



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Keeping well this winter

Ready to Go

Top tips for getting out and
about again

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Creu Cymru oed gyfeillgar
Creating an age friendly Wales



Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru
Older People's Commissioner for Wales

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Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Helpful Contacts

Below you'll find contact information for organisations that can provide you with help if you need it, or put you in touch with services and support available in your area.

Age Cymru Advice Line

0300 303 4498

Age Connects Wales

029 2068 3600

Alzheimer's Society

0333 150 3456

BAME Helpline

0300 222 5720

British Red Cross

0808 196 3651

CALL Mental Health Helpline

0800 132 737

CALL Dementia Helpline

0808 808 2235

Care and Repair Cymru

0300 111 3333

Carers Trust

0300 772 9702

Carers Wales

0808 808 7777

Cruse Bereavement Care

0808 808 1677

Hourglass Cymru

(formerly Action on Elder Abuse)

0808 808 8141

Older People's Commissioner for Wales

03442 640 670

RNIB Cymru Helpline

0303 123 9999

Stroke Association

0303 3033 100

Versus Arthritis

0800 5200 520

Why not keep these numbers somewhere handy – on the fridge or by the phone – just in case you need them this winter?

Ready to Go

Before the pandemic, getting out and about into our communities – to visit the shops or meet up with friends, for example – would have been something that many of us didn't really think about.

With all that's happened since last year, doing things like this might seem more difficult now, and we know that lots of people are feeling a bit anxious about getting out and about again.

But doing these kinds of things is really important for our health and well-being, helping us to feel better both physically and mentally.

So we've pulled together some practical tips that will help you to feel more prepared and confident about getting out and about again so you can do the things you enjoy, the things that matter to you.

We've also included some tips that will help you to keep well through the winter months, as well as details of who you can contact if you need a little help or support.

So please take a look to make sure you're Ready to Go.

Be Prepared

A little bit of planning and preparation can make all the difference and help to make you feel more confident to get out and about again, particularly if you haven't been out for a while or you're feeling a bit anxious.

Below you'll find a few simple steps you can take and some things to think about that will help to ensure you're Ready to Go.

The route to success

It's important to think about how you'll get where you need to go, particularly if you don't have access to a car.

If you're walking somewhere, think about the route you'll take and the distance involved – a walk you previously found easy may be more difficult if you haven't been as active during the pandemic.

If you are using public transport, make sure to check timetables as many services have changed due to the pandemic. You may also want to think about the times you travel if you are concerned about using services that might be particularly busy.

I only came in for bread and milk

We've all come back from the shops with more than we planned to buy at some point, but it's important you don't try and carry too much, particularly if you're on foot or using public transport.

You may want to try filling a carrier bag or two at home to give you a sense of what you would be comfortable carrying – and bear in mind how long you may need to carry it for. Using a backpack or shopping trolley might also be helpful.

You should also think about the kind of shop you want to visit and what will best suit your needs. Larger stores provide more space for social distancing, for example, but you'll need to cover more distance inside the store compared to smaller local shops.

Taking a stand

If there are limits on the number of people allowed in a shop, café or other business at one time, you may need to stand outside and queue for a while.

We rarely spend time standing in one spot for any length of time while we're at home and when we do – such as when we do the dishes – we may use the sink or countertop for support, sometimes without even realising it.

So think about how comfortable you would be standing without support, as this could be important if you need to stand / queue outside.

Dress for the occasion

Think about the clothing you'll wear when you go out to keep you warm and dry. We all know how quickly the weather in Wales can change!

Try different options and layers at home to give you an idea of what you'll find comfortable and get a sense of any extra weight your clothing might add, such as a heavy winter coat.

You should also think about the shoes you'll wear when you go out. Many of us are used to wearing lighter footwear around the house, and your outdoor shoes might be heavier or grip differently compared to what you've been used to.

Try on any footwear you're planning to wear, to make sure it's comfortable, provides sufficient grip and won't cause you to trip or fall.

Bumps in the road

It's important to remember that pavements and other outdoor surfaces can be uneven or slippery in bad weather, which can increase the risk of trips and falls.

It could be helpful to go walking outside of your home for short periods each day, gradually increasing the distance, to build up your confidence as well as your stamina.

Ready to Go Checklist

Before you head out, it will be helpful to check the latest rules / restrictions that might be in place, and let someone know you'll be popping out if you can.

Things to take with you:

- hand sanitiser
- face coverings (if these are required or you choose to wear one)
- your mobile phone (if you have one)
- shopping bags
- any glasses, hearing aids or mobility aids you might need while you're out.

A little bit of help can make all the difference

We all need a little bit of help sometimes, although it's sometimes difficult to ask for it.

But please remember that going out with your family or friends, or a local volunteer, so they can give you a bit of help if you need it, could make a big difference and help you feel more confident as you start getting out and about more.

There's also lots going on in communities throughout Wales to make sure people can get help if they need it. You can contact Age Cymru's advice line to find out what's available in your area or if you're online, you can visit Dewis Cymru – www.dewis.wales/

Age Cymru Advice Line: 0300 303 44 98.

Keeping well this Winter

As we get older, the cold weather can have more of an impact on our health and well-being, and we may find it more difficult to fight off winter bugs or illnesses.

But there are lots of simple things we can all do to help us keep warm and well during the winter.

Keep moving

Just a little bit of activity can help you to keep your strength and mobility, and you can build all kinds of simple exercises into your daily routine to help keep you moving.

Age Cymru has lots of advice and tips about the ways you can stay active, so why not give them a call on **0300 303 44 98** and find what will work for you?

