



Beyond 50 Newsletter
December 2023

To our readers,

A warm hello to the first edition of Age Cymru West Glamorgan's Beyond 50 Newsletter.

Becoming older is a natural phase of life many of us will experience. Will writing, retirement, home adaptations, and changes to your family and social commitments are all things you may start thinking about when you're aged 50 and over.

Change is on the horizon, but how do you approach this life transition with the same confidence of your younger years? At Age Cymru West Glamorgan, we believe the answer is in ageing well.

Through this newsletter, we will bring you the latest news, information and resources relative to this time of your life, and to anyone with an interest in ageing well. You may be a carer or relative of an older person, or perhaps even a doctor, nurse, community care worker, or community support group facilitator – this newsletter is for you too.

Throughout this issue, you will find listings and information on local events and news from across Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend. We hope you find this go-to guide helpful in making new connections and maintaining those you've already established.

Head to page 5 for practical information like our advice guide for claiming the Warm Home Discount for 2023.

As this is our first edition, we welcome any feedback on what you'd like to see in future issues! Please email communications@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk.

Many thanks and happy reading!

From the Age Cymru West Glamorgan Team

Don't miss out!

[Sign up here to receive the next issue of our Beyond 50 Bulletin](#)

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Getting Ready to Retire?

Data from the Office for National Statistics has revealed that a record number of people aged 50+ have transitioned to part-time work in preparation for their retirement.

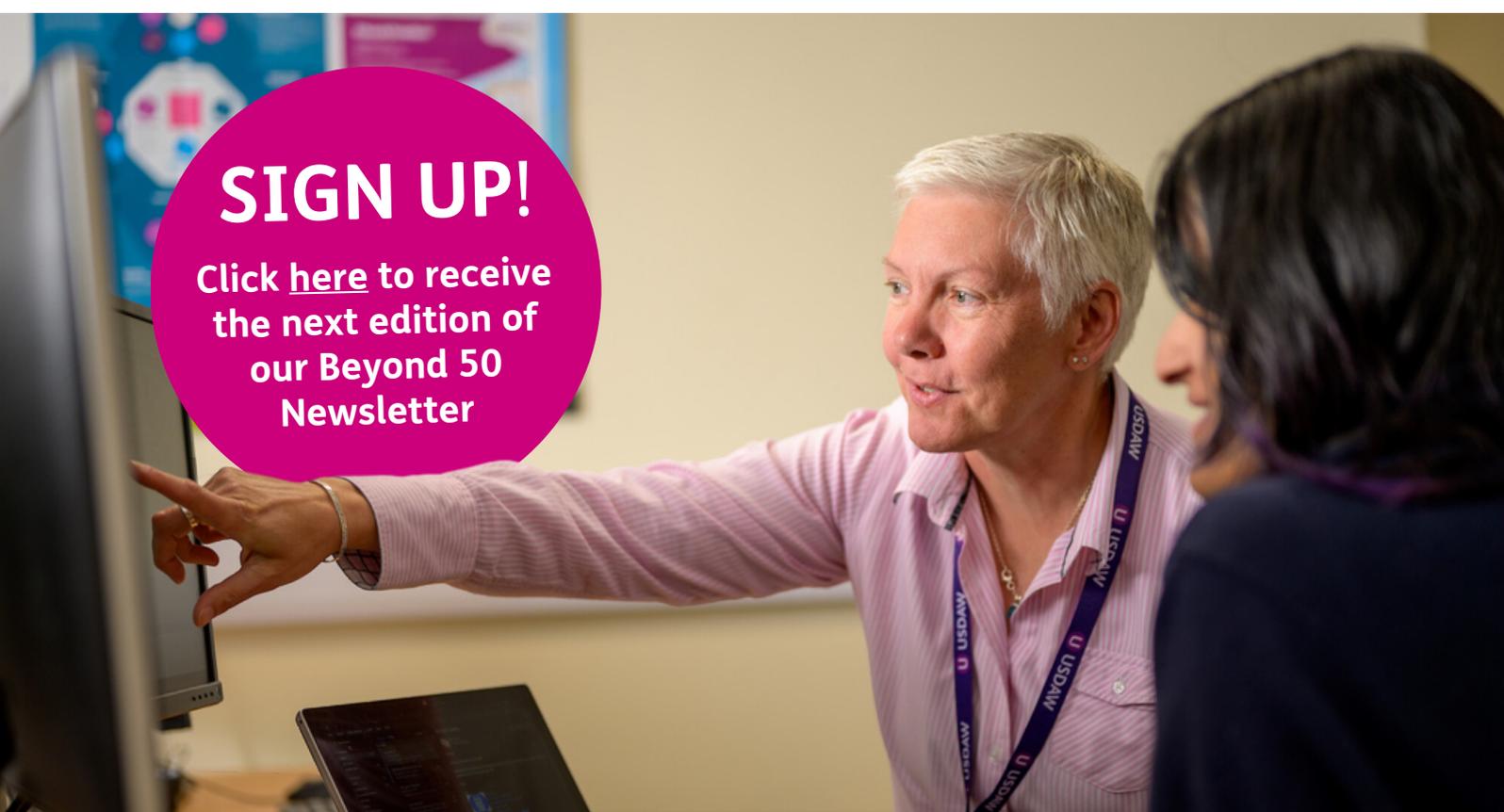
With studies showing that there has been a 26% increase in the last decade of people aged 50 plus working part-time, this recently released statistic is changing the way we see working up to retirement, bringing the possibility of more flexible career paths.

