

14st loss: 'No more second helpings for me!'

After struggling with her weight for years, a surprise proposal made chef Carys Teasdale, 38, spring into action

Making my way towards the PE teacher, I nervously handed her a piece of paper. It was a sick note, asking if I could be exempt from another lesson. 'Again?' she asked, frowning her brow. At just 11, I was a size 16 and the biggest in my class. I was bullied relentlessly due to my size, with the other kids calling me names such as 'fatty' and 'blob'. Mum did her

best to encourage healthy eating, rustling up home-cooked meals from scratch, but I never felt full, so snacked in secret. I'd sneak to the shops and buy my own crisps and chocolate bars, hiding the wrappers and binning them once I left the house so Mum couldn't see how much I was eating.

I spent a lot of time with my great aunt, and we always had chippy tea together after swimming on a Friday night. For dessert, we'd split a big tub of ice cream in front of the telly or have cakes, or scones with fresh cream.

Once I left school, I was fully in charge of what I ate, so the weight piled on. I began boozing, and binge eating the next day while hungover. I went to a catering college and started work in the kitchens of a care home in 2016.

I specialised in working with residents who had dementia, and it was incredibly fulfilling. I loved nothing more than whipping up old-fashioned favourites for them, like roast meat with potatoes and veg.

I also put on baking afternoons, where I showed some of the residents how to make Welsh cakes and bara brith, a traditional Welsh fruitcake. They would regale me with tales of their own mums' baking, or how they'd collect the weekly loaf of bread on the way to school.

But care home cooking was incredibly calorific, as it's intended to help elderly people maintain a healthy weight and prevent frailty. My sauces were laden with cream, and my mashed potatoes were full of butter. Working long shifts meant I was picking constantly and eating leftovers to keep me going. Not long into working there, I met Jason, who also worked as a chef. We immediately bonded over our shared love of food and bantered

with each other in the kitchen. We became a couple and Jason loved me, curves and all. It was great to finally be accepted for who I was.

But the longer I worked there, the more weight I put on. For breakfast, I had three rounds of doorstep white toast before leaving the house, then a bacon or sausage butty as I served the residents' breakfast. At lunch, I'd have a large helping of whatever was on the menu – often a creamy pasta bake, cauliflower cheese or a roast dinner.

Ironically, with two chefs in our household, neither of us could be bothered to cook, so for dinner we got into the habit of ordering takeaways, or nipping into ASDA and grabbing a pizza. After dinner, we'd have a big bag of nachos or tub of ice cream. At work, I got used to residents commenting on my weight. 'Oh you're a big girl aren't you?' they'd remark. I knew they didn't mean any harm, but it still stung.

In 2019, Jason proposed to me after three years together, and I was determined to lose weight as I didn't want to be an overweight bride. But the pandemic hit, and we carried on our shifts at the home as key workers. I put on more weight as I ate out of boredom. Jason and I wanted to start a family, but I had PCOS (a condition which affects the ovaries) and knew that would

make conceiving difficult. At 5ft 7in, I was 26st 3.5lb and wore a size 30. My ankles were so swollen I had to buy special wide shoes to wear, and I got out of breath walking upstairs. 'I need to do something,' I said to Jason one day. I knew I couldn't go on like I was, so in 2021, I signed up to Slimming World. But just a couple of months in, I fell pregnant.

I had to put my weight-loss journey on the back burner but I ended up with gestational diabetes and when we got married that August, I wore a size 28-30 wedding dress. I didn't feel great and I promised myself that once I'd given birth, I would lose weight so I could be the best mum possible. After Alys-Rose was born in December 2021, I joined Slimming World online before realising I needed face-to-face support and eventually joined a local group. Meeting every week with people on the same journey as me really helped. I learned moderation was key, and I could still eat what I loved – I just had to make substitutions. I followed Slimming World recipes and I stopped eating food at the care home, and would take my own packed lunches in.

Jason was incredibly supportive, and pushing Alys-Rose in her pram was good exercise. Around 18 months into my journey, I joined a gym, where I started lifting weights and running on the treadmill. By January 2023, I was down to 19st. Over time, the residents noticed how much weight I'd lost, and told me how good I looked. In August 2025, by sticking to the plan, I hit my target weight of 11st 8.5lb – I'd lost 14st and 7lb and was a size 10 to 12. I felt amazing and was so proud of myself. Becoming a mum was the only inspiration I needed to become my best self.

Now, with a new zest for life, I've signed up to a number of charity runs and walks, including this year's Race for Life, and a walking marathon around the Brecon Beacons. Last September, I became a Slimming World consultant and now have my own group. Who better to help and guide people on their own weight-loss journey than someone who's come out the other side?

BEFORE
26st 3.5lb
Size 30



Behind her smiles, she lacked confidence

AFTER
11st 8.5lb
Size 10-12



Carys is now a Slimming World consultant



On their wedding day



With husband Jason

DIET BEFORE

BREAKFAST Toast with butter, bacon or sausage baps
LUNCH Full roast dinner
DINNER 12-inch ASDA pizza with share-bag of crisps and garlic and herb dip
SNACKS Leftovers at work, nachos, Ben & Jerry's litre tub ice cream

DIET AFTER

BREAKFAST Overnight oats
LUNCH Chicken salad or leftovers from the night before
DINNER Slimming World 'fakeaway' lemon chicken with egg-fried rice or Slimming World lasagne
SNACKS Grapes, hard-boiled eggs