



Beyond 50 Newsletter

July 2024

To our readers,

Welcome to the latest edition of Age Cymru West Glamorgan's Beyond 50 Newsletter.

In this edition we'll be celebrating the joys that the sunnier seasons bring in the themes throughout this newsletter, in the hope that warmer weather will make an appearance! It's likely that you'll be spending more time out and about despite the current weather, thinking about home improvements, and enjoying the longer days. Remember, age is truly just a number when it comes to enjoying all that life has to offer – and this summer, there's lots to make the most of.

Throughout this newsletter, we will bring you the latest news, information and resources, for 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, support or community group facilitator – this newsletter is for you too.

We'll be sharing listings and information on local events from across Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend over the coming months. We hope you find this go-to guide helpful in making new connections and maintaining those you've already established.

This issue is all about making connections, socialising and the life admin we often put off. Head to page 1 to read about landlines moving to digital, page 3 to learn about dementia-minded reading, or page 7 for our tips on keeping cool this summer.

Thank you to everyone who sent us feedback on our previous issue. Let us know what you'd like to see in future issues! Send your feedback to communications@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk.

Many thanks and happy reading!

From the Age Cymru West Glamorgan Team

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Landlines Go Digital: What You Need to Know

The telecommunications landscape is evolving, and one of the most significant changes on the horizon is the shift from traditional landline phones to digital phone services for everyone.

This transition, primarily driven by advancements in technology, promises numerous benefits, including improved call quality and enhanced reliability, helping you to stay connected. However, for many people, this change might seem daunting. Here's what you need to know about the switch and the support available to ensure a smooth transition.



Why Is It Happening?

Landline phones use a network known as the public switched telephone network (PSTN), which is now in need of replacement to ensure that we continue to have reliable landline services.

BT is retiring its PSTN by December 2025 and this means other providers that use BT's network must also prepare for this deadline. Other companies, such as Virgin Media, plan to follow a similar timescale, and upgrade their networks at the same time as transitioning to the new system.



Once completed, landline calls will then be delivered using digital technology called Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

How Will it Affect You?

For most users, the switch will be seamless. However, it's important to understand that digital phone services require an internet connection. This means that during power outages, unless you have a backup power source, your phone service could be disrupted.

What Support Is Available ?

BT is leading the charge in providing support to ensure their customers are well-prepared for this change.

Many other service providers are also offering support for the transition to digital phone services. Here are some general types of support you can expect:

Customer Service Helplines:	Most providers have dedicated helplines to assist with the switch to digital, offering personalised advice and troubleshooting.
Equipment Upgrades:	Providers often supply necessary equipment like adapters or new phones at no extra cost.
Technical Assistance:	Providers offer technical support both online and via phone to help you set up and use your new digital phone service.
Backup Solutions:	Some providers offer backup battery solutions to ensure that your phone service remains operational during power outages.
Home Visits:	For those who need extra help, BT provides home visits from their engineers to assist with the installation and answer any questions about the new service.

Preparing for the Switch

To prepare for the transition, start by checking with your current phone service provider to understand their specific plans and support options. Ensure your internet connection is reliable and consider a backup power solution if you rely on your landline for emergencies. Let your provider know about your circumstances for any additional help.

If you need additional support when contacting your provider, or arranging a visit, you can get in touch with our team for information and advice on **01792 648 866** or email enquiries@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk

Reading Well For Dementia

Reading Well for Dementia is a specially curated program designed to support individuals living with dementia and their carers.

This initiative provides access to a carefully selected collection of books that offer information, advice, and support for managing the condition. The collection includes personal stories, practical guides, and resources to help understand and cope with dementia.

Available in public libraries, Reading Well for Dementia aims to enhance

the quality of life for those affected by dementia through the therapeutic benefits of reading, fostering empathy, and offering comfort and guidance during challenging times.

Our Recommendations

FAQs on Dementia

Everything you've ever wanted to know about dementia, is likely answered in this book. No question is too simple, complex, obvious or embarrassing.



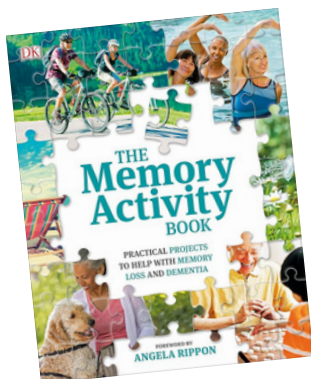
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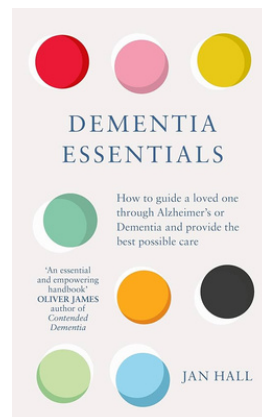


The Memory Activity Book

With the help of this useful activity book, you can lessen and delay the symptoms of dementia, including memory loss and disorientation.

