



# Keep Well this Winter

February 2010



[www.kwtw.org.uk](http://www.kwtw.org.uk)

## Benefit your income



Older people are constantly being asked to get a benefit check because we know that many who are entitled to extra benefits do not claim them.

Recently a new problem has been highlighted showing how many are losing out on much needed income. Often people are over the means tested benefit level even though this

may be by a very small amount. Some people feel very let down that although they are struggling to make ends meet they cannot get any further support so they assume that forever more they are not entitled to help.

People's circumstances change and so to the opportunities to claim money to which you are entitled. During older age it is likely that eventually one partner or the other will need care and attendance. This need develops gradually without the partner who is caring realising they are undertaking duties/care for which they are entitled to receive attendance or carers allowance for. When people suggest to them they claim for this often the answer is given that they have been checked out and they are not entitled to help as they do not realise that not all benefits are means tested.

Refusing the opportunity to claim due benefits means that many older people do not get the quality of life they are entitled to. The money they could claim would pay for care to give a much needed break for tired carers. Furthermore the receipt of full attendance allowance also makes it possible to access other benefits.

Welsh weather presenter **Sian Lloyds** invited shoppers in Cardiff's Queen's Arcade into her living room on **Friday 5 February 2010**, to chat about how they can save money on their energy bills after weeks of chilly weather.

Sian was at the **Lower Level of Queen's Arcade (outside the Post Office) between 10am and 12.30pm** to talk about the Home Heat Helpline (0800 33 66 99), a free service funded by Britain's major energy suppliers to help customers who are worried about their energy bills. The service aims to give people on low incomes access to free home insulation and reduced or 'social' tariffs.

**Ros Williams, Health Initiatives Coordinator**  
**Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales**  
Tel: 029 2043 1552; email: [rosalyn.williams@accymru.org.uk](mailto:rosalyn.williams@accymru.org.uk)

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# Benefit your income continued...



Recent research showed 23,300 households in Cardiff could save around £150 a year on their heating bills by insulating their lofts and another £115 a year with cavity wall insulation.

The research, commissioned by the Home Heat Helpline, revealed more than 250,000 vulnerable households are eligible for assistance through the Helpline across Wales, including 23,900 in Rhondda Cynon Taf and 17,500 in the Caerphilly borough.

During the cold snap the service has been helping record numbers of people with advice on keeping warm and keeping bills down.

Sian's Home Heat Helpline living room is touring the country to offer people tips and advice on reducing their energy bills. The tour kicked off in Birmingham in

January and has also visited Leeds and Glasgow. After Cardiff it will head to Bristol.

Sian was joined by a friendly team of advisers from the Home Heat Helpline who helped visitors to the living room to find out if they could be eligible for free help from their energy suppliers or the Government.

The Home Heat Helpline's trained advisers can help customers to access a range of services provided by all Britain's major energy suppliers, including:

- Grants for free home insulation
- Advice on reduced or 'social' tariffs which could offer customers more affordable prices on their gas and electricity
- The Priority Services Register for those with a disability or special needs
- Flexible payment options for those in fuel debt

Age Concern Cardiff and the Vale Welfare Rights service helped supply additional support for living room visitors. Around 20 referrals were taken in the two hour period for benefits checks with several older people saying they will contact Age Concern.

Sue Campbell, the Welfare Rights Manager stated that it is likely that the 20 referrals will be eligible to receive between £70 and £200 per week each extra to boost their income. That is £960 per week of government payments that should have been received by older people in Cardiff – how many more nationwide? We try hard to get the message over that The Pensions Service, Local Age Concerns and other respected voluntary organisations can help you get the money to which you are entitled and will handle your claim in confidence and in a respectful manner. Get in touch with Age Concern on 029 2043 1555.

## Dear reader...

Dear reader,

### Keep Well this Winter

On 2<sup>nd</sup> March coordinators for the Keep Well this Winter Campaign will meet in the Media Resource Centre in Llandrindod Wells to discuss this year's campaign. It is important to evaluate this National campaign and to report back to the Welsh Assembly Government who funds this initiative.

