

Speaking Up for Our Age

The Messenger

Issue 33 March 2010

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Help the Aged yng Nghymru
Help the Aged in Wales

Welcome

This update from the Speaking Up for Our Age programme in Wales brings news of, and for, older people's forums across Wales.

If you would like further information about any of the items featured in this issue please get in touch.

Kathy Lye
Engagement Support Assistant

Included in this issue

News from forums in

- Cardiff
- Neath Port Talbot

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News from forums

Cardiff

The **Cardiff Older Persons Forum** has been working hard in 2008 and 2009 to promote the voice and needs of older people in the city.

The forum developed a project involving members of the executive committee visiting care homes in Cardiff, comparing the standards and making recommendations to the council. The project has now been extended to include Newport and Barry. The forum has also developed the project to include visiting accommodation for the homeless in Cardiff.

The forum has been developing its representation of older people in the city by meeting with members of the Cardiff Minority Ethnic Elders Council.

With the help of the Strategy Co-ordinator, John Gorwill, the Cardiff Older Persons Forum is now a registered charity. It is hoped that this will enable the forum to become more independent, seeking its own funding and setting its own agenda.

We have regular contact with many older people's forums across Wales. If your forum has not been mentioned in this issue and you would like to feature in a future edition please contact us:

Tel: 029 2043 1570

Email: SUFOAWales@helptheagedwales.org.uk

Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales, Tŷ John Pathy, 13/14 Neptune Court, Vanguard Way, Cardiff, CF24 5PJ

Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales have joined together to form a single new charity (regd.no. 1128436) dedicated to improving the lives of older people. From Spring 2010, we will be known as Age Cymru.

A new structure has been introduced for the forum's question time, ensuring all members have an opportunity to express their views.

As well as the work carried out by the forum in general, some members have been involved in other projects in the community. As well as the annual Christmas dinner event for older people, there has been involvement in raising money to buy and distribute sleeping bags to homeless people and a coffee morning with Cardiff Council and the Royal National Institute for the Blind.

Report submitted by Toni Verderame, Chair, Cardiff Older Persons Forum.

Neath Port Talbot

Neath Abbey and District Older People's Forum held a meeting on Friday 12th February at the Old Town Hall in Neath to discuss the Welsh Assembly Government's Green Paper on Paying for Care in Wales.

Gwenda Thomas AM, Deputy Minister for Social Services attended the event and spoke briefly about the proposed options for reforming the current social care system.

Report submitted by Sheila Manning, Neath Abbey and District Older People's Forum.

News from Speaking Up for Our Age

Staff news

The restructuring of Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales is continuing and a new Engagement team has been created to continue the work carried out by the Speaking Up for Our Age programme and the Welsh Council on Ageing. Recently, a number of appointments have been made to the team.

Deborah Boyce has been appointed Engagement Manager, Christine Thomas will be starting in her new role as Engagement

Development Officer in April and Kathy Lye has been appointed as the Engagement Support Assistant.

Liz Stephenson, Part-time Engagement Support Assistant, has decided that she will not be returning to the Charity following her maternity leave – we all wish Liz and her family well.

Reference group

The latest meeting of the Speaking Up for Our Age Reference Group was held in Cardiff on Tuesday 9th March. Among the items discussed were the continuing plans for a Consultative Forum for the new charity and further ways to involve older people in the charity's work.

The next meeting is being arranged for June 2010.

The Messenger

Some readers may be aware that Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales produce a newsletter called *Llais Ni* (Our Voice). It is distributed on a quarterly basis and includes letters, articles and stories from older people across Wales.

In order to prevent duplication of information, it has been suggested that *The Messenger* and *Llais Ni* be amalgamated into one newsletter to be distributed to all our contacts across Wales. We would like to hear your views on this.

If you have any comments or suggestions for the future of the engagement newsletters, please contact Kathy Lye on 029 2043 1570 or via email at kathy.lye@helptheagedwales.org.uk

Conference news

As reported in the December issue of *The Messenger*, an external funding bid was

submitted to enable the Speaking Up for Our Age conference to take place this year. Unfortunately, the bid was not successful.

