

This is Older

Through the This is Older project, Age Cymru has engaged with people aged 50 plus from across Wales, as well as people and organisations that represent older peoples interests, to consider their representation in the media.

The representations we currently see fall into extremes and reinforce stereotypes of ageing. For example, wrinkly hands on the walking stick to the extraordinary sky-diving 90 year old. In reality, the over 50's fall within the grey areas and can be active, less mobile, sociable, isolated, glamorous, happy to blend in, happy, sad and the full range of emotions in between, well-off, living in poverty, independent to dependent.

“At last someone is doing something about the disgraceful portrayal of older people in this country...”

A collective voice is a powerful voice. Show us your accurate portrayals of older people, help us to spread the word and tackle ageism by using #ThisIsOlder



Our recommendations are for any individual, publication or organisation which represents older people in their work and are outlined below.

- We need to consider the fact that we are all ageing, rather than thinking of age as a far-off destination. This helps to reduce the ‘othering’ of older people. We need to also recognise that older people are not one homogenous group and are as diverse in their lives and lifestyles as any other age group.
- We can work harder to gain consent from people to ensure that we show the whole person in images. It is dehumanising to only show their hands, for example. There is also a huge amount of power in someone’s face.
- We need to be cautious about defining someone by their income from the state, eg ‘Pensioner’ and consider whether we are reinforcing stereotypes with the language we use. Are you promoting the dangerous stereotype of dependence or infirmity when it isn’t part of the story?
- We need to give older people a voice which will help to break down inter-generational barriers, defeat stereotypes and enable people to see themselves reflected in real-life, everyday scenarios.
- We can promote the full spectrum of older people’s experiences, not just the extremes. This includes the intersectionality of older people of different backgrounds, races and sexual orientations.
- Where possible, we should use case studies or older people’s real life experiences to help audiences to relate to wider stories.

We’d like to thank the following
Contributors: Leslie Herman Jones and Kelly Barr
Artwork: Nathan Wyburn