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# MANIFESTO

A SAFER AGEING SOCIETY BY 2050



# LET'S COMMIT TO A SAFER AGEING SOCIETY BY 2050.

Every year, over two and a half million people in the UK are affected by the physical, emotional, economic, or sexual abuse and neglect of older women and men. It's an issue which has reached epidemic proportions but too often remains hidden from the headlines.

This stark reality is an indictment of our society's treatment and regard for older people. The rise in the abuse of older people isn't a niche issue; but it has now escalated to an intolerable level demanding immediate attention and action. Yet still governments, local authorities and other key agencies file this abuse under Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and often ignore the unique nature of this horrific abuse.

Hourglass, the UK's sole charity entirely focused on confronting this epidemic of harm, abuse, and neglect inflicted upon older people, believes it is time we built a Safer Ageing Society. We need to shape a new approach that

prioritises the safety and security of older people, free from abuse, especially as the number of older people continues to climb.

But this is no overnight project. We need support, understanding and, importantly, parity. But we believe a Safer Ageing Society is possible by 2050 in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Why parity? Because care and legislation across the UK is a patchwork of provision. Some areas have specialist support and training and others do not. Different parts of the UK protect older people in differing ways, and some better than others. Vital data is available in some nations and regions, but is sketchy or non-existent elsewhere. It's a lottery.

Funding parity is also necessary. Currently it is unfairly distributed. Hourglass is in a funding no man's land – where the charity is neither seen as a frontline service or a niche specialist

service. Therefore, the charity misses out on funding at both ends of the spectrum. The truth is, of course, that Hourglass is a frontline charity but the issue of the abuse of older people simply isn't recognised as a major concern.

The media often shy away from reporting the abuse of older people; it is barely mentioned in the four legislatures across the UK, and unless you are confronted with the issue head-on, people prefer to believe it doesn't exist at all. And that means the abuse of older people is the last taboo.

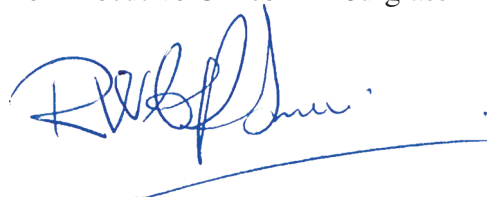
Our entire charitable objective is to end the abuse of older people and to work towards a safer ageing society. For over thirty years we've been lobbying for tangible change and parity with other forms of abuse. But this lobbying, campaigning and desperate search for much needed funding and support goes on whilst our 24/7 helpline continues to battle growing call numbers. Our team deals with the distressing realities and harrowing tales of abuse and neglect all day, every day and every night, 365 days per year. It requires a specialist team, drawing from over three decades of organisational expertise, to deal with the growing impacts Hourglass is now recording.

We need politicians, influencers, the general public and our colleagues in the legal, criminal justice, health and social care and third sectors to join us on this quest for a safer ageing

society. We know it won't be easy. Yet, with real support, we can relentlessly advocate, challenge, and educate. We will listen, offer guidance, and stand in solidarity with anyone in the abuse sector and most importantly with victim-survivors, to deliver meaningful change for vulnerable older people and those affected across the UK. Our aim is to foster an environment where the safety and dignity of ageing individuals are guaranteed.

It's time to make an oath to support Hourglass and end the tide of abuse, harm, exploitation and neglect of older people.

Richard Robinson,  
Chief Executive Officer – Hourglass



# WE ARE HOURGLASS...

**...the only UK-wide charity calling time on the abuse, harm, exploitation and neglect of older people, and striving to create an environment where safer ageing is guaranteed for all.**

## **The Abuse of Older People**

A single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person.

## **Safer Ageing**

Older people face physical and attitudinal barriers that create circumstances of actual or presumed age related vulnerability – an environment which puts older adults at risk. The Hourglass campaign for safer ageing seeks to remove these barriers and to empower older people to age securely and live free from abuse.

# A SAFER AGEING SOCIETY BY 2050.

## **Hourglass is committed to creating a Safer Ageing Society by 2050. This is why:**

Hourglass wants the establishment of a Safer Ageing Society where people can age without fear of abuse, harm, exploitation, or neglect. This means ensuring that all older people have access to necessary services, can trust their caregivers and surroundings, and have equal opportunities and recognition in society, akin to other age groups. Central to this goal is achieving parity for older victim-survivors where abuse has occurred, in comparison to support and protection enjoyed by other perceived vulnerable groups.

This means governments (national and local), trusts and all other public bodies develop Safer Ageing Strategies and utilise documents like Hourglass's own Safer Ageing Indexes to help make informed decisions about policies and investment.

