



Age Matters

The quarterly newsletter
from Age Cymru

Spring 2022

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 **ageCymru**

Creating an age friendly Wales

Spring 2022 – a time of achievements, challenges, and opportunities

By Victoria Lloyd, Chief Executive,
March 2022

Welcome to this latest edition of Age Matters. We hope that this newsletter will give you a taste of some of the work we've been doing in communities across Wales over the last few months and bring you up to date with the issues we've been addressing.

We're delighted that Age Cymru has been awarded NDTi's Advocacy Quality Performance Mark underlining the excellent quality of the support provided by Age Cymru's Advocacy teams. This quality is further reinforced by the extra funding awarded to our Advocacy Development Project.

It was an absolute privilege to be part of the panel celebrating six years of Age Cymru's cARTrefu programme, that brought artistic and creative experiences to older people living in care homes in February.

The rising cost of living and the impact of energy costs have been high on the agenda at Age Cymru since the beginning of 2022 and we continue to call on the Welsh Government and the Westminster Government to take action to provide greater support for older people at this difficult time.



We're also encouraging people to maximise their income by checking their entitlements. We know for example that 40% of people entitled to Pension Credit are not receiving it, often because they think they won't get it and so don't claim. So please check and encourage others to do the same.

As we head towards Spring, we are once more working with our partners in the national older people's organisations to conduct a Wales-wide survey to inform our understanding of how older people in Wales experienced the pandemic and to help us identify what steps need to be taken to aid recovery.

The information we have collected over the last two years has proved invaluable in making sure older people's voices are being heard by Welsh Government, Members of the Senedd and other key decision makers. We'd encourage anyone aged over 50 to share your experiences and views.

And, talking of Spring, what a great time to join one of our walking groups! Or perhaps to volunteer for Culture Club? Or take part in our Consultative Forum.

Details about all these projects and how to get involved are available within this newsletter. We hope you enjoy this issue – we'd love to hear what you think so please let us know.



National survey of the pandemic for the over 50s in Wales

We wish to invite anyone aged over 50 living in Wales to take part in our national survey to gain an understanding of how they fared during the pandemic and help us identify what is needed to aid recoveries so we can work with the Welsh Government and other service providers.

We want to hear about people's access to health and social care, and how this may have affected their physical and mental well-being, and whether this has meant an increase in caring responsibilities.

We want to know if the over 50s were forced to stop working during the pandemic, whether they've been able to return to the same job, find new work, or had retirement plans impacted.

We also want to know how the over 50s feel about getting out into the local community. Do they feel confident that it is safe and if not, what measures would need to be introduced?

To take part in our research, funded by Welsh Government, people may request a copy of the survey in either English or Welsh from: Age Cymru, FREEPOST RTZG-JHGC-RYJJ, Mariners House, Trident Court, East Moors Road, CARDIFF CF24 5TD

Or people can complete our survey online in English or Welsh by visiting: www.agecymru.org.uk/covid19survey

The deadline to submit the questionnaire is Friday 25 March 2022

Age Cymru gains Advocacy Quality Performance Mark (QPM)

Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) for the work it delivers through projects such as HOPE and Dementia Advocacy.

The QPM is the UK's only independent quality performance mark for organisations like Age Cymru offering independent advocacy; an essential service for people who need support to express their needs and enable them to have increased choice and control in their lives.

To gain the QPM, the Charity's work in this area had to undergo a rigorous self-assessment process and policy review followed by a structured site visit by NDTi assessors who met some of our advocates and the people they support.

Louise Hughes who heads up the Charity's advocacy work said: "I am absolutely thrilled with this award as it demonstrates that we are providing excellent services to people often experiencing challenging situations in their lives. It also shows that we have the training and policies in place to help ensure that older people's rights are upheld, and their preferences are heard and responded to."

For further information about our advocacy work call 029 2043 1555, email: advocacy@agecymru.org.uk or visit: www.agecymru.org.uk/advocacy



Charity secures funding for human rights project

Age Cymru has secured funding from the Welsh Government to raise awareness of human rights and its importance for older people.

The project, which will run until June 2022, will engage with older people across Wales to embed the message that they are citizens and participants in society who should expect to have their human rights upheld.

The project is producing a short film, introduced by Age Cymru chair, Professor John Williams, featuring older people talking about human rights in their own words.

It will also be working with the Charity's advocacy team to design a toolkit to help older people and their advocates start conversations about their rights.

