



# *Age Matters*

The quarterly newsletter  
from Age Cymru

*Spring 2023*

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 **ageCymru**  
Creating an age friendly Wales

## Welcome to our Spring Edition of Age Matters.



*Victoria Lloyd, Chief Executive*

As I'm writing this, hints of Spring are starting to show themselves with blossom on trees and bulbs starting to flower, though snow does remain in the weather forecast. That's why we're still encouraging people who might not have received their energy vouchers for pre-payment meters to double check and contact Age Cymru Advice for further information (see page 3).

We've got a fantastic range of articles on the work of Age Cymru and Age Cymru local partners in this edition. I wanted to take this opportunity to say how proud I am of the whole team for their work in achieving the Investing in Volunteer Quality Mark and how much we value the contributions volunteers make to the work of the Charity every day, whether they're making a friendship call, leading an activity session, advocating for an older person, raising funds, or in the many other ways people volunteer for Age Cymru. A huge thank you to all our volunteers.

And finally, our latest survey has just gone live, we're asking for your views on a range of issues. The information we've collected in these surveys over the last three years has been invaluable. It has informed our service development, our campaigns and our thinking. So please share your views (see page 12).

## Thousands of households with a traditional pre-payment meter have yet to cash in their energy vouchers

According to data released by PayPoint one in five households with traditional pre-payment meters have yet to cash in their energy vouchers. The company estimates that 760,000 vouchers, worth approximately £50 million, that were issued during October and November 2022 were not redeemed by the deadline date of Sunday 5 February 2023.

While recent press reports suggest that, when you include the figures for December and January, nearly two million energy support vouchers worth £125m have been either lost, delayed or unclaimed.

The UK Government pledged to give every home with an electricity supply in Britain £400 through its Energy Bills Support Scheme with payments spread over a six-month period from October 2022 to March 2023.

For most households, this amount was simply deducted from their direct debits. However, customers with traditional prepayment meters need to redeem their vouchers at post offices or PayPoint shops.

Crucially, the government has said that customers can contact their energy supplier to have a voucher reissued even if it's expired. The reissued voucher will then be valid for three months from the date it has expired. It also said that when a voucher is not redeemed, energy suppliers must make at least three attempts to reach the customer, by more than one means which can include post, email, and text message.



## The next deadline dates

PayPoint said that so far 79% of customers have redeemed their December vouchers ahead of the deadline date of March 8 2023. While those who have yet to redeem their January vouchers have until have until April 9 2023.

Age Cymru's Head of Policy Heather Ferguson says "I would urge anyone who has missed the deadline date to contact their energy supplier as soon as possible to have a new voucher issued. The scheme

was introduced to help people cope with some of the most expensive energy bills they have ever faced, so it's important to take full advantage of this support.

"Many homes with traditional pre-payment meters tend to be amongst those who need to heat their home the most to stay warm and well, so it's crucial that any available support reaches them as easily as possible."

For more information contact Age Cymru Advice.

# Celebrating the broad diversity of older people in Wales

**Age Cymru is launching its very own image library of older people living in Wales so that journalists, recruiters and marketing professionals can access images that are a genuine reflection of this older generation.**

For several years, the charity has been dismayed at the common portrayal of older people as vulnerable individuals incapable of contributing to society or enjoying community-based activities. In many cases the portrayal is often reduced to a pair of wrinkled hands while the individual sits passively in a chair.

