



# *Age Matters*

The quarterly newsletter  
from Age Cymru

*Spring Edition 2021*

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 **ageCymru**  
Creating an age friendly Wales

# Making older people's voices heard amongst all the noise

By Victoria Lloyd, Chief Executive,  
March 2021

There is no doubting that we're living in unprecedented times as we mark a year of lockdown following the onset of Covid 19 at the beginning of 2020.

During the recent pandemic many of us have lost loved ones, we've witnessed the disruption of health and care services, and heard the plight of many older people whose sense of loneliness and isolation was compounded by the virus. Then at the start of 2021 we were all filled with hope as vaccines are being rolled out across Wales and the UK.

With everything that has been taking place, there is a danger that older people's rights are not being upheld and promoted. Which is why we have redoubled our efforts to understand older people's hopes, fears and aspirations during these difficult times. We've also made sure that service providers, key decision makers, and politicians are hearing about the challenges currently facing older people in Wales right now.



In this edition of Age Matters we discuss the launch of our second national survey of older people and their experiences of the pandemic.

Similarly, our manifesto launched for the forthcoming Welsh Government elections urges our politicians to promote and protect the rights of older people.

This edition also has a timely reminder about the importance of upholding the rights of LGBT+ older people living with dementia.

We hope you enjoy this edition and if there's anything you'd like to tell us about how we can improve Age Matters please let us know.

# As vaccinations roll out across Wales, Age Cymru wants to hear older people's views of the pandemic



As vaccinations roll out across Wales, Age Cymru and its partner organisations want to hear about the over 50s experiences of the pandemic in Wales.

In August 2020, 1100 people responded to our initial survey and we were able to share the information with Welsh Government and others. Now, having experienced another significant period of lockdown and with vaccines being rolled out at pace, we're keen to hear again the experiences of older people and their thoughts on recovery.

Age Cymru's chief executive Victoria Lloyd says: "When we first undertook this survey we learned that the pandemic had compounded the problems of loneliness and isolation as many sources of companionship such as lunch clubs, day centres, and places of worship were closed.

"We heard that two thirds of older people had difficulty in accessing hospital, GP, dental, and chiropody appointments during the first lock-down.

"We also learned that the pandemic increased pressures on older carers, many of whom were already exhausted but who now had to take on extra responsibilities as support services were withdrawn in many cases.

"We would hope that many of these issues would have improved as services and support has adapted. However, if there are still problem areas and gaps in services we need to hear about them. We also need to understand what support older people will need to re-engage with their community.

You can complete our survey online: [www.agecymru.org.uk/covid19survey](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/covid19survey). You can also obtain paper copies of the survey from Kathy Lye on 029 2043 1570 or email [kathy.lye@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:kathy.lye@agecymru.org.uk). The deadline for all correspondence is 29 April 2021.

# Charity launches its Manifesto 2021 ahead of the Senedd elections in May

Age Cymru has launched its Manifesto 2021 ahead of the Senedd elections in May, which sets out the issues that the Charity believes should be priorities for the next Welsh Government to ensure that older people are able to exercise fully their rights and live fulfilling and dignified later lives.

The two-page manifesto focuses on the five key areas of: Poverty and voice; Accessing primary care; Seamless health and social care; Employment; and Age friendly communities. Age Cymru's chief executive, Victoria Lloyd says: "We believe that delivery in these five key areas will both promote and protect the rights of older people in Wales.

"The pandemic has compounded the challenges faced by older people significantly and it's vital that older people form an integral part of the next Welsh Government's plans for reconstruction when prioritising action and resources throughout the term of the next Welsh Parliament."

You can download a copy of our Manifesto by visiting [www.agecymru.org.uk/seneddelections2021](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/seneddelections2021). If you'd like to discuss our manifesto in more detail please contact our Communications Manager Michael Phillips on 07739 894923.

## Age Cymru's Question Time event

Age Cymru held its very own Question Time event on 23 March 2021, where older people posed some challenging questions to Janet Finch-Saunders MS (Conservative Party), Julie Morgan MS (Labour Party), and Rhun ap Iorwerth MS (Plaid Cymru). Many older people also took advantage of the opportunity to observe the online event from the comfort of their own homes. A recording of the hour-long event is available on the Age Cymru website.



## Living with dementia if you're lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender



Age Cymru's Benedict Hodge outlines the rights of LGBT+ people living with dementia

Everyone is different and there is no one size fit all approach to living a happy and fulfilling life with dementia. One of the key parts is a connection to the people and communities that matter most to individuals. It's very important that this connection isn't lost through people's journey with dementia.

The rights of someone who is LGBT+ must always be respected. It's also really important that they have access to support services that they can identify with and that understand the challenges they may have faced as someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

There can be a lot to think about when it comes to being LGBT+ and living a meaningful life with dementia. Our dementia advocacy project can help people understand their intrinsic rights, and how to uphold them at all times. It can also connect people with services that reflect their needs as someone who is LGBT+.

