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Date 01/03/21

Dear Colleague

Re: Age Friendly Wales: Our Strategy for an Ageing Society

Introduction

The CSP welcomes this opportunity to respond to the Welsh Government Consultation “Age Friendly Wales: Our Strategy for an Ageing Society”. . The consultation and our response compliments the principles in ‘A Healthier Wales’ and, the stated aim of the Welsh Government, to develop a long-term high level workforce strategy in partnership with the NHS and local government, the voluntary and independent sectors as well as regulators, professional bodies and education providers. Thank you for providing us with an opportunity to agree with the overall direction, while offering comment on specific areas which we see the physiotherapy and the profession making a significant contribution. We hope you can take these comments into consideration before publication of the final document.

Comments from the CSP

Question 1: The Strategy sets out the areas we will prioritise in planning for our ageing society and why. Have we prioritised the right areas?

Comments:

- The areas for priority are wide ranging and the vision is ambitious.
- Pleased to see priorities around ‘enhancing well-being’ and ‘building and retaining people’s own capabilities’. Good physical and mental health for older people is critical here and physiotherapy will be an important profession providing skills and support to older people in their communities.
- Also pleased to see ‘prioritising prevention’ being an identified cross-cutting theme. Physiotherapists will be instrumental in supporting the prevention agenda.

Question 2: Are there any issues that are not reflected in the Strategy that you think should be considered when planning for an ageing society?

Comments:

- There is mention of a range of Welsh Government strategy and legislation that supports and underpins the Strategy. Success of 'A Healthier Wales' and successful implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 will be critical to how older people manage their health and wellbeing in later life. The contribution of all services must be scrutinised to ensure they are being utilised effectively. Underinvestment in primary and community care, for example, must be addressed. Health and social care services must deliver a more 'integrated' service. Progress is being made, but more needs to be done.
- The CSP believes everyone has the "Right to Rehab", an expression which means all patients in Wales deserve access to services that help them manage and live with conditions, before and after other treatment. Older people who are living with conditions need access to these services to help them live in their own homes and/or live longer and healthier lives. Rehab services are proven to help prevent hospital admissions and keep people healthier. A focus on this specific preventative measure will be welcome.
- A multi-disciplinary focus on service delivery is key to meeting needs, an area of priority is to ensure the right person with the right skills is available to the patient to delivering age friendly services.

Question 3: Have we identified the key policies and mechanisms that can deliver real change in the lives of older people today and future generations?

Comments:

- Policies and mechanisms identified in the Strategy are many and varied. Pulled together, they will deliver change for older people.
- One concern is that in many aspects of the strategy there is a reliance on 'projects' and short-term funding. For example, the 'Integrated Care Fund' and 'Transformation Fund' have funded a range of 'projects' and the 'Social Care Fund' similarly. There still appears to be a problem in Wales in moving from 'projects' to sustainable funding for what works well. The last audit of transformation funds found that there had been significant overlap with existing services. It will be useful to
- Disappointed to see Welsh Government initiatives like 'Train, Work, Live' referring only to GPs when the primary care team consists of a far wider range of healthcare professionals such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists. The report referred to in the Strategy (GP Services in Wales – The perspective of older people) looked at how older people access their GP. As primary and community services develop as part of the 'primary care model for Wales' there will need to be a far greater emphasis for older people on seeing a wide range of health and care professionals as part of their primary care interaction – it will not need to be the GP first every time – it might be the physiotherapist, the chiropodist, the paramedic or

the nurse who is the right person, in the right place, at the right time with whom they have their General Practice intervention.

- Dewis Cymru is mentioned in the document and is a very useful resource for health and care. Unfortunately, it is not as comprehensive as it could (and should) be. There needs to be a real 'joined up' approach across Health and Social Care to maximise this resource and all avenues used to publicise it to older people, their families, carers and communities.
- More emphasis should be placed on supporting the older workforce, particularly in relation to access to occupational health services and specific requirements on employers to consider health and wellbeing of older workers. Professions such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy have important skills here and it would be encouraging to see reference to these professions and to occupational health services in this section of the strategy.

Question 4: Does the content amount to a sufficiently ambitious response to the major public policy issue of our ageing society?

Comments:

- Yes. The Strategy is ambitious. The danger is that partners will not be clear on what they are being required to deliver. An implementation plan with actions and responsibilities for delivery of the four aims and cross-cutting themes will be key.

Question 5: Will the Strategy help to maximise the potential of the growing numbers of older people in our communities?

Comments:

- It will certainly help.
- Connecting with older people is key. Welsh Government, and its partners need to harness every possible communication network and tool to reach older people to involve them (where they wish to be involved) and inform them.
- Potential needs to be maximised in so many different ways. All the enablers must be available, be that transport, professional and informal help, technology and communities to which older people can belong. It should be possible to eradicate loneliness.