Project co-ordinator Rachel Dawson says: "The topic of human rights can sometimes sound abstract or academic, but every day we encounter situations that relate to our human rights. We all have the right to live with dignity, to make our own choices, and to have our views respected. "

If you would like to hear more about this work or invite us to come and speak to your group, please email Rachel.Dawson@agecymru.org.uk or call 029 2043 1555.

Social Care Wales have released two booklets about the human rights of older people: Making Rights Work For Older People that is aimed at health and social care professionals; and Guidance on Understanding Your Care and Support Rights as an Older Person.



Extra year of funding for our dementia advocacy project

Age Cymru's Dementia Advocacy project has been awarded a year's continuation funding from the Welsh Government's managed integrated care fund.

Since October 2020 the project has been delivering independent and non-statutory advocacy for older people all over Wales who are living with dementia and memory concerns.

The advocacy support has been vital in helping people express themselves and have a voice in their own lives. It's also helped ensure that decisions made about individuals respects their advanced wishes and the way they have chosen to live their life.

Age Cymru's dementia advocacy project manager, Ben Hodge says "This additional funding means we can build on what we have learned and developed since our dementia advocacy project started in 2020.

"Our dementia advocates go from strength to strength in their expertise and the standards they can achieve for the older people we work with. The project's continuation funding means that we can keep improving our service, reach more older people and continue raising the voices of older people living with dementia and memory concerns across Wales."



Charity calls on Welsh Government to include older people on pension credit within the Winter Fuel Support Scheme

Age Cymru recently joined forces with the Older People's Commissioner to call on the Welsh Government to include older people claiming pension credit within the Winter Fuel Support scheme.

In a joint statement the two organisations said that the Welsh Government must urgently change the eligibility criteria for the Winter Fuel Support Scheme to ensure that older people claiming Pension Credit can access the financial support they need to keep themselves safe and warm

The statement also said older people are facing tough challenges in several other areas which is leading to a real cost of living crisis. This includes the increasing price of basic food staples, older workers facing the highest rate of redundancy of all age groups, and many older people having to pay for their own health and social care due to delays caused by the pandemic or reduce their working hours to look after loved ones.

For more information about this and other campaigns please contact our Head of Policy and Campaigns Heather Ferguson on 029 2043 1555 or email heather.ferguson@agecymru.org.uk



Celebrating the success of cARTrefu – bringing creative activities into care homes since 2015

cARTrefu, which means to reside in Welsh, has been developing artistic and creative activities in care homes since 2015 to become the largest project of its kind in Europe.

As well as engaging care home residents, the project also helps to foster a greater appreciation of the arts amongst care home staff as they work alongside the cARTrefu artists.

One of the key objectives of the project, funded by the Baring Foundation and the Arts Council of Wales, is to equip care home staff with the skills, and the confidence, to work with their residents on creative activities which will hopefully enable care homes to continue using creative activities long after the cARTrefu artist has left the care home.

To celebrate the project's achievements, and to thank the participating care homes and artists, the team held a celebration on 16 February to launch a virtual exhibition of some of the artwork created during the last six years.

To view the exhibition visit: www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/our-work/arts-and-creativity/cartrefu/

Free home energy checks in Powys

Older people in Powys who are on a low income, suffering long-term health conditions, and living in a hard-to-heat home could be eligible for a free home energy check from Age Cymru Powys.

Through the sessions, the Charity can provide advice and free energy saving kit to clients through its Home Energy Officer. They can replace light bulbs with more energy efficient ones, provide draft proofing, install heat reflectors behind radiators, and insulate hot water tanks.

They can provide a wide range of advice at home or over the telephone and cover issues such as electrical safety, health conditions related to cold homes, energy use, how heating systems work, and various money matters.

The sessions can also cover the legal rights and responsibilities of energy

suppliers, payment methods, priority service registers and sources of further support.

For further information call 01597 825908, visit www.agecymru.org.uk/powys or email enquiries@acpowys.org.uk



Three Nations Conference, headlined by Ruby Wax, putting age inclusion on business and government agendas

Business in the Community (BITC) Cymru, together with Age Cymru and with support from The National Lottery Community Fund, launched a three nations Age at Work online conference in March 2022 with participants from Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

The conference's keynote speaker was mental health campaigner, broadcaster and best-selling author Ruby Wax, OBE. Using her education in psychology and psychotherapy, Ruby now teaches business communication in the public and private sector. At the conference she shared her optimistic outlook on how businesses that value people of all ages hold a key to success.

