited

Denbighshire Leisure Ltd (DLL) operates a portfolio of leisure facilities and creative arts opportunities across the County recognising the importance of community and with a mission to provide high quality, accessible leisure opportunities which attract high levels of participation, and improve the wellbeing of Denbighshire's residents and visitors. The Denbighshire Leisure Active Communities team plays a key role in promoting participation in activities to improve both physical and mental wellbeing. This includes supporting local sports clubs and teams, coordinating community arts projects and working with our primary and secondary schools to promote sport and physical activity.

Examples of the opportunities provided for older Denbighshire residents includes:

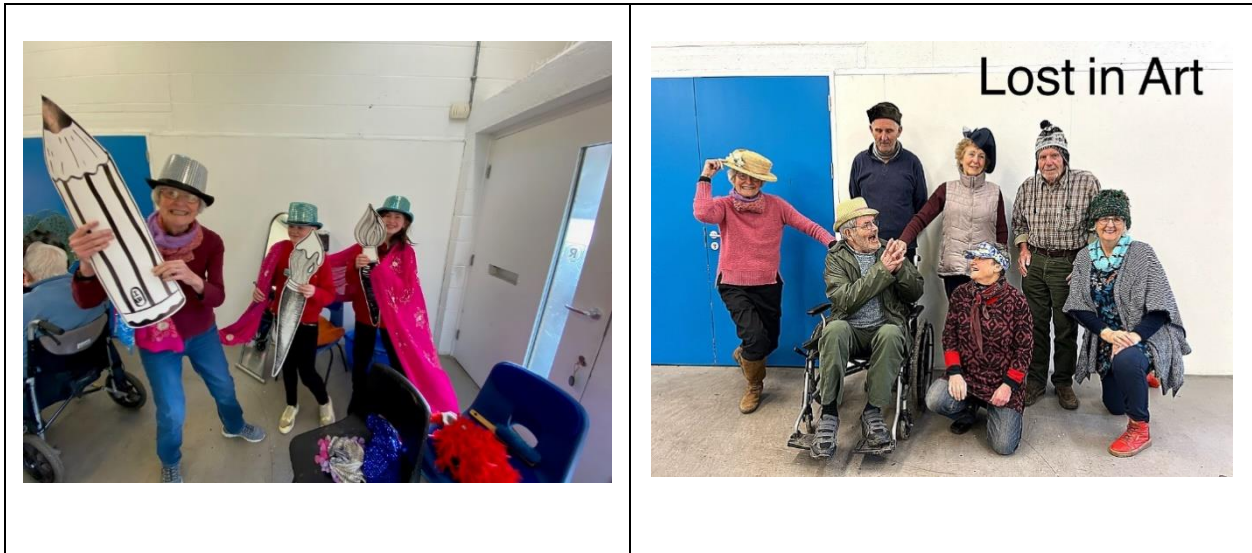
- Subsidised physical activity sessions for over 60s
- Free swim sessions for over 60s at all sites.
- National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS)

For more information on the above see section 3.1 Outdoor Environment and Buildings above.

DLL Community arts have also formed a number of partnerships that work with others to provide a comprehensive timetable of arts activities for those who are over 50 and living in Denbighshire. Examples of these include the following:

### Lost in Art

Lost in Art is a project aimed at people living with dementia, along with their family members and carers. The aim of the project is to explore the role of the visual arts in addressing issues which can affect people with dementia, including social isolation, confidence, communication and quality of life and wellbeing. Lost in Art takes place weekly during term time at Ruthin Craft Centre and provides a warm and welcoming space where people living with dementia and their families and friends can enjoy working with professional artists using the galleries as inspiration and also finding support and friendships from the rest of the group.



### Vale of Clwyd Mind

We work in partnership with Mind to run regular workshops in various art forms including visual arts and dance. Sessions are delivered by professionals in both Denbigh and Rhyl and help support the valuable work that Mind does within these communities.

### KIM-Inspire

We also work in partnership with KIM-Inspire, currently in both Prestatyn and Corwen. Projects have varied from creative writing to photography to fine art and craft, with workshops tailored to meet the requirements of participants to support their mental health and wellbeing.

### South Denbighshire Community Partnership

Regular creative sessions are run in collaboration with South Denbighshire Community Partnership in both Llangollen and Corwen, with a variety of professional artists leading workshops in mediums that have included glass, felting, fine art, woodwork and mosaics, to name but a few.

### Inter-generational Projects

DLL provide inter-generational opportunities, with current projects running with Ruthin and Denbigh schools in collaboration with Ruthin and Denbigh Community Hospitals.



### Cuppa and Song, Llanrhaeadr

Paned a Chân is a Welsh Language community music project delivered in partnership with Canolfan Gerdd William Mathias Music Centre. Led by award-winning music therapist Ceri Rawson, older members of the community meet weekly to sing together in Welsh in a friendly and supportive environment.