Last year many older people suffered as a result of ill health and fuel poverty. Sadly the Winter Related Death Statistics showed a 67% rise for 2008/9 illustrating the

consequences on the vulnerable when faced with poverty and ill health. It is argued by a leading charitable organisations that this figure can be considerably reduced if people can access the help they need and live in warm houses. Along side these initiatives it is highly important to get older people to have a flu vaccination yet only an average 68% take this opportunity.

We always want to improve the service and information the campaign supports so this is your chance, as a reader of this newsletter, to feed information that will be taken into account in the

annual report. If you are a carer, older person or someone indirectly or directly involved with KWTW we want to here from you. If some aspect of the campaign has made a difference to you let us know. You can contact 02920431555 quoting KWTW information link or email me on:

[Rosalyn.williams@accymru.org.uk](mailto:Rosalyn.williams@accymru.org.uk)

Thank you for your help.



# Health information

## Profiles of Lifestyle and Health

Profiles of lifestyle and health have been produced by the Public Health Wales Observatory as part of a series following the demography profile released in June 2009. It aims to assist the health boards in understanding the health of their population and in their planning activities, as well as provide a resource on lifestyle for other stakeholders.

It presents information on behaviours relating to health, as well as their impact on health in Wales through outcome measures. It provides a snapshot

of local patterns in Wales displayed in traffic light tables, and also contains some comparisons to other countries. The topics covered are diet, physical activity and obesity; smoking; alcohol; illicit drugs; sexual health and dental health. For the first time smoking-attributable mortality has been calculated for Wales.

The profiles consist of the Wales reference document Lifestyle and health: Wales and its health boards ([http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/568/Lifestyle\\_Wales\\_Final%28E%29.pdf](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/568/Lifestyle_Wales_Final%28E%29.pdf)) and a set of seven individual health board profiles

(combined or separate): All seven health board profiles combined.

[http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/568/Lifestyle\\_HealthBoards%28E%29.pdf](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/568/Lifestyle_HealthBoards%28E%29.pdf)



## Swine flu



Influenza is a very contagious virus that causes lots of people health problems every winter.

Flu can be serious and some groups are more vulnerable to severe health problems if they catch it. That's why free flu vaccinations are offered every year to the people most vulnerable to serious complications from flu infection. This includes all those aged 65 and over as well as younger folk with specific medical conditions or health problems. This generally happens from October each year, and many of you will already have had the seasonal flu jab.

This winter has also seen the emergence of a new flu virus H1N1, swine flu. Swine flu has caused ill health across the world and the swine flu vaccination was first offered in the UK from October 2009. It is a separate vaccine to the seasonal flu jab and is available free from your GP surgery if you are over 65 or in one of the other identified risk groups. It is not too late to get protection from the swine flu vaccine.

Levels of swine flu caused by the new virus (H1N1) are currently low but substantial numbers of people are still in hospital and critical care units receiving treatment for it. It is extremely important that the current low levels of influenza don't lead to complacency as it might return and the virus may "drift", no one knows how this new virus will behave.

The swine flu vaccine gives a high

level of immunity to people who receive it, may give longer lasting immunity and is likely to protect against "drifted" strains of influenza.

So if you are aged 65 or over, or in a group that is at increased risk of complications of flu please contact your GP surgery and arrange to get the swine flu vaccine. It's not too late to get protected.

For more advice and information about swine flu, please contact NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or by visiting <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pandemic-flu/Pages/Introduction.aspx?WT.srch=1>

# Care & Repair Cymru welcomes funding deal



## Care and Repair Cymru welcomes continued funding deal for vulnerable older people in Wales

A £6.6 million Wales-wide package aimed at helping older people to remain in their own homes has been welcomed by Care & Repair Cymru.