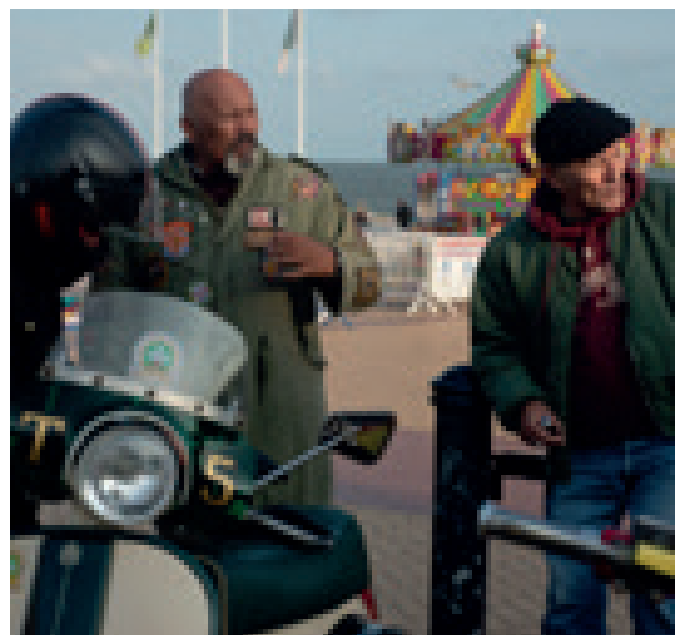
However, everyday Age Cymru interacts with older people who continue to contribute to their workplace, undertake millions of pounds worth of caring for loved ones, and form the cornerstone of much of the volunteering undertaken in Wales. The collection contains more than 50 images of older people from a scooter riding skinhead to a mountain-sheep-farmer and from wild

swimmers to allotment keepers with much in between.

The images in this library are free to use in a wide range of ways such as in newspapers, magazines, community newsletters, websites, recruitment adverts, and social media or anywhere that older people are being portrayed to help provide a more compelling story about older lives in Wales.

Age Cymru's Kelly Barr who co-ordinated the project says, "This is very much a thought-provoking collection of photographs that breaks down some of the negative stereotypes of older people and better reflects the breadth of experiences and interests of older people in Wales."

To access the image library, visit: [agecymru.org.uk/thisisolder](http://agecymru.org.uk/thisisolder)



# Age Cymru recognised for its work with volunteers



Age Cymru has been awarded the Investing in Volunteers Quality Mark by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). The award recognises an organisation's commitment to volunteering and shows that it values its volunteers.

Age Cymru's chief executive Victoria Lloyd says "We are absolutely delighted to have been awarded this quality mark for our work with volunteers. They are an integral part of our organisation and we couldn't do what we

do without them. We can reach and support so many more older people because of the time volunteers give and their dedication to our cause.

I would also like to thank all the teams at Age Cymru who support our volunteers on a regular basis making sure they have everything they need to carry out their vital work."

The charity was assessed against the following six quality areas and proved to excel in all aspects of working with its volunteers;

- Vision for Volunteering
- Planning for Volunteers
- Volunteer inclusion
- Recruiting and welcoming volunteers
- Supporting volunteers
- Valuing and developing volunteers.

For more information about volunteering with Age Cymru contact Amanda O'Shea on 029 2043 1555 or email [amanda.oshea@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:amanda.oshea@agecymru.org.uk)

Further information about the Standard can be found at [investinginvolunteers.co.uk](http://investinginvolunteers.co.uk) or [wcva.cymru/investinginvolunteers/](http://wcva.cymru/investinginvolunteers/) You may also call 0800 288 8329.

## Widespread calls for more support to help older people thrive in the workplace

The need to support older people wishing to return to, or remain in, the workplace to take full advantage of their skills, talents, and knowledge was the underlying message of speakers at a recent event focusing on employment and older people.

Held at Senedd Cymru, Cardiff Bay, the event heard that older people often face barriers to accessing and staying in employment such as the lack of flexible working options given the right support, older people can thrive in the workplace.

Speakers agreed the cost-of-living crisis makes it more important than ever that we enable older people to flourish in the workplace so they can become more financially resilient and develop a more financially secure retirement.

The event heard that older workers could play a significant part in addressing some of the skill shortages in several key industries such as logistics, hospitality, retail and the

health and social care sectors, and thereby help the economy to recover from the effects of the pandemic.

