

“Tackling loneliness and isolation in Wales is a national priority” – Huw Irranca-Davies

The Minister said loneliness and social isolation is one of the most significant issues facing people in Wales, especially people aged over 80; as a result, tackling it is one of his top priorities.

Wales is already leading the way when it comes to improving people’s well-being. Two key laws have been passed in recent years – the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – which require public bodies to consider people’s wider well-being when providing services, to think more about the long-term, to work better with each other and with communities, to look to prevent problems arising or situations worsening and to take a more joined-up approach.

The Welsh Government’s national strategy, Prosperity for All will help direct the energy and resources of the whole public service to develop a coherent, holistic and long-term response to loneliness and isolation in Wales.

A number of initiatives are already in place to help reduce loneliness, including improved mental health support, free bus travel, free swimming for older people and inter-generational support to help older people get online.

In addition, the Welsh Government will:

- Identify areas of work across the government that could be accelerated to tackle the issue
- During 2018, publish for consultation a cross-government strategy on loneliness and isolation with a final strategy published by March 2019
- Commission work to assess the impact of loneliness and isolation on health and well-being and whether people experiencing these issues make increased use of public services.

Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“Loneliness and isolation is a public health issue which can affect many different groups of people at a variety of stages of life – but in particular, it’s a major issue for many older people in Wales.

“It can have and does have a significant impact on people’s physical and mental health. As a government, we are committed to securing the best possible health, well-being and quality of life for people in Wales. So preventing people from becoming lonely and isolated must be a national priority for us, because it will not only improve people’s lives, but it will also help reduce demand for health and social services.

“I’m determined to use the energy and resources of the whole public service in Wales to develop a coherent, holistic and long-term response to loneliness

and isolation in Wales.”