Eat well

Preparing meals and making sure we eat a healthy, varied diet can sometimes be difficult, but it's really important that we eat well, particularly during the winter months.

Planning your meals for the week can make it easier to have a bit more routine and can also help to reduce food waste.

Keep your home warm

It's important to try to heat your home to a steady and comfortable temperature throughout the day.

If you're struggling with the cost of heating your home, help might be available from your energy supplier through the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

The Welsh Government's **Nest scheme** may be able to provide you with support to make your home more energy efficient, which can help to reduce your energy bills. Call now on **0808 808 2244**.

Care and Repair Cymru may also be able to make adaptations to your home to help keep you warm, safe and well. Call **0300 111 3333** to find out more.

Wrap yourself up

Layering our clothing is the best way we can keep warm if we're heading out this winter, and don't forget your hat and gloves – even if you don't need them immediately.

Our choice of footwear can be important too – make sure your shoes are waterproof and provide proper grip, particularly in poor weather.

For more information about keeping well this winter, contact **Age Cymru's** advice line on **0300 303 44 98** or visit the Public Health Wales website: www.phw.nhs.wales/

COVID Vaccination Booster

A COVID vaccination booster will help to ensure the protection you have from your first and second doses is maintained ahead of the winter, and help to protect you against new variants.

All over 50s, frontline health and social care workers and people with underlying health conditions (people in priority groups one to nine) will be offered a booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. You will receive an invitation when it's your turn.



Mae Brechu yn achub bywydau
Vaccination saves lives

Mental health: It's OK not to be OK

Even though we don't often talk about it, many of us will have found that our mental health has been affected by the pandemic and everything that's happened since last year.

If you're concerned about how you are feeling, or feel like you are struggling with your mental health, **CALL Mental Health Listening Line** provides a confidential mental health listening and emotional support line which is open 24/7.

CALL can also signpost you to support in your communities and a range of online information.

Call **0800 132 737**, text "help" to **81066** or visit callhelpline.org.uk.

Get your flu jab

Flu can make us seriously unwell, particularly as we get older, and the best way we can protect ourselves is by getting a flu jab.

Everyone aged 50 and over is entitled to a free flu jab from their GP or pharmacist this year, so make sure you book your appointment now.

Think CALM

Using CALM may help you to take care of your feelings, your body, your thoughts and what you are doing.

Calm **A**ctivities – relaxation, seeking reassurance and mindfulness practices.

Attending to **b**asic needs – thinking carefully about your sleep, exercise, nutrition.

Learning to **r**e-think – avoiding rumours, limiting media coverage, thinking in the here and now.

Making yourself **f**eel good – doing things that bring you joy and take your mind off your worries.

Stay connected

Keeping in touch with the people we care about can make a big difference to how we feel, whether meeting up in person, or catching up on the phone.

Lots of people have also been doing video calls during the pandemic, and there's lots of help available to get you online if this is something you'd like to try. You can find out more about what's available in your area by calling **Digital Communities Wales** on **0300 111 5050**.

If you're feeling a bit lonely and would like a friendly chat with someone, **Age Cymru** can help. Lots of people have made lasting friendships, or simply enjoyed a chat when they wanted one, through their friendship services. Call **0300 303 44 98** to find out more.

Re-engage (formerly Contact the Elderly) will also be starting up social gatherings again soon (when it's safe to do so), which can be great to meet new people and make new connections. You can contact them by calling **0800 716 543**.

Coping with bereavement

Losing someone important to us can be emotionally devastating – whether that be a partner, family member, friend or pet and no-one should suffer this grief alone – help is available.

You can contact **Cruse Bereavement Services** by calling **0808 808 1677** or visit their website – www.cruse.org.uk – for information, support or for your nearest branch contact details.

Protect yourself from crime and scams

Criminals are experts at impersonating people and organisations you may trust, even the police and can target you by phone, email, text, on social media, or on your doorstep.

They will try to deceive you into buying goods or services that don't exist, or try to get you to share financial details or personal information.

We can all take action to protect ourselves against crime and scams. If you are contacted unexpectedly, remember to:

Stop: Take a moment to think before parting with your money or information.

Challenge: Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

Protect: Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen victim to a scam and report it to **Action Fraud** by calling **0300 123 2040**.

Help for people experiencing abuse

If you are experiencing abuse, are concerned that you might be at risk, or are worried about someone else, it's really important that you seek help. We know this can be incredibly difficult, but please don't suffer in silence.

You can get free help, advice and support from the **Live Fear Free Helpline** (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) by calling **0808 8010 800**.

If you believe that you or someone else are at risk of imminent harm, contact the police by dialing **999**.

Are you struggling to make ends meet?

Winter can mean increased costs, such as heating costs, so it's important you receive all of the financial support you're entitled to.

It's estimated that **around £200m** went unclaimed in Wales last year – money which should have been in older people's pockets.

It's really easy to check if you're receiving what you should be – local **Age Cymru** organisations and **Citizens Advice** can help you – and claiming what you're entitled to could make a big difference to your finances.

Top tips

- Make sure you keep moving as much as possible and try to eat well.
- Keep yourself and your home nice and warm. Stay wrapped up!
- Get your Covid vaccination booster and Flu vaccination when these are offered to you.
- Think about your mental health, and try to find time to do things you enjoy.
- Make sure you're claiming all of the financial support you're entitled to – it can make a big difference.
- Don't be afraid to ask for a bit of help if you need it – we all need a hand with something once in a while. There are lots of organisations all over Wales that can help you in lots of different ways this winter.