### Singing in Care Settings

Professional musicians visit care homes and Extra Care Housing facilities, enabling residents to enjoy singing songs in both Welsh and English. Some of these sessions are also intergenerational, as bringing together the generations is so beneficial to all.

The Age-friendly Communities grant in Denbighshire has also helped to fund the Social Enterprise 'Book of You' to supply volunteers to provide activities, support and friendship to care home residents through their Care Home Buddy scheme and reminiscence activities.

## Where we want to be – Action Plan for Domain 4

Work will continue to ensure that the views and needs of older people from minority groups influence our plans. This is taking time and requires sensitivity and flexibility, but progress is being made. During 2024 we organised a series of engagement events across the county to capture the views of as wide an audience as possible and enable them to contribute in a meaningful way to plans.

As a result of Age-friendly funding, one group has been able to publish a book of writings and illustrations, with contributions from community members aged between 4 and 103. Members plan to go 'on tour' collecting stories and illustrations more widely and the Ageing Well in Denbighshire network will support where possible.

We hope that beneficiaries of the distributed grants will continue to advise policy makers as we develop provision and services.

The Ageing Well in Denbighshire group has combined with the Dementia friendly group and is collaborating with the Dementia Aware Denbighshire network to ensure that we avoid duplication and work jointly to create a community that is 'friendly' for all regardless of age or ability. Our objectives include a determination to:

- Continue to promote the availability of funding to support services aimed at reducing loneliness and social isolation, working with DVSC to direct and support community organisations and initiatives in sourcing and applying for financial support.
- Encourage community groups and organisations to raise awareness of their existence and support them in publicising their meetings, activities and events including through central resources like community navigators and social prescribers.
- Support and promote initiatives to encourage participation in activities indoors or outdoors to enhance wellbeing.
- Continue to collate relevant information to inform AWiD members (and via AWiD, wider Denbighshire communities) on relevant opportunities for social participation.
- Liaise with Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health board to contribute to a range of awareness raising events including an International Women's Day celebration offering a platform for some of our older 'heroines'

### 3.5 Social Inclusion and non-discrimination (Domain 5)

*The goal of interventions in this domain is to create environments that are socially inclusive places, where all people – regardless of age, gender, social position, health or disability – are respected and have opportunities to participate and contribute. To enhance equity, it is crucial to complement population-based interventions with targeted efforts, reaching out to people most at risk of poor health and exclusion, understanding their specific needs and promoting their health and quality of life.*

(World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Europe, 2017)

#### Where are we now

Social inclusion, respect and non-discrimination are central aspects of the age-friendliness of a community, contributing to the quality of life and health of older people. The local Well-being Assessment shows that people want to see more intergenerational activities, recognising their benefit for well-being as well as providing opportunities for building positive social attitudes towards people of different ages. People have also told us that having a sense of belonging to the local community is important, as is being listened to and treated with respect. Dementia friendly practices and initiatives are found across the county, including awareness raising and influencing social attitudes. As mentioned earlier there are several examples of intergenerational projects across the county, aimed at enhancing social inclusion. For example, many schools engage regularly with Extra Care Housing schemes and residential homes and help with engagement exercises designed to prepare housing and town development plans. Plans for a falls prevention project are currently under way which will involve joint working between 2 primary schools, the Falls Coordinator and relevant agencies including Care and Repair, Age Connects North Wales Central and the British Red Cross. Students will be presented with a scenario and asked to work as detectives to find out why a fall has occurred, with the help of information from relevant professionals.

#### Things we are proud of

##### Older People's Fora

Members of Ageing Well in Denbighshire have long supported and initiated activities and methods of interaction for older people to participate in their communities and to have their voices heard. As mentioned earlier, members include those representing the local authority, town councils, the health authority, voluntary sector partners and individuals.

Denbighshire County Council have funded older peoples fora across the county at 6 different locations since 2011. These groups meet at least every 6 weeks and follow a varied programme of activities and speakers. The programmes are developed with the interests of each group and can vary from crafting workshops to information sessions regarding scams, benefits, street lighting, housing, access to services, bank closures, post office closures, cost of living issues and council services. Guest speakers have attended these meetings to deliver information regarding services.

Police officers and fire and rescue services periodically attend to promote their services and discuss any concerns of the forum members.

There are also opportunities for the groups to take part in surveys and questionnaires both locally and nationally.

Members of Age Connects North Wales Central help to create regular newsletters to keep forum members informed if they miss a forum. These were started in the successive Covid lockdowns and continue to be popular with the membership. The newsletters are produced both electronically and printed and received a special mention from the Older Peoples Commissioner for Wales for providing printed matter for those who may not have access to digital options.

