

voice

SUMMER 2022

Bedfordshire
ageUK

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**Cutting costs on
Energy Bills**

**Caring for
someone with
Dementia**

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Feeling Lonely? Feeling low or worried?

These feelings are not just a normal part of ageing.

We all feel down from time to time, no matter our age. But when these feelings are persistent, talking to someone can be helpful. If you're feeling lonely, low, anxious or just not your usual self Bedfordshire Wellbeing Service can help. You can seek advice from your doctor or self-refer to Bedfordshire Wellbeing Service on: [01234 880 400](tel:01234880400) or visit our website: www.bedfordshirewellbeingsservice.nhs.uk/get-started.



To find out more about our service, which is free and part of the NHS, please call us on **01234 880 400** or visit our website: www.bedfordshirewellbeingsservice.nhs.uk



Great Days Out on the Marston Vale Line this Summer!

Trains run hourly Monday - Saturday including Bank Holidays



Bedford - Stroll along the Embankment & cruise the Great Ouse on the John Bunyan Boat. Discover parks, independent shops & cafes and the Higgins Bedford, John Bunyan Museum & Panacea Museum - **all free entry!**

Millbrook - Gateway to the spectacular **Millennium Country Park** at the heart of the Forest of Marston Vale. Pleasant walk or cycle ride on surfaced paths to the **Forest Centre**. Take your bike on the train - **no charge!** **10% discount for rail passengers in the Lakeside Café!**

Bletchley - **Bletchley Park** is just a few minutes walk from the station. **2 for 1 entry for rail passengers!**

Ridgmont - Home of **Ridgmont Station Heritage Centre**. Enjoy afternoon tea in the original Ladies Waiting Room, a guided tour of the Museum & browse in the Gift Shop! Circular & linear walks available. **Free entry!**

Open Wednesday - Sunday 10:00 - 4:00.
Booking recommended for Tea Room - call 01525 287120
Groups welcome all year by prior arrangement.

01234 832645 stephens@bedsrcc.org.uk
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Foreword from the CEO

Welcome to this Summer edition of our **VOICE** magazine.



Hello to all our readers,

The time of year is changing and we are promised some warm weather through the summer. I hope you have all had the opportunity to enjoy some of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. A victory in itself to reach 75 years of being Queen. Many of you will have your own memories of the days of her reign from the coronation to the current time.

Other hot topics are not so pleasant and I know that some of you will be worried about your finances with the cost of living increases and especially the increase in energy costs and fuel costs. This is not good news for anyone and inside this issue we have some simple tips to try and help you start to save money on energy. Small things that may seem obvious but always good to remind ourselves. There has been help through the Winter with bills such as the Cold Weather Payments and Warm Homes Discounts. Not all suppliers do this and not everyone can register but worth keeping in mind.

We have been very busy as usual with our volunteer advisors taking so many calls and helping so many people. We have undertaken projects to help people through the Winter and now hope to help those most vulnerable through the next months.

Take a look inside for some news, articles, recipes, dates for your diary and much more.

Enjoy stay safe and well.

Karen

Karen Perry
CEO, Age UK Bedfordshire

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Caring for Someone with Dementia

Looking after a friend or relative who has dementia is often very challenging. But it's just as important to look after your own health.

- What support is available for me if I care for someone with dementia?
- How do I manage financial and legal issues?
- How can I support someone as their dementia progresses?
- How to communicate with someone who has dementia

What support is available for me if I care for someone with dementia?

When you're caring for someone else, it can be easy to overlook your own needs. But looking after your health and making time for yourself can help you feel better and more able to cope with your caring role. Caring for someone with dementia can lead to feelings of guilt, sadness, confusion or anger. Unlike with other conditions, it can be difficult to share these feelings with someone with dementia, leaving you feeling very isolated. It's important to acknowledge these feelings, and to remember that there's no right or wrong way to feel.

If you're feeling anxious or depressed, or you're struggling to cope, talk to your doctor who can let you know about the help and support available to you.

Carers' groups

Carers' groups can be a good way to get support from other carers who understand what you're going through and can share their own experiences. Most groups meet regularly and may offer speakers, leisure activities, trips and simply time to sit and chat. Ask your dementia adviser or social services about local groups or contact the following organisations:

- Alzheimer's Society
- Dementia UK
- Carers UK

Online groups

Online groups can be a great source of support, especially if you can't get out or if you need someone to talk to when no one else is around. You might like to take a look at the following groups:

- The Talking Point forum on the Alzheimer's Society website
- The Carers UK Forum

Memory cafes

Memory cafes offer information and support in an informal setting where people with dementia and their carers can attend together. There are often professional carers available for you to

talk to in confidence. To find out about local memory cafes, ask your dementia adviser, or local Alzheimer's Society.