Having a dementia advocate will mean people will have the full range of options presented to them. These could be options that they have never considered, didn't know existed or simply haven't been told about. By centring the person, their unique identity and voice, our dementia advocacy team can make sure they have the support they need and don't lose who they really are.'

For more information about our work in this area, please visit [www.agecymru.org.uk/advocacy](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/advocacy) email [benedict.hodge@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:benedict.hodge@agecymru.org.uk)

# Guide for carers overseeing loved ones moving into care homes

Overseeing loved ones moving into care homes can be one of the most emotionally difficult challenges facing older carers, according to a new guide launched by Age Cymru.

'Making relationships count' says older carers can often suffer a sense of loss, guilt and worry when their loved one leaves to move into a care home. However, carers can also feel a sense of relief as caring can be so exhausting, especially for those suffering with ill-health.

Cath Peach who manages the Cottage Nursing Home in Mold says: "The guide has been produced at a time when it has never been needed more. The transition into a care home can be difficult at the best of times but the lockdown has brought lots of additional challenges."

'Making relationships count' advises carers going through the process to communicate with the care home as



much as possible so that the homes can get to know their new resident and better understand what they do and don't like, and what matters to them most.

It also advises carers to take care of themselves by sharing their feelings with people they trust, ensuring they get plenty of rest and exercise, and by treating themselves with whatever makes them feel good.

The guide, funded by the Welsh Government, is available in English or Welsh from Age Cymru: [www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/our-work/carers/making-relationships-count/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/our-work/carers/making-relationships-count/) or call 029 2043 1555.

## People over 50 in Wales urged to plan for their future

People aged 50+ in Wales are being encouraged to plan for their future through a series of free Mid-Career Review webinars, delivered by Business in the Community (BITC) Cymru with Age Cymru.

The webinars, which form part of the Age at Work Programme, provide an opportunity for individuals to reflect and take stock of their career, health and wellbeing, finances and their work-life balance. They also help participants to make informed choices and plan for a positive future.

BITC's Age at Work Programme Manager Jill Salter says: "More than half of us haven't thought much about our hopes or ambitions for life after 60. However, research shows that if you plan and manage this stage of your life you're more likely to have a successful retirement.

"The pandemic has turned many lives upside down; threatening jobs and finances as well as significantly increasing some people's caring responsibilities. The webinars provide an ideal opportunity for people to reflect on key areas in their lives and take back some control."

Webinars will be taking place throughout the year. For more information or to register visit [www.agecymru.org.uk/ageatwork](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/ageatwork) or telephone Jill on 07793 443893.

## Project to bring HOPE to older people in Monmouthshire

Older people and their carers throughout Monmouthshire can now benefit from a new Age Cymru project called HOPE (Helping others participate and engage), which will provide independent advocacy support to people aged 50+ and their carers throughout the county.

HOPE's independent volunteer advocates will support older people struggling to find information about what services are available, how to access such services, and help in getting their entitlements. They can also listen to older people's views and help them understand their options so they can make better-informed decisions.

Louise Williams, one of Monmouthshire's recent recruits, says: "By building older people's self-confidence and by giving them the necessary resources, we can help them to become engaged and involved in sorting out the issues that concern them.

"Age Cymru has done a great job in bringing the HOPE volunteers together as a team and has provided us with excellent training so I now feel ready to go out into the community and support our local older people."

HOPE is delivered in partnership with local Age Cymru partners and local Age Connects organisations and is funded by the Welsh Government for three years until March 2023.

For more information email [janet.ellard@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:janet.ellard@agecymru.org.uk) or call 07943 186766. You can find out more about our HOPE programme by visiting [www.agecymru.org.uk/advocacy](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/advocacy)



Louise Williams

## Friend in Need service recruiting volunteers



Loneliness is often cited as one of the biggest challenges facing older people, particularly those living alone. Our Friends in Need (FiN) service aims to tackle this issue by linking suitable volunteers with older people through a weekly telephone friendship call.

However, the number of older people requiring a call is far outstripping the number of volunteers making the calls, so we need to recruit more people to the service as soon as possible so we can help more older people like Mr Williams:

Mr Williams is a carer for his wife, and he suffers from depression. Our FiN service calls them both every week. As a result, Mr Williams has started to call his friends that he had lost contact with to try and give back what he gets from Age Cymru. He even arranged for the FiN service to sing happy birthday to his wife!

If you would like to become a FiN volunteer visit [www.agecymru.org.uk/befriender](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/befriender), email: [volunteer@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@agecymru.org.uk) or call 029 2043 1555 for more information.