**Economy Minister, Vaughan Gething MS** said “As part of our Economic Mission, we’re using the levers we have to narrow the skills divide, support better jobs and tackle poverty. Our Plan for Employability and Skills prioritises people most in need of help. This includes supporting older people to stay in work and those further away from the labour market to find employment. Supporting older workers to stay in work offers employers a rich source of talent and provides a catalyst for a more inclusive workplace overall. That’s why we fund a range of initiatives to support older people to do just that – from programmes to help them retrain and develop new skills, to support with overcoming poor health.”

Focusing on the human rights element of older workers **Age Cymru chair Professor John Williams**, stated that everyone has the right to work and to be treated fairly and with dignity, and not to be dismissed or marginalised in the workplace because of their age. He highlighted the positive attributes of older workers such as their loyalty, dependability and knowledge, and the need to move away from negative stereotypes such as older people being set in their ways or prone to sickness. Professor Williams also said Brexit has left several key industries in the UK short of some 300,000 workers so it made no sense to waste the talents of older people at times like these.

**Mike Hedges MS** who chairs the Welsh Government’s Cross-Party Group on Older People and Ageing said we know that some older people are facing barriers to entering, and developing in, the workplace which is a waste of their talents, and their experiences and knowledge built up over many years.

**Dr Martin Hyde Associate Professor in Gerontology at Swansea University** argued that as governments at all levels seek to ‘build back better’ it is crucial that older workers are not left behind and that

this requires an understanding of the labour market conditions of, and challenges faced by older workers.

Outlining the business case for becoming an age friendly employer **Sue Husband OBE Director of Business in the Community (BITC) (Cymru)**, said that Wales’ population is growing older, and around a third of the workforce in Wales is now aged 50 and over, and employers need to tap into this valuable cohort if they want to succeed now and in the future.

Echoing the BITC view **Glynis Scarico Senior HR Business Partner at Legal & General**, an age inclusive employer, spoke about the importance of creating a workplace where we can all perform at our best no matter who we are. She said inclusivity is at the heart of this and age is no exception. While Vivienne Russell, Customer Service Manager also at Legal & General spoke about how she has benefitted personally from working for an age-friendly organisation.

Opening and closing the event, **Age Cymru chief executive Victoria Lloyd** said “We need to challenge ageist attitudes and work with organisations to help them remove any unnecessary barriers for older workers. We also want employers to understand the benefits that a mixed age workforce can bring to an organisation.”

To view the full report visit [www.agecymru.org.uk/latestnews](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/latestnews)



**Economy Minister Vaughan Gething MS speaking at the event**



# Let's get physical, with Age Cymru

Our physical activity projects aim to increase activity in older people, reverse physical decline and frailty, and help people live more independently as they age. We help older people to better understand the benefits of being active. We also ensure all our programmes include a social element, which is equally important to the overall wellbeing of our participants by helping to combat loneliness and isolation. All of this is done in a safe, fun and community setting.

In recent years we have been delivering three physical activity programmes across Wales; Nordic Walking, Tai Chi and Low Impact Functional Training (LIFT). And in 2021, we introduced walking to our programme, with new Walking Groups and a Walk and Talk project.

Our sessions are run by Age Cymru volunteers who we recruit, train and support continuously. We currently have more than 130 volunteers on our program who deliver and invest their time to help others. All our volunteers are fully qualified by recognised training providers.



## Walk and Talk

This programme benefits older adults who, due to Covid-19, have seen a decline in their ability to get out and about. They may lack confidence or have other barriers that they feel they need to overcome. Volunteers are matched with a suitable participant and will work with them over a 12-week period to achieve a goal that the participant helps set. The volunteer supports the participants to overcome their fears and will provide much needed encouragement and support as well as social interaction.

## Walking Groups

This programme benefits the older person who might already have the confidence and ability to walk a short distance and who would enjoy the benefit of walking in a group. We provide safe, guided walks, led by a trained walking leader who will be on hand to provide encouragement and support, and make sure no one is left behind. Our walks are short and carefully selected to take account of inclines and terrain.

