

# Older People's Manifesto



Plaid Cymru | Party of Wales

 PlaidCymruWales    @Plaid\_Cymru    [www.plaid2016.cymru](http://www.plaid2016.cymru)   [www.plaid2016.wales](http://www.plaid2016.wales)

**“Plaid Cymru recognises the importance of older people to Welsh society and to our economy.**

**This is Plaid Cymru’s plan to look after the generation that looked after us.”**

Elin Jones, Shadow Minister for Health



## Free Social Care for All

*“Our plan for older people is about keeping the social contract with people who have worked throughout their lives, paid their taxes, and who now need care.”*

Elin Jones, Shadow Minister for Health

A Plaid Cymru Government will remove the worry of the costs of paying for social care.

Over a period of ten years we will make all social care in Wales free, starting with domiciliary care that takes place at home, then making it free for those with dementia who are in residential homes and then, finally, abolishing all charges for everybody over 65.

This is possible because most of the costs for care are already paid by the government with a means-tested contribution included for some individuals. By scrapping the means-tested contribution we will save on administration costs and, more importantly, ease the concerns that many people have that their care costs will mean that they have to sell their home.

We can be trusted on this because when we were last in Government we cut the cost of domiciliary care at home to no more than £50 a week for everybody.

Making social care free is part of Plaid Cymru’s commitment to a universal National Health Service, and the integration of health and social care.

At the moment there are too many arguments and delays about whether care is provided by health (which is free to users and paid by the NHS) or provided by local government social care (with a contribution from the user).

Our plans to unite health and social care will put people first, rather than the needs of bureaucracy. This will make savings and simplify the decision making process, making it better for service users and their families.

To ensure that the best care is provided in both hospitals and residential homes, we will improve the methods and increase the frequencies of hospital, care homes and nursing home inspections, through one integrated inspection service. This will ensure that there are sufficient numbers of qualified staff, and that there is an excellent quality of care, and that dignity and respect are shown at all times.

We will also ensure that care workers are able to spend sufficient time with older people to ensure that their care needs are met, rather than being rushed to go to their next client. Plaid Cymru will ensure that the needs of Welsh speakers in care services are properly attended to, and not ignored.

## Older People's Health

We recognise that personal health and the health of their friends are central to daily life for older people.

Plaid Cymru will ensure a person-centred health service with a national network of acute and specialist hospitals across Wales. We will aim to reduce preventable deaths in Wales by 25%. This will save 10,000 lives between 2016 and 2025.

It is important that older people are correctly diagnosed, particularly with issues relating to dementia or mental health, and, in our bilingual society, that issues with language are correctly identified. We will increase the proportion of healthcare spending on mental health to improve early diagnosis and reduce waiting times.

Everybody knows somebody who has sadly died of cancer. Plaid Cymru will prioritise early diagnosis of cancer to ensure the best chances of survival. We will provide fast access to diagnostic tests and diagnosis so that any suspected cancer patients will know within 28 days. Three Urgent Diagnostic Centres will be built across Wales to make this happen, and keyworkers assigned to all patients to provide them with support before, during and after treatment.

We will develop a network of intermediary medical homes across Wales which will provide a 'halfway house' for patients who are not yet ready to return home, but do not require intensive hospital treatment.

Plaid Cymru's preventive health policies include extending the Breast Screening Programme to women up to 75, as well as introducing the Bowel Screening Programme at an earlier age.



## Adult learning

Apprenticeships provide people of all ages with the opportunity to earn while they learn. Plaid Cymru will use the funding that comes to Wales from the UK Government's apprenticeship levy to pay for 50,000 additional apprenticeships, bringing the total number of apprenticeships in Wales to over 100,000 over the next Assembly term. Apprenticeships will be open to adults of all ages.

Plaid Cymru will invest in 3-14 and 3-19 schools, where locally appropriate, which will serve as community hubs, open on evenings, weekends and holidays and with modern facilities such as libraries, swimming pools and gyms, available for the public. These schools will provide learning facilities for families and communities and we will encourage parents, and the wider community, to take part in learning activities in order to up-skill.

