

Dear Ministers Drakeford, Gething, James, Morgan and Hutt,

Hourglass Cymru is the only national charity focused on the abuse of older people and championing safer ageing. We know that the abuse of older people – side-lined in decision-making for decades – is more prevalent in our communities than ever before. With risk of abuse acutely exacerbated by COVID-19 restrictions, the outlook for each of us ageing in Wales is concerning.

We are writing to make yourselves aware of the findings of our recent polling and calling on the Welsh Government Ministers to join our movement for safer ageing, launching with the first annual Safer Ageing Week on 30th November 2020.

We want you to lead the way in changing how older people are viewed and considered in national policy. Older people face both physical and attitudinal barriers that create circumstances of age-related vulnerability – an environment which puts older adults at risk. Our movement for safer ageing seeks to remove these barriers and to empower older people to age securely and live free from abuse.

In February we conducted a survey looking at experiences, attitudes and perceptions towards the abuse of older people, ‘Growing Old in the UK 2020’. The second round of the survey took place in June, to account for the changes brought on by the pandemic, ‘Growing Old Under Lockdown in the UK’. The outcome in Wales found that as many as 143,000 people over the age of 65 have experienced abuse in older age – a startling figure.



The abuse of older people, to the detriment of victims and families, has not been given the consideration it needs. This must change.

Key findings in our polling:

- 1 in 5 people in Wales believe that inappropriate sexual acts directed at older people don’t constitute abuse.
- A fifth (21 percent) don’t view ‘pushing, hitting, or beating an older person’ as abuse.
- A third (31 percent) don’t see ‘taking precious items from an older relative’s home without asking’ as abuse.
- Over half (52 percent) of those surveyed in Wales believe that the abuse and neglect of older people increased as a result of the lockdown.



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The experiences of older people must be represented at the top of Government to close this gap – you can make this difference.

We call on the Welsh Government to begin a national conversation about safer ageing; urgently review arrangements available for older people and their families to report abuse; and ensure all key workers are trained appropriately to spot abuse of older people, including domestic abuse. Further, we call specifically on the Ministers of the Welsh Government to commit to a safer ageing approach, and work across your departments to ensure that the views of older people are represented at key meetings.

Older people's voices need to be heard, now more than ever. At Hourglass we represent those people and their experiences. Our initiative for Safer Ageing Week, starting on the 30th of November, with your support, will galvanise awareness of the abuse of older people; inform the public of the signs and manifestations of abuse; and trigger a turning point in the national agenda – putting safer ageing at the heart of decision making.

Yours sincerely,





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

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