For more information about any of our activities or about becoming an activity volunteer please email [amy.lloyd@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:amy.lloyd@agecymru.org.uk) or call 0300 3034498

## Tell us about your experiences of accessing social care

Last summer we published our report ‘Why are we waiting?’ on delays in access to social care that showed nearly one in ten older people had to wait more than 30 days for an assessment of their social care needs.

This year we’re repeating the research and want to hear from older people aged

55 and over, across Wales, about their experiences of applying for an assessment of their social care needs or who are still waiting for a package of care. We are also keen to hear from families, friends and carers who may be supporting their loved one to go through this process.

If you can help, please contact Age Cymru’s Helen Twidle at [policy@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:policy@agecymru.org.uk), write to Helen at our Cardiff office address, or call 029 2043 1571.

## Forest arts programme launching for the over 50s in Bridgend

Age Cymru in partnership with community arts organisation Tanio has organised a series of well-being sessions for the over 50s using creative skills within the natural environment.

Tanio will be delivering the sessions using specially trained forest arts practitioners throughout this spring. Refreshments will be provided while support with transport and access is also available.

Lisa Davies, Tanio’s Chief Executive says “We’re delighted to be partnering with Age Cymru to bring forest arts to older people in Bridgend. We have seen the huge benefits that being creative in nature brings through our Forest Schools programme, and can’t wait to bring people together in some of our wonderful outdoor spaces.”

Kelly Barr, Age Cymru’s Arts and Creativity Programme Manager says “For many of us, the last few years have helped us to appreciate the natural world around us, through daily walks and meeting socially outside. It is widely recognised that being in nature has a positive impact on our physical and mental wellbeing. We hope that this pilot project will demonstrate the benefits of bringing together creativity and the outside world!”

The project, funded by Natural Resources Wales Resilient Communities fund, will take place in woodlands in Bridgend County Borough. For more information call Kelly Barr on 02920 431 576 or email [kelly.barr@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:kelly.barr@agecymru.org.uk)



# Charity to kick start The Big Step fundraiser in July

Throughout July, we're asking you to get involved in The Big Step challenge and walk 10,000 steps a day. In 2022, we made more than 10,000 friendship calls to lonely or isolated older people. So set yourself a challenge and complete 10,000 (or whatever you can manage) steps for every friendship call we made last year.

For many older people simple pleasures such as meeting family and friends for a cuppa and a chat have had to be curtailed to help balance household budgets. Which is why our telephone friendship service and Age Cymru Advice is so important right now. Sadly, with 220,000 older people in Wales saying they feel lonely there's a pressing need to reach out to even more lonely older people.

Older people are facing unprecedented challenges right now as they struggle with spiraling fuel and food costs on relatively low fixed incomes and the situation will be worse still for those with disabilities or ill-health who

have higher energy needs.

Equally challenging is the need to remove the stigma that some people feel of applying for support which they are entitled to. An estimated £200m worth of pension credit goes unclaimed each year in Wales – a benefit that can act as a passport to many other benefits and entitlements.

