

# North Wales Dementia Strategy

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CYDWEITHREDFA GWELLA GWASANAETHAU  
GOFAL A LLESANT **GOGLEDD CYMRU**  
**NORTH WALES** SOCIAL CARE AND WELL-BEING  
SERVICES IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Betsi Cadwaladr  
University Health Board



# Hello

Our brain is incredible! It helps us:

- interpret sound and sight
- store memories
- feel emotions
- solve problems
- make decisions
- make sense of the world
- control what we say and do.

So, when illness affects the brain, it can be really difficult.

Illness can gradually affect things like:

- memory
- day-to-day activities
- understanding information
- behaviour
- speech
- hearing
- vision.

**Dementia** describes these symptoms.

We are **North Wales Regional Partnership Board (RPB)**. We aim to improve health and well-being for everyone across North Wales.

Dementia can affect anyone, from any background or culture, but it mostly affects older people.

**i** **Young onset dementia** is when someone under 65 is diagnosed.

**i** **Mild cognitive impairment** is when someone's mental ability starts to decline faster than is normal.

We want to make sure everyone has the support they need. This is our **Dementia Strategy**. It has seven priorities to support people living with dementia.

## The 7 priorities

- 1:** We want to reduce the risk of dementia and delay it
- 2:** We want to raise awareness and understanding
- 3:** We want people to recognise and identify dementia better
- 4:** We want to improve assessment and diagnosis
- 5:** We want to support people with dementia to live as well as possible
- 6:** We want to increase support
- 7:** We want to support carers





# How we wrote the strategy

## **We talked to people**

In 2019 we asked people what they thought of dementia services in North Wales, what works well and what we can improve. This helped us write this strategy.

## **We used evidence and looked at the services we have**

We used evidence like the North Wales Population Assessment. It has information about how many people live with dementia and what we can expect in the future. We checked what services are available so we could spot gaps in support.

## **We linked to other plans and programmes**

This includes:

- the North Wales Carers Strategy
- the North Wales Together for Mental Health Strategy
- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) Dementia Strategy
- other Welsh Government plans to support people with dementia.

## **We worked in partnership**

This strategy has been written with:

- people with lived experience of dementia
- the six North Wales councils
- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB)
- Public Health Wales
- Bangor University
- other partners.

This strategy deals with the things we can do in North Wales. There are things we can't change because they are decided by the UK Government or the Welsh Government. This includes the benefits system and the way social care is funded.

# What matters

People told us we should:

- reduce stigma
- raise awareness of the risks of dementia and how to reduce them
- raise awareness of the symptoms of dementia
- raise awareness of the support and services available
- continue to support the work of dementia friendly communities
- promote positive messages
- help people find information and advice
- improve staff training in GP surgeries, hospital, care-homes and other places
- have more information about out-of-hours services
- have more support available in Welsh
- have support in other languages
- reduce waiting times
- include memory tests in standard health checks at certain ages
- research causes and links to other conditions
- involve carers in conversations about assessment and diagnosis
- improve the diagnosis in people with a learning disability
- have a LGBT support group.
- improve access to services in rural areas
- improve access to services for people without transport.
- improve how teams and agencies work together
- promote assistive technology and telecare
- support carers better
- give carers training, advice and breaks away to rest
- raise awareness about the Lasting Power of Attorney.