Day centres

Some carers feel unsure about day centres – but a variation in routine can allow you some time to yourself and benefit both you and the person you care for. Some day care centres are suitable for those with mild dementia, while some provide a specialist dementia service. At first, day care can be difficult for the person with dementia to get used to. Talk to the staff if they seem upset or unhappy about going. Different day centres offer different activities and environments – you may find the person's social and cultural needs are better met by a different one.

How do I manage financial and legal issues?

Making decisions for their future while they still have mental capacity can help someone with dementia remain in control and feel more confident. It can also help you, as a carer, to feel reassured that plans are in place for the future.

Managing money

If the person with dementia is still able to manage basic finances, they may wish to set up direct debits to pay regular household bills. If they prefer not to do this, contact their fuel companies to let them know the person has dementia and give them an alternative contact number so the person isn't suddenly cut off if they forget to pay their bills. If the person with dementia handled all the money matters for the household you may be finding it daunting to deal with all the finances for the first time. Start by finding all the important documents, such as bank statements, insurance policies, wills and pension details, and putting them in a safe place. The person with dementia could also set up a third-party mandate to give you permission to manage their bank account on their behalf.

Planning for the future

Talk to the person with dementia to make sure that they have a current up-to-date will that reflects their wishes. Encourage the person with dementia to set up a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) so that a responsible person can make decisions on their behalf when they are no longer able to. Talk to the person with dementia about making an advance decision to



refuse certain types of medical treatment in certain situations. It will only be used when the person with dementia has lost the capacity to make or communicate the decision in the future. If the person you're caring for has already lost the ability to make or communicate decisions but doesn't have an LPA, you can apply to the Court of Protection who can make decisions on behalf of that person or appoint someone else (a deputy) to do so.

We have factsheets and information booklets on Lasting Power of Attorney that gives lots of information. **Call 01234 360510** and ask about these booklets.

If the person you care for drives, the law requires them to tell DVLA about their diagnosis. A diagnosis of dementia doesn't automatically mean someone has to stop driving straight away – what matters is that they can drive safely.

How can I support someone as their dementia progresses?

As a person's dementia reaches its later stages, they become increasingly dependent on others for their care. They may have severe memory loss and no longer recognise those close to them. They may lose weight (especially if chewing and swallowing are difficult), lose their ability to walk, become incontinent, and behave in unusual ways. Not everyone will show all these signs, and some people may show them earlier on in the illness.

Going into hospital

If the person you care for has to be admitted to hospital, this can be disorientating for them. You can help by asking for the name of someone to contact with any questions or concerns about the person's care. Tell them and other staff that the person has dementia and ask to be kept informed and involved in decision making. It can help to write down important facts about the person and give them to staff – for example, how the person prefers to be addressed, their likes and dislikes, and the practical help they need.

Alzheimer's Society's leaflet

This is me gives you space to write about the person's hobbies and interests, things that may upset them, their personal care and mobility requirements,

sleep patterns, and other relevant information.

Moving to a care home

If the person's needs become too great for you to manage at home, you may need to consider other long-term options.

If you're becoming exhausted or the person with dementia is becoming harder to care for, a care home might be the best option for you both. A move to a care home can be a difficult decision, but there are limits to the care you can provide. If the person you care for is moving into a care home, familiar furniture, belongings or music can help them feel more settled.

End of life care

People with dementia often experience a gradual, long-term decline, so it can be difficult to clearly recognise when they are approaching the end of their life. The best thing you can do is to ensure that their GP, medical staff and any care home staff know what plans they have put in place about their future care. And if you're caring for the person with dementia at home, make sure you speak to your GP about local services available to help you as their condition progresses. When someone has dementia, you may experience feelings of grief and bereavement as the illness progresses. When they die, you may find that you've already grieved so much that you have no strong emotions – or you may feel overwhelmed by the loss. However you're feeling, it's important to recognise that it's normal.

How to communicate with someone who has dementia

As dementia progresses, it affects people's ability to express themselves – so you may need to learn new ways to understand and communicate with the person you care for. Here are some tips:

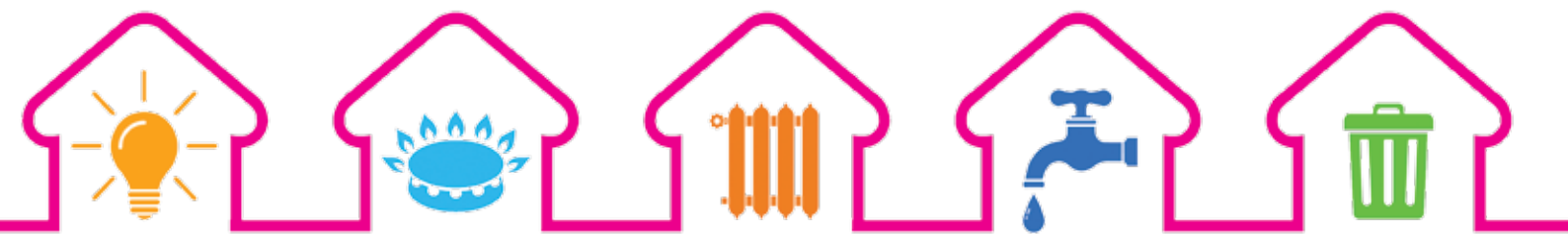
1. If they don't seem to be making sense, try to look for the meaning behind their words.
2. Speak slowly and clearly, using simple language and short sentences.
3. Avoid offering them complex choices – keep things simple with questions that only need a 'yes' or 'no' answer.
4. Avoid testing their memory by asking them about what they've been doing. Try not to get into arguments about what they say – even if you think they're mistaken. Simply listening to what they're saying rather than correcting them can help someone feel acknowledged.
5. Create a memory book to help them remember special times. This could be a collection of photos that represent happy events like weddings, holidays, or the birth of children. Memory books can help health and social care professionals understand the person, too.

If you're struggling with unusual or challenging behaviour, speak to the person's GP to get a referral to your community mental health team. The Alzheimer Society's factsheet Aggressive behaviour has more useful information including how to react, working out triggers, and dealing with your own feelings. It's worth bearing in mind that distress and confusion may be caused by other health needs than dementia.

Always discuss any concerns with the person's GP so they can check for physical causes of symptoms. It's a good idea to check that the person's glasses are clean and their hearing aid is working, if they use them.



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Cutting costs on Energy Bills

We are all aware of the cost of living increases and energy bills are a main issue for people at the moment. We have some tips below that may help you to reduce your energy costs going forward. Please read below:-

Keep an eye on your lights



Turn lights off when you leave a room, but not at the expense of your safety. Keep stairs and other areas well lit to reduce the risk of falling. You could save £14 a year just by turning off the lights when you don't need them on.

By changing from traditional light bulbs to LED bulbs, you could save between £3 and £6 a year per bulb, depending on the type of bulb you replace.

Switch off appliances now and again



Switch appliances off when they're not in use rather than leaving them on standby. This can save around £30 a year.

Defrost your freezer every six months - this will ensure it runs efficiently.

Many new appliances come with an energy rating. You should choose the best energy rating you can.

Cut down your water bill



Shower instead of taking a bath. A short shower can use a third of the amount of water needed for a bath. If you prefer taking baths, consider filling the bath slightly less - the average full bath uses 80 litres of water.

Fix any dripping taps. A dripping tap can waste the equivalent of half a bath a week. If you're on a water meter, a dripping tap could cost an extra £15 per year.

Do the washing up in a bowl rather than under running water to save around £25 per year. And only boil the amount of water you need for hot drinks.

Control the temperatures in your home



Run the washing machine at a lower temperature too - you can often do everyday washes at 30°C. Washing clothes at 30°C uses around 40% less electricity over a year than washing at higher temperatures.

Use your heating controls, such as thermostats and timers, to heat your home without wasting energy.

Make sure you keep your living room (or the room you use most) warm during the day while you're at home at 21°C (70°F) and heat your bedroom to 18°C (64°F) before you go to bed. If there are rooms you don't use, like a spare bedroom, turn off the radiators in them and close the doors.

Keep radiators and heaters clear so hot air can circulate. Don't forget to draw your curtains and tuck them behind radiators to minimise heat loss.

Have a look at your windows



Make sure doors and windows are draught-proofed to avoid loss of heat. Fit draught-proofing strips and draught excluders around doors, sealing gaps around window frames and fitting covers to letterboxes and keyholes. This can save you around £25 a year.

Double glazing reduces heat loss as well as noise from outside. You could save up to £80 per year in heating bills if you install it throughout your home. You can choose to double glaze the rooms you use and heat most often to keep installation costs down.

Major energy saving changes for your home



If you have no loft insulation, installing 270mm of new insulation could save around £135 a year. Most homes have some loft insulation but often not enough. Topping up your loft insulation will make your home warmer and save you money on your energy bills.

If your home has cavity walls (a space between the inner and outer layers of brick) the gap can be insulated. Insulating your cavity walls will make your home feel warmer and in a typical home cavity wall insulation can save around £150 a year.

Contact all your energy suppliers for electricity, gas and water and ask to be put on their Priority Services Register. This will ensure your providers are aware that you are older and may need help.

With summer coming the above suggestions may seem ridiculous but when the Autumn and Winter come the above measure will already be saving you money.

We may be able to help fit simple things like draught excluders etc that you can purchase readily at DIY stores. Please call us on 01234 360510.