Age Cymru's Chief Executive Victoria Lloyd said, "Some older workers need support to confidently own the later stages of their career, to financially plan their retirement, or indeed to reclaim their place in the employment market. Later life can throw up health challenges, changes of lifestyle and new carer responsibilities. It is important for older workers to understand their rights, and to be supported to continue to make a valued and valuable contribution in the workplace.

For more information about Age at Work please contact Michael Phillips on 029 20 43 1555 or email michael.phillips@agecymru.org.uk

Later life planning – supporting you and your loved ones during difficult times

The Covid-19 pandemic has made us think, more than ever, about what's important to us, including what we would like the end of our life to be like, and how we would like to be cared for if we fall ill and are no longer able to communicate our wishes. Thinking about this can be difficult, but it doesn't need to be. Ensuring that your loved ones know your wishes can be empowering for you and can take much of the stress away if they already know what you want.

We're likely to live around a fifth of our lives with some form of ill health, it's important that our loved ones know how we wish to be cared for if we become ill in later life.

One way to achieve this is through **Advance Decisions** or **Living Wills** which document what we want to happen if we're not able to communicate our own decisions because, for example, we become unconscious or develop dementia.

Appointing a **power of attorney** ensures your wishes are carried out if you lose capacity to make decisions. This is a legally recognised document that enables someone to make decisions on your behalf. It doesn't have to be permanent if, for example, you only need them to look after your affairs during a stay in hospital.

It's also important to make a valid **Will** because if you die without one your money and possessions may not go to the people you want them to.

If you're not sure how to raise these sensitive issues with your loved ones, Hospice UK has some useful tips:

- Try to make sure you're in the right place and the right time – you don't want to be stressed or rushed.
- Look for a 'prompt' that can help you start. It could be up and coming retirement, a recent bereavement, a change in health or something similar.
- Think about starting with something like, "Have you wondered what would happen if..." Or "Do you think we should talk about ..."
- You might want to reassure them that you're not talking about this now because you're very ill and have kept something from them.
- We all worry about hurting our loved ones, so if you're worried about how the conversation will go, you could try talking it through with someone else you trust first.
- If you're worried about not saying the things you need to say, you could write them down first or put them in a letter.
- You don't have to talk about everything in one go – having several conversations over time can help and it give you both time to reflect and think things through.

Age Cymru has a range of resources that can help with advance care planning and later life planning; call 0300 303 44 98 or visit www.agecymru.org.uk/LLP



Age Cymru's Consultative Forum seeking new members

Age Cymru's Consultative Forum is looking for new members to share their experiences of living as an older person in Wales, scrutinise the Charity's policies and priorities, and contribute to its policy development programme. In effect the Forum provides feedback on everything the Charity does.

Any older person living in Wales is welcome to join the Forum, but it would particularly like to hear from Welsh speakers, people from ethnic minority and LGBTQ+ communities, as

well as those living in sheltered or supported housing.

In addition to individual members, the Forum also has representatives from older people's organisations and groups who make contributions from national, regional, local, and individual perspectives.

If you're interested in joining our Forum, please either email or call Kathy Lye: kathy.lye@agecymru.org.uk or 029 2043 1570.

Tell Me More shedding light on the experiences of care home residents

Through its Tell Me More project, Age Cymru has gained an invaluable insight into the lives of more than 100 care home residents across Wales during the pandemic.

Funded by the Welsh Government, the project used professional artists to talk with residents, via Zoom, about aspects such as their feelings, what they missed most, and what they were looking forward to once the pandemic ends.

As a reward for taking part in the project the artists offered to provide each participant with a portrait sketched during the conversations. The artists then added some animation software to the sketches to produce a moving picture to go alongside the recorded voices.

And all the recordings and animations were then brought together to produce a unique 10-minute film that was made available to all care homes in Wales during March 2022.

Age Cymru's Care Home Network Manager, Suzy Webster says "We've been privileged to be welcomed into the homes of the people who have been affected greatly by all sorts of challenges such as intermittent and extended lockdowns, the implementation of safety measures and restrictions, and of course

being separated from their loved ones.

"We spoke with one hundred and five residents across twenty-two care homes listening unconditionally to the challenges and frustrations they had to face. We've heard heart-breaking stories of loss that demonstrated incredible levels of resilience. And we've been met with humour and hope from the darkest of times."