As we're living longer and healthier lives and in line with the new pension age announcement, many people aren't quite ready to leave the world of work, which can provide much needed

socialisation alongside a reliable and steady income. Working part-time can help ease the transition into full-time retirement which can seem daunting for many, instead offering more of a work-life balance as you get older.

Age-inclusive and flexible working policies are now becoming a priority in the workplace, and this is a fantastic step towards a more positive work environment for older people, helping you to age well with support from your employer.

Find out more about guidance and initiatives available [here](#).



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Top Tips for Enjoying Your Retirement

Whether you're reducing your hours to part-time, or are getting ready to retire from work altogether, deciding how you will use your free time will ensure you can enjoy this positive change as you deserve to.

Here are our top tips for getting the most enjoyment from your changed working pattern and retirement.

Find A Hobby

Start to think about a hobby that interests you. Drawing, painting, knitting, yoga, swimming, hiking. It could be anything. Then look for local places that offer groups, lessons or services for your new-found passion. You'll make lots of friends too!

Check what's on at your local leisure centre, village hall, college, [local U3A group](#), or our [What's On Guide](#) for activities and groups in your area.



Embrace Technology

Staying connected isn't always easy, but with the help of a mobile phone, laptop or tablet, it can be made more accessible. The world of technology allows us to stay in the loop with phone calls, text message and emails with the people we love. Lots of libraries offer sessions on improving technology skills, so check out your local library for something similar.

- [Swansea Libraries](#)
- [NPT Libraries](#)
- [Bridgend Libraries](#)

What's On in Your Local Area

[CLICK HERE TO JOIN OUR MAILING LIST](#)

There are lots of exciting events, classes and dates to mark in your calendar over the coming months. We've put together some of our favourites to help you love later life, including local book clubs, knitting and crocheting, yoga classes, group walks and much more.



You can now view our full [What's On Guide](#) for Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Bridgend and the surrounding areas, on our website.

Don't forget – Odeon offer a fabulous film deal at just £3.50pp, inclusive of tea, coffee and biscuits. You can get more information on our [What's On Guide](#).

Common Ailments Service

Experiencing a minor illness and not sure who to go to for help? If you're unable to reach your doctor, but are experiencing symptoms from a mild illness, the Common Ailments Service can assist.