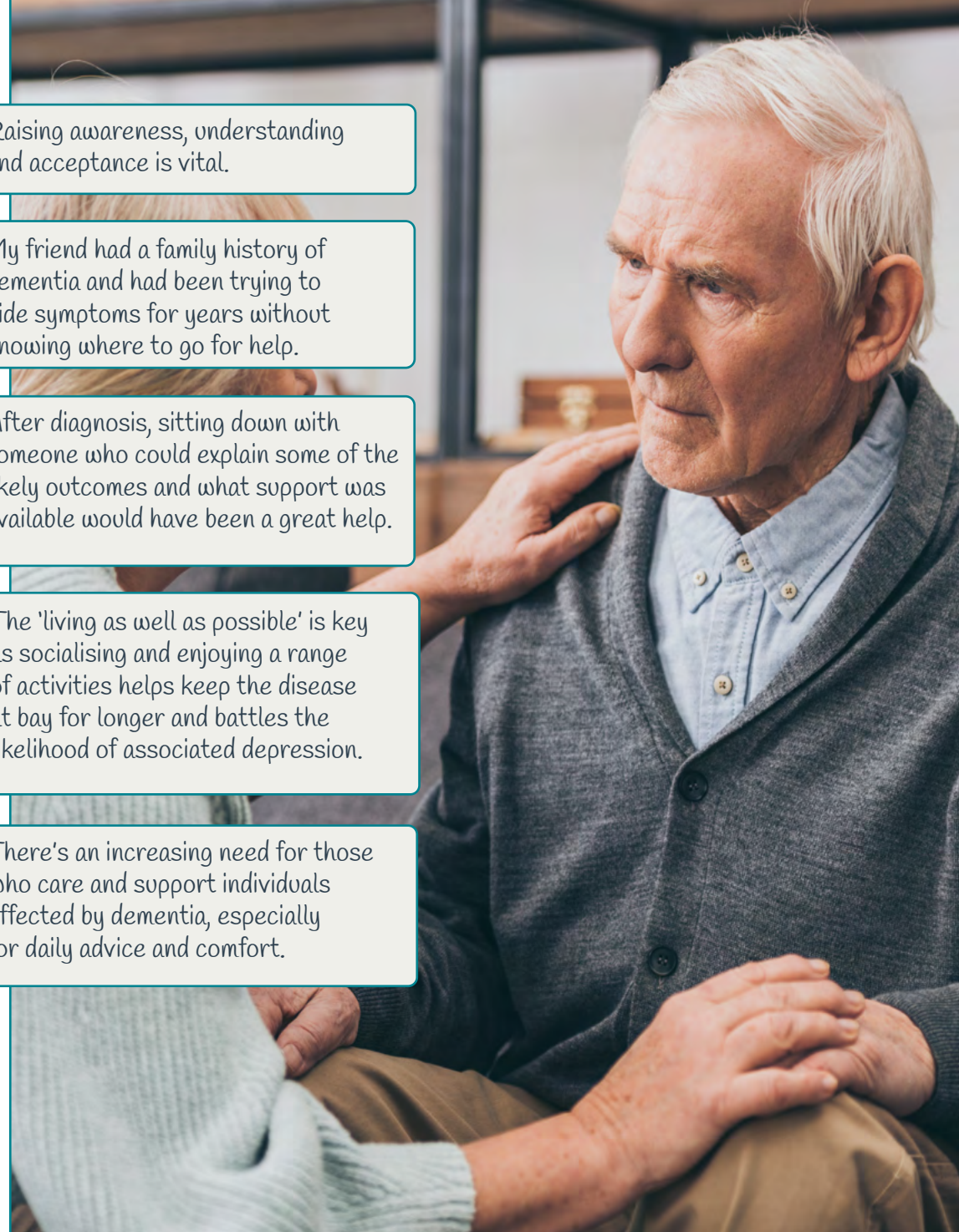
☞ Raising awareness, understanding and acceptance is vital.

☞ My friend had a family history of dementia and had been trying to hide symptoms for years without knowing where to go for help.

☞ After diagnosis, sitting down with someone who could explain some of the likely outcomes and what support was available would have been a great help.

☞ The 'living as well as possible' is key as socialising and enjoying a range of activities helps keep the disease at bay for longer and battles the likelihood of associated depression.

☞ There's an increasing need for those who care and support individuals affected by dementia, especially for daily advice and comfort.





## ➔ Priority 1:

### We want to reduce the risk of dementia and delay it

#### Some facts

The Welsh Government has **six steps** to reduce the risk of dementia:

1. Be physically active
2. Maintain a healthy weight
3. Be socially and mentally active
4. Avoid drinking too much alcohol
5. Stop smoking
6. Check your health

#### In North Wales:

- **52%** of adults do 150 minutes of exercise each week
- **22%** eat five fruit or vegetables each day
- **40%** are a healthy weight
- **18%** drink more alcohol than recommended
- **19%** of adults smoke.

👂 There is a link between **hearing loss** and dementia.

👥 There are lots of services and groups working together to improve people's well-being. This includes support for carers.

📋 People can get advice from **Dementia Connect**.

🔍 The Dementia Services Development Centre at Bangor University has an international reputation for ageing and dementia research, focusing on treatment and care.

#### ✓ Actions

**1:** We will keep promoting and supporting things that reduce the risk of dementia and delay it.

**2:** We will support research into the causes and treatment of dementia.

**3:** We will set up workshops for health and social care staff who work with adults with learning disabilities so they can share good practice.