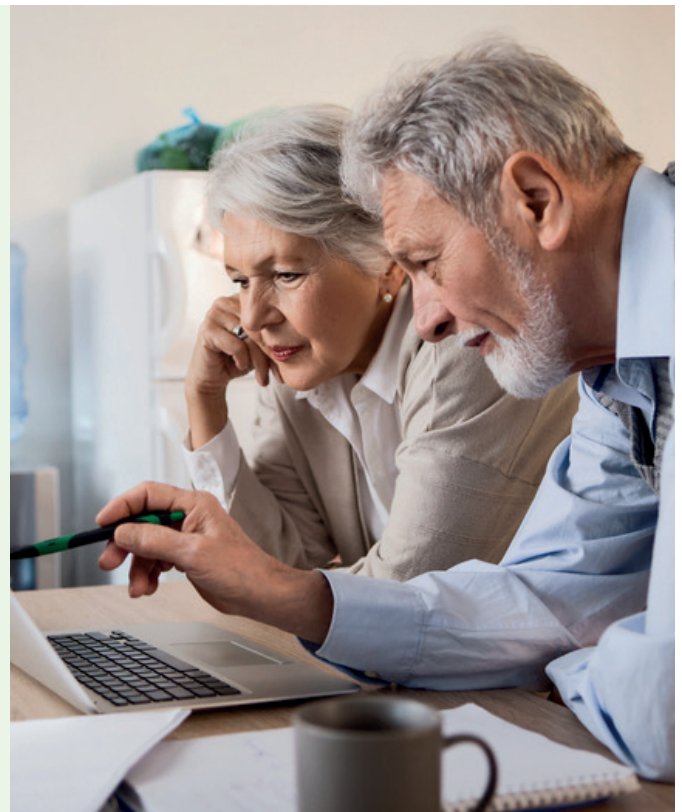
So, to help us support more older people all you have to do is sign up to The Big Step by visiting [agecymru.org.uk/thebigstep](http://agecymru.org.uk/thebigstep) or calling 029 2043 1555. Then choose the number of steps you'd like to walk and seek sponsorship from family, friends and colleagues. And if you raise more than £50, you'll get a special Big Step T-shirt from us.



## Later Life Planning

Planning for the future and putting your affairs in order can provide peace of mind and security for both you and your loved ones. That's why Age Cymru offers a range of services to help you plan for your future, now and after you've gone.

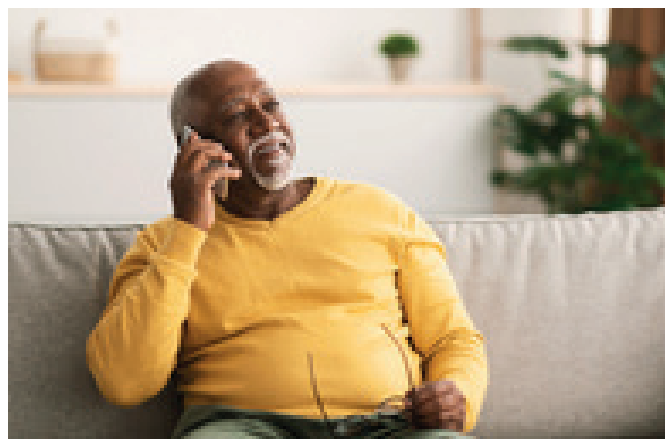
Our Later Life Planning Service can help with a range of estate planning services including helping you draft your Will and establishing Lasting Power of Attorney. If you already have a will, you may need to consider whether it needs updating. The Society of Will Writers advises reviewing your will every 3 to 5 years.





## Why do you need a Will?

- A will is a legally binding document where you can state your instructions for what should happen when you pass away. It can be used to outline how your belongings should be distributed, who you want to manage your estate and can include information about your funeral wishes.
- If we die without a Will in place the 'rules of intestacy' will apply. This means that our estate will be shared out according to a strict order and could mean that the things we own end up passing to people who we'd prefer not to inherit from us.
- If we aren't married or in a civil partnership, then our partner won't inherit anything from us without a will in place.
- If we're the parent or guardian of children, and there is no surviving parent, then social services will decide where to place our children.
- If there are no surviving relatives who can inherit under the rules of intestacy, the estate passes to the Crown.
- If we die without a will in place sorting out our assets can be a long, drawn-out process. During this time, our loved ones will have no access to our finances to pay the bills.



## Why do you need a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA/POA)?

A Lasting Power of Attorney is a legal document that allows you to appoint one or more people of your choice to help or make decisions on your behalf when you are no longer able.

- Without an LPA, your next of kin won't be able to make important decisions on your behalf.
- Having an LPA in place prevents a stranger or someone you don't trust making decisions about your welfare.
- If you lose the capacity to make your own decisions, you will not be able to arrange an LPA.
- Without an LPA in place, your loved ones may have to apply for a Deputyship order if you lose capacity, which is expensive.
- It can take a long time to get an LPA or Deputyship processed. This can have financial and practical implications.