For more information about the Tell Me More project please contact Suzy Webster on 029 2043 1555, email suzy.webster@agecymru.org.uk, or visit www.agecymru.org.uk/tellmemore





Charity' walking groups aiming to get the least active moving

Age Cymru's recently established walking groups aim to encourage the less active older people to give walking a try as Covid related restrictions ease.

The group walks are led by friendly, specially trained volunteers who make sure no one gets left behind and that everyone can walk at a pace that's comfortable for them. The volunteers also provide a safe, sociable, and fun environment that gives older walkers a chance to make new friends and discover new walks in and around local areas.

Age Cymru's Healthy Ageing Co-ordinator Amy Lloyd explains "Our walks are short and over easy terrain. They are open to everyone but are especially aimed at those who are less active.

"Sometimes overlooked as a form of exercise, walking has many great benefits from strengthening your heart, lungs, and muscles to building stamina and maintaining a healthy weight. It can also help with your mental health, improve self-esteem, mood, and sleep quality, while reducing stress, anxiety, and fatigue.

"Walking is a low impact exercise, so it is easy for anyone to get involved, even if you are not feeling your best and requires little equipment."

For more information about walks in your local area please email walkinggroups@agecymru.org.uk or call 029 2043 1555. We also need more volunteer walk leaders so get in touch if you think you'd like to get involved.



Volunteers needed to join our Culture Club and help isolated older people visit cultural sites across Wales

Pilot scheme to start in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan

Age Cymru is seeking volunteers who are passionate about our cultural sites such as museums, public art works, and parks, to join our newly formed Culture Club and support isolated older people to visit and enjoy such sites.

The main aims behind Culture Club, funded by the Welsh Government, are to build the confidence of isolated older people, help them to make new friends, and encourage them to get out and about to safely enjoy our many cultural sites, with the help of a friendly volunteer.

The volunteers may travel with the older people, or they may meet them at the site, whichever suits both parties best. The volunteers, who will receive training from the Charity, will be matched with between one and four older people for monthly meet-ups.

Culture Club will initially run a pilot project

in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan during springtime before extending the project into other parts of Wales later in the year.

Age Cymru's Kelly Barr, who will oversee the project, says "We know that lots of older people are living lonely and isolated lives and although many of them are interested in our cultural sites, they do not have the confidence to visit them on their own.

"This lack of confidence has, for many, been made worse by the pandemic with some older people shielding and not visiting their usual places of socialisation. We hope that Culture Club can be the kick start they need to get back out into their communities and start enjoying many of our cultural sites once more."

If you feel like you may benefit from either joining, or volunteering, with Culture Club please email kelly.barr@agecymru.org.uk, call 029 2043 1555, or visit www.agecymru.org.uk/volunteer

Recruiting volunteers to join our Friend in Need telephone befriending service

Age Cymru is looking to recruit volunteers to join its Friend in Need telephone befriending service.

Our volunteers, or befrienders, are asked to engage in friendly conversation with the person they're matched with to help alleviate feelings of isolation and loneliness through a weekly telephone friendship call. Such social interaction can also help build confidence and self-esteem in the older person.

Volunteers will be given an induction and training on how to start a call, what to do in the middle, and how to end a call. It will also cover what to do on more challenging calls or if they suspect someone may be at risk.

This is what one of our current volunteers thinks about the service: "To me befriending is a very small way I can make a difference to somebody's life, someone who is lonely and maybe frightened, someone who doesn't have anyone else to talk to, or doesn't want to burden their family with their worries. I am a befriender to two ladies, both of whom say they look forward to our weekly chats. It doesn't take much of my time and they find it reassuring to know somebody is going to make the effort to check on them."

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please email us on friends@agecymru.org.uk or call 029 2043 1555.



Make sure you're claiming all your benefits and entitlements

With the expected £600 rise in energy bills for the average household this April, together with rising inflation, life is becoming extremely challenging for many older people living on low fixed incomes. It's therefore more important than ever for older people to claim all their benefits and entitlements which is why we've pulled together the following 'Benefits at a Glance.'

It's a brief overview of the benefits you may be eligible for and how much you could get. They fall into three categories: your pension, your home, and your wellbeing.