Through this NHS funded service, pharmacists can offer free advice and over-the-counter and prescription medicines to take some pressure off local GPs, helping you to get better, faster. Covering a range of over 25 conditions, this scheme can help to

support you with everyday non-urgent conditions, reducing your time spent waiting for an appointment at your local medical centre.

The Common Ailments Scheme includes things such as sore throat, lower back pain, mouth ulcers, diarrhoea and constipation, dry eyes, thrush, dry skin, warts and verrucae, haemorrhoids and much more.

You can find out more [here](#), or visit your local pharmacy to have a chat about the service.

Stay Cosy This Winter

Are you concerned about the rising cost of bills this winter?

With winter well and truly here, last year's lingering energy bill inflation costs are at the forefront of all our minds. We can offer some advice and practical help for keeping the cold away.



Free Home Energy Check

We can offer a FREE home energy check to ensure your home energy needs are met, and that you're being as energy efficient as possible.

With our Warm Homes Project, we can send out a trained handyman who will visit your home and evaluate your home energy set up, to give you peace of mind.

They can also install energy efficient equipment at no extra cost, such as light bulbs and reflective radiator panels, to help ensure you're not wasting energy when your appliances are turned on.



Our Warm Homes Project helps by:

- Increasing your income through Benefit Entitlement Checks (BECs)
- Improving the energy efficiency of your home through small energy and thermal efficiency measures
- Improving understanding of keeping warm and well in winter and saving energy

Warm Home Discount Scheme

Many people are entitled to a one-off payment under the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

Eligible people can receive a £150 payment, given directly to energy suppliers to help combat electricity bills between early October 2023 and 31 March 2024.

You may qualify for this payment, if:

- You get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit
- Are on a low income and have high energy bills

The discount does not affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel

Payment, which are available to apply for separately. If you're eligible, you may receive a letter about the scheme by January 2024. If you do not get a letter and you think you're eligible, you must contact the Warm Home Discount Scheme before 29 February 2024.

For more information on the scheme, visit [here](#).

If you'd like to speak to someone about our Warm Homes Project, your entitlement for the Warm Home Discount Scheme, or any other help you may be entitled to, you can call our advice line on 01792 648866 or find out more [here](#).



Living with Dementia

Dementia is not an inevitable part of ageing, however, as we are living much longer and research develops, more people are getting diagnosed.

Knowing the earlier signs of dementia is essential for quicker diagnosis, and is key to accessing the correct support and medication, and can allow you to live a full and happy life with dementia. If you think your loved one

is showing signs of dementia or memory issues, monitor their behaviour, make a log of any new or out of character changes to their routine, and speak to a reputable organisation or medical professional. If you are concerned about your own health and the possibility of dementia, we encourage you to do the same and arrange an appointment with your GP promptly.

Dementia can be different for everyone, but in general, here are a few signs to keep an eye out for:

Sometimes forgetting where you parked your car or placed your glasses, keys, or mobile phone can happen to us all, but regularly putting things in unusual places, losing items or repeatedly getting lost can be a sign of something more serious. Becoming irritable when your daily routine is disrupted can be completely normal for lots of people, but noticeable changes in mood and personality, or irregular mood patterns such as agitation and mood swings might require further investigation.

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Local Dementia Support

If you are living with dementia or caring for someone with dementia, there are lots of groups and organisations that can provide you with advice and information.

Would you like to speak to someone in a relaxed environment?

Visit the Dementia Hwb Swansea, a unique information centre, run by a group of volunteers and professionals from local organisations who support those living with dementia and their loved ones.

Dementia Hwb Swansea is located in the Quadrant Shopping Centre and is open 7 days a week between 11am-3pm.

Find out more [here](#) or call 01792 304519.

Bridgend now also has its very own Dementia Hub, open 5 days a week, signposting its users to useful information and resources, activity-focused sessions, and a space for peer support.

You can find the Bridgend Dementia Hub at 63 Nolton Street, Bridgend, CF31 3AE.