### **Liaison with the Older People's Commissioner for Wales**

The Ageing Well in Denbighshire network benefits enormously from the support of the Older People's Commissioner and her team. The Commissioner and her representatives regularly attend our meetings and events and have followed up concerns raised by our members including, significant challenges around transport, communication, digital exclusion and access to support.



The picture above shows Sion Evans of the Older People's Commissioner's Office speaking at an engagement event in February 2024.

## Links with Dementia Friendly Communities

Until 2023, representatives of different departments in Denbighshire County Council used to meet regularly to look at ways of ensuring that the council and its officers worked in dementia-friendly ways. We realised that combining effort between this group and Ageing Well in Denbighshire (AWiD) would have a greater impact. We now have representatives who attend the regional dementia working groups and one member is responsible for providing training and supporting the Dementia friendly communities in Denbighshire. Our work is complimentary, and resources are shared. Examples of collaborative projects include the Dementia Active Denbighshire coordinator providing training for care home staff, and family members of residents and presentations to the AWiD group about the collaborations between care homes and some of our primary schools. In 2024, a gentleman living with dementia, accompanied by his young grandson, and the vicar of his church, spoke to attendees at one of our age-friendly communities engagement days. The presentation was memorable and a real eye opener for all.

## ConneXions

One of our AWiD members set up a community group called ConneXions, to bring younger and older residents of the Trefnant community together. They meet monthly in their village hall (provided free of charge) to talk, play and enjoy delicious home made cakes made by some of the members. Regular attendees include residents from the local care homes, children from the local school and adults with learning disabilities. Many of the organisers are in their 80s. Partly due to age-friendly funding, they were able to publish a book of writings and illustrations, with contributions from members aged between 4 and 103. Members plan to go 'on tour' collecting stories and illustrations more widely and the Ageing Well in Denbighshire network will support where possible. The connections between the group and the primary school, residential care home and the local church continue as strong as ever, meeting monthly for arts, crafts, stories, tea, cake and fun. Their founder member, unphased by the distraction of recent heart surgery, continues to work creatively with a variety of groups, and is currently building a portfolio of artwork and stories from a group of women who have been brought together by a shared experience of breast cancer.

## Carer Representation and Support

AWiD has regular attendance from carers and from individuals and organisations supporting unpaid carers. We have collaborated to ensure that grants have been able to benefit these groups and that their views are taken into account. Day care providers including Welsh language medium providers also have strong links with the group and have benefitted from age-friendly funding. Members have arranged for awareness raising sessions to help carers to become more aware of the support available and how to access it.

## Leisure Activities

There are a wide range of activities organised for and often by older people in Denbighshire. As mentioned earlier, Denbighshire Leisure Ltd offers a variety of arts, crafts and physical fitness opportunities to its residents. Also the University of the Third Age (U3A) offers a very wide range of activities, many of which are facilitated by older

people. They include history societies, language learning, creative writing, yoga, pilates and bowls.

### **Liaison with residential and care homes**

Residents, staff and families of residents from Denbighshire care homes have attended our awareness raising events and contribute hugely to our plans. The wife of one care home resident is an important member of AWiD and helps hugely with our projects. Residents are involved in helping with care staff recruitment and advising us on plans. The following clip shows a resident in a DCC home talking about working in the care sector: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3CQleblJY0>

### **Disabilities and Sensory Loss**

The AWiD network includes members with protected characteristics from a wide range of backgrounds. It also has members who represent all these groups and more including the North Wales Regional Equality Network, North Wales Women's Centre, Vision Support, Dewis Centre for Independent Living, the Centre of Sign, Sight, Sound, British Red Cross and Care and Repair.

Many of these members work together to provide 'Safe and Well checks'. The falls coordinator presents periodically to the group to look at the best way to prevent falls and she works closely with Care and Repair to ensure that homes are as safe as possible and can remain as independent as they chose for as long as possible.

Members who are wheelchair users or have mobility challenges advise us before we book venues and have informed our baseline assessment as well as this plan. They also advise and take part in our Walkability audits, in collaboration with Denbighshire County Council's active transport team.

### **Where we want to be – Action Plan for Domain 5**

We want Denbighshire to be an age-friendly county which provides opportunity for participation by its older people without prejudice and discrimination, and which encourages and promotes intergenerational activity and builds positive social attitudes towards people of different ages. We want to work in collaboration with organisations and communities to understand and tackle factors which lead to loneliness and promote opportunities for older people to engage with their communities. Our objectives are to:

- Continue to work with DVSC to raise awareness of dementia and to support carers and their communities meet the needs of people with dementia, supporting activities to ensure Denbighshire continues to work to become dementia-friendly as well as age-friendly.
- Continue to support and develop intergenerational initiatives, activities and events which address issues of discrimination, and which promote the positive attributes and capabilities of older people thereby encouraging opportunities for contributing to their communities.