## **Some protection exists. But it's often a postcode lottery of support.**

Protection for older people remains on the starting blocks compared to other victim-survivors of abuse. Take children, for example, where their need for care, support and protection is a clear and obvious necessity.

In the UK, the first laws specifically aimed at protecting children from harm and abuse were enacted in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The key legislation includes **The Prevention of Cruelty to, and Protection of, Children Act (1889)**. This was the first piece of legislation in the UK to address child welfare. It established the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and gave courts the power to intervene in cases of child abuse and neglect.

Subsequent legislation across the UK expanded protection further and provided additional measures for the protection and welfare of

children, including the appointment of probation officers to work with juvenile offenders and neglected children, and introducing measures such as the establishment of juvenile courts and the provision of care and supervision for children in need.

**Hourglass is not comparing the needs of children and those of older people; rather the charity is seeking to highlight the disparity that exists in safeguarding and protection of some vulnerable groups as opposed to others.**

In the UK, laws and policies that may offer protection to older people vary significantly, and older people are often the victims of a postcode lottery of protection. **The Care Act (2014)** introduced significant reforms to the social care system in England and Wales, and includes provisions for safeguarding adults at risk of abuse or neglect. **The Domestic Abuse Act (2021)** created a statutory definition of domestic abuse, established a Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office, and established a duty on local authorities to provide accommodation-based support to domestic abuse victims-survivors. **The Mental Capacity Act (2005)** provides a legal framework for decision-making on behalf of individuals who may lack capacity to make their own decisions, which can include many older people. It includes safeguards to prevent abuse and ensure decisions are made in the person's best interests. **The Equality Act (2010)**, whilst not specifically focused on older people, prohibits

discrimination on the grounds of age and protects older individuals from age-related discrimination in various areas, including employment and the provision of goods and services. But all of these laws fall short in addressing the specific needs of older people.

Scotland has often been viewed as the forerunner in this debate, as the **Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act (2007)** provides a robust framework for the protection of adults at risk of harm or abuse, and also establishes local authorities' duties to investigate and act in cases of suspected abuse or neglect. However, in recent years Scotland has started falling behind and of particular concern is the lack of proper data on abuse and crime committed against older people.

Northern Ireland currently lags behind as the only part of the UK without dedicated adult safeguarding legislation. With the Northern Ireland Executive now restored, the passage of the proposed **Adult Protection Bill** into law must be an urgent priority. As in Wales, a **Commissioner for Older People (Northern Ireland) Act (2011)** established a role which includes promoting and safeguarding the interests of older people and ensuring their rights are protected. But no such post exists in England or Scotland.

Building on issues raised in the 2011 White Paper Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action, the **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** aims to provide the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and protecting those at risk of abuse and neglect. The Welsh government have also recently released a specific National Action Plan to Prevent the Abuse of Older People, and in 2021 released a strategy based around developing an age friendly society.

However, despite these laws, there is still a need for much stronger protection and greater awareness of the specific vulnerabilities older people may face, particularly in relation to issues such as abuse, neglect, and ageism.

**Achieving parity for older people remains a goal for Hourglass and other representatives in the age sector.**

**A Safer Ageing Society by 2050 is essential.**

A Safer Ageing Society, free from abuse, harm, exploitation, is not a pipedream or an impossible ambition. It is achievable and essential. Why, in the 21st century, should older people be the poor relations? Why should they face a patchwork of provision due to a lack of joined-up thinking and insufficient specialist support services, or services that are often gender-based or promoted at younger people?

A Safer Ageing Society by 2050 must become a given. As the population of older people

overtake those aged under 16 (17.47% of the population, compared to 19.17% over 65s in 2022) – surely, it’s time to tackle this issue head-on and provide parity, understanding and cross-party, cross-nation thinking to develop policies and legislation that stops this inequality.

# HOURGLASS PLEDGES TO:

**Hourglass will play a part in lobbying to achieve a Safer Ageing Society by 2050 and pledges to:**

**1. CREATE CHANGE:** To work alongside local and national governments, local authorities, trusts, police, regulators and care providers to ensure their services and strategies are focused on creating a safer ageing society for older people, free from abuse and neglect.

**2. ENSURE PARITY:** To lobby to ensure parity for older victim-survivors of abuse and ensure investment in services that specialise in education, prevention and recovery for older people subject to abuse.

**3. COLLABORATE:** To collaborate with all third sector and voluntary abuse/age organisations to ensure the need for a safer ageing society, free from harm and abuse, is understood and embedded in all strategy.

**4. PROVIDE THE RATIONALE:** To provide powerful and innovative research that underpins decision-making around related legislation and policy development. Ensuring that safer ageing

is an obvious and understood step based on real-time data and research.