Find out more [here](#) or call 0300 102 4970.

There is also support available through the Dementia Support Service across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot, a partnership between five key organisations.



These services include:

- Information and Advice
- Help at Home
- Housing Adaptation and Repairs
- Support and Guidance for Unpaid Carers and At Home Respite for Carers

Find out more [here](#) and get in touch today by calling 01792 277 778.

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Winter Warmer Recipe

Do the cold dark nights have you firing up the stove for a tasty winter treat? This delicious winter berry pie recipe from [Tesco](#), is a budget friendly pudding that will keep you warm and satisfy your sweet tooth.



Ingredients:

- 450g sweet shortcrust pastry mix
- 1 free-range egg, beaten
- 500g mixed berries, defrosted
- 100g golden granulated sugar, plus extra for sprinkling
- 1 vanilla pod

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to gas 6, 200°C, fan 180°C. Make the pastry following the pack instructions. On a lightly floured surface, roll two-thirds of the pastry into a circle to line a 23cm pie dish. Trim the edges and chill for 20 mins. Roll out the remaining pastry and cut into strips, place on a lined baking sheet and chill.
2. Remove the pie dish from the fridge and line with non-stick baking paper and baking beans. Bake for 12-15 mins, then remove the paper and beans. Brush with the beaten egg and bake for 5 mins.
3. Drain any liquid from the berries and toss with the sugar and seeds from the vanilla pod. Spoon into the pie dish, then use the pastry strips to make a lattice top. Brush with more beaten egg, sprinkle with sugar and bake for 30 mins until golden and the fruit is bubbling.

Top Tip:

If you don't want to spend time creating a lattice pastry top, this works just as well with a full-coverage pastry lid. Simply roll out your pastry and place on top of your sweet winter berry mix!

Managing the Menopause

**Are you experiencing menopause?
Approaching a new stage of life?
We've got some tips, resources and
local support groups to help.**

Menopause, for many, is a natural part of ageing. Although menopause can happen at any time, people aged 51 and over are most likely to recognise

the symptoms and the impact of the menopause on day-to-day life. It is a common misconception that menopause affects us only at the onset; it is something that may continue to affect us until much later on in life. No matter what stage of menopause you're at, there is help to support you through it.



There are many support groups and services in Swansea to help you through your journey and alleviate menopausal stresses you may be feeling and experiencing.

- [Menopause Café Swansea & South West Wales](#) (online)
- [Menopause Lounge Wales](#) (online)
- [Menopause Café](#) (in-person, Costa Coffee Swansea, Morfa Retail Park SA1 7BP)

If you're looking for medical guidance, please seek advice from your local GP.

[Read more from Age UK](#) on symptoms and how to access further support.

Do you know of any menopause support groups in Neath Port Talbot or Bridgend? We'd love to feature them in our next edition.

Please send details to communications@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk.

Connected for Christmas

Christmas is a wonderful time of year, filled with fairy lights and festive cheer, but for some it can feel lonely too. This Christmas, stay connected with the people you love and ensure your holiday season is filled with joy. Here are our top tips for making the most of this special season.

Send Cards

There's something very touching about receiving and sending Christmas cards. It is a tradition that we should always try to keep. Why not send a card to a faraway friend? Buying charity cards is a great way to give back to a good cause too.

Tip: Remember to check the last posting dates with Royal Mail



Make Time For Friends And Family

- ★ If you have friends and family nearby, ask them if you can join in with their Christmas plans. If your nearest and dearest live further afield, why not spend some time together over video call? If you are distanced from your relatives, there are lots of events in your local area to ensure you don't spend the month alone.

Find out more in our [What's On Guide](#).

Enjoy Your Local Groups

Refer to our [What's On Guide](#) to find all the local classes, groups and community events happening in your area. We guarantee there'll be something you'd like to try. Using public transport? Check the transport schedules ahead of time, as these can sometimes differ during the Christmas period.