Our Later Life Planning Officers are fully trained and accredited in will writing and estate planning by The College of Will Writing. They hold the Society of Will Writers' Wills and Estate Planning Certificate and are professional members of the Society of Will Writers. Call the team on 07772 697 097 (Luan) or 07772 461 585 (Sally) or email us at [LLP@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:LLP@agecymru.org.uk) for more information and a list of prices for all our Later Life Planning services.

# Help us create an age friendly Wales



**Age Cymru's Consultative Forum puts older people at the heart of what we do. The Forum informs and influences our work, provides guidance for our activities, contributes to our events, and offers us feedback on everything we do.**

The Forum has a wide and diverse membership to make sure that a range of views and experience is available to Age Cymru. It has members from older people's organisations and groups, as well as individual older people from across Wales who make contributions from national, regional, local and individual perspectives.

We are particularly looking for new members from north Wales who are willing to share their experiences and thereby contribute to developing Age Cymru's policies and priorities. If you are interested in being a part of the Consultative Forum, contact Kathy Lye by email on [kathy.lye@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:kathy.lye@agecymru.org.uk) or by phone on 029 2043 1570.

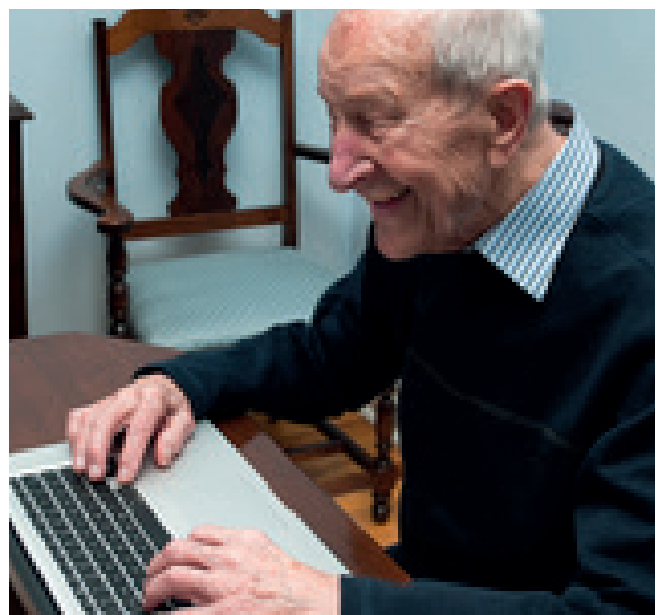
## Age Cymru Dyfed secures £150,000 for digital inclusion

Age Cymru Dyfed has secured £150,000 over the next three years from the Santander Foundation to help the charity deliver its digital inclusion programmes that aim to improve the financial and digital skills of the over 50s in the region, particularly with banking and shopping online.

Age Cymru Dyfed's Chief Executive Officer Simon Wright said: "The money will directly support the skills and well-being of our local communities. Our digital inclusion project makes a real difference to the lives of those who would otherwise struggle with accessing vital online services.

Judith Moran, the Santander Foundation Chair said, "We're delighted to be working alongside and supporting Age Cymru Dyfed, with their expertise and approach - this funding will positively change the lives of older residents in west Wales."

For more information call 03333 447 874 or email [reception@agecymrudyfed.org.uk](mailto:reception@agecymrudyfed.org.uk)



## Tailored support for the over 50s linked to the Powys farming community

Age Cymru Powys in partnership with Care & Repair in Powys has developed the Mamwlad project to support the over 50s linked to the area's farming industry.

The Mamwlad project, funded by the Welsh Government, supports farmers, farm workers and those retired from the industry to stay living at their homes safely and independently for as long as possible.

Care & Repair in Powys offers a free home visit to assess falls hazards, fire safety,

energy efficiency, and security. While Age Cymru Powys provides free home visits to check benefit eligibility and arrange befriending services if required.

Between April and September 2022 Mamwlad helped 173 clients, raised £224,806 in welfare benefits, and undertook more than £56,000 worth of adaptations and home improvements.