Dementia Essentials

Upon receiving a dementia diagnosis for a loved one, you might take on the role of carer, assisting your relative in maintaining their safety, happiness, and maximum level of independence. This is a guide to assist you and the affected individual in navigating the challenges presented by Alzheimer's and dementia.



Find out more about The Reading Agency's Reading Well for Dementia campaign on their website [here](#).

Dementia Pathfinder Service

We provide free dementia support and advice through our Dementia Pathfinder Service.

We know how challenging living with dementia can be, and we're here to work with you to create a plan to navigate through your dementia journey.

Our team can:

- Provide you with independent information and advice
- Help you understand your rights and the support available to you
- Assist you with applications for benefits and other entitlements to make sure you have access to financial help

We can support anyone with dementia and their carers, at any stage.

If you think that you, or someone you care for, could benefit from this service then please contact us on **01792 346377** or email us at

dementia@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk

Good News Spotlight

At Age Cymru West Glamorgan, our priority is to offer support and practical help to older people within our communities to help them age well and enjoy life, no matter their circumstances.

Dementia support is never a 'one size fits all'. With over 200 types of dementia, each client who is referred, or self refers to us, has varying challenges, needs and requirements.

Tim's Story

In the past twelve months, we've supported Tim, who was diagnosed with dementia five years ago, following a fall.

Tim got in touch to enquire about a befriending service to ensure that his wife was able to continue going out as much as possible and not have to sit in with him. Tim is aware of his deterioration but was unwilling to accept any further help than he is already getting.

Through our partnership within the Dementia Support Service, the project has allowed Tim's wife to continue spending time outside of the home without having to worry about her husband being left alone. At the same time, the service has provided Tim with much needed company, and the

option to talk openly and freely about his condition and his worry for his future.

Since receiving support from the Dementia Support Service, Tim has been much more comfortable sharing his thoughts and feelings on his dementia diagnosis and his concerns for his and his wife's future. Tim has also been in contact with a dementia doctor and nurse and has set up visits for reassessment.

We've provided signposting information for other services in his area that may be able to offer befriending services and has enabled him to arrange 'ad hoc' befriending support from his local social services team.

Support from Age Cymru West Glamorgan through the Dementia Support Service has allowed Tim to reclaim control and take some of the stress out of the practical aspects of being diagnosed with dementia.



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.

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

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



**Gwasanaeth Cefnogi
Dementia
Support Service**
Swansea | Neath Port Talbot
Abertawe | Castell-nedd Port Talbot

In partnership with:



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Keep Cool This Summer

As summer temperatures (will hopefully) rise, it's crucial for us all to take extra precautions to stay cool.

However it has been found that due to changes in their bodies' ability to regulate temperature, older adults are more susceptible to heat-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Adults over 65 are more prone to heat stress, making it vital to implement strategies to stay cool during the hottest months.

Here are some practical tips to help older adults keep cool:

- 1. Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Dehydration can happen quickly in hot weather, increasing the effects of heat. Avoid beverages with caffeine or alcohol, as they can contribute to dehydration.
- 2. Wear Appropriate Clothing:** Choose light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes made of breathable fabrics like cotton. This helps the body stay cooler and sweat evaporate more efficiently.
- 3. Use Fans and Air Conditioning:** If you don't have air conditioning, spend time in air-conditioned public places like shopping centres or libraries. Electric fans can also help, but during very high temperatures, they may not be sufficient.



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- 4. Limit Outdoor Activities:** Avoid harder activities during the peak heat of the day, usually between 10am and 4pm. If you need to be outside, take frequent breaks in the shade.
- 5. Cool Showers and Baths:** Taking a cool shower or bath can help lower body temperature. Additionally, applying a cool, damp cloth to the back of your neck or wrists can provide quick relief.
- 6. Check On Others:** If you have older neighbours or family members, check on them regularly to ensure they are staying cool and hydrated.

By following these tips, older adults can enjoy a safer and more comfortable summer, should the temperatures soar. Remember, taking proactive steps to stay cool can prevent serious health issues and ensure a more enjoyable season.

What's On in Your Local Area

There's no shortage of fantastic events happening across Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend over the summer months.