# Age Cymru supports the Wales Intergenerational Summit



Photograph supplied by the Centre for Better Ageing

More than 100 delegates from the NHS, local authorities, universities, and a variety of third sector organisations came together to mark intergenerational week at the Wales Intergenerational Summit.

Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services opened the Summit and inspired delegates by reminding them of Jo Cox's words that 'we've got more in common than divides us.'

Welsh Government's Penny Hall spoke about the key elements that facilitate good intergenerational work and tackle loneliness such as committed leadership, a focused purpose, and partnership working. While some key outcomes of intergenerational work include fun, friendship, and increased understanding.

Heléna Herklots, Older People's Commissioner for Wales, spoke about the effect of lockdown on her own wellbeing, and considered how we can all reconnect after lockdown. Heléna called us to draw on our intergenerational bonds to rebuild our connections.

Sally Holland, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, built on what Heléna said by talking about the impact of the lockdown on young people. She spoke about the importance of older and younger people respecting each other's skills and building links of commonality between generations.

Closing the plenary session Tanya Strange, Assistant Director of Nursing for Person Centred Care shared inspiring examples of good practice, such as the Ffriend I Mi/Friend of Mine social movement. She introduced case studies where intergenerational work had reduced distress from an older man with dementia, and where experiential learning had inspired young people to aspire to careers in the health and social care sector.

Delegates at the Summit were able to contribute in a series of workshops and agreed to continue sharing ideas with each other to help ensure that the best intergenerational practice is happening in Wales. For more information contact Rachel Dawson on 029 2043 1555 or email [rachel.dawson@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:rachel.dawson@agecymru.org.uk).

# Information resources updated during January and February 2021

## **FS24w: Direct payments for social care services in Wales**

Direct payments are cash payments that local authorities can make to individuals so that they can organise their own services to meet their social care needs. They offer an alternative to the local authority arranging social care services on your behalf.

## **FS29w: Finding care home accommodation in Wales**

Considers a number of issues related to finding suitable care home accommodation, including types of homes; how to identify the right home; funding and financial considerations which may be relevant in choosing a home and issues to consider and questions to ask.

## **FS9: Anti-social behaviour in housing**

Covers anti-social behaviour that takes place in the home or neighbourhood and includes information on noisy neighbours, hedge disputes, and harassment.

## **FS27: Planning for your funeral**

Highlights things to consider if you want to plan ahead and make financial and other arrangements for your funeral. It looks at options when deciding what type of funeral you want, ways to pay for a funeral, and information about organ donation.

## **S61w: Help with NHS health costs in Wales**

Most NHS services are free, but there are charges for things like dental treatment or glasses and contact lenses. This factsheet explains what happens with these charges once you reach age 60, or if you receive Pension Credit Guarantee Credit. It also explains how the NHS Low Income Scheme can help.

## **FS65: Equity release**

Provides information about different types of equity release, such as lifetime mortgages and home reversion plans.

## **FS71: Park homes**

Gives information about the law relating to park homes (also called mobile homes or caravans) and is aimed at park homeowners who are entitled to use their home as a permanent residence.

All of the above factsheets are available on Age Cymru's website: [www.agecymru.org.uk/advice](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/advice) or by calling Age Cymru Advice on 0300 303 44 98.

# In the last year Age Cymru Partners have been here for you



Age Cymru : Age Cymru Dyfed : Age Cymru Gwent :  
 Age Cymru Gwynedd a Môn : Age Cymru Powys : Age Cymru West Glamorgan

## Last year our partnership:



Helped 22,181 older people, their families and carers with 45,218 information and advice enquiries

Supported older people to claim **£13,609,692** in benefits and entitlements

**Supported 421** older people through our advocacy services

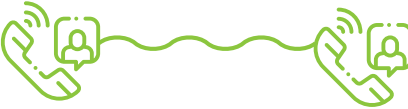
Delivered 18,627 meals to older people in their own homes



**Supported 1,139** older people through our befriending services

Together our services provided help and support to older people across Wales on **137,022 occasions** during 2020

**Made 33,269** check in and chat calls



“ You are doing a brilliant job and it makes all the difference to me being on my own. It means the world to me having the calls. ”

“ I have been able to save my mother £400 off her water bill. I can't thank you enough. ”

“ Thank you so much for you call today. What an excellent service the quality of your advice was superb. ”



Throughout our rollercoaster of a dementia journey, which has felt overwhelming at times, the advocate has offered ongoing support and a friendly face on a continuous basis. We truly appreciate all the information and support provided it would have been a far more difficult journey without her at our side.

**Together we're working towards an age friendly Wales**  
**0300 303 44 98**



## Get in touch

If you have a story for Age Matters then please get in touch with the editor Michael Phillips on 07794 366 224 or email [michael.phillips@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:michael.phillips@agecymru.org.uk)

## Age Matters

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