Tell Us Your Thoughts

We are looking into securing funding to run some trips and events for people aged 50+ across the next calendar year. We would love to hear from you and find out exactly what you have in mind.

What would you like to do?
Where would you like to go?
Who would you take with you?

Help us plan for the year ahead by getting in touch with us to tell us what you'd like to see us do or provide. At Age Cymru West Glamorgan, we want to ensure you love later life.

To let us know your thoughts and help us shape our events calendar, please complete this survey [here](#).

Good News Spotlight

Throughout this issue, we've shared information on dementia, the Warm Home Discount and keeping warm and safe through winter.

At Age Cymru West Glamorgan, our priority is to offer support and practical help to older people within our communities to help them age and live well.

Last year, we were able to help Norma and her husband with not just her initial enquiry, but to access vital support that has improved both of their lives.

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Norma's Story

Norma called Age Cymru West Glamorgan in December, as she was struggling to find someone to fix her boiler.

The home she shared with her husband was freezing cold and she needed someone to help. When we spoke to Norma and gathered some of her information, it came to light that her husband had dementia. Our advisor informed Norma about our Dementia Pathfinding Project and she agreed to a referral.

While we sourced help for Norma's home and boiler situation, we knew there was much more we could do. We provided a personalised dementia support plan for both Norma and her husband, offered advice about living well, how to access practical supporting including home adaptations and transport options. We also discussed benefits, power of attorney and support for carers. Norma's husband was entitled to a DLA (Disability Living Allowance) review. Age Cymru West Glamorgan supported Norma and her husband to

complete the application form over the telephone. A full benefit check confirmed they would also be eligible for pension credit – after applying for carer's allowance, we were also on hand to support with this application too.

Within just a few weeks of contacting our team, Norma and her husband received a back payment of £2,589, with a regular weekly payment of £180.23. They have since received a 100% council tax discount, saving £1,560 a year. They were entitled to be in receipt of £900 in Cost-of-Living payments from the government this past year and have benefited from having a free TV licence, free NHS dental treatment and glasses.

When asked about her experience of contacting Age Cymru West Glamorgan, Norma said she was shocked to see a lump sum of £2,589 in her bank account and thought it must be a mistake. She said she 'had never had so much money before' and that this will make a huge difference to them both.

We are thrilled to have been able to help Norma and her husband access the support and benefits that they're entitled to, and otherwise may have been living without.



Help Us Support Even More People

At Age Cymru West Glamorgan, we want to continue helping more people to age well and enjoy later life. You can support us, and help us help more people within our communities by donating to our charity, or by joining our team of volunteers.

Become a Volunteer

Volunteering is hugely rewarding. If you have spare time and can offer this to support Age Cymru West Glamorgan, we would love to hear from you. We couldn't run our advice line and other services without the support of volunteers. There are lots of volunteering opportunities available on our website.

Please visit [here](#) to find out more, email volunteer@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk or call 01792 648866 and speak to Saffron Isaac to have a chat about our roles.

Donate to Us

You may not have time to volunteer – we understand! Life is busy for us all. Instead, you could consider supporting Age Cymru West Glamorgan by making a donation to our charity. We promise that your donations go directly to local communities across Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend.

To make a donation, please visit [here](#) or phone 01792 648866 to speak to a member of our team.



Ageing Well in Swansea

Guest feature

by Rhys Ananicz

Ageing Well Partnership & Involvement Co-Ordinator, from Age Friendly Swansea.

Over the past two years Swansea Council's Partnership and Involvement Team has worked with a wide range of partners in running a number of weekly community engagement sessions designed to combat loneliness and isolation. Activity has included exciting day trips which allow participants to build confidence, make new social connections and engage with community activities and projects which they may not have felt comfortable or able to do without support.

