



Age Matters

The quarterly newsletter
from Age Cymru

Summer 2022

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 **ageCymru**
Creating an age friendly Wales

Our summer celebrations are underway

By Victoria Lloyd, Chief Executive, June 2022

Welcome to the Summer edition of Age Matters. Summer is on its way and we've just celebrated Volunteers Week and Carers Week which are both important points in the Age Cymru annual calendar. We are indebted to the 400+ volunteers that give their valuable time to Age Cymru and the wellbeing of older people each week.

Similarly, without the vital contribution of unpaid carers in all communities across Wales our health and care services could not function, and Carers week provides a fantastic opportunity for us collectively to pay tribute to all carers and to highlight the issues they face.

This edition includes feedback on our latest survey into older people's experiences of Covid. We'd like to thank everybody who took the time to share their thoughts with us. Your insight and feedback are incredibly valuable. The survey highlights both the negative and positive experiences and views and enables us to track how these have changed over the last two years.

We also report on the increasing feedback we have received about people's struggles with increases in the cost of living.



Victoria Lloyd

And we respond to the Chancellor's recent announcements regarding the measures the Government are taking in response.

We provide details on our Community Coffee Mornings that are taking place across Wales and would encourage people to 'pop-in' and find out more about our work, how we can help and to share your thoughts and issues with us.

I hope you enjoy these and the many other updates on our work across Wales.



Age Cymru set to launch the results of its third national pandemic survey

During March and April 2022 Age Cymru, Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA), Welsh Senate of Older People, Active Wales, National Pensioners Convention Wales, and Pensioners Forum Wales worked in partnership to understand the experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic by people aged 50 or over in Wales.

This is the third national survey that we've undertaken during the pandemic with this edition focussing on the period January to March 2022 and people's thoughts on the year ahead. 1169 older people told us their views by completing our survey online, in hard copy, by telephone, or writing to us directly about their experiences.

People told us about the positive experiences they've had such as learning new skills and having less pressure on their time, but we also heard of the struggles people had in accessing healthcare, particularly GP surgeries, and issues with getting appropriate and timely social care support.

We also heard from unpaid carers, 55% of whom have increased the amount of care

they provide in the last three months, and from people who are struggling with poor mental and physical health.

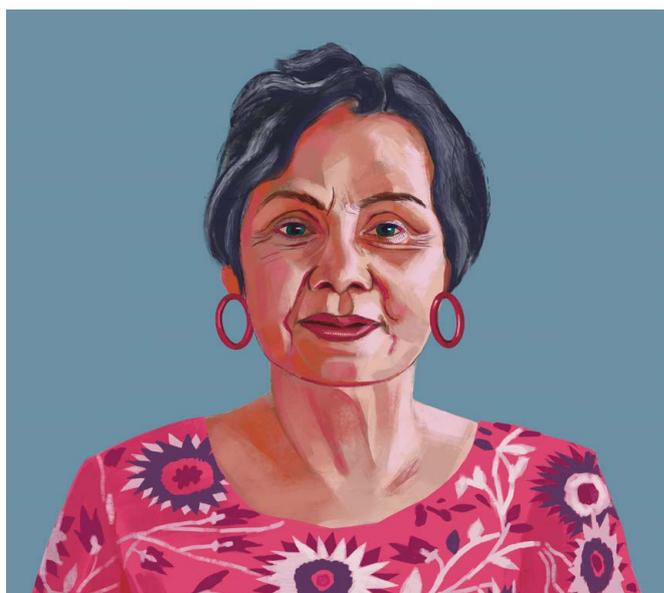
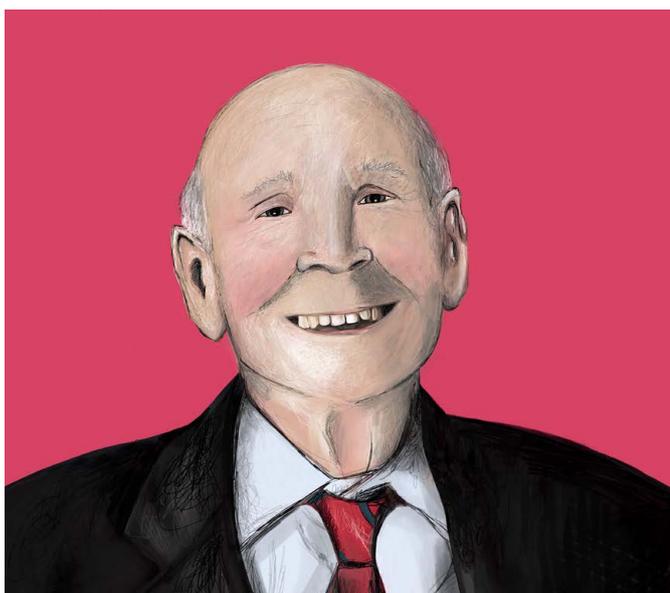
Experiences of employment during the three months was also featured. Cost of living has been an increasingly worrying issue both over the three months and looking to the year ahead with 35% of respondents telling us that they aren't confident about having enough money.

