



# **Beyond 50 Newsletter**

**March 2024**

To our readers,

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

As we head into the warmer months, with daffodils blooming, trees blossoming and the lighter and brighter mornings and evenings upon us, we begin to feel hopeful for the year ahead. You might be feeling like you're experiencing a transition into a different stage of life, much like the seasons, or settling into the comfort of a new routine.

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.

Throughout this issue, you will find 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 staying active and healthy. Head to page 2 for the best of accessible scenic strolls across Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend or to page 5 to read about a new study that suggests challenging your brain by doing things you enjoy can help improve colour perception as we get older.

Thank you to everyone who sent us feedback on our first issue. Let us know what you'd like to see in future issues! Send your feedback to [communications@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk](mailto: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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## PAID ADVERTISEMENTS

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# Put a Spring in Your Step

**Looking to put your best foot forward as we head into the warmer months?**

Age Cymru West Glamorgan can arrange appointments for fully trained chiropodists at Swansea Podiatry, who are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), to visit and carry out all aspects of foot care and health from the comfort of your own home.

An appointment for one person costs £40, or £65 for two people residing in the same property. This service is also available for individuals with diabetes, and those prescribed warfarin.



With every appointment booked via our trusted partner, Swansea Podiatry, you'll be giving back. At no extra charge to you, £3 out of your appointment cost gets donated to us at Age Cymru West Glamorgan to help us support everyone who needs us.

**To find out more or to arrange an appointment, call us on 01792 648 866**

**Once you've got your feet in tip-top condition, there are plenty of ways that you can embrace an active lifestyle and unlock a whole new level of enjoyment this spring.**

A leisurely stroll along the beach, maybe a dance in the living room, or even joining a local yoga class. The key is to keep it light, enjoyable, and most importantly, sustainable.

Find practical ways to get moving on the next few pages.

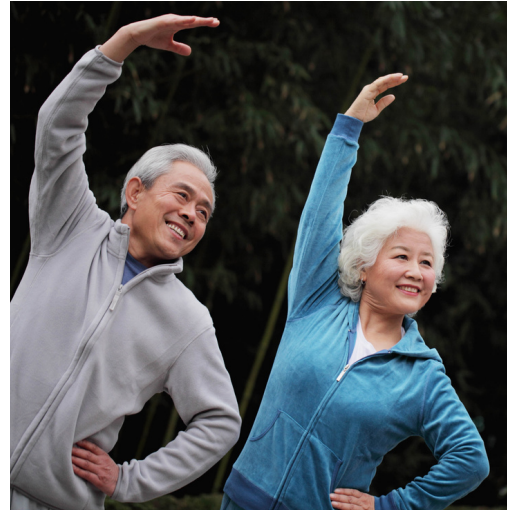




## Yoga and Pilates at Your Own Pace

Whether you prefer the comfort of your home or a community setting, yoga and pilates are excellent choices for maintaining flexibility and improving mindfulness.

There are some excellent resources from Action for Elders including live exercise programmes, local community classes, and videos to follow in your own time. Find out more [here](#).



## Silver Swim

Thanks to the Welsh Government's Free Swim Initiative, over 60s can enjoy a refreshing and invigorating swim for free. Available during the week at Penyrheol, Penlan, and Morriston Leisure Centre, Swansea's Silver Swim initiative is a fantastic opportunity to stay active while having a fun time, learn more [here](#). Over 60s in Bridgend can also swim for free in any public sessions, find out more [here](#). NPT residents over 60 can also enjoy a free swim session each week at a Celtic pool. Find out more [here](#).

## Accessible Scenic Strolls

Explore the beauty of our local surroundings with accessible walks designed for everyone.

Caswell Bay offers a picturesque setting, and for those in need of mobility assistance, free beach wheelchair hire is provided through Surfability. Find out more [here](#) or call 01792 368 482 to find out more about beach wheelchair hire.



Another beautiful, and accessible nearby walk is the National Cycle Trail 43 route from Pontardawe to Ystalyfera. The 4 mile route follows the flat and smooth cycle path along the river Tawe. Find out more [here](#).

A tranquil spot nestled in Bridgend consisting of grassland, woodland and wetland, and a stunning place for nature lovers, is the Parc Slip Nature Reserve. The site has a number of easy access routes which can be approached via wheelchair, and there are a number of routes accessible for people with a sight problem or who require walking sticks. The cafe and centre are both fully accessible, with lift to the upstairs conference room, which also has a hearing loop. Find out more [here](#).