The funding package was announced (today) by Deputy Minister for Housing, Jocelyn Davies AM when she visited Conwy Care & Repair agency. £4.5m of the funding has been awarded to Care & Repair Cymru and to the individual Care & Repair agencies across Wales as a contribution to their operational costs. The service offers support to older people to help them to carry out home improvements to meet their needs. This includes home renovation and adaptations,

managing building work and advice on reputable contractors.

The Rapid Response Adaptations Programme, in which Care and Repair also plays a pivotal role, has been awarded £2.1m. This will be used for minor but often urgent improvements that are needed to allow people to return home after being discharged from hospital or to prevent future admissions. Improvements may include:

- Small ramps, home access and door entry
- Community safety alarms
- Internal or external hand rails or hand grips
- Access to toilet facilities
- Levelling paths

**Wendy Bourton OBE, Chief Executive of Care & Repair Cymru** welcomed the announcement and said:

“We are delighted with today’s announcement, especially in today’s difficult, economic climate. This continued funding shows a commitment and confidence in the services to older people delivered by Care & Repair across

Wales. Care & Repair Agencies remain committed to supporting older homeowners to remain warm, safe and secure in their own homes.”

**Jocelyn Davies** added:

“Care & Repair provides a valuable service that allows older and disabled people across Wales to continue living safely and independently in their own homes for as long as possible. Simple adaptations to a person’s home, such as adding grab rails or improved steps, can have a huge impact on their quality of life.”

As well as health and social care, Care & Repair also has an important role to play in the Assembly Government’s affordability and sustainability agendas. Allowing older people to remain in their own homes in comfort and security, through a varied programme of repairs and adaptations, not only enhances the health and emotional well-being of individuals but also in improving their homes, makes communities more cohesive and sustainable.”

For further information please contact Care & Repair Cymru on 029 2057 6286 or email [enquiries@careandrepair.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@careandrepair.org.uk)

## Pedal Power

**A registered charity providing cycling opportunities for all ages and abilities.**

Raise money for Pedal Power by riding the Taff Trail.

Rides scheduled:  
From Brecon to Pontcanna Fields, Cardiff (52 miles)

From Pontcanna Fields to Tongwynlais and back (12 miles - ideal for families!)

Or set your own distance around Pontcanna Park!

For further details contact Pedal Power:  
Tel: 029 2039 0713

Email: [jaci.pedalpower@btconnect.com](mailto:jaci.pedalpower@btconnect.com)



# Ask George



George Burke, Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales' Trading Manager has a regular column in the South Wales Echo newspaper in which he answers older people's questions on a range of topics.

**Dear George,** I hear that pensioners will be getting an extra 2.5 per cent added to their state pensions from April. Is this true?

**George says:**

This is partly true. The 2.5 per cent increase is based upon the main state benefit which is £95.25 per week for a single person or £153.30 for a couple. Unfortunately there has been some confusion over this increase, with many wrongly believing that pensioners would be getting the extra 2.5 per cent on the other parts of the state pension such as SERPS or the state second pension and the old graduated pension. This means that if a single person is receiving say £120 per week in total from all these state pensions, it will be only the £95.25 which will attract the additional 2.5 per cent increase.

**Dear George,** I hear that you will be putting on some free seminars for pensioners in the Cardiff and Vale areas about putting their personal and financial affairs in order. Can you tell me when and where are they?

**George says:**

That's right - so many people ask me such things like "What do I do with my savings?" and "Where is the best place to put them?", that I've arranged a series of seminars. I'll also be covering things like making sure your will is in place and that ensuring your funeral arrangements are taken care of. But it doesn't stop there - I will also be on hand to discuss such things as probate, and benefits etc. I will be giving out the dates soon but if you are interested in coming along, please register your interest by telephoning 029 2043 1555.

