

# Golden Years



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## Lifeline Service

Your phone may be the only means of contact with friends, relatives or neighbours. But in some situations you might find it difficult to get to your phone or dial a number.

Now you can get help or seek reassurance instantly, whenever you need it, wherever you are in your home.

### Free Prize Draw

We are carrying out a major campaign to increase the number of vulnerable people who enjoy the benefits, independence and security from our Lifeline Service. The more people you encourage to join Lifeline, the more chance you've got of winning a credit crunch busting prize!

Calling for help could not be easier or faster using Bron Afon's Lifeline Service. By pressing a button on the alarm unit, the Emergency Response Centre in Torfaen will answer your call. They will have all your details in front of them, which includes who you are, where you live, and the friends, relatives or neighbours you would like us to contact in an emergency. If necessary, we will also call 999 on your behalf. To find out more call us on **Freephone 0800 111 4242**

Tell anyone who applies for Lifeline to add your name to the top of the application. All names will be entered in a prize draw which could win you up to £300 of M&S vouchers.

The person named on the most applications (must have over ten applications to qualify) will receive £100 M&S vouchers (in case of a tie the prize will be shared).

All applications must become clients to be entered in draw.



A Lifeline pendant

## The lady who has swum the earth!

**Ladywell resident, Dorothy Surridge, 91, is living proof that a daily dose of exercise is good for the mind and body.**

Dorothy is the longest serving member of Esporta in Cwmbran and swims at least 20 lengths a day.

If she swum a mile on most days since she was 14 (allowing for a

few days off a year), we estimate she has swum 360 miles each year or 27,360 miles in her lifetime up to the age of 90. As the circumference of the earth is 24,902 miles we calculate that she's circumnavigated the world in her lifetime.

Apart from swimming, Dorothy is a keen tango dancer and attends

dancing sessions at Llantarnam School every Friday.

She's travelled to various countries, swum with dolphins in the Bahamas and she still drives.

Dorothy said: "A lot of people in their 90s sit around and don't do much. I don't like slouching. I guess you could say I haven't stood still in life."



## Senior Sheltered Housing Officers

Here are the four officers who supervise management of our sheltered schemes.

(l to r) **Linda Brooks, Jayne Curtis, Des Smith** and **Elaine Pressley**. You can contact them on **Freephone 0800 111 42 42**



## Help to recover at home

Five new homes in Torfaen are helping people to leave hospital earlier and rebuild their confidence in safety and with close support. The temporary homes have opened in five of Bron Afon's



The new flat at Baker Street in Blaenavon

sheltered housing schemes: Kennard Court, Baker Stree, Talywain House, Tan-y-Coed and Charston. The fully furnished homes mean residents can do general household tasks, but with plenty of support available and the appropriate sensors and Telecare alarms fitted just in case of an emergency.

All referrals for the new accommodation must be made via Torfaen's Intermediate Care team, a service provided jointly by Torfaen Council, the Local Health Board and Gwent HealthCare NHS Trust.

For more information call the Intermediate Care Service on **01495 742590**, or to make a referral for social care services, contact Torfaen Council on **01495 762200**.

## Top energy saving tips

- Use a timer for your immersion heater - don't leave it on all day.
- Only boil the amount of water you need in a kettle.
- Defrost your freezer regularly.
- Match saucepan size to hotplate.
- Cut food into smaller pieces before cooking.

Rising gas and electric prices are always in the news. Here are ten money saving tips from National Energy Action Cymru.

- Use energy efficient light bulbs.
- Cook with lids on saucepans to trap heat to cook quicker.
- Don't leave your TV, stereo or computer on standby.
- Close curtains and blinds to insulate windows and keep heat in.
- Block up any draughts in doors, window frames, letter boxes.

For free impartial advice call the Energy Saving Trust on **0800 512 012**

# Preventing trips and falls

A new DVD aims to cut the number of people who fall over and injure themselves. The 30 minute DVD is being sent to doctors, sheltered housing schemes, carers, social workers and the Health and Safety Executive.

It has been produced by Bron Afon Community Housing and funded by Torfaen Council. The powerful film features interviews with people talking about their experiences of falling over in their home.

## Remember:

- **Keep active and exercise** - Regular physical activity makes you stronger and improves balance and coordination.
- **Ask your GP to review your medicines** - As you get older you may need to change the dose of your medicines. Some medicines or combinations of medicines may make you feel faint or light-headed which could lead to a fall.
- **Get your eyesight checked regularly** - Poor vision can increase your chances of falling.
- **Arrange furniture so that you can easily move around all your rooms** - Remove rugs or use non-slip tape or backing so rugs will not slip.

For more information on how you can watch the DVD call Bron Afon Community Housing on **01633 620 111**.

Make sure you read the feature in this newsletter on Bron Afon's Lifeline service to give you added peace of mind if you do have a fall in your home.

## Useful phone numbers

Age Concern Handyman Scheme  
**01495 769264**

Consumer Direct **08454 04 05 06**

Fire Service Home Safety Scheme  
**0800 328 1830**

Gwent Association for the Blind  
**01495 763650**

Pensions Service **0845 60 60 2 65**

Torfaen Council **01495 762200**

Torfaen Credit Union **01495 750020**

Torfaen's Older Persons  
Co-ordinator, Sue Browne  
**01495 766147**

Widdershins Ageing Well Centre  
**01495 769264**

## Silver medal star supports silver anniversary party

A silver medal winner from the Paralympics in China was the star guest at the silver anniversary celebrations at a Cwmbran sheltered housing complex. Gareth Duke, aged 22, from Pontnewydd, came second in the 100m breaststroke in September. He helped Llanderfel Court in Thornhill mark 25 years since it opened in 1983.



## Knitting group

**Talywain House ladies knitting group are busy once again putting their creative talents to good use.**

They are knitting clothing and blankets for Operation Sunshine, a charity that sends essential items to Africa and elsewhere for those in need.

To donate your spare wool call **Denise Dixon**, Sheltered Housing Officer, on **Freephone 0800 111 42 42**.



## Claim your money

**Many older people do not claim the benefits they are entitled to, whether through a lack of information about what may be available to them or a feeling of embarrassment or shame in seeking this kind of help. Whatever the reason, their quality of life is affected and often they experience financial difficulties and hardship. The case studies below show how assistance in claiming benefits can have a positive impact on older people's lives.**

### Case study 1

Mrs L was helped to see if she could be entitled to more help. She was awarded the higher rate of Attendance Allowance and then helped to complete carers allowance and council tax benefit forms. Although Mr and Mrs L had an income of over £400 per week (not including the Attendance Allowance) they were still entitled to nearly £17 per week council tax benefit. Although Mr and Mrs L had no savings, they had never considered that they might be entitled to help with their council tax before. Overall they are now £315.60 better off a month.

### Case study 2

Mr and Mrs W had never thought about claiming any benefits and were surprised to hear that they may be entitled to some help. Mr W was helped to apply for Attendance Allowance which he was awarded at the higher rate. A follow up visit was then arranged to complete Pension Credit, Council Tax benefit forms and Carers Allowance forms. They were awarded nearly £6 Pension Credit a week, and instead of paying £25.77 council tax every week, they now only pay £6.31.

Call Torfaen Council's Benefits Team on **0800 6525422** to make sure you are receiving all the money you are entitled to claim.