- Encourage and promote awareness within Denbighshire communities of the range of impacts that age can bring and how adaptations can be made (both physical as well as through awareness and training) to support older people to participate.
- Work with Digital Confidence Denbighshire to give confidence and capability to older people to access and use digital communication and information, thereby reducing digital exclusion.
- Continue to encourage and promote mechanisms to involve older people to have an active voice representing their needs and aspirations.
- Continue to collate relevant information to inform AWiD members (and via AWiD, wider Denbighshire communities) on relevant opportunities to promote social inclusion for and respect of older people.
- Ensure the portrayal of older people in any marketing promotes images of positive ageing.
- Continue to support the agenda of the Older People's Commissioner for Wales through sharing information and supporting initiatives.

### 3.6 Civic Engagement and Employment (Domain 6)

*The goal of interventions in this domain is to make better use of the potential of ageing societies by creating more and better opportunities for older people to engage in political, economic and public life and to increase employment, social engagement and volunteering opportunities for older people.*

(World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Europe, 2017)

#### Where we are now

In Denbighshire all people are valued equally and there is support and encouragement for all people to be active in society and have good employment and volunteering opportunities, as can be seen from our positive achievements listed below. From the local [Well-being Assessment](#), we know that a rise in the population of older people will place ever-greater pressure on the public finances, as a relatively smaller working-age population supports growing spending on health, social care and pensions. However, as we have learnt from Ageing Well in Denbighshire (AWiD) members, older people have a significant amount to offer to society including knowledge, skills and expertise and this is well recognised in Denbighshire. Ageing can present many opportunities for learning new things, changing career or offering unpaid care to older or younger family members. Good-quality volunteering has a measurable positive impact on well-being and mental health and contributes to community resilience. The AWiD group strives to create better opportunities for people of all ages to contribute to society, whether through employment, volunteering, or engagement in decision making.

#### Things we are proud of

##### Working Denbighshire

The Working Denbighshire initiative looks to remove barriers to the workplace for all people, and strives to increase the number of people aged 50+ who are economically active, offering support to older people to continue their learning and skills development before and after retirement. Each year, they are working with an increased number of older people, helping them with skills development and employability. In 2024, more than 130 people over 55 years old were supported through the scheme.

##### Citizens Advice Denbighshire

Citizens Advice Denbighshire has been part of AWiD since its inception and played the role of chair for many years. They and other voluntary sector partners offer employment and volunteering opportunities to people of all ages who wish to work within their community, in support of their community. Citizens Advice Denbighshire help check Pension Credit eligibility. Pensioners in Denbighshire received more than £712,000 from unclaimed benefits in 2024. Denbighshire County Council launched a campaign to encourage pensioners to check if they were missing out on Pension Credit. They also help people to check if they are eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment.

## Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC)

DVSC have always played a pivotal role in the work of of the Ageing Well in Denbighshire network. Members have worked with DVSC to ensure that Age-friendly Communities funding has reached grass roots organisations including older people, enabling them to get more involved in their communities, for instance members of ConneXions working with Trefnant Primary School on arts, crafts and storytelling projects. Beneficiaries are listed under domain 4 (Social Participation). They have strong links right across the county and make sure that messages reach a wide and diverse audience

### Edge of Care Service

The 'Edge of Care' service has been set up to encourage volunteers to get involved in supporting people who are lonely or isolated. They work closely with Community Navigators to make sure people know of all the support available. Interest soared during the pandemic but the service is still extremely popular and the impact is immense. Volunteers, many in their 80s and 90s, get pleasure from supporting others in a variety of ways including reading to care home residents with limited sight, going on outings or just helping to reduce a sense of loneliness and isolation.

### Age-friendly Employer Promotion

AWiD has championed the introduction of an Age-friendly Employer Pledge promoted by The Centre for Ageing Better. Denbighshire County Council has pledged its commitment to becoming an age-friendly employer as have our partners, Age Connects North Wales Central. The benefits of recruitment of older workers is also recognised and promoted by Working Denbighshire (see above).

### Digital Confidence Denbighshire

Representatives of Cwmpas and Digital Communities Wales are important AWiD members. They target support to staff and residents to improve digital skills and confidence in the workplace and beyond.

Many members of the Ageing Well in Denbighshire group are older people who contribute hugely to our plans and actions.

### Housing Associations

Our partners in housing associations help us to reach a wider audience through their work with community organisations. For example, all housing associations with Extra Care Housing schemes work closely with Sensory Support Services, Digital Communities Wales, Cwmpas and Dementia Friendly Communities and local schools to ensure that their tenants' needs are met.

They also get involved in creative projects such as those provided at The Hŵb in Denbigh. There is a great example of partnership working between Grŵp Cynefin, Youth Services and training providers where some enterprising apprenticeship schemes are based. Also in the North of the county, Meliden Residents Action Group have created Y-Shed, a community hub in partnership with Grŵp Cynefin. They provide a welcoming,

creative space with a café, where people can go to meet or get involved in creative opportunities.

