BSG Ageism SIG



Ageism in social care:
Causes, impact and remedies

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AGEISM



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The **stereotypes** (how we think),

prejudice (how we feel) and

discrimination (how we act)

towards others or ourselves based on age

World Health Organisation 2021

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Social Care



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‘Adult social care can be defined as the provision of social work, personal care, protection or social support services to adults in need or at risk’
Government Statistical Service

‘We all want to live in the place we call home, with the people and things that we love, in communities where we look out for one another, doing the things that matter to us’
Social Care Future

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Ageism in social care



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- The Big Questions?
- The Big Ideas?
- The Big Take Aways?

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The Big Questions



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- Do older people get the same level and type of social care support as other adults ? (why not?)
- How is social care for older people viewed/regarded?
- What choice do older people get?
- What stories do we tell ourselves about what we might need when we’re older and what it will be like?
- What research has been done and what does it tell us?
- Why isn’t there more research?

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The Big Questions: Research

What research has been done and what does it tell us?

- Professional attitudes
- Workforce ageism
- Resource Allocation
- Access to services
- Institutional discrimination

Why isn’t there more research?

- Government and funders agendas and priorities

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The Big Ideas



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- Expect more for older people and uphold rights
- Be anti-ageist and challenge ageism and discrimination
- Make ageism an explicit part of the equalities agenda, and highlight intersectionality
- Include awareness of age and ageism in learning and development, and research
- Harness new technologies AND challenge digital ageism
- Research, highlight and spread good practice

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Expect more



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When I Get Old

Giving, living and loving into our older age

We have a dream…of a world where older people, especially those of us who need a bit more help than we did, can continue to live adventurous and fulfilled lives. Where we are valued for all we have experienced and learned. Where everything that we know and are good at can still be shared and useful. And where, when we do need help, we get it in the right way and at the right time so that we can carry on giving, living, and loving.

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Be anti-ageist



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Make ageism part of equalities

WHO – 1 in 6 people over 60 experience abuse

Hourglass survey – attitudes and what ‘counts’ as abuse of older people

- 30% don’t view ‘pushing, hitting, or beating an older person’ as abuse

- 35% don’t believe that ‘inappropriate sexual acts directed at older people’ count as abuse

https://wearehourglass.org/

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‘The biggest barrier to coming forward is a belief that no-one is going to help, no-one is going to listen’

Older abuse survivor

- Involving older people – Steering Group and Action Group
- Research with older people, service providers and other experts
- Analysing and using policy and legal levers
- Building a coalition of people pressing for change
- Influencing Government with older people’s stories at the centre

Result - the Welsh Government National Action Plan to Prevent the Abuse of Older People – the first of its kind in the UK

https://www.gov.wales/national-action-plan-prevent-abuse-older-people-html

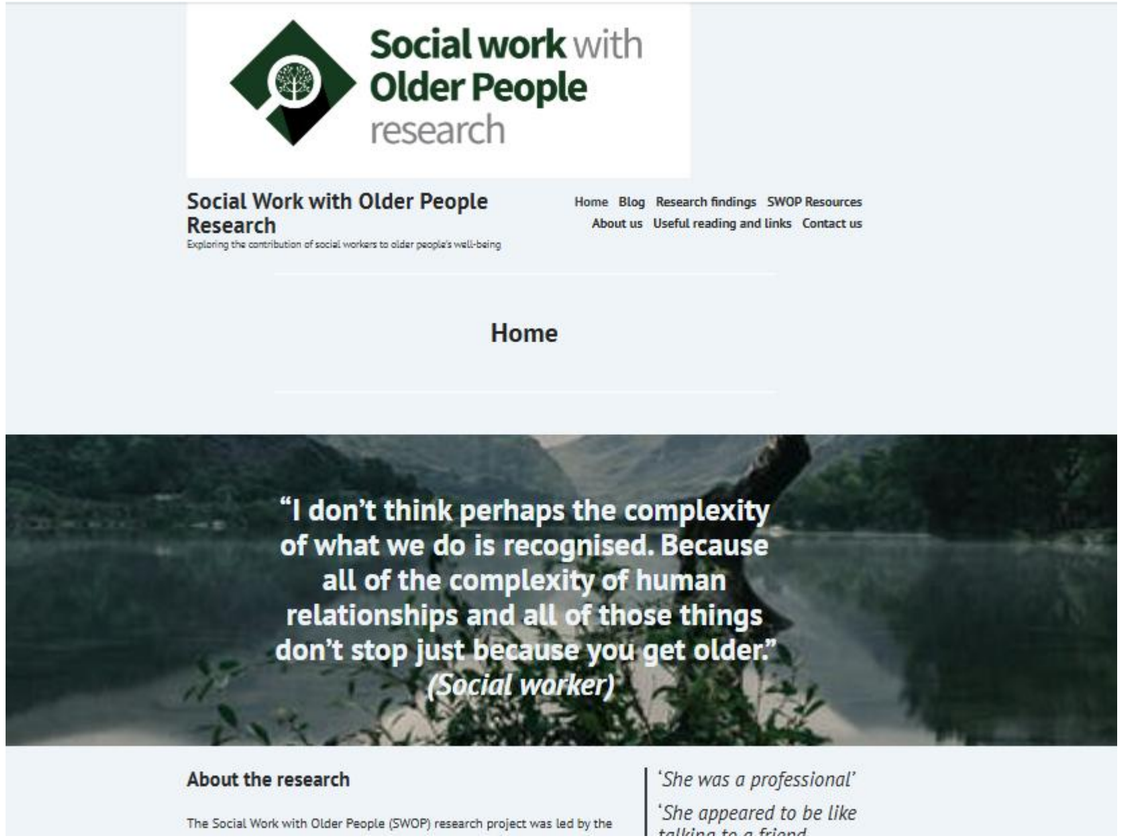
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Include age in learning