We've put together some of our favourites to help you enjoy life, including local book clubs, knitting and crocheting, yoga classes, group walks and much more.

Find our full [What's On Guide](#) on our website.



Mythbusting Benefits Checks

For many older adults, navigating the range of benefits can be overwhelming, leading to misconceptions and missed opportunities for financial support.

Age Cymru West Glamorgan is dedicated to debunking myths and ensuring that everyone receives the benefits they're entitled to. Here's a closer look at how we can help and what services are offered.

Myth: "I'm not eligible for any benefits."

Many people mistakenly believe that they don't qualify for benefits. However, those with modest incomes or savings may be eligible for financial support, such as non-means-tested benefits. Our free benefits check service can uncover entitlements you may not be aware of, such as Pension Credit, Housing Benefit, and Attendance Allowance.

Myth: "It's too complicated to apply."

Applying for benefits can seem daunting, but we provide comprehensive support to simplify the process.

Our trained advisors offer free, confidential advice, guiding you through the application forms and helping you gather the necessary documentation. This hands-on assistance makes the process more manageable and less stressful.

Myth: "Benefits checks aren't worth the hassle."

The benefits check service from ACWG is thorough and often reveals significant financial support that can substantially improve your quality of life. For example, Pension Credit alone can provide extra income and may open doors to other benefits such as help with NHS costs, free TV licences for those over 75, and Cold Weather Payments.



Our friendly and professional team can assess your eligibility and complete the application process with you from the comfort of your own home.

We help with:

- **Benefits Check Assessment:** A detailed assessment of your financial situation to identify all possible entitlements.
- **Advice and Information:** Expert guidance on a wide range of issues affecting older people, including health, housing, and legal matters.
- **Application Support:** Help with completing applications for benefits and other support services, such as:

Pension Credit:	A top-up for those on a low income.
Attendance Allowance:	For those who need help with personal care to disability.
Housing Benefit:	Assistance with rent payments.
Council Tax Reduction:	Help with council tax bills
Disability Benefits:	For those who are eligible for additional benefits due to health conditions.

- **Appeals Signposting:** We can signpost you to organisations who can support in challenging decisions if you believe you've been wrongly denied benefits.

If you'd like to enquire about your eligibility, or for somebody you care for, get in touch with our **Information and Advice team** by calling **01792 648 866**.



Meet Our Volunteers

Here at Age Cymru West Glamorgan, we have a range of volunteering opportunities to help support people over the age of 50, and their carers, receive information and advice, and the correct support to empower them to age well and enjoy life.

Many of our volunteers have lived experience which helps them to support our clients with first-hand knowledge and an understanding of where they may be in life.

Carole, Charity Support Volunteer



I worked for Age Cymru West Glamorgan for several years as Digital Inclusion Officer, HR Officer and within the Homecare Plus Project, and decided after retiring that I'd like to return and help out as a volunteer.

Because I'd already been part of the team, I was familiar with the work practices and roles of the charity and felt I could still give back to the community and the organisation.

I enjoy my role because it allows me to update my IT skills, I get to mix with likeminded people and help clients. I'm an older person myself and have empathy with clients who are struggling.

We recently caught up with a handful of our volunteers, to find out why volunteering with Age Cymru West Glamorgan benefits them.

James, Volunteer Outreach Case Worker



I became an Age Cymru West Glamorgan volunteer after responding to an advert I saw online. I met with the team who are a very caring and friendly group, I immediately felt comfortable and welcome.

I previously worked for Citizens Advice, helping people with many difficult issues. My role here at Age Cymru West Glamorgan allows me to put my training to good use, with the knowledge gained in my previous role, helping me keep up to date with various changes in policies that have taken place over the years.

Volunteering also allows me to make a difference to people's lives by providing them with help at a difficult time. I enjoy the fact I can help people and it helps me get out and meet people from different backgrounds which in turn, helps me with my social anxiety.



Enid, Information and Advice Volunteer

I became a volunteer with Age Cymru West Glamorgan having already been familiar with the charity and wanting to take on some volunteering duties. I had a wealth of welfare benefit information to share and wanted to do something useful.

My role brings great satisfaction when people receive successful benefit claims, and it's great to see clients in a stronger position after we've helped them. I like meeting lots of new people through my role and I'm of an age to enjoy total empathy with older people. I like to think my age can be very positive to viewpoints of all age groups, including younger family members of those we support.

Digital Champion Volunteers

Over the next few months, we'll be rolling out the Digital Championship Programme which aims to help older people in our community become more digitally savvy.