## **Where we want to be - Action Plan for Domain 6**

We want Denbighshire to be an age-friendly county, providing good-quality options for people in later life to continue to contribute to their communities, including paid employment or voluntary work, as well as being engaged in decision making. We want to work in collaboration with organisations and communities to understand and overcome the barriers preventing people from all walks of life from being active members of society. Our objectives are to:

- Continue to champion the importance of volunteers, and in line with people's suggestions, we will improve our communication and the way we let people know how they can get involved and what kinds of volunteering opportunities they can partake in or be supported by.
- Work with partners, such as Working Denbighshire, to support people of all ages to access training and paid employment opportunities, including helping people seeking to remain in or re-enter employment.
- Work with partners, such as DVSC, to support people of all ages who are considering setting up small enterprises and community initiatives.
- Promote lifelong learning in our communities, helping people to access opportunities available through local colleges, libraries, digital upskilling programs, and the University of the Third Age, for example.
- Encourage people of all ages to get involved in decision making processes and have their say on what matters to them, working with partners to identify and overcome barriers preventing people from doing so.
- Continue to support intergenerational activities and in line with people's suggestions, we will encourage the transfer or swapping of skills and experiences.
- Use Denbighshire County Council and Age Connects North Wales Central as models of best practice in the workplace and spread the word about the benefits of being an age-friendly employer.
- Continue to collate relevant information to inform AWiD members (and via AWiD, wider Denbighshire communities) on relevant opportunities to promote social inclusion for and respect of older people.

### 3.7 Communication and Information (Domain 7)

*The goal of interventions in this domain is to assist older adults in accessing timely, reliable, relevant and understandable information about their community, ways of engagement, available services and health topics through word of mouth, general press or the use of information technology.*

(World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Europe, 2017)

#### Where are we now

We recognise the importance of effective communication and consider this to be a cornerstone for successful delivery of our goals in other domains. Through the course of our work and our partners work we seek to sensitively challenge discriminatory language or images used.

The local Well-being Assessment shows that while the growth of new technology continues, it is still crucial to ensure people have access to information and services via non-digital means. This is because we know that certain groups of people are more likely to be digitally excluded, and this includes older people.

Having access to the internet has become a part of daily life and online services can help people to overcome barriers to accessing services because of transport, for example. We continue to develop support for older people to get online, with teams of people offering training, assistance and equipment under various schemes. There are also a number of systems in place supported by Denbighshire County Council and its partners to provide advice, support and information in various non-digital ways, such as via the telephone, letters or in person.

#### Things we are proud of

##### Ageing Well in Denbighshire (AWiD) Information Bulletin

AWiD produces a regular news and information bulletin to inform members and their associates of relevant activities, actions, initiatives, opportunities, practices and plans which might affect older people. The bulletin has evolved from a collection of typewritten articles in word format to a digital magazine. Whilst it is acknowledged that some potential recipients may not have the digital confidence or ability to engage fully with the document, we offer printed copies to those who request this. The AWiD information bulletin is now considered an essential communication tool to distribute relevant information to members.

##### Ageing Well Engagement Events

Since its establishment, AWiD has held periodic engagements events across Denbighshire's communities to promote age-friendly practices and seek the people's views regarding aspects of community life which support 'Ageing Well in Denbighshire'. In 2024, to facilitate the completion of our WHO Age-friendly Action Plan, we invited communities to create an 'Age-friendly Recipe Book' at separate engagement events in

Corwen, Prestatyn, and Trefnant. These attracted over 100 community members who contributed to the recipe book and to this action plan. All AWiD members have helped to publicise these events.

See link to video clip of engagement event in Trefnant:

<https://vimeo.com/911584290/264aebef0a?share=copy>

### **Denbighshire One Stop Shops and Talking Points**

Ensuring that residents have access to clear, accessible, and timely information about local services and support is essential to promoting independence and well-being. Talking Points, available in libraries across Denbighshire, provide opportunities for face-to-face conversations with Community Navigators who offer personalised guidance based on what matters most to individuals seeking support. Whether it's learning about local community services, support groups, or activities, Talking Points help residents connect with the right support. The growing number of people using Talking Points highlights increasing awareness of this valuable resource. Notably, 99% of those who accessed Talking Points found the help they needed without requiring a referral to the council's Adult Social Care services. Our One Stop Shops, also located in libraries, provide a convenient way for residents to access a range of services all in one place. From self-service cash payment kiosks to help with blue badge applications, these hubs make it easier for people to get the support they need quickly and independently. Both Talking Points and One Stop Shops help to create more connected and supportive communities, ensuring everyone has access to the right information and assistance when they need it.