**5. INFLUENCE AND BUILD CONSENSUS:** To build a strong strategic base of political, academic, influential and service experts that underline the case for safer ageing and deliver key messages to decision-makers and society generally.

**6. BE COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS:** To bring the need for a safer ageing society to every community in the UK – ensuring that the community is part of the solution and building inter-generational understanding and bridges to a safer future for older people.

**Hourglass is the third sector leader in this debate and welcomes the opportunity to discuss these plans with any politician, influencer, collaborator or third-sector partner keen to make a difference.**



# THE HOURGLASS MANIFESTO.

**These are the overarching measures which Hourglass believes the governments should adopt in order to create a Safer Ageing Society by 2050.**

## **1. Strategy:**

**1.1** Begin consultation and evidence gathering to create a dedicated strategy to end violence and abuse against older people, to complement Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategies, and ensure older victim-survivors are given parity with other demographics.

**1.2** Ensure that the lived experiences and voices of all victim-survivors are central to all strategy and policy development considerations.

## **2. Legislation and Enforcement:**

**2.1** Pledge to review the efficacy of existing legal protections, and enforce robust laws specifically targeting those who abuse, exploit and neglect older

people, with strict penalties for perpetrators.

**2.2** Establish dedicated task forces or units within the criminal justice sector to investigate and prosecute cases of neglect and abuse promptly and effectively irrespective of the abuse taking place within older people's own homes and care homes.

## **3. Awareness and Education:**

**3.1** Launch nationwide public awareness campaigns to educate people about the signs and consequences of abuse, exploitation and neglect of older people. Working hand in hand with key charities and agencies.

**3.2** Integrate education on ageing, rights of older people, and 'expectation of trust' into school curricula and professional training programmes for healthcare workers, social workers,

police, legal professionals and caregivers (volunteers, professional or otherwise).

#### **4. Support Services:**

**4.1** Expanded and ring-fenced funding for support services tailored to older individuals, (with a focus on specific needs for groups such as older men, older LGBT, older minority groups, and older disabled people) including helplines, counselling services, shelters for older victims of abuse, and community based, person-centred/victim-led options.

**4.2** Ensure accessible, quality assured health and social care services, including mental health support, for older people and support for those working in the sector.

#### **5. Community Engagement:**

**5.1** Foster community-based initiatives and neighbourhood programmes to empower communities to identify and address abuse, neglect and exploitation.

**5.2** Promote intergenerational activities and initiatives to strengthen social connections and combat ageism and stereotypes.

#### **6. Legal Aid and Advocacy:**

**6.1** Guarantee access to legal aid for older people facing abuse, exploitation or neglect, to help them navigate legal proceedings and seek justice.

**6.2** Establish advocacy groups and networks to amplify the voices of older people and advocate for their rights at local, regional and national levels.

#### **7. Research and Data Collection:**

**7.1** Invest in research to better understand the prevalence, causes, and consequences of abuse, neglect and exploitation, and to identify effective prevention, intervention and recovery strategies.

**7.2** Implement comprehensive data collection systems to track cases of abuse and commit to regular publication of data to enable evidence-based policy development and targeted interventions.

This action will make gains by demonstrating a strong commitment to protecting and empowering older people in society, thereby garnering public support and trust. By prioritising the well-being of older people and taking proactive measures to address abuse, all governments can sway public opinion by showing tangible progress towards creating a safer and more inclusive society for older people.

# A SAFER AGEING SOCIETY FOR ALL.

Hourglass is proud to collaborate with the UK and devolved Governments. However, we recognise that each nation has unique challenges and opportunities in creating a safer ageing society. These are our individual manifesto objectives for each nation:



**Hourglass calls on Westminster to:**

**1.** Research, undertake consultation and develop a strategy to tackle abuse and neglect of older people. This would complement the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy and include specific commitments to fund and properly resource older people's services. This should include a duty to fund and properly resource services for older people and particularly those aligned to the Victims and Prisoners Bill.

**2.** Implement a consistent and accessible data collection system in each police force in England, that categorises crime according to age.

**3.** Mandate all Police and Crime Commissioner (PCCS) to have specialist older person Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) in every local area as is currently in place for younger victims.

**4.** Introduce Powers of Entry for social workers to investigate suspected abuse of older people.

**5.** Widen the scope of the Forfeiture Act 1982 to include abuse.

**6.** Commit to support and fund the annual Hourglass Safer Ageing Index.

**7.** Create an Older People's Commissioner in England.

# DEVELOP A STRATEGY FOR SAFER AGEING.

Hourglass calls on the Stormont Executive to:



**1.** Research, undertake consultation and develop a strategy to tackle abuse and neglect of older people. This would complement the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy and include specific commitments to fund and properly resource specialist services for older victim-survivors of abuse.