We are continuing to seek funding opportunities for a conference to take place later in the year and will continue with updates in future issues of *The Messenger*.

News from Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales

New charity brand

Readers may be aware that the new name for the merged charity will be Age Cymru.

Monday 19th April sees Age Cymru begin to use its new name, logo and brand. As part of the rebranding process, and to make sure all stock of useful literature is used up, there may be times when you will still see Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales brochures and leaflets.

Also on April 19th, Age Cymru is hosting an event for an invited audience of older people to quiz politicians. The Question Time style event is being chaired by BBC Wales' Adrian Masters and leading Assembly Members, Gwenda Thomas, Ieuan Wyn Jones, Kirsty Williams, and Mark Isherwood will face questions from up to 100 older people.

The Age Agenda for the General Election

Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales' have produced a manifesto entitled 'A new decade for older people in Wales: The age agenda for the 2010 General Election'. It contains a number of calls for MPs and political parties which are based on extensive consultation with older people and with Age Concern organisations in Wales conducted late last year. Thank you to those who contributed to the manifesto development.

Older people in Wales are still acutely affected by decisions taken at Westminster. Our demands in the manifesto include:

- **Tackling poverty** among older people through better state pension, automatic benefit payments and action on fuel poverty and energy prices
- **Equal respect for everyone** by getting rid of age discrimination which forces people into retirement, drives up insurance premiums for older people and denies them access to health services
- **Supporting older people's independence** through reforming the care system, safeguarding disability benefits and by ensuring health services treat older people with dignity

The General Election presents a real opportunity to focus the minds of candidates on the needs and aspirations of older people, and to remind them that older people are a key voting force and will play a major part in determining the election results in all constituencies.

If you would like to receive copies of the manifesto, please contact Amy Clifton on 029 2043 1458 or via email at amy.clifton@accymru.org.uk

Consultative Forum

A further Have Your Say event was held in Colwyn Bay in January which included discussions about the proposed development of a Consultative Forum for the new charity.

For those who were not able to attend this event or the previous events held in October, copies of a questionnaire about the proposed Consultative Forum and the way the charity provides information to older people are available by contacting Kathy Lye on 029 2043 5170 or via email at kathy.lye@helptheagedwales.org.uk

Notes from all the meetings are being collated. We will keep readers updated on developments in future issues of *The Messenger*.

Paying for care consultations

Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales held events in Colwyn Bay, Cardiff and Carmarthen during January and February to enable older people to contribute their views in relation to the Welsh Assembly Government's Future of Paying for Care in Wales Green Paper.

Following a brief presentation, attendees took part in workshop sessions to discuss the proposals set out in the Green Paper consultation document.

Almost 90 older people from across Wales attended the events. Their views will inform the charity's response to the Green Paper, copies of which will be available in the near future.

Gwanwyn Festival

Gwanwyn, which means 'Spring' in Welsh, is an annual festival that celebrates older age as a time of opportunity for renewal, growth and creativity. The aim is to offer opportunities for greater participation by older people in the arts.

All applications for funding have been received and events will be taking place across Wales in May. Keep an eye out for an insert in your local press in April listing the events that will be taking place in your area.

For more information, please contact the Gwanwyn team on 029 2043 1555 or via email at gwanwyn@accymru.org.uk
More can also be found on the website at www.gwanwyn.org.uk

Campaign News

Defending the Welfare State and Public Services

The National Pensioners Convention (NPC) has been involved in organising a march and rally to be held in London on Saturday 10th April. The rally is entitled 'Defending the Welfare State and Public Services' and is supported by all the major unions.

NPC is calling for forums and older people's groups to support the rally, but stresses that it is an event for all ages, as the issue affects everyone in the UK.

More information can be found at www.npcuk.org

If you would like to attend the rally, please contact Shirley Whitman, Secretary NPC Wales on 029 2049 1063 or via email on shirley1934@hotmail.co.uk

Community Calculator

Have you filled in a Community Calculator and sent it back to us?

