



Roger Pugh

South Wales Fire & Rescue

“The retirement groups help ease some of the loneliness I've felt since my wife passed away”



How do you adjust to life after the death of someone you've spent nearly 50 years with? It's a dilemma no one wants to have to think about, but is one Roger Pugh was faced with when his wife passed away six years ago after a short illness.

“I find it difficult to explain what life was like after her,” says the former South Wales firefighter. “She died six weeks after being diagnosed, which was good for her, but for myself and our family, was more than a little bit devastating. Everything we'd ever planned was suddenly gone. I'd just assumed that I would go first. But then one day she was wasn't there anymore.”

After an accident prevented him from being able to continue, Roger retired from the fire service in 1996 after 21 happy years. Wanting to keep himself busy, he had a series of other roles. But he says he still very much misses the fire service. When The Fire Fighters Charity opened its first Living Well Group in Aberdare last autumn, Roger went along. And he's now become a familiar face at each of the monthly meetings.

“I think it's excellent,” he says. “Everybody I know who goes to it looks forward to each meeting. We talk about the old days, having a laugh and a joke, or listening to lectures with a serious side. Many of us are former colleagues, so it's great to catch up.”

Roger says the group also helps ease some of the loneliness he has felt since his wife passed away: “The group gives something to look forward to each month,” he says. “It helps you stay connected and keeps the brain going. It also helps you feel like you're still part of the fire service. I needed the company and still wanted to be part of my community, which is partly why I became involved in so many different things; everything I've ever done has been to try and help others. But I've never broken my ties with the fire service.”

www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/roger-pugh

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