### **Digital Confidence Denbighshire**

In Denbighshire, up to 9% of our population is not online, which is higher than the national average of 7%, impacting access to vital services. Many residents face barriers such as lack of devices, poor connectivity, or limited digital skills and confidence. This project, led by Cwmpas, aims to tackle digital exclusion and increase engagement with services, employment, and education. Through personalised digital support, training opportunities, and referral services, this initiative is helping residents to develop essential digital skills and access services that are increasingly online. Targeting vulnerable groups such as older people, those with disabilities, and financially excluded individuals, the project helps improve social inclusion and reduce isolation. By working with local partners, the benefits of digital access are shared across the community, creating stronger communication and connection. Cwmpas representatives attend AWiD meetings regularly and bring members up to date with opportunities as well as discussing any barriers or challenges.

### **Single Point of Access (SpOA)**

Single Point of Access (SPoA) is described as the front door to services in Denbighshire, providing a simple and accessible way for residents and professionals to get the right care and support, at the right time, from the right people. Finding the right services can sometimes feel overwhelming, but SPoA makes it easier by offering clear information, advice, and guidance, all in one place. They have community navigators who are based in different parts of the county who are aware of all opportunities, social

prescribers and sources of support locally. Whether it's help with care needs, support to stay independent, or connecting with local services, the SPoA team is available to listen to what matters most and guide people to the right solutions. Residents can easily reach out to SPoA by phone during the week to learn more about support available and how it can help them stay independent and well.

### **Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC)**

The Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC) supports effective communication between the Health Board, statutory partners, and the Third Sector. By facilitating collaboration, sharing objectives, and building strategic connections, DVSC helps ensure that services are aligned and accessible to those who need them. Through forums like the Denbighshire Well-being Network, DVSC fosters open communication between sector organisations and public bodies, encouraging joint working and meaningful partnerships. Additionally, DVSC's work with initiatives such as Dementia Aware Denbighshire ensures clear communication and support for communities, improving access to vital services.

### **The Older Person's Commissioner for Wales**

Members of the older person's commissioner's team attend our meetings and events regularly and contribute a great deal to our plans. We are able to raise concerns and challenges and hopefully help them to reach a wider audience with their reports and surveys. Members of our older people's fora have appreciated the opportunity to discuss issues with members of the team and mention feeling listened to and taken seriously by the North Wales representative, who has attended some of our engagement events.

## **Where we want to be – Action Plan for Domain 7**

Given the dispersed pattern of population centres and communities in Denbighshire, we believe that the availability, accessibility and capability for people to communicate effectively and to receive and share information is an essential ingredient to being able to age well in Denbighshire. We want to work in collaboration with organisations and communities to understand and overcome any barriers which limit communication and the exchange of information in all its forms, thereby promoting opportunity for participation and social inclusivity for all. Our objectives are to:

- Continue to prepare our regular Ageing Well in Denbighshire information bulletin to advise members as well as communities and other networks of the work of AWID and inform them of issues relevant to all 8 domains.
- Continue to organise and support age-friendly events within Denbighshire to gather views regarding age-friendly practices and measure the progress of our Age-friendly Action Plan.
- Encourage partners to make age relevant information accessible to older people through a variety of media including through verbal means (e.g. Talking Points), printed means, as well as electronically.

- Continue to support relevant information resources operating within Denbighshire including Denbighshire Libraries, Citizens Advice Denbighshire and DVSC.
- Work with Digital Communities Denbighshire and Cwmpas to give confidence and capability to older people to access and use digital communication and information, thereby reducing digital exclusion.
- Continue to gather relevant information to inform AWiD members (and via AWiD, wider Denbighshire communities) on relevant age-friendly features available.
- Ensure the portrayal of older people in any marketing promotes images of positive ageing.

### 3.8 Community Support and Health Services (Domain 8)

*The goal of interventions in this domain is to promote and provide older adults with a broad range of well located, easily accessible health and community services. These include preventative, nutritional guidance and mental health services, affordable meals and help with everyday activities, home care arrangements and person-centred health services and residential care facilities.*

(World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Europe, 2017)

#### Where are we now

Whilst we have made significant progress in Denbighshire toward these goals and are lucky to have the representation of all significant players in the Ageing well in Denbighshire network, we will need to continue to work closely with all our partners, particularly BCUHB, in order to measure progress and assess gaps, and improve services in all relevant areas. This is particularly true of our joint working with the health board and our need for better data in terms of access to health and dental care. The Womens Health day in March 2025 is an example of a step in this direction.

The pandemic created significant challenges and we are still addressing the backlog. We know, from talking to older people, that access to affordable dental care continues to be a challenge, particularly for those who are not mobile or who live in a nursing or residential care home. Having said that it is very good to see that the Gwen am Byth team is back at work with renewed energy after the pandemic, training 'oral health champions' in care homes so that they can go on to train their colleagues in the importance of supporting residents to maintain good oral health. Plans are underway to enable the community dental service in Denbighshire to access further funding through a regional dementia grant. This is partly as a result of feedback from care homes and family members about the challenges presented by lost or faulty dentures.