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# Support for Unpaid Carers

There are around seven million carers in the UK, meaning one in ten of us look after somebody else and provide support with a range of needs.

According to [Carers Trust](#), unpaid carers save the state £132bn worth of care every year.

More people in Neath Port Talbot provide unpaid care than anywhere else in Wales ([12.3%](#)), with over 2.9% providing 20 to 49 hours of unpaid care per week, the largest proportion compared to any other Welsh local authority.



## What is an unpaid carer?

A carer is anyone who cares for a relative or friend, due to disability, illness, mental health condition or addiction, and isn't paid. This can be for just a few hours a day or week, or may be for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## What support is available for unpaid carers?

- **Financial Support** – there are various grants and financial benefits that you may be eligible for if you are an unpaid carer. You can use the Turn2Us Grants Search tool to find out what you're eligible for. Or, our Information & Advice team can carry out a benefits check for you, signpost you to the correct places, and help you complete any paperwork.
- **Rights in the workplace** – Carers have the right to request flexible working and taking time off in case of emergency. Many employers have additional benefits such as carer's leave.
- **Carers Services** – Local carers networks provide additional support especially for carers such as information and advice, respite, and activities to help them focus on their own health and wellbeing. Find out more by visiting [Swansea Carers Centre](#), [NPT Carers Service](#), [Bridgend Carers Centre](#).

If you'd like to speak to our team about support available as an unpaid carer, call us on 01792 648 866 or email [enquiries@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk).

# Boost Your Brain

**Recent studies show that the colours we see get increasingly dull as we get older**

Scientists have discovered that older people's pupils react differently to those of younger people, suggesting that colours fade with age, and may also indicate conditions with cognitive impairments, such as certain types of dementia.

A new paper in the [Scientific Reports](#) journal suggests that older adults judge colours as less saturated than young adults. Some studies have also shown that older adults struggle in particular to distinguish between colours on the green/blue spectrum.

There isn't yet enough research to find out exactly why this happens, but there are several suggestions including changes to the structure and colouring

of our retina and lens as we age, which affects the amount or type of light let in.

Lead author, Dr Janneke van Leeuwen (UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology), said: "This work brings into question the long-held belief among scientists that colour perception remains relatively constant across the lifespan, and suggests instead that colours slowly fade as we age. Our findings might also help explain why our colour preferences may alter as we age – and why at least some older people may prefer to dress in bold colours."

Although more research is needed into the correlation of age and colour perception, other cognitive ageing studies have long shown that people who consistently take part in more mentally stimulating activities benefit from improved thinking skills in older age.





Regularly training your brain can not only benefit you in terms of colour, it can also enhance the overall cognitive function as we age, and potentially help combat cognitive decline. Here are some easy and affordable ways to stimulate your brain.

## Solve The Puzzle

Taking the time to engage your brain with wordsearch, crossword and sudoku puzzles helps keep your mind sharp.

Puzzles which require logic, problem-solving or memory recall uses different parts of your brain which you may not necessarily use in everyday life.

Completing sudoku or crosswords also improves concentration and reduces stress and anxiety at the same time.

## Complete the riddle...

Where is the only place where today comes before yesterday?

FIND THE  
ANSWER ON  
PAGE 17

## Get Creative

Improve your brain health and your physical dexterity by taking part in arts and crafts activities.

Being creative is a great all-rounder, as it utilises both sides of your brain, while also fine-tuning your motor skills.

Find out more about local art, writing and reading groups in our What's On Guide [here](#).



## Volunteer

Volunteering is a wonderful way to enjoy a sense of purpose, learn new skills or build on existing ones, and socialise with likeminded individuals.

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 help them live and age well.

We particularly encourage those with lived experience to find out more and join our team of friendly volunteers,

## What's On in Your Local Area

There are lots of exciting events, classes, and dates to mark in your calendar this spring.

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.

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



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# 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 and live well, including advice and signposting to financial support that may be available.**

Last year, we were able to help Edna and Roy access benefits and support that they didn't know was available and has since enriched their lives considerably.