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Machins Solicitors LLP have offices in Luton and Berkhamsted. We are one of the leading law firms in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire and recognise the need to establish a proper relationship with our clients which allows us to understand individual requirements and to give effective practical advice in a pragmatic, cost effective way. We provide specialist advice and assistance both for businesses and individuals.

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As we get older, we still have a need for closeness and companionship. Many older people find themselves newly single, or simply decide now's the time to find a partner. Whether you're separated, bereaved, or have been single for some time, it's never too late to start a new relationship.

- How do I know I'm ready to start dating?
- Where can I meet new people?
- How do I sign up to online dating websites?
- Staying safe using dating sites
- Dating if you're lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender
- Talk to your friends and family

How do I know I'm ready to start dating?

It's not unusual to feel lonely, particularly if you've just lost a partner or decided to go your separate ways. You may have more free time and want to share that time with somebody, or you may miss having physical contact. But the thought of meeting someone new can feel daunting, especially if you've spent years in the same relationship or been on your own for a long time.

Moving on from a previous relationship

If you're newly single, it may mean coming to terms with the end of your previous relationship. Everyone responds differently to the end of a relationship, but it's important to give yourself time and support to process your feelings.

Coping with the loss of a partner

If you've been bereaved, you may need to give yourself a chance to adjust to what has happened. We have information about dealing with bereavement.

Just call 01234 360510 and ask for our Bereavement booklet.

Where can I meet new people?

Once you feel ready to think about a new relationship you may be wondering where to begin. The information below about signing up to online dating websites or apps might be useful. Be assured that there are lots of ways you could meet someone. Trying new activities or volunteering is a



Dating in Later Life

great way to make friends, learn something different and have fun.

You could join:

- a walking group
- a local choir
- a course to learn something new
- a book group.
- Top of Form
- Bottom of Form

If you aren't sure what activities are in your local area, there are a number of ways you can find this information:

- read the notice boards in your local library, GP surgery, town hall or place of worship
- take a look in your local paper for listings of activities and local groups.
- check out the adult courses offered by your local council, often they'll have brochures advertising the different courses - sometimes these may be subsidised or free for older people.
- find volunteering opportunities at your local volunteer centre.

If you don't feel like these options are for you, you could try:

- meeting people through mutual friends signing up for online dating
- placing a personal ad in a local newspaper

Many local newspapers have a personal ads section (sometimes called a 'lonely hearts' or 'would like to meet') where you can put a short message about yourself and what type of person you would like to meet.

People can then contact you if they are interested in getting in touch.

Your personal contact details aren't included in the ad so it's quite safe and you can choose who you reply to if people get in contact.

Don't put too much pressure on yourself to meet someone right away.

It won't happen overnight, but keeping active and staying positive will help you to enjoy this time.

How do I sign up to online dating websites?

Online dating is now one of the most common ways to meet a partner and some dating sites are aimed specifically at older people.

Step 1: Find a website that suits you

There are lots of dating websites to try. Plenty of specialist sites cater to specific interests or backgrounds, such as faith or ethnicity. Most dating websites can be used to find a lesbian, gay, or bisexual partner, but there are also specific LGBT dating sites as well.

Step 2: Register on the website

Some dating websites let you register for free while others may require monthly or yearly fees. Check out a few different websites before choosing one to try. You could also sign up to several at once.

Step 3: Create a profile

For most dating websites you'll need to create a personal profile, which other users will be able to view. You can put up a photo, write about your interests, and indicate what type of person you'd like to meet. The more information you include, the easier it is for people to see what you are like and whether you might be a good match. To put a photo online you need a digital camera or a smartphone. If you don't have one, ask a friend or relative if they can help.

Step 4: Start sending messages

Once you've set up a profile, you'll be able to send and receive messages. It can be exciting to find people with similar interests to you and to receive messages and emails from them. Taking time to exchange messages with someone will help you to work out if you like them enough to arrange a phone call or a face to face meeting.

It's a good idea to speak to someone on the phone a few times before you agree to meet them. This will give you a better idea of their personality and whether or not you might be a good match. Just remember there's no rush - take your time to be sure it feels right before you get serious with someone.

Staying safe using dating sites

Online dating is generally very safe. It can be easy to throw caution to the wind when

getting caught up in the excitement of dating, but there are some basic safety precautions you should take:

- When you're meeting someone for the first time, meet them in a public place such as a café.
- Always tell somebody where you're going and when you expect to be back.
- You could agree a system with a friend or relative where they call or text you at a certain time during the meeting to check you're OK.
- Don't accept a lift from the person, go home with them, or take them to your home until you're sure about them.

Avoiding online dating fraud

Online dating fraud is on the rise and unfortunately scams can take place. A common scam involves the new partner trying to get money, perhaps by telling a hard luck story, or asking for money to