Plaid Cymru will scrap the unsustainable tuition fee grant and replace it with a learning bond offered to all undergraduate students to study wherever they want. This will free up approximately £250m a year in funding to re-invest in our universities and colleges. The Higher Education Funding Council, universities and colleges will be charged with ensuring that part of this funding is used to ensure there are sufficient part-time courses available, that these courses are affordable and that support is available for part-time learners.



## An Active Older Life

Keeping fit and supple is key to an active older life. Plaid Cymru will promote public health and fitness. We will ensure that doctors refer those in need to local leisure centres and gyms in order to keep fit. We will promote outdoor gyms where appropriate to allow people to exercise for free, and our Inspire Wales sports programme will develop age- and fitness-appropriate activities to promote an active life, with everything from walking outdoors to playing sports. We recognise the importance of sports and group activities as part of mental and physical well-being. Some of this work will be targeted at those most at risk, including those in more deprived areas who, sadly, have lower life expectancies and often lead less healthy lives.



## Contributing to the economy

Plaid Cymru believes that older people play a hugely important role in our economy, whether as producers or as consumers.

Plaid Cymru campaigned for the end of the compulsory retirement age, and we will support older people to stay in employment or find work if they wish to do so. We want to use the experience and knowledge that has been built up in our population over many years and even generations to transfer these skills. We want to see older people involved in training, whether they are leading the sessions or learning new skills, and will support our Further Education colleges and apprenticeships so that this can happen.

Recognising the economic impact of older people's spending, a Plaid Cymru government will make Wales an older-person friendly tourist location, with our hotels and customer services geared up to meet the varied needs and interests of older people. This will be particularly geared towards our seaside locations, but many opportunities exist in all tourism sectors in Wales.

## A home for life

Appropriate housing is important for people of all ages, but particularly for older people. We support the introduction of lifetime housing standards for new developments so that homes are wheelchair-friendly or can be easily and quickly adapted to meet residents' needs. This will prevent the need for costly housing repairs or enforced house moves.

Where appropriate, we will support the development of housing accommodation suitable for older people, including those with mobility needs, to ensure that older people are part of a community and support network that best meets their current situation.

At the same time, allowing housing associations and local authorities to build new housing means that right size and style of housing can be built. Social and affordable housing providers will be able to borrow against rents to provide the types of houses needed. Providing more age-appropriate older people's accommodation also means that other housing stock can then be released for use.

Reducing fuel poverty for older people is a key aim for Plaid Cymru. A Plaid Cymru government will launch Wales' largest housing energy efficiency scheme. This will cut energy bills, which is particularly important for those on fixed incomes, reduce carbon emissions and create local jobs. Nobody should be forced into making a decision between heating and eating.

## Tackling Isolation

A Plaid Cymru government will work with the third sector, the Older People's Commissioner and local authorities to tackle isolation for older people.

We will protect the free bus pass that allows older people to keep in touch with friends and maintain their independence to go shopping and attend events on their own. We will also continue to support community transport innovations such as the Bwcabus in south Ceredigion and north Carmarthenshire that provide door-to-door transport in rural areas, particularly where public transport is limited.

We will support the use of community locations, such as community centres, for older people where they can socialise and interact with friends, and work with the third sector to ensure successful organisation and co-ordination of friendship schemes and activities wherever in Wales there is a need.

Town centres are a great place for people to meet others. These shopping centres need to be accessible to older people and their needs. We will support the maintenance and opening hours of public toilets in town centres so that older people can use them. We will ask local authorities to consider the accessibility of their town centres and shops for people with limited mobility, including their parking provision.



## Clamping down on scams

A Plaid Cymru government will work closely with the police and with local authorities to prevent or solve scams which involve exploiting older people. This will include scams in person, by mail, phone or online, as well as abuses of trust by family members.

We will investigate the effectiveness of existing Cold Calling Zones and, if the impact has been positive, will make it easier for local authorities to introduce them.

When Wales has criminal and justice powers we will also push for tough sentences on criminals who deliberately target vulnerable older people to extort cash or favours from them.