People also told us their views about getting back out and about in their community and what they are looking forward to.

This report provides a snapshot of the experiences and views of people aged 50 or over in Wales. It provides evidence of the specific needs of older people; reflecting a diversity of views and experiences that policy makers and practitioners need to take into account when considering what should be done to ensure that older people can live well in the coming year, and beyond.

This research was funded by Welsh Government. We're grateful to everybody who responded to this survey and thank them for sharing their views and experiences. An overview report of the survey results will be available on the Charity's website.

Don't get me started – short film exploring older people's thoughts on human rights



Age Cymru is developing 'Don't Get Me Started', a short film exploring what older people think and feel about human rights. The film features six people from across Wales, speaking in both English and Welsh, who have a wealth of life experiences.

In the film they share their observations on a range of topics including digital exclusion, healthcare, being a transgender woman in need of care, having the right to work, and being able to let your hair down!

The film has been shot, drawn, and animated by community arts practitioners Jon Ratigan and Emma Prentice. Jon and Emma have both worked with Age Cymru in the past on a range of creative and artistic activities.

We will be sharing the film with communities across Wales. If you would like Rachel, our Human Rights Project Officer, to visit a local group to show the film and discuss human rights, please email humanrights@agecymru.org.uk or call 029 2043 1555.

Unpaid older carers experienced a huge surge in responsibilities during the pandemic, finds survey

The number of older people in Wales providing unpaid support to family and friends more than doubled during the pandemic, finds a series of Age Cymru surveys undertaken in 2020, 2021 and 2022 and released by the charity's Carers Project.

The surveys found that in 2020, 14% of respondents were providing unpaid care, which rose to 19% in 2021 and an astonishing 33% in 2022.

Nearly half of the unpaid carers (45%) said it was one of their most challenging experiences during lockdown. While, more than half of them said their responsibilities had increased during the last three months.

While half of the carers cited loneliness and/or isolation as one of the challenging experiences for them in the last 3 months.