**4:** We will extend support services so everyone with dementia can get support and include the six steps into their daily life.



## ➡ Priority 2:

### We want to raise awareness and understanding

#### Some facts

There are over **10,000** people living with dementia in North Wales.

 **6,300** women  **3,700** men.

People can get information and advice:

- from support services like **Dementia Connect**
- online from places like **Dewis Cymru**, social media and forums
- by calling **Wales Dementia Helpline** and the **Alzheimer's Society Dementia Directory**.



There are lots of dementia friendly projects and programmes across North Wales.



Planning departments are working to create better environments for people living with dementia.



There are programmes to keep people safe including the **Keep Safe Cymru Card** and **Safe Places**.

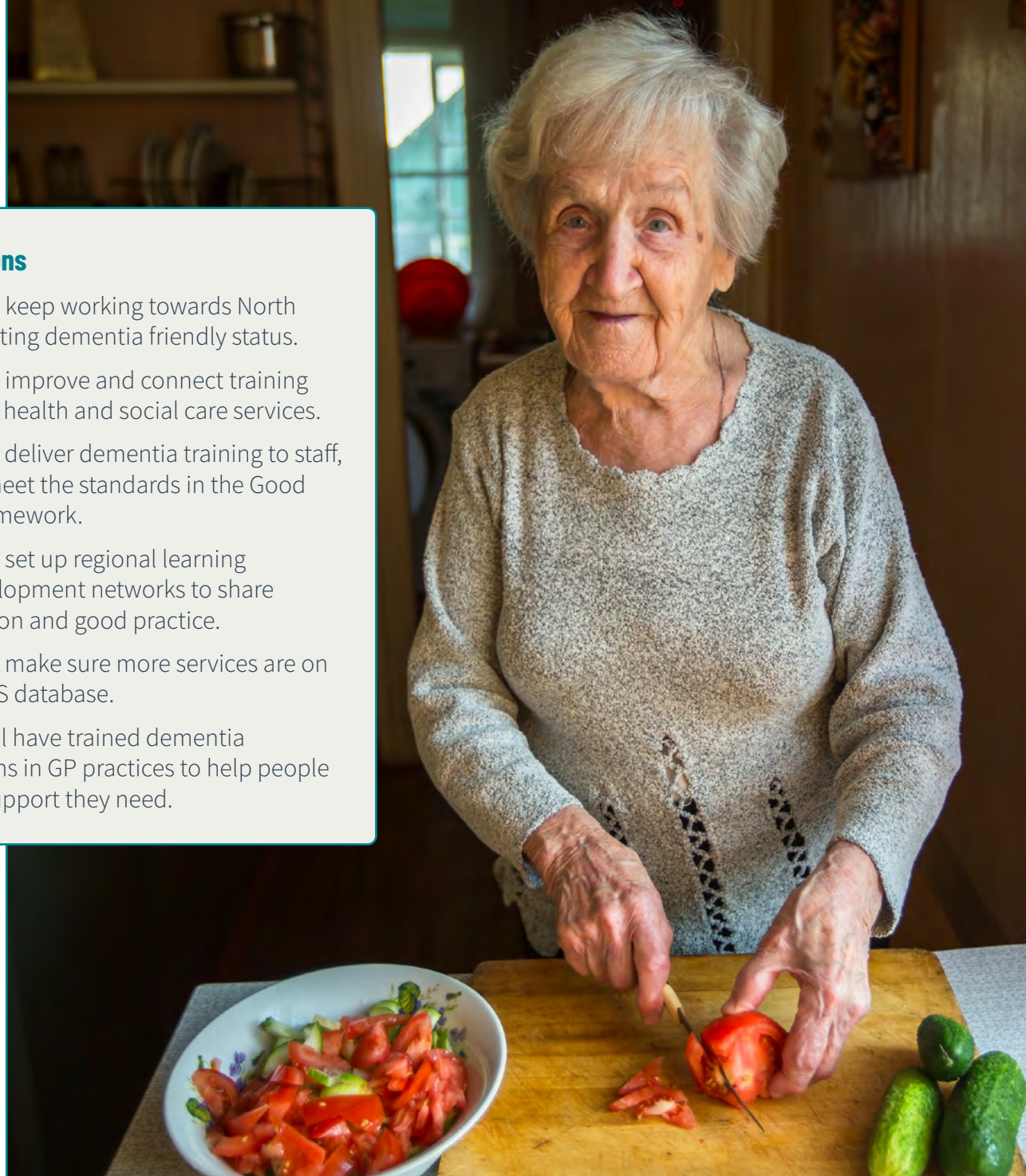


**Social Care Wales** has a new dementia resource for care professionals.



#### Actions

- 5:** We will keep working towards North Wales getting dementia friendly status.
- 6:** We will improve and connect training across all health and social care services.
- 7:** We will deliver dementia training to staff, so they meet the standards in the Good Work Framework.
- 8:** We will set up regional learning and development networks to share information and good practice.
- 9:** We will make sure more services are on the DEWIS database.
- 10:** We will have trained dementia champions in GP practices to help people get the support they need.





## ➔ Priority 3:


### We want people to recognise and identify dementia better


#### Some facts


 Age is the biggest risk factor for dementia rising from **7% at 65** to **17% over 80**.

 People with **learning disabilities** are more at risk. People with **Down's Syndrome** are particularly at risk.

 **Hearing assessments** are recommended for people with suspected dementia. **80% to 90%** of people getting a memory assessment have hearing issues.

 GPs are the first point of contact for many people developing dementia.

 Welsh language speakers and some ethnic groups don't get diagnosed quickly enough.