In terms of emergency preparedness, Denbighshire is well prepared and has a strong group of volunteers from the statutory and voluntary sectors who are quick to attend in the event of an emergency. Whilst we try to accommodate the needs of all, particularly older people, we intend to consider this further in the future. We have learnt from the challenges faced when sheltered housing tenants have been affected by floods in the last few years and we are continuing to improve how we support older people and those with specified needs.

#### Things we are proud of

##### Person centered approach to care

Members of Ageing Well in Denbighshire have been working hard to create person-centred community and health services that are fit for ageing populations for many years now, seeing these as indispensable for healthy ageing. Community and voluntary services support families, carers and older people in the care and support that they provide, formally and informally, including social care, respite provision, fostering health, literacy and empowerment.

Strong partnerships exist with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Social Care Wales (SCW) and WeCare Wales (WCW), with the shared focus on creating safe and healthy environments for people of all ages. Workforce Development, Safeguarding, Contract and Commissioning teams and our residential and domiciliary care providers work particularly closely with Social Care Wales (SCW) to ensure that all those working in the field of health and social care are registered and provided with appropriate induction, support and training in their chosen areas of work. When we encounter challenges, Social Care Wales offer useful advice to employers, employees, and those with a registration or monitoring role.

Whilst recruitment and retention remains a significant challenge in health and social care, WeCare Wales provide significant support. Their aim is to help attract more people to work in social care and to show the variety of roles and career progression opportunities available. Importantly, they focus on the challenges as well as what makes this work rewarding and worthwhile. Workers in health and social care are able to:

- learn about the roles available
- [search for jobs](#)
- [find work placement opportunities](#)
- [be signposted to volunteering opportunities](#)
- [attend free online training](#)
- [have access to host of learning resources.](#)

We have held, and will continue to hold, a number of jobs fairs in Denbighshire which have helped in our efforts to attract more people to careers in health and social care, particularly working with older people.

### Health and social care regional integration fund (RIF)

The Integrated Care fund (ICF), established in 2014, was a preventative programme sought to integrate health and social care services to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people in our society. The programme placed people at the centre of their care and support by providing services that help them achieve what matters to them and enable them to live their lives as they chose. For many people that meant being able to access services and support at or close to home rather than in hospital. It also meant being able to access holistic support that consider health, care and in some cases housing needs as an integrated and seamless package.

Many Denbighshire ICF projects provided people with a much more satisfactory experience of accessing the services they want and needed. Not only is this approach better for individuals, it has also helped to reduce pressures on finite health and social care resources, ensuring that more acute and specialist services are available to those who most need them.

The ICF funding has now been replaced by the Regional Integrated Fund (RIF) but this still enables health and social care services to work together to support older people with complex needs and long term conditions including dementia.

As a result of these funding streams, joint working systems have been introduced to include:

- Single Point of Access (SPoA) for all health and social care needs

- Community Resource Teams in different parts of the county with health and social care practitioners working together from a shared base including a number of joint funded health, social care and well being practitioners
- Talking Points – opportunities for people to find out about preventative services from a range of providers from the statutory and voluntary sector.

The performance of these services is closely monitored and they have proved very successful. However, challenges are presented by the fact that demand for services continues to grow whilst funding reduces and the cost of living crisis deepens.

### **Falls Prevention Service**

BCUHB operates a falls prevention service across the North Wales region, with the Falls Coordinator working closely in partnership with a wide range of AWiD members. This service is an important early intervention and primary prevention initiative aimed at reducing the risk of falls and supporting people to maintain their independence.

The service offers home visits for comprehensive falls risk assessments, followed by a range of support interventions, such as education and advice, small aids and adaptations, and referrals to external services. This ensures a holistic service that helps identify and support residents in reducing their risk of falls. The falls coordinator also supports residential and nursing care as well as domiciliary care providers.

A key part of the service is the evidence-based FaME (Falls Management Exercise) programmes, which are run out of community centres and free to attend. Each 32-week session includes 60 minutes of exercise, followed by 30 minutes of socialising and peer support. These sessions are designed to build confidence, encourage long-term exercise habits, and ensure accessibility for all participants.

The service has also been developing outreach education programmes which will be rolled out during 2025, these are to include:

- A pilot scheme for pupils aged 7 to 11 aiming to educate both the students and their families about falls risks and management in an intergenerational context.
- Education sessions in independent and supported living establishments focusing on falls risk awareness, the role of the falls team, post-fall management and the importance of maintaining mobility and strength.
- An initiative working closely with the Practice Development Nurses and Social Services Workforce in supporting and offering education sessions for the care homes.
- Linking with our local NERS service to offer multifactorial assessments to residents who have been referred directly to their service and who, therefore, may not have been offered this type of in-depth assessment.
- Supporting staff from BCUHB, Social Services and the third sector in falls risk awareness and management and reinforcing the mantra 'Falls have to be everybody's business' aiming to empower health and social care staff to confidently address falls (and know where to refer for support).
- Seek to continually raise the profile of the falls prevention team and offer more public-facing educational events by working with our third sector colleagues.