## Edna and Roy's Story

**Edna was referred to ACWG by the Alzheimer's Society for information about respite services, as her partner of 32 years, Roy, has dementia.**

A dementia support plan was provided to enable Edna to access the relevant support that is available. As part of this, a benefit check was offered to the couple, which showed they were over the threshold for pension credit. Roy was already in receipt of attendance allowance, but Edna also had difficulties with her own personal care tasks due to health conditions, so we suggested that she apply for Attendance Allowance with our assistance. If successful, this would lead to further financial benefits, such as pension credit. The first step was to

apply for Attendance Allowance for Edna. We completed the Attendance Allowance form over the telephone, and she was subsequently awarded the higher rate. We then applied for underlying entitlement to carer's allowance for both Edna and Roy, as this would add a carers premium with pension credit. We then helped Edna apply for pension credit using the online form. The benefit process took several weeks but we stayed in regular contact with Edna during this time to provide reassurance and guidance. She was awarded pension credit guaranteed credit and this in turn led to full housing benefit and full council tax reduction. Edna and Roy will also qualify for free NHS dental treatment, help with the cost of glasses, a free TV license, and be eligible for Warm Homes discount and cold weather payments. They are expecting a £299 Cost of Living payment and will automatically receive any future Cost of Living payments going forward.



## Outcome

Effectively, Edna and Roy are better off financially by over £300 per week. Edna receives higher rate attendance allowance of £101.75 and pension credit of £75.68 per week, but also benefits by paying less rent (£103.56 housing benefit per week) and zero council tax (£21.13 per week). In addition, as she receives pension credit, the TV licence is free, a further saving of £159 per year.

This substantial increase in financial support will be invaluable to their quality of living allowing them to afford to buy furniture they need and pay for services that will further enrich both of their lives.

**If you think you're eligible for support, or if you're not sure, please get in touch with our friendly team today by calling 01792 648 866.**

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# Book Review

By Anita Leimane, Age Cymru West Glamorgan Volunteer

**Margareta Magnusson The Swedish Art of Ageing Well: Life wisdom from someone who will (probably) die before you**

What do you think when you hear the word 'ageing'? Are your thoughts predominantly positive or negative about the term?

Regrettably, the way people, talk about getting older, regardless of their age, is largely negative. Common negative stereotypes include that older people are suffering from poor health and loneliness and are often perceived as fragile.

These beliefs can be internalised by limiting people's behaviour, choices, and opportunities. As a result, people may become prisoners of their own thoughts. In her book 'The Swedish Art of Ageing Well', Swedish author Margareta Magnusson challenges this way of thinking by sharing an alternative way of embracing older age.

The author, according to her words, is aged between 80 and 100. She gives an account of her life experiences and relates to the words of wisdom to live by. In this context, it is more of a memoir rather than self-help book. By sharing her life experiences, the



author offers some advice and wisdom on how to age well and gracefully. Her advice is not especially Swedish but the way she writes about her experiences is. According to her words, Swedes tend to be quite blunt, and this is reflected in the way the author writes about what matters in life. Each chapter provides an insight on living and ageing well, and this is interwoven with stories and anecdotes from the author's long life. Margareta Magnusson writes about a wide range of subjects, such as trying not to fall, taking care of one's hair, eating chocolate, maintaining friendships, surrounding oneself with younger people, volunteering and taking care of something every day. There are a few stories of difficult memories and regret too. But there is never despair and hopelessness. Above all the author reminds her readers to keep an open mind and be more adaptable to new situations and circumstances.

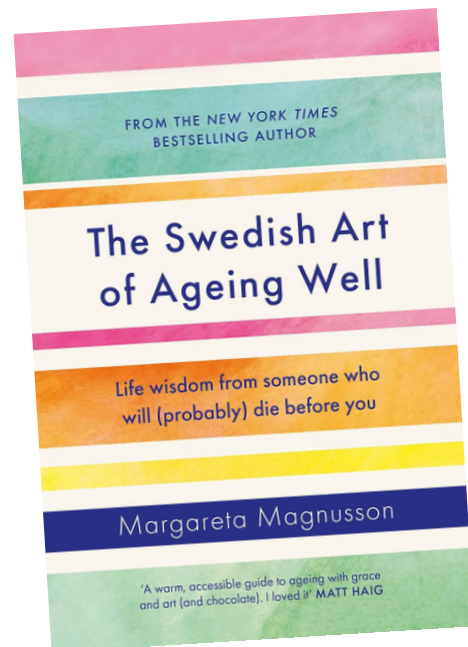
My favourite quote that I would like to remember is: "It is never too late to do anything, unless it really is too late, and you are dead. The moment you start thinking it is too late, then you begin to die. I will keep going and do all I want to do".

Reading this book is like sitting down and talking with a wise dear friend.

Her writing style is humorous and entertaining, and it was fun to read.