 Some services are only available to people with a formal diagnosis of dementia.

#### Actions

**13:** We will raise awareness and encourage people who think they have early signs of dementia to go talk to their GP.

**14:** We will share positive stories about dementia.

**15:** We will include memory tests in standard health checks.



## ➔ Priority 4:

### We want to improve assessment and diagnosis

#### Some facts



Only **51%** of people who have dementia in North Wales are registered as having a diagnosis of dementia.



Research found dementia diagnosis varies between different groups due to a lack of appropriate language provision and cultural factors. It's important people have the opportunity to get diagnostic tests in the Welsh language.



There are **7 memory clinics** across North Wales.



People in rural Northwest Wales only have **1** clinic.



#### Actions

**16:** We will explore having a new or mobile memory clinic for rural areas.

**17:** We will research the challenges for adults with learning disabilities and their carers so we can help them better.

**18:** We will run a project to identify hearing issues for people with dementia.

**19:** We will put the 'Make Every Contact Count' approach at the centre of all services.

**20:** We will work with carers and others to make services more user-friendly.

**21:** We will develop a set of quality standards for all services.

**22:** We will check people get the active offer of Welsh language during assessments and check the use of Welsh language assessment.





## ➔ Priority 5:

### We want to support people with dementia to live as well as possible

#### Some facts



There are advocacy services across all of North Wales including:

- Alzheimer's Society
- Age Cymru
- North Wales Advice and Advocacy Service
- Advocacy Services North East Wales
- Dewis Centre for Independent Living
- Mental Health Matters Wales.



**LGBT** people can face more social challenges living with dementia.



**Carers Trust North Wales Crossroads** provide a dementia support service across North Wales. Support for younger onset dementia is available but varies in each County.



There are day opportunities, day care and carer breaks available.