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Harness technology



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McDonald et al 2023

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Challenge digital ageism

‘Stereotyping, prejudice or disadvantage directed at people on the basis of age within digital contexts, which impacts upon individuals, as well as affecting wider services and systems’

Exploring digital ageism – Older People’s Commissioner for Wales, October 2025
https://olderpeople.wales/resource/digital-ageism/

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Spread good practice

Age Without Limits https://www.agewithoutlimits.org/

Care Confidence https://www.careconfidence.org.uk/

Social Work with Older People
https://swopresearch.wordpress.com/

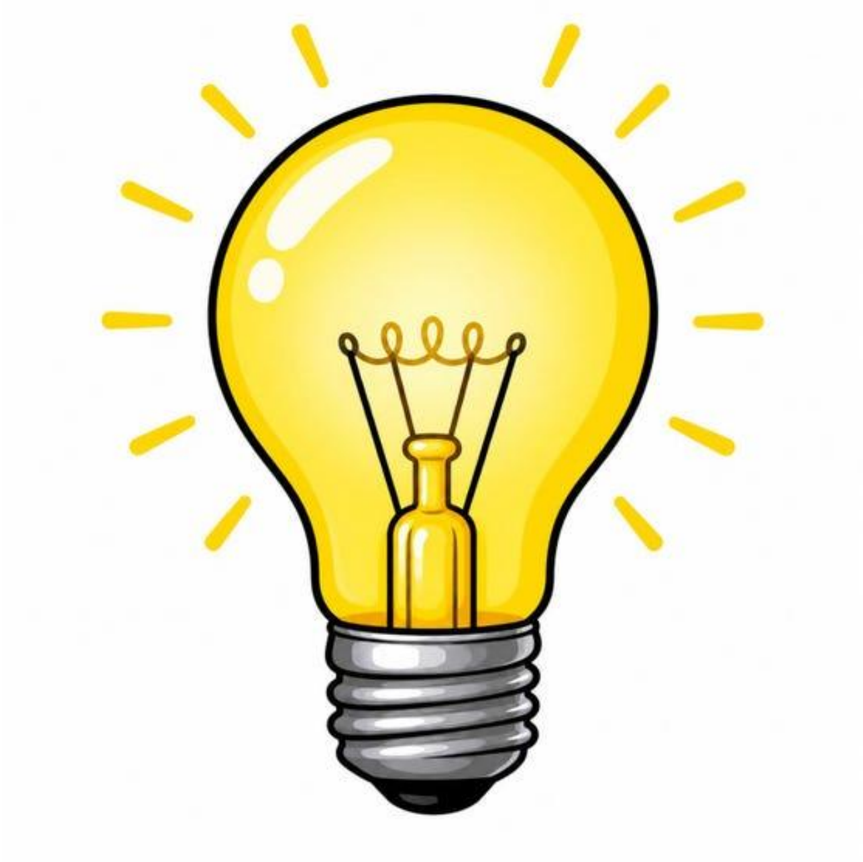
Campaign for named social worker
https://basw.co.uk/support/groups-and-networks/special-interest-group-social-work-ageing

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The Big Take Aways



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