Working alongside the Age Cymru West Glamorgan team and fellow Volunteer Digital Champions, you'll be instrumental in spreading digital awareness, showcasing the benefits of being online, and ensuring technology is accessible to all.

No formal training is needed, but if you're passionate about sharing your digital skills to benefit others, we'd love to hear from you!

If you're interested, fill out a form via our website, email volunteer@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk or call 01792 648866 and speak to Saffron Isaac to have a chat about the role.



Can you help us support even more people?

At Age Cymru West Glamorgan, we want to continue helping more people to age well and enjoy life. Your support will allow us to help more people within our local areas and our donations go directly to local communities across Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend.

Here are several ways you can donate:

Online Donations

Donating online is quick and secure. Visit our [website](#) or our [JustGiving page](#) to make a direct donation, it's never been easier to show your support.

Telephone Donations

If you prefer to donate over the phone, you can call **01792 648866**. A representative will assist you in making your donation securely.

Standing Orders

Setting up a standing order is an excellent way to provide ongoing support. Information on how to establish a standing order can be found on our [website](#).

Cheque Donations

If you would like to write us a cheque, please make it payable to Age Cymru West Glamorgan.

Our address is;

Age Cymru West Glamorgan
250 Carmarthen Road,
Swansea,
SA1 1HG

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Use Our Partners

Another way to help is by booking services such as Footcare through our partners. We're linking up with local businesses and organisations who will provide a percentage of every booking to us as a donation.

For example, choosing your Footcare Service to be provided through Swansea Podiatry means that we get £3 from every appointment booked.

This not only supports the organisation financially but supports small local businesses which in turn benefit the local community.

Leave a Legacy

Leaving a legacy in your Will is one of the best ways of ensuring that we can continue our valuable work. A gift in your Will, however small or large, can help ensure we can always be here for older people across Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend.

If you need to make a Will, we have partnered with FreeWills.co.uk to provide all our supporters with the opportunity to make their own fully comprehensive Will for free, with help from a team of legal experts.

Every single gift is vital to Age Cymru West Glamorgan and we appreciate any gift you may choose to leave us. Whatever the value of your gift, it will go a long way to help someone who needs us.

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



Social Singing with Swansea Carers Choir

Guest Feature

By Geraldine Spencer

Many of us become carers at some stage of our lives. In West Glamorgan there are at least 50,000 unpaid carers, 31,000 in Swansea alone.

When you take on a caring role it often comes at a personal cost and the daily pressures are often hidden from view. Research indicates that family carers are more likely to suffer from ill health, exhaustion and depression.

In 2015, inspirational musical director Stuart Jones, himself a carer, recognised the tangible benefits of singing in harmony. He encouraged other unpaid carers and former carers to join together to sing some of their favourite songs. Since then, Swansea Carers Choir has become a lifeline for many carers whose life opportunities may have become limited or feel socially isolated.

Numerous studies point to the physical and mental health benefits of singing in harmony. It not only builds self-confidence and memory but enhances mood, lung function, breath control, blood pressure and is even said to improve the immune system and pain management.

The aim of the choir is to make harmony singing accessible to everyone, of all ages, regardless of whether they have any musical experience. We firmly believe that everyone can sing, including those who think they can't, and are terrified at the thought of singing out loud.

Our present Musical Director, Heather, is also a carer and fully aware that it is easy for us to forget to look after ourselves while we are looking after the loved ones we support. She enthusiastically and sensitively teaches songs by ear at a speed everyone can manage, and we don't use written music. No one is left behind, no one is put on the spot. We don't want to be mollycoddled and are delighted that as well as singing reflective songs, she is not afraid to challenge us with some thought-provoking harmonies.



No judging other people's voices and no judging your own. Where the uniqueness of everyone's voice is appreciated and celebrated for what it is. No one is put under pressure to sing in public if they don't want to.

All members have spoken of how important singing together is and the difference it has made to our lives.

We feel energised, valued, and become better carers, and we all deserve some "me" time. Swansea Carers Choir offers a friendly creative space for unpaid carers and former carers to drop in and sing together, relax, laugh and share a unique bond.

Join Swansea Carers Choir

Every Wednesday (Term time) 11am - 1pm

Holy Trinity Church Hall, Sketty Park Drive, Swansea. SA2 8JW

For more information, contact Musical Director Heather via:
07552 515 660 or email swanseacarerschoirinfo@gmail.com



40 Years of Support for NPT Mind

Guest Feature

By Rachel Diplock

This year Neath Port Talbot Mind celebrates a milestone achievement of being in operation for 40 years.