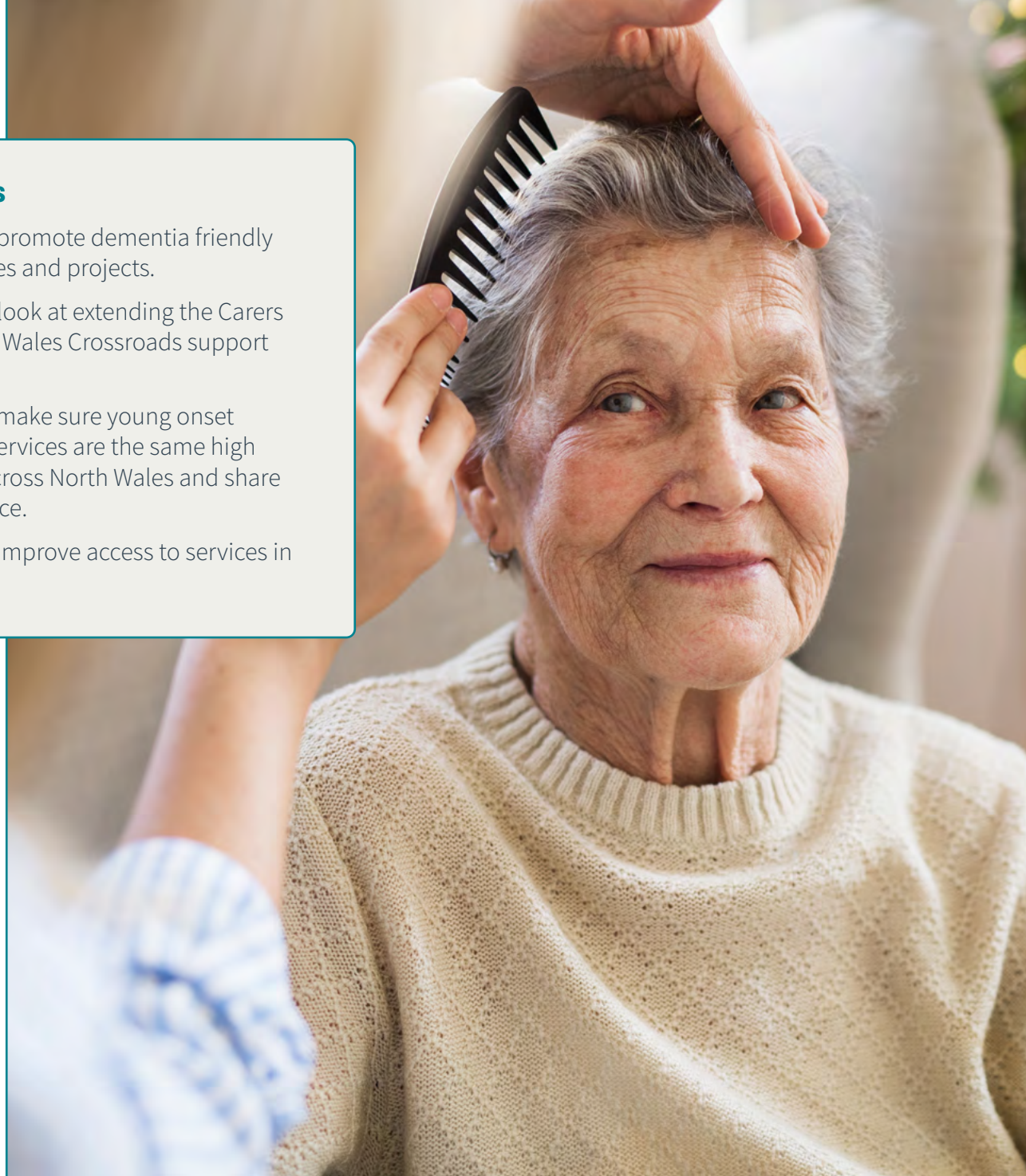
#### Actions

**23:** We will promote dementia friendly communities and projects.

**24:** We will look at extending the Carers Trust North Wales Crossroads support service.

**25:** We will make sure young onset dementia services are the same high standard across North Wales and share good practice.

**26:** We will improve access to services in rural areas.



## ➔ Priority 6:

### We want to increase support

#### Some facts



People living with dementia often have other health conditions that need treatment.



There are **dementia support workers** across all of North Wales.



The **Care Inspectorate Wales website** has details of care homes and home care in North Wales.



**Step-up, step-down beds** in care homes are important. They are an alternative to hospital admissions or used following a hospital stay. These are available across North Wales.



The **fire, police and ambulance services** are working towards being dementia friendly.



The **3 General Hospitals** and **13 community hospitals** all provide care to people living with dementia. There are also **3 hospices** in North Wales.