**2.** Ensure there is adequate and ring-fenced funding and support available for charities which offer front line support services to older victim-survivors of abuse.

**3.** Urgently pass the Adult Protection Bill into law. This law must also extend powers of entry for social workers to investigate suspected abuse older people.

**4.** Ensure crime data collection remains robust and commit to the routine publication of Health and Social Care data on adult safeguarding.

**5.** Commit to support and fund the annual Hourglass Safer Ageing Index.

# INTRODUCTION OF WILLIE'S LAW.

Hourglass calls on the Government in Holyrood to:

## SCOTLAND



**1.** Develop a strategy to tackle abuse and neglect of older people, which builds on previous work by the Scottish Government in this area, and commitment to fund and properly resource specialist services for older victim-survivors of abuse.

**2.** Implement a consistent and accessible data collection system and commit to publishing all relevant data pertaining to the abuse and neglect of older people. This must include police, courts, NHS, social care providers and other government agencies.

**3.** Urgently review the Domestic Abuse Act (Scotland) (2018), to broaden the definition of domestic abuse to include abuse perpetrated by a family member or carer.

**4.** Introduce 'Willie's Law' and an economic abuse strategy which would require a medical professional to co-sign legal documents of vulnerable people to prove they have legal capacity.

**5.** Create a Victim and Witnesses Commissioner and an Older People's Commissioner in Scotland.

# INCREASE PROVISION OF SERVICES.

Hourglass calls on Senedd Cymru to:



- 1.** Ensure implementation and a yearly review of the National Action Plan to Prevent the Abuse of Older People with support from Hourglass, ensuring it complements the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse, and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) strategy, with specific commitments to fund and properly resource specialist services for older people.
- 2.** Advocate for all police forces in Wales to implement a consistent and accessible overarching data collection system that allows for categorisation of crime by victim and perpetrator age, and work with Hourglass to call

on Westminster for this change. Ensure that police forces are encouraged to make this data publicly accessible on a yearly basis.

- 3.** Mandate all Police and Crime Commissioner (PCCS) to have specialist older person Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) in every local area as is currently in place for younger victims.
- 4.** Engage with Hourglass on any developing Government policy to tackle abuse and neglect of older people.
- 5.** Increase provision of specialist services that support older victim-survivors of abuse throughout Wales and ensure these have sustainable funding.
- 6.** Commit to support and fund the annual Hourglass Safer Ageing Index.



**Take the OATH. Protect older people. Build a Safer Ageing Society - free from abuse, harm, neglect and exploitation.**

**Join Hourglass by adding your name to the growing list of people who are committed to seeing a Safer Ageing Society in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales by 2050.**

**The OATH** is a pledge you make to fight against the abuse, harm, exploitation and neglect of older people, to demand parity for older victim-survivors and to build a society where older people are able to age safely, have access to necessary services, can trust their caregivers and surroundings, and have equal opportunities and recognition in society, akin to other age groups.

**This is not a choice between older people and the rest of society. It's about ensuring parity and equality for older people and society – it's that simple.**

**Our older people deserve:**

- A Violence Against Older People Strategy
- Robust legislation and criminal justice enforcement
- Comprehensive awareness and education
- Funded and appropriate support services for all older-victim survivors
- Enhanced community engagement
- Access to legal aid and advocacy
- Improved research and data collection

These key demands focus on creating a Safer Ageing Society and empowering everyone, including older people themselves, to prevent and respond to abuse, harm, exploitation and neglect effectively.

Together, signatories can work together to create a Safer Ageing Society by 2050 where older people can age safely and with dignity, free from abuse and exploitation.

**IT'S TIME TO TAKE THE OATH.**



# Hourglass

Safer ageing · Stopping abuse

You can contact us in many ways:

**24/7 Helpline: 0808 808 8141**

Our helpline is entirely confidential and free to call from a landline or mobile, and the number will not appear on your phone bill.

**Text message: 07860 052906**

Texts from outside the UK will be charged at their standard international rate which will differ depending on location and service charges of your phone provider. The number will appear on your bill and in your phone records but will not be identified as Hourglass.

**INSTANT MESSAGING service: [www.wearehourglass.org](http://www.wearehourglass.org)**

**Get information from our CHATBOT - [www.wearehourglass.org](http://www.wearehourglass.org)**

**Get information from our KNOWLEDGE BANK - [knowledgebank.wearehourglass.org](http://knowledgebank.wearehourglass.org)**

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