## Sensory Support Service

Members of Denbighshire's Sensory Support Service form an important part of AWiD, raising awareness in its members and informing all our work. We are lucky that Vision Support and The Centre of Sign Sight Sound (CoSSS) have been working in the area for many years and their expertise has helped many people to live happier more independent lives. We are delighted that following feedback from people living in rural areas, this year has seen the introduction of a new fully equipped mobile audiology service which operates from a van and just needs a car park to work from. Initial feedback is very positive. The importance of this service has been realised partly because of an increased understanding of the links between hearing loss and dementia. We hope that recent research regarding the links between sight loss and dementia will support further resources.

## Micro-providers

Micro-providers are small, independent care and support services run by local people for their communities. They help older and disabled individuals live independently in their own homes by offering tailored support.

Denbighshire County Council runs a free development programme to help residents set up their own micro-provider services, offering mentoring, guidance, and support on regulation, training, and opportunities within the social care sector. Once established, micro-providers become part of a wider network across Denbighshire, enabling people to remain in their homes for longer while improving their quality of life.

Micro-providers can offer a wide range of services including household help, cleaning, meal preparation, DIY, shopping, personal care, dog walking, and companionship. Any service that enhances safety, independence, and well-being at home may be supported. The following link is a directory of services available (as of January 2025):

<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/community-and-living/denbighshire-micro-provider-directory.aspx>

## Advocacy Services

Representatives of advocacy services, particularly Dewis Centre for Independent Living, have been members of AWiD since its inception and play an important role in ensuring that older people's views are represented and expressed, particularly at crucial times such as when considering next steps after a stay in hospital. They support residents across the county who need support to ensure that people are kept safe and that their views and opinions are taken into account and taken seriously at every stage.

## NEWCIS and Carer services

NEWCIS is a key provider of carer services across Wales, including Denbighshire, offering vital support to those who provide unpaid care to family and friends. They deliver information, one-to-one support, training, and counselling to carers, helping them access the resources and guidance needed to support them in their caring roles.

Their wide range of services in Denbighshire includes:

- Financial support
- An award-winning respite scheme
- Carer needs assessments
- Counselling
- Training
- Peer support groups
- Hospital support
- Plus much more

## **Where we want to be - Action Plan for Domain 8**

We want Denbighshire to be an age-friendly county, providing good-quality options for people in later life to continue to maintain their independence and to contribute to their communities, accessing relevant community support and health services. We want to continue to work in collaboration with relevant organisations and communities to promote healthy and active life styles and access to medical and health services, allowing people from all walks of life to be active members of society. Our objectives are to:

- Promote good dental and oral hygiene by working with organisations such as the Community Dental Service and its Oral Health Promotion Teams to increase awareness of the importance of oral health in the context of general health, and to promote access to dental care facilities.
- Continue to support established oral health improvement programmes in care homes and the community, such as the National Gwên am Byth programme.
- Continue to support the 'Regional Integration Fund' initiatives in Denbighshire to promote person centred health, care and other needs in a holistic integrated way.
- Implement the Denbighshire Dementia Strategy in line with the North Wales Dementia Strategy and the All Wales Dementia Care Pathway of Standards.
- Continue to collaborate with colleagues in the Social Care Wales (SCW) and WeCare Wales (WCW) to ensure that all staff and organisations supporting the ageing population in Denbighshire have access to comprehensive good quality training and support, so they are able to competently meet the needs of Denbighshire Citizens."
- Continue to support Denbighshire initiatives for the identification and management of 'sensory loss', associated with sight or hearing.
- Work with BCUHB and other partners to improve access to healthcare services for older people, including easier access to GP appointments, scheduling hospital appointments at travel friendly times and providing support with repeat prescriptions.

- Work with emergency planning partners in Denbighshire to make sure we continue to have sufficient volunteers with a focus on addressing challenges that older people may face during a disaster.
- Continue to collate and share relevant information with AWiD members (and through AWiD, the wider Denbighshire communities) on community support, health services as well as initiatives that promote health and wellbeing.
- Over the next few years, the Ageing Well in Denbighshire group aim to further explore:
  - Access to health and dental care - ensuring services are available, affordable, and easily accessible for older people.
  - End-of-life support – improving availability of and access to services for individuals, their families and caregivers
  - Home and community-based care – supporting options that enable people to remain independent for as long as possible

In many of the areas under this domain, person centred practice and joint working is key. When health, social care, housing providers and partners from both voluntary and statutory sectors work together, they are often able to provide more timely, effective and well-rounded service that support people at all stages of life.