For more information about Mamwlad call Age Cymru Powys on 01686 623 707 or Care & Repair in Powys on 01686 620 760.

## Supporting carers in the workplace

According to Carers UK, one in seven carers in the UK are juggling caring responsibilities with work, and on average, approximately 600 people a day leave work to care. This demonstrates the strong need to provide more support to working carers to enable them to remain in work, continue to earn, and stay connected.

Recent research by the Centre of Ageing and Dementia Research in Wales in partnership with the Age at Work programme, found that only 13% of responding employers say they allow staff leave to care for older adults.

The Age at Work programme in Wales, delivered by Business in the Community (BITC) in partnership with Age Cymru and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, encourages employers to take action to support carers in their organisations. It encourages them to create a carers policy, signpost to information on carers rights, provide paid carers leave, offer flexibility, set-up an employee carers network, introduce a

carers passport and value carers as part of a diverse and inclusive workforce.

BITC developed a guide for employers on supporting carers in the workplace. By providing support to their employees who have caring responsibilities, they can recruit and retain valuable staff and benefit from the many skills that carers can bring to the workplace.

Age at Work also offers support and resources to employers on age inclusion in the workplace through its Age-Inclusive Business Review - an online self-assessment tool where employers can identify gaps and highlight strengths regarding age-inclusive policies and practices. Each organisation that completes the Review receives a bespoke recommendations report on how they can take action towards a more age-inclusive workplace.

Visit [www.bitcni.org.uk/age-at-work-wales](http://www.bitcni.org.uk/age-at-work-wales) to complete the Age-Inclusive Business Review or contact Jill Salter, Age at Work Programme Manager at [jill.salter@bitc.org.uk](mailto:jill.salter@bitc.org.uk) or call 07793 443 893 to explore how the Age at Work programme can help your organisation to become more age inclusive.



## Raise funds for Age Cymru by running the Cardiff Half Marathon

If you're looking for a new challenge, then why not run the Cardiff Half Marathon on 1 October 2023 to not only get fit and healthy but also to raise funds for Age Cymru and help us continue supporting older people in Wales.

When you join our Age Cymru team we'll give you free space and a running vest, plus lots of support throughout your training and on the day itself.

All you need to do is pledge to raise £300 in sponsorship. If you've already signed up for the Cardiff Half Marathon but still want to fundraise for us, simply get in touch and we'll place you in our team and support you all the way.

If you wish to join our team, or you need further information, email us at [runforus@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:runforus@agecymru.org.uk) or call 029 2043 1555, and we'll explain what you need to do next. Please include a contact number as well as your email address.



## Tell us what matters to you - national survey of the current experiences of people aged 50 or over in Wales

Age Cymru and its key partners have launched their fourth annual survey to understand the views and current experiences of people aged 50 or over across Wales.

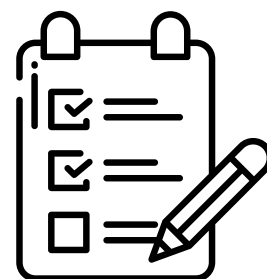
More than 3,800 people have responded to this annual research since the first survey was launched in 2020, and the information gathered has provided us with vital insight into what matters to older people, informed and influenced Welsh Government, and shaped policy and campaigning through the organisations involved.

From health to employment, finances to social care, we want to hear what matters to you.

How to complete our survey:

- Visit [www.agecymru.org.uk/annualsurvey](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/annualsurvey) to complete the survey online
- Call 029 2043 1555 for a paper copy of the survey, in English or Welsh and return via our freepost address: Age Cymru, FREEPOST RTZG-JHGC-RYJJ, Ground Floor, Mariners House, Age Cymru, Trident Court, East Moors Road, CARDIFF CF24 5TD
- You can also write to us with your views via our freepost address.

The deadline for the survey and any other information is Friday 21 April 2023



### 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](mailto:michael.phillips@agecymru.org.uk)

### Age Matters

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