Question 6: Do you agree with our ambition to work towards an age friendly Wales? If so, please state what you, as an individual or organisation, are doing to help us to create an age friendly Wales.

Comments:

- Yes
- Physiotherapists play a key role in making the lives of older people better and

healthier. Both in public and private practice physiotherapists work across many types of service, including arthritis and pain management services which disproportionately help older people.

- We would like to highlight our mental health and dementia physiotherapy services. In Swansea Bay the physiotherapy team have been innovative creating recent dementia roles in Primary Care and Care Home Teams. This work has enabled more older people living with dementia to live happier lives as they keep their independence longer.
- The CSP collates resources for physiotherapists working with older people, and this can be accessed here: <https://agile.csp.org.uk/content/covid-19-resources-physiotherapists-working-older-people>
- One specific area of the CSPs work to highlight is the importance of strength and muscle as people get older. The CSP has produced an animation “it’s never too late” to highlight the importance of maintaining muscle mass as people get older, <https://www.csp.org.uk/news/2018-09-20-csp-animation-shows-its-never-too-late-boost-muscle-power>

Question 7: How has Covid-19 changed your ability to do things that matter to you, or the way you deliver services to older people?

Comments:

Covid has impacted on services greatly. Teams have adapted to telephone and community work to reach clients who are unable to attend hospital or other services.

Older patients have found the experience challenging as they are unable to see friends and family and unable to access services which maintain their health, such as swimming pools and gyms; these are important for both mental and physical health.

While physiotherapy teams have adapted greatly, the challenge still remains to engage with older people who may not have the digital skills or ability to communicate in new formats, and adapted services will need to keep an element of face to face communication to keep these patients engaged.

Question 8: How can we involve older people in the re building our communities following the pandemic?

Comments:

The CSP encourages a dialogue with key organisations such as Age Cymru and the Age Alliance to gather views

We will assist in any way we can to communicate with older people through our membership and resources.

The pandemic has seen, in some areas, support for older people by neighbours and friends in the community. We would encourage this community approach where possible. As mentioned in previous comments about the right to rehab; it's vital that we provide opportunities for older people to regain the confidence to go out safely again and meet in their communities. Mental Health and physical rehab for those who have physically and/or mentally deconditioned will be key to helping older people getting active again. Without a strategic approach to this it's possible that many older people will remain inactive socially and physically, which will impact the health service in the longer term.

Welsh Government review of engagement

Questions for older people

Question 9: Are you a member of a 50+ group or forum? If yes, how successful do you think the forum is influencing local and national policy decisions?

Comments:

N/A

Question 10: Does the 50+ forum benefit your local area in other ways? (Eg. by reducing social isolation or building community resilience?)

Comments:

N/A

Question 11: How do you think local and national government can better engage with older people?

Comments:

N/A

Questions for local authorities

Question 12: Does a 50+ Forum still operate in your area? If yes, how successful is it in involving older people in local decision making?

Comments:

N/A

Question 13: Does your 50+ forum benefit your local area in other ways? (Eg. by reducing social isolation or building community resilience?)

Comments:

N/A

Question 14: If a 50+ forum is not active in your local area, how do you engage with older people?

Comments:

N/A

Question 15: We would like to know your views on the effects that the *Strategy for an Ageing Society* for would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Comments:

- Any opportunities for people to speak Welsh or learn Welsh are to be welcomed and would be expected to be found in 'access to learning'
- Welsh classes and opportunities to engage in conversational Welsh must be accessible for all ages.

Question 16: Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy *Strategy for an Ageing Society* could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Comments:

- No specific comment here.

Question 17: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Comments:

- Nothing else to add.

About the CSP and Physiotherapy

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy is the professional, educational and trade union body for the UK's 58,000 chartered physiotherapists, physiotherapy students and support workers. The CSP represents 2,400 members in Wales.

Physiotherapists use manual therapy, therapeutic exercise and rehabilitative approaches to restore, maintain and improve movement and activity. Physiotherapists and their teams work with a wide range of population groups (including children, those of working age and older people); across sectors; and in hospital, community and workplace settings. Physiotherapists facilitate early intervention, support self management and promote independence, helping to prevent episodes of ill health and disability developing into chronic conditions.

Physiotherapy delivers high quality, innovative services in accessible, responsive and timely ways. It is founded on an increasingly strong evidence base, an evolving scope of practice, clinical leadership and person centred professionalism. As an adaptable, engaged workforce, physiotherapy teams have the skills to address healthcare priorities, meet individual needs and to develop and deliver services in clinically and cost effective ways. With a focus on quality and

productivity, physiotherapy puts meeting patient and population needs, optimising clinical outcomes and the patient experience at the centre of all it does.

For more information, please contact

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