Ageing is unavoidable and it happens to everyone. It occurs with some

challenges, but at the same time older age comes with some wisdom to live in the present and enjoy life. I believe we all should approach ageing with as much grace, humour and practicality as Margareta Magnusson.



**Swansea Library, Neath Port Talbot Library and Bridgend Library customers can access this book using BorrowBox app (eBook and audiobook). The printed copy of this book is available only at Swansea Library and Bridgend Library.**



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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.

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.

Following the continued success of the Dementia Hwb in Swansea, and mobile Dementia Hwbs within the wider community, a permanent centre has recently opened in Aberafan Shopping Centre for residents in Neath Port Talbot and beyond.

**Find the new Dementia Hwb in Aberafan Shopping Centre, open during weekdays between 11am-3pm.**

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

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



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

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.

## In partnership with:



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# Herby Spring Chicken Pot Pie Recipe

Reduce your washing-up with this delicious one-pan chicken pie incorporating delicious seasonal spring ingredients, by BBC Good Food.



## Method:

1. Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Heat the oil in a large, shallow casserole dish on a medium heat. Add the spring onions and fry for 3 mins, then stir through the frozen spinach and cook for 2 mins or until it's starting to wilt. Remove the skin from the chicken and discard. Shred the chicken off the bone and into the pan and discard the bones. Stir through the stock and mustard. Bring to a simmer and cook, uncovered, for 5-10 mins.

## Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive oil, plus a little extra for brushing over the pastry
- bunch spring onions, sliced into 3cm pieces
- 250g frozen spinach
- 6 ready-cooked chicken thighs (or see tip, below)
- 350ml hot chicken stock
- ½ tbsp wholegrain mustard
- 200g frozen peas
- 200ml half-fat crème fraîche
- ½ small bunch tarragon, leaves finely chopped
- small bunch parsley, finely chopped
- 270g pack filo pastry

2. Stir in the peas, crème fraîche and herbs, then remove from the heat. Scrunch the filo pastry sheets over the mixture, brush with a little oil and bake for 15-20 mins or until golden brown.

## Share your recipe

Do you have a favourite recipe? We'd love to feature them in our next edition. Please send details to [communications@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk](mailto:communications@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk).



# 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 to 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 and also beneficial for our mental health, socialisation and expanding our skills as we age. If you have spare time and can offer this to support Age Cymru West Glamorgan, we would love to hear from you. We could not 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](mailto: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.



# Stroke Recovery and Mental Health

## Guest feature

by Rachel Diplock

Neath Port Talbot Wellbeing After Stroke Project (WASP)

In October 2023, a first of its kind project in the whole of the UK was launched in Neath Port Talbot. The project is a partnership between Neath Port Talbot Stroke Group and Neath Port Talbot Mind. The two organisations came together to discuss how physical recovery after a stroke is just one part of the puzzle, and that there was a real lack of mental health support for stroke survivors, their family members and carers, leaving these individuals isolated with nowhere to turn. Together they designed a service that would provide this support that until now was missing.

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.



## The support available includes:

**Signposting Support** – Meet with our Pathfinder to co-create a personalised support plan including help with benefits, help with social support needs, accessing WASP emotional wellbeing support and referrals to other agencies to support practical challenges such as home adaptations.

**Counselling** – One to one support to help you deal with specific problems, cope with difficult situations and improve relationships. Counselling can help you understand your feelings and explore ways of coping.



**Psycho-educational Courses** – A safe space with your peers to explore the impact of stroke on your life. Covering a range of topics such as anger, grief and managing difficult emotions.

**Supported Self Help** – 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.

**Drop-in Social Group** – Pop in for a cuppa and a chat with other stroke survivors, family members/carers and our group facilitators.

### Well-known Effects

Muscle weakness  
Aphasia (Communication problems)  
Memory loss  
Balance problems  
Foot drop  
Headaches  
Spasticity & contractures  
Pain after stroke

### Lesser-known Effects

Fatigue  
Sight problems  
Emotional changes  
Swallowing problems  
Behavioural problems  
Seizures & epilepsy  
Changes in sensations  
Difficulty concentrating

If you or someone you care for would like a referral into the project or simply want to find out more, please call Rachel on 07541760872 or email [rachel@nptmind.org.uk](mailto:rachel@nptmind.org.uk).



# 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 & 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](mailto: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](mailto:dementia@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk)

## FEATURE IN OUR NEWSLETTER

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

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