The Community Calculator will allow you to assess your community according to the 10 principles of Towards Common Ground:

- Access to local amenities
- public transport
- public seating and places to rest
- public toilets
- pavements
- neighbourhood safety
- places to meet
- information and advice
- your home
- your voice

You will give each principle a score out of 10, giving a total score of 100. The higher the overall score you give your community, the more age friendly it is.

The campaign aims to work with your local authority in order to 'age-proof' communities in the area and to mainstream these 10 principles into their planning and regeneration policies.

The campaign would greatly benefit from your involvement by filling in a Community Calculator. You could also use it as an activity for your forum, group or network. You would require one Community Calculator per person.

Please help us to distribute the Community Calculator to older people and community groups in your area, especially in Caerphilly, Pembrokeshire, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Wrexham, Anglesey and Torfaen.

To get free Community Calculators please call Mared Williams on 029 2043 1571 or email mared.williams@helptheagedwales.org.uk

News from the Assembly

Framework of Services for Older People

The Welsh Assembly Government is seeking to develop information about services which older people find helpful in maintaining their independence.

There are many examples in Wales of good services which promote independence for older people, but in some areas, the range of services is not as effective as it should be.

The purpose of gathering the information is to provide local authorities, the NHS and their partners with examples of good practice relating to effective local services that respond to the needs and concerns of older people and their carers. The information will then be used to develop an all Wales Framework within which the planning and delivery of services can be developed at a local level whilst still ensuring service consistency and good practice across Wales.

This is an opportunity for older people in every local authority area in Wales to contribute to the future planning of their local services and to promote the effective services already in place.

If you, your family or someone you know values a service in your area and would like to contribute, please contact

Sarah Austin
Office of the Director of Social Services
Wales
Pillar H02, 4th Floor
Welsh Assembly Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Sarah.Austin@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Boiler scrappage scheme

From Thursday 1st April, people over 60 in Wales will be able to take advantage of a scheme designed to improve boiler efficiency and save money on fuel bills.

The boiler scrappage scheme is open to those who have an inefficient, G-rated boiler. Eligible applicants will receive a voucher worth £500 towards replacing it with a new, A-rated boiler. The energy saving for an average household can be up to £235 and significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Details of the application process and delivery system have yet to be finalised; we will keep readers updated when the details are released.

Other News

Older People's Commissioner's Review

The Older People's Commissioner has the legal power to review public bodies and propose ways of improving their services.

Ruth Marks has announced that her first review will focus on older people in a health care or social care setting and whether they are treated with dignity and respect. This area was chosen because since its inception in 2008, the Commission has received a large amount of correspondence on this subject from older people, their families and carers.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact the Older People's Commission on 08442 640670 or via email at ask@olderpeoplewales.com

Growing Old Disgracefully Photography Competition

NIACE Dysgu Cymru and the Wales Millennium Centre are working together to present an exhibition of photography called 'Growing Old Disgracefully'. The exhibition is part of the Gwanwyn Festival which celebrates creativity in older age.

Growing Old Disgracefully will feature selected digital photographs submitted from all over Wales. The judging panel are looking for photographs of older people learning or taking part in surprising activities. The selected photographs will be on show throughout May at the Wales Millennium Centre.

Photographs can be submitted by members of any age group, but must feature an older person. If you or someone you know is an older person with an unusual, unexpected or adventurous hobby, or would like to learn one, then this is the competition for you.

The closing date for entries is Thursday 1 April. Full details of the competition and examples of photographs from the 2009 competition can be found at www.flickr.com/groups/ffotosgrowingold

Fix My Street website

Fix My Street is a website that can be used to report and discuss local problems such as potholes, broken paving slabs, graffiti or street lighting.

This useful website can be found at www.fixmystreet.com

Diary Dates

Defending the Welfare State and Public Services Rally

Saturday 10th April 2010, London