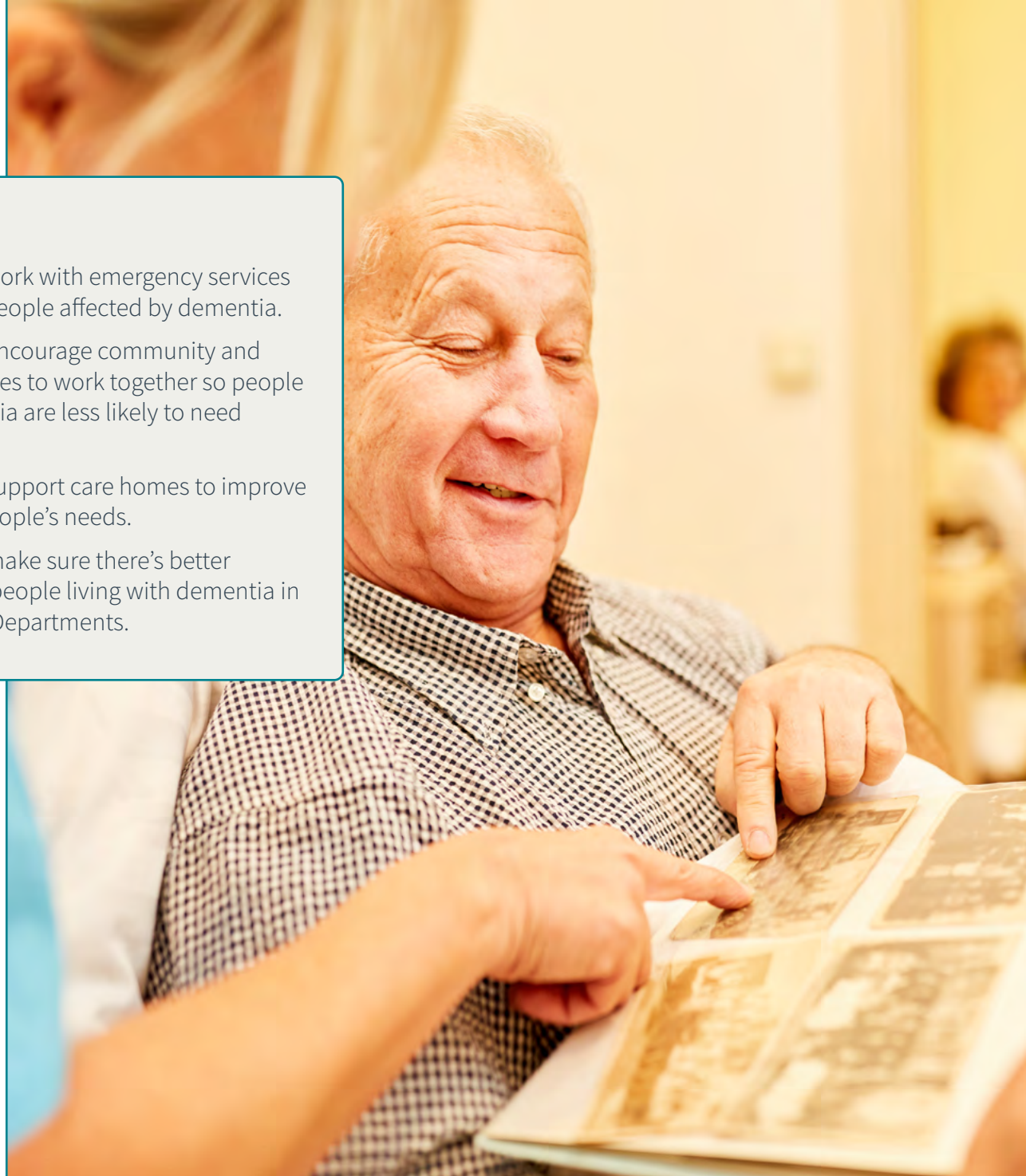
#### Actions

**27:** We will work with emergency services to support people affected by dementia.

**28:** We will encourage community and health services to work together so people with dementia are less likely to need hospital.

**29:** We will support care homes to improve and meet people's needs.

**30:** We will make sure there's better support for people living with dementia in Emergency Departments.





## ➔ Priority 7:

### We want to support carers

#### Some facts



Around **73,000** people provide unpaid care in North Wales. People aged **50 to 64** are the most likely to provide **unpaid care**.



Between **60%** and **70%** of all unpaid dementia carers are women. Many provide intensive care for someone 24-hours a day.



There is support available for carers of people living with dementia across North Wales.



Many services are available in Welsh and English.



#### Actions

- 31:** We will look at how we buy services and see if they can be commissioned together.
- 32:** We will promote the active offer so people can have support services in Welsh.
- 33:** We will promote new projects like the 'coping with caring and loss' project.





# Checking this works

The new **Dementia Strategy Steering Group** will make sure this strategy is making a difference. The group has members from the six local councils, BCUHB, organisations and people with experience of dementia.

They will report back to us and we can change some of the actions if we need to. The evidence from this strategy will also help us make future decisions and support people with dementia across our area.

## Thanks for reading this

You can read the full strategy here:  
[www.northwalescollaborative.wales/  
regional-priorities/dementia-strategy](http://www.northwalescollaborative.wales/regional-priorities/dementia-strategy)