Ageing Well engagement started small and simple, with a weekly walk around Swansea Marina being the first engagement session to be set up. There were very modest numbers in attendance to begin with but now, two years on, the Thursday walk around Swansea Marina has anywhere between 75-100 regulars turning up

every week and was even featured on ITV news at the start of February. The walk has since been recognised on a national level and was nominated as a finalist for best wellbeing initiative in the APSE Service Awards 2023! This has been achieved by using flyers to advertise the walk but mainly through word of mouth, where the people in attendance have told friends about and invited friends along to join the group.

From chatting with people during the weekly walks and over a free hot drink which is provided afterwards, staff have been able to gain knowledge on what is important to people aged 50 and over in Swansea. Using this information, more and more engagement sessions have been put in place, the large majority of which are free to access, and we are now in a position where we have something available for people aged 50 and over to attend from Monday to Friday, every week.

Sessions are all very inclusive and we have tried to include a variety of options for people, from a cuppa and chat to bowling and a choir! We have a good number of people attending all sessions and are regularly seeing new faces at each session too.



The Ageing Well engagement, whilst facilitated by staff and partners, has always been led and developed as a collaboration with people aged 50 and over in Swansea. We now have between 400-500 people attending our engagement sessions across any

typical week, and hopefully this will continue long into the future. We believe that talking to and listening to the people aged 50 and over who attend the engagement sessions has been a major factor in the success of the Ageing Well work in Swansea.

If you would like any further information, please contact:

Rhys Ananicz, Ageing Well Partnership & Involvement Co-Ordinator
Tel: 07442 839441

Email: rhys.ananicz@swansea.gov.uk or AgeingWell@swansea.gov.uk

You can sign up to receive our [weekly newsletter here](#).

You can also find our list of weekly Ageing Well activities [here](#).



Activities For Unpaid Carers This Winter

Guest feature with Swansea Carers Centre

Swansea Carers Centre is a specialist voluntary organisation providing support to unpaid carers and former carers across the City & County of Swansea.

We offer information, advice, and support to make life easier for the carer and the person they are looking after. We provide opportunities to meet other carers, share experiences

and work together to get things changed for the benefit of everyone. All our services are completely free and confidential.

We have lots of free activities and events taking place over the next couple of months specifically for unpaid carers and former carers, and are always organising more. Click [here](#) to find out more.

To stay up-to-date with what we have coming up, please click [here](#). Spotted a Swansea Carers Centre event you're interested in? Please contact georgia@swansecarerscentre.org.uk to book your place.



How Age Cymru West Glamorgan Can Help

We have a range of services available through Age Cymru West Glamorgan, and if you need support, advice or practical help to enjoy later life, we are here for you.

INFORMATION & ADVICE SERVICE

Age Cymru West Glamorgan provides information and advice on a range of issues in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend.

We can advise you on your rights and entitlements, local services and support available to you and those who care for and support you.

Call us on 01792 648 866
or email us at enquiries@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk

FREE DEMENTIA SUPPORT

A dementia diagnosis can completely turn your world upside down, but we can offer support, help and guidance to anyone affected by dementia in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend with our free Dementia Support Service.

If you think that you, or someone you care for, could benefit from our free Dementia Support Service then please contact us.

Call us on 01792 346377
or email us at dementia@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk

WARM HOMES PROJECT

Does your home feel cold? Are you worried about paying your energy bills? As part of the Warm Homes programme, you can receive a free home energy check.

Our trained handyperson will come to your home and discuss your home energy needs as well as install free energy efficient equipment, such as light bulbs and reflective radiator panels to help make your heating more efficient.

Call us on 01792 648866
or email us at enquiries@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk

Our Services

At Age Cymru West Glamorgan, we can also offer services for the following:

[Help with Power of Attorney](#)

[Footcare Service](#)

[Free Wills](#)

Visit our [website](#) for more information or call 01792 648866 to speak to a friendly member of our team today.



Feature in our Newsletter

Are you a charity, organisation or a service provider and would like to be included in our next issue?

Get in touch today at communications@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk

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