Since NPT Mind began in 1984 we have grown as an organisation offering free mental health support to people in the Neath and Port Talbot community. NPT Mind offers adults and young people tailored support, including:

1-2-1 Support

Counselling can help you deal with specific problems, cope with difficult situations and improve relationships.

The purpose of counselling is not to give you advice, but to help you understand your feelings and behaviour better and to explore different perspectives and ways of coping.

Supported Self Help is a six-week programme with individual support from a practitioner where you can learn strategies to manage different life challenges and feel more like yourself, focusing on pathways including anxiety, stress, low mood, anger, loneliness, grief, self-esteem and menopause.

Groups

Neath Port Talbot Wellbeing After Stroke Project, affectionately known as NPT WASP is leading the way in mental health support for stroke survivors and their loved ones/carers, offering a varied range of support, that is personalised to every individual that accesses the project. Support available through this project includes: signposting support, counselling, psycho-educational courses, supported self help and a drop-in social group.

Wellbeing & Social Activities

ASICS Get Active Project supports people into physical activity to support their mental health. Being active can improve mood, lower the risk of depression, improve sleep, manage stress, increase self-esteem and improve social connections.

Our support groups offer a space to be together, learn and share experiences. Groups are run by a team of mental health practitioners, counsellors and group facilitators. We run a blend of online and face to face groups.

Find out more about our other social and support groups on our website
www.nptmind.org.uk

Celebrating Volunteers in Neath Port Talbot

Guest Feature
By Tom Hadfield

As charities, community organisations and volunteers across the country celebrate the 40th Anniversary of Volunteers' Week, a very special awards night was held at Neath's Gwyn Hall.

Hosted by Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), The Celebration of Volunteering saw over 40 awards presented to volunteers and groups who make a huge difference to their communities.

There were seven different categories celebrated – Health, Wellbeing and Social Care, Children and Young People, Environment and Conservation, Community Group of the Year, Volunteer of the Year and Young Volunteer of the Year – plus the Special Recognition Award. In attendance and presenting the awards were His Majesty's Vice Lord-Lieutenant, Mr Philip Hunkin DL, The High Sheriff of West Glamorgan, Mrs Melanie James JP, Deputy Mayor of

The High Sheriff of West Glamorgan, Melanie James JP (left), with young singer Thea Fleur, who performed at the ceremony

Neath Port Talbot, Councillor Wayne Carpenter, and Member of the Senedd for Aberavon, David Rees. The evening began with a speech from CVS Director Gaynor Richards MBE, who welcomed guests and said:

“In every community across Neath Port Talbot, there are people who make a difference in the lives of others by volunteering.

When we help improve the lives of others, our own lives improve automatically.”

Each category was presented by a member of CVS staff, who read a short description of the impact every nominee has made, before asking the Highly Commended and overall award winners to come up and receive their certificates.

Photos by Andrew Lambert Photography



Winners on the night were Forward4Fairlyland (Community Group of the Year), Cwmgors Repair Café (Environment and Conservation), Marie Curie Companions (Health, Wellbeing and Social Care), HOPE (Children and Young People), Emma and Irene Knight (Volunteers of the Year) and Chelsea Elias (Young Volunteer of the Year). Videos of each of the winners can be viewed on NPTCVS' YouTube channel.

The Special Recognition Award went to Bob Chapman, former Secretary of Cymmer Community Library.

CVS Deputy Director Tony Potts said: "Bob has used his energy, vision and expertise in the service of his community.

"He epitomises what voluntary community involvement is all about."

The evening was opened by Tonna Male Voice Choir, and also featured an interval performance by young local singer Thea Fleur.

The ceremony ended with Gaynor Richards adding: "It has been an honour to hear all the wonderful stories about the incredible volunteers here in Neath Port Talbot."

Photos by Andrew Lambert Photography

Below Image: David Rees MS (left) presents the winners of the Sports category, The Bootroom, with their award



Members of FAN Community Alliance are presented with their Highly Commended Award by Deputy Mayor, Councillor Wayne Carpenter (left)



Bob Chapman (left) was presented with the Special Recognition Award by His Majesty's Vice Lord Lieutenant of West Glamorgan, Mr Philip Hunkin



Can Age Cymru West Glamorgan help you?

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 AND 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 and Neath Port Talbot with our free Dementia Support Service.

If you think that you, or someone you care for, could benefit from our free Dementia Support Service, please call us on **01792 346377** or email us at dementia@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk

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