Your pension

- State Pension - Up to £179.60 per week depending on the National Insurance contributions made during your working years
- Pension Credit - Guarantee Credit - Tops up your income to at least £177.10 per week for single people and £270.30 for couples
- Pension Credit - Savings Credit - Up to £14.04 per week for single people or £15.71 per week for couples

Your home

- Council Tax Reduction Schemes - Amount varies but may cover your Council Tax in full
- Housing Benefit - Amount varies but may cover your rent in full
- Winter Fuel Payment - One annual payment, normally £200 if you're under 80 and £300 if you're 80 or over
- Cold Weather Payment - £25 per week when the weather is very cold.
- Warm Home Discount - A one-off discount on your energy bill from your supplier

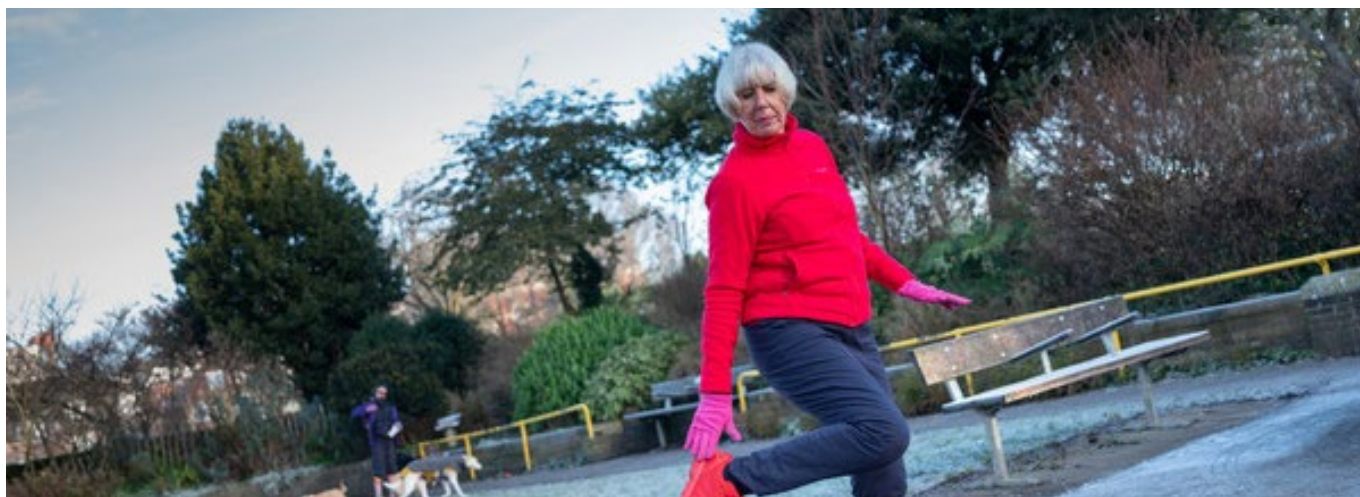
Your wellbeing

- Attendance Allowance - £60.00 per week if you need help in the day or at night. £89.60 if you need help in the day and at night

- Carer's Allowance - £67.60 per week if you care for someone
- Help with health costs - Amount varies. Helps towards the cost of dental treatment, glasses or contact lenses and certain travel costs to receive NHS treatment
- Help with urgent or one-off expenses - There's a range of help available, depending on your circumstances

For more information on benefits and entitlements contact Age Cymru Advice on 0300 303 44 98, email advice@agecymru.org.uk, or visit www.agecymru.org.uk/benefits





Run the Cardiff Half Marathon and raise funds for Age Cymru

If you're looking for a new challenge, then why not run the Cardiff Half Marathon on 2 October 2022 to raise funds and help us continue supporting older people in Wales.

Join our Age Cymru team and we'll give you a free space and lots of support throughout your training. In return all you have to do is pledge to raise £300 in sponsorship.

If you've already signed up for the Cardiff Half Marathon but still want to fundraise for us, just simply get in touch and we'll support you all the way.

For more information email fundraising@agecymru.org.uk



Donating

There are many ways you can donate to our Charity from leaving a legacy to making a donation in memory, or you can simply donate online right now. For more details please visit: www.agecymru.org.uk/donate

Fundraising activities

There are all sorts of fundraising events available. For the more energetic fundraiser we could link you up to a challenge event, or perhaps a half or even a full marathon. For those who prefer more gentle pastimes we have the Big Knit where you can knit little woolly hats for our Big Knit campaign. For more details about our fundraising events please visit: www.agecymru.org.uk/getinvolved

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

Age Matters

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