**Dear George,** my 76-year-old mother-in-law lives alone and I am becoming increasingly worried about her. She is being inundated with junk mail and letters telling her that she's won large cash prizes and asking her to send an 'administration fee' to 'cover the cost of processing her prize money'. I am worried that she is sending cheques in the post to some of these companies and I think she is expecting a pay-out because I've noticed she has written 'prize cheque due' several times on her calendar at home. She refuses to talk to me about this and I am very worried. My mother-in-law used to be very open and she would speak with me about pretty much anything, but recently she has become very short-tempered. She refuses to

talk to me about the junk mail and her calendar. What can I do?

**George says:**

I think your mother-in-law is being scammed. It is very important that you try to talk to her about this, or speak to one of her friends about your concerns and see if they can chat to your mother-in-law about this problem. It sounds like your mother-in-law has convinced herself that she's won a large cash prize, but that deep down she is gradually realising that she has been conned, and maybe that's why she won't talk to you about it. The important thing to remember for anyone reading this is not to respond to any of these letters - you'll often end up on a so-called 'sucker list', and find yourself getting more and more of these letters. You need to convince your mother-in-law that this is a con and get her to contact Consumer Direct - 08454 04 05 06 to ask for their help. You should also get her to speak to the Mailing Preference Service - 0845 703 4599, to stop the unwanted post. Alternatively, your local Age Concern may be able to offer you guidance and support.

**If you would like to submit a question for George then please write to:**

George Burke,  
Age Concern Enterprises Cymru,  
Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales,  
Tŷ John Pathy,  
13-14 Neptune Court,  
Vanguard Way,  
Cardiff, CF24 5PJ

or email:

[george.burke@accymru.org.uk](mailto:george.burke@accymru.org.uk)

# Diary dates for coming months

Over the next few months Keep Well this Winter events and activities will be taking place throughout Wales to provide older people with help and advice to keep them healthy during the winter period.

If you are running an event that you'd like us to list in the newsletter and on the Keep Well this Winter Website, please contact Ros Williams on 029 2043 1552 or email [rosalyn.williams@accymru.org.uk](mailto:rosalyn.williams@accymru.org.uk).

Keep Well This Winter Debriefing at the Media Resource Centre, Llandrindod Wells, Powys on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2010 9:30am – 3:30am. This meeting is for professional staff working with the campaign. Please book a place 029 2043 1555 or email [Rosalyn.williams@accymru.org.uk](mailto:Rosalyn.williams@accymru.org.uk)

## Real life stories request

The key aims of the Keep Well this Winter campaign include improving the health and quality of life of older people in Wales. Real-life examples of this can motivate those involved with promoting the campaign by showing what difference has been made to older people. Also, access to a human interest story can be the difference between the media giving press attention to the campaign and highlighting campaign messages, or rejecting the story.

If you know of any real-life stories of how the campaign has helped an older person and could share the story either anonymised or with the older person's consent and identity revealed, then please contact Ros Williams on 029 2043 1552.

## Keep Well this Winter contact information:

**Rosalyn Williams - Health Initiatives Coordinator,  
Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales:**

Tel: 029 2043 1552

Email: [rosalyn.williams@accymru.org.uk](mailto:rosalyn.williams@accymru.org.uk)

**Margot Deveraux - Healthy Ageing Assistant, Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales:**

Tel: 029 2043 1553

Email: [richard.jones@accymru.org.uk](mailto:richard.jones@accymru.org.uk)

### Useful websites:

Keep Well this Winter - [www.kwtw.org.uk](http://www.kwtw.org.uk)

Welsh Assembly Government - [www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk)

Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales - [www.agecymru.org.uk](http://www.agecymru.org.uk)



**HELPTHEAGED WE WILL**

Help the Aged yng Nghymru  
Help the Aged in Wales

Keep Well this Winter is coordinated by Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales, a new charity dedicated to improving the lives of older people.

Age Concern Cymru and Help the Aged in Wales

Tŷ John Pathy

13/14 Neptune Court

Vanguard Way

Cardiff

Tel: 029 2043 1555

Fax: 029 2047 1418

Registered Charity: 1128436