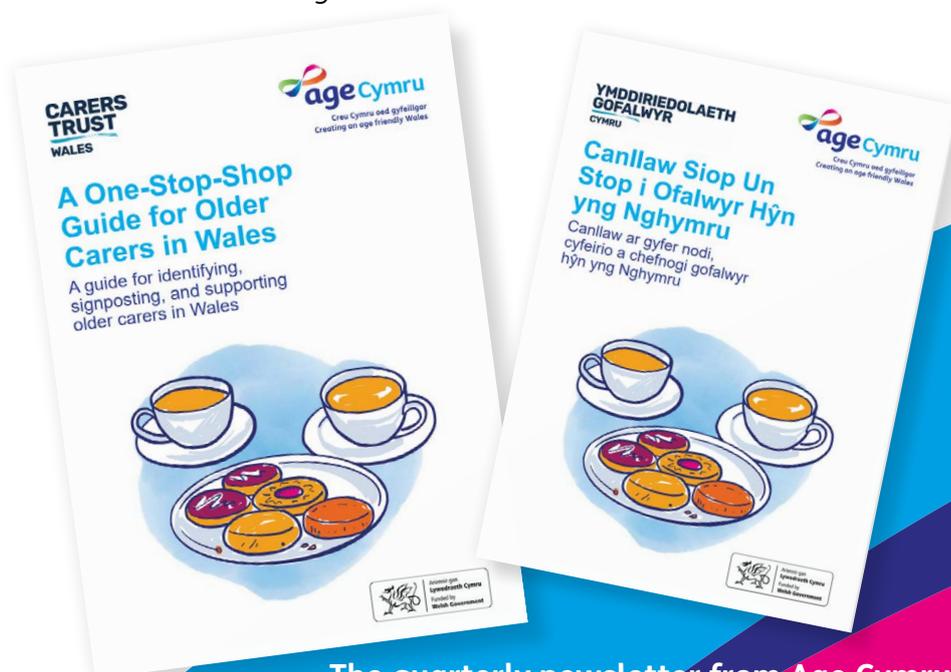
Age Cymru's chief executive Victoria Lloyd said: "Unpaid carers suffered terribly during the pandemic as they were forced to undertake new caring roles or increase

their existing responsibilities when statutory services and support were not available.

"This meant that many unpaid carers picked up the pieces with little support or advice and in many cases, without any respite services. Too often carers became exhausted and ill themselves as they struggled to cope.

"It is therefore crucial that we encourage as many older people as possible who are looking after someone to recognise themselves as carers and seek the support they need and deserve from both the public and charity sectors. Social care teams must incorporate the needs of the primary carer when they put in place care packages so they can continue to provide vital care to their loved ones."

If you'd like more information about Age Cymru's Carers Project, wish to tell us more about your situation or want to contribute to the project, please contact us on 029 2043 1538, email carers@agecymru.org.uk or visit www.agecymru.org.uk/carers



Advocacy provision in Wales on the increase, finds report

Advocacy provision, whereby older people are supported to access services such as utilities, health, housing, and benefits advice, or perhaps to reconnect with their local community, is on the increase in Wales.

Age Cymru undertook its eighth biennial study of advocacy services, Advocacy Counts 8, and found that, since 2020, there has been an increase in the number of advocacy services from 12 to 19 specifically for older people with the number of paid and volunteer advocates quadrupling to approximately 132 individuals across Wales.

It also found the total number of people supported across all services in Wales over the last 12 months rose by 16% to 19,592. Advocacy services specifically funded for older people now exist in all 22 local authority areas in Wales compared to just 15 in 2020.

Louise Hughes, who heads up the charity's Advocacy project, says: "We're delighted with

the findings showing a significant increase in advocacy provision as this means that more, potentially vulnerable older people, are getting access to the services and opportunities they need to live a later life of dignity and well-being.

"However, there is still a lot of work to do, particularly with raising awareness of advocacy services amongst potential beneficiaries and their families.

We also need to raise awareness of advocacy services amongst social workers and health professionals through training and promotion, so they will become more likely to refer their clients to an advocacy service."

If you, or someone you know, could benefit from advocacy support then why not get in touch with us for an informal chat about the process using the contact details below?

To download a free copy of Advocacy 8 or for more information about Age Cymru's advocacy services visit www.agecymru.org.uk/advocacy or call 029 2043 1555.

Charity welcomes Westminster Government's measures to ease cost-of-living pressures – but calls for more long-term planning

Age Cymru welcomed the Westminster Government's recent pledge to provide a series of support measures to help people cope with the cost-of-living crisis. However, the Charity also said there needs to be more long-term planning to help ease people's worries about their long-term financial situation.

For older people on low fixed incomes, relying solely on their State Pension and benefits, the long-term future is still bleak

as there are no more cuts they can make to their household budgets.

A large percentage of older people's expenditure is spent on essential items such as rent or mortgage, Council Tax, utility bills, food and drinks, communications in the home such as the telephone and internet, and transport with taxis and vehicle running costs.

The Charity is deeply concerned that, for those living on low and modest incomes,

there will be no wiggle room to meet any increased expenses with the situation being even more difficult for those with disabilities or ill-health who have higher energy needs.

Age Cymru's chief executive Victoria Lloyd said: "We welcome the specific support for older people, as they're disproportionately affected by the cost-of-living crisis while many have told us that they've been struggling to make ends meet for a number of years prior to this crisis. "We also welcome the fact that

the Government has increased the £200 loan to a £400 non-payable grant, as this caused significant concern for many older people.

"However, there needs to be a long-term plan as there is so much uncertainty surrounding energy costs. The Government's announcement will do little to allay people's long-term fears. We want to see the level of benefits and state pension raised within this financial year, so they keep pace with inflation and help support older people in the longer term."

Why are we waiting? Age Cymru's social care delay campaign gets underway

Age Cymru's advice and advocacy services are increasingly hearing from people who are struggling to get the social care they need. So, we contacted each local authority in Wales to ask about the issue and spoke to some older people waiting to have their care arranged.

The picture across Wales looks bleak at present. Many families have been caring for their loved ones when domiciliary care isn't available. Carers have told us their loved ones haven't been able to get the care they need, while some have only been given reduced care packages due to staff shortages. Some people with savings haven't been able to find any private care for the same reasons.

But some promising developments are planned across Wales. Welsh Government introduced the Real Living Wage for social

care workers in April this year. But it will take time for the initiative to make a difference in improving recruitment so the sector can start training enough staff to meet demand.

Local authorities told the charity how they are learning from the experiences of the pandemic to work more closely with charities and community groups to provide a better overall service.

For example, some local authorities are financing driving lessons and electric bikes to help carers travel between clients while others are increasing wage levels above the real living wage to attract more carers.

The Charity wants to hear from more people about their experiences of trying to get social care so if you would like to share your story, please email helen.twidle@agecymru.org.uk, call 029 2043 1555 or write to Age Cymru, Mariners House, Trident Court, East Moors Road, Cardiff CF24 5TD.

Why some older people may need to prepare for Digital Switchover

Between now and December 2025 the UK's telephone network is being upgraded, so the technology we currently use to make landline calls, called 'analogue', is being replaced with an internet-based system, called a Voice over Internet Protocol or VoIP for short.

Many of the services that lots of older people use via their landline such as telecare, personal alarms, burglar alarms and fax machines may be affected by the change. However, if people's devices are relatively modern, they should still work fine but older ones may need to be reconfigured or replaced. Very old handsets may also need to be changed.

Your phone provider will be able to provide advice on all these matters.

For many people, the change will be as simple as plugging a phone into the provider's router to link into their system. And in most cases, people will still be able to keep their existing numbers.

However, if there's a power cut people may lose access to some of their services. Therefore, you should speak to your current provider to make sure you have a suitable back up in place such as a mobile phone, a battery back-up, or some other solution.

Be scam aware

The digital switchover will be free of charge, and no one should ask you for any payments. If they do, please report them to the Police using 101 and to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040. If your bank account was used in a scam, contact your bank as soon as possible.

If somebody tries to sell you equipment or get you to sign up to expensive contracts as part of Digital Switchover, don't rush into any decisions, seek a second opinion, and speak to your phone company who will be able to advise you about what you need.

For more information

You can always contact your existing provider, at any time, using the customer service details on correspondence such as your bill. You may also visit Age Cymru's website: www.agecymru.org.uk/digital-switchover or call Age Cymru Advice on 0300 303 44 98.





Journal spotlights employment and older people

The next edition of Age Cymru's *EnvisAGE*, the Charity's discussion journal, shines a spotlight on older people and employment. Experts have contributed a series of articles examining issues around employment and older people and highlight a range of services and approaches that can help support and improve the working lives of older people.

More people are working for longer than ever before. For some this is through choice while, for others, a combination of economic factors and policies such as the raising of the State Pension age means that continuing to work is a financial necessity.

And while many older people continue to enjoy fulfilling careers there are others who face discrimination and find they're unable to continue in their job or find new employment and thereby wasting older people's skills at a time when many sectors are experiencing skills-shortages. And for the individual it's often devastating in relation to their personal finances, health and self-esteem.

Areas covered by the essays

In our opening article Dr Martin Hyde of Swansea University presents an overview of employment trends and challenges for our ageing workforce.

Jill Salter of Business in the Community Cymru (BITC) and D'Yon Dowell at Legal & General provide an insight into the Age at Work programme, where Age Cymru and BITC are working with employers in Wales to ensure they're recreating workplaces where older workers can thrive.

Shavanah Taj at Wales TUC focuses on older workers and the menopause at work, and Claire Morgan of Carers Wales explores the relationship between employment and caring, and the importance of providing support for older carers who work.

Kayleigh Jones draws attention to the barriers that older people can face to employment and provides an insight into the work of PRIME Cymru, and in our final article,

David Hagendyk of the Learning and Work Institute (Wales) provides an insight into lifelong learning and all age apprenticeships.

EnvisAGE will be published on the Age Cymru website this summer.

Highlighting the work of Age Cymru Dyfed with older veterans

Age Cymru Dyfed launched the RAF's 'Wales and the Battle of Britain' Exhibition in the National Library of Wales this spring. The launch featured discussions between WW2 veterans in their late 90's and teenage Air Cadets from the Air Training Corps in Aberystwyth.

It also included a 10-minute film made jointly by Age Cymru Dyfed and the National Library of Wales featuring five WW2 veterans, living in Dyfed, talking about their memories of the Battle of Britain.

The Charity works with more than 200 older veterans and, supported by a grant from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, has set up the award winning 'West Wales Veterans Archive,' that is held at the People's Collection Wales; www.peoplescollection.wales/users/44171

Age Cymru Dyfed and ITV Wales have recently produced a documentary providing a thoughtful exploration into the wartime and later lives of several WW2 veterans living in Wales today and is scheduled for screening during early summer 2022.

For more information about the Charity's work with older veterans contact Hugh Morgan OBE, Veterans' Coordinator, Age Cymru Dyfed on 03333 11 1920.



Harvey Jones (ACD), Dai Harries (ACD), Pedr ap Llwyd (National Library of Wales), Ted Owens (veteran) and Tony Bird (veteran)

Age Cymru West Glamorgan's Suzi rescues trapped client who suffered a fall

Age Cymru West Glamorgan's Home Support Worker Suzi arrived for a client appointment only to find them trapped upstairs and unable to answer the door.

Quick thinking Suzi sought the help of the non-urgent fire and rescue team, as well as a local locksmith, to gain entry into the home where they found the poor client lying on the bedroom floor.

Unable to contact the client's next of kin, Suzi moved her next appointment so she could stay with her client until the medical services arrived, who found the client confused but physically fine. Meanwhile the locksmith changed the locks so the client could remain safe in her home.

The client's next of kin told us the next day that the client was fine, and they were in the process of seeking further support to help prevent further falls.

Well done, Suzi!

For more information about Age Cymru West Glamorgan's services please call 01792 589654 or email enquiries@agecymruwestglamorgan.org.uk





Come and chat to us at one of our community coffee mornings

Age Cymru is running a series of community coffee mornings across Wales. The informal sessions will be open to all people aged 50+ where you can chat about your concerns and interests and, at the same time, learn about Age Cymru's activities and support.

If you'd like to pop in for a chat over a cuppa and a biscuit, you'd be most welcome. Each session will be about three hours long, but you can pop in at any time. You don't have to stay for the whole session, unless you'd like to!



Over coming weeks, we'll be visiting:

Wyeside Arts Centre, Builth Wells
- 15 June, 1pm - 4pm

Acton Community Centre, Wrexham
- 21 June, 1pm-4pm

Town Hall, Welshpool
- 22 June, 10am - 12pm

The Phoenix Centre, Swansea
- 5 July, 10am - 1pm

The Bridges Centre, Monmouth
- 12 July, 10am - 1pm

Details of further venues, including Aberystwyth, will be available on the Age Cymru website over the summer.

In the meantime, if you have any queries or suggestions for future venues, please contact Chris Williams, Age Cymru's National Partnership Manager, at christopher.williams@agecymru.org.uk or call 029 2043 1555.

More Money in your pocket – an Age Cymru guide to help you claim all your entitlements

Every year, it's estimated that up to £175m of state benefits goes unclaimed by older people in Wales. Some people are reluctant to claim, some are put off by the claims process, and others simply don't know that they qualify for extra support. Could you be one of the people missing out? If you're an older person, you could be entitled to benefits that you haven't been able to claim before.

Such benefits can help you keep your independence and improve your standard of living by helping with housing costs, care needs or general day-to-day living expenses.

So, it's well worth reading through this guide to see whether you're claiming all that you're due.

All figures referred to in this guide apply from April 2022 to March 2023 and is applicable across Wales. There are separate versions covering England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. To download a copy, visit www.agecymru.org.uk/moneyguides or call 0300 303 44 98.



More than 100 Age Cymru Nordic Walkers celebrate the Platinum Jubilee

More than 100 Age Cymru Nordic Walkers celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with walks led by the Charity's instructors in Barry, Wrexham, Brecon, Pontypridd, and Swansea. All the walks offered long or short routes to suit different abilities.

Following the walks, the participants, who came from several local groups, were invited to take part in celebratory teas provided by generous local venues.

This offered the perfect opportunity for everyone to socialise with one another in a friendly, informal setting.

One participant said, "What a wonderful morning, it was so lovely to meet so many new people, thank you Age Cymru and the Instructors for organising the walk."

Using a pair of specially designed lightweight poles that provide additional support, Nordic Walking exercises 90% of your muscles and increases strength in the arms, legs, shoulders, chest and back.

If you're interested in joining your local Nordic Walking group, then please get in touch for an informal chat. You may also speak to your local Nordic Walking instructor.

Contact Age Cymru on 029 2043 1555 or email nordicwalking@agecymru.org.uk





The prestigious Wizz Air Cardiff Half Marathon: team up with Age Cymru this autumn

The prestigious Wizz Air Cardiff Half Marathon takes place on 2 October 2022 and Age Cymru has several complementary running spots available for would be runners and fundraisers.

All you have to do to claim your free spot, as well as an Age Cymru running vest and support throughout your training period, is pledge to raise £300 in sponsorship.

The Wizz Air Cardiff Half Marathon has been awarded a World Athletics Elite Road Race Label and its flat terrain means that lots of records and personal best times can be broken on the day. It's a very popular event and last year all 27,000 plus available spots were snapped up quickly by runners.

But of course, the main reward is that you'll be raising money to help the Charity support older people in Wales as they grapple with

their own enormous challenges brought about by the pandemic and now the cost-of-living crisis.

Your donations can help us deliver vital information and advice to older people crippled with financial worries. They can also help us to provide direct support to older people worried about re-engaging with their communities following two years of isolating during the pandemic.

And they can help us train more volunteers to lead community-based activities for older people such as Nordic Walking and Tai Chi.

Even if you've already booked a running spot, you can still join our team.

For more information call 029 2043 1536, email runforus@agecymru.org.uk, or visit: www.agecymru.org.uk/cardiffhalf

Get in touch

If you have a story for Age Matters then please get in touch with the editor Michael Phillips on 07794 366 224 or email michael.phillips@agecymru.org.uk

Age Matters

Editor in Chief: Victoria Lloyd,
Chief Executive

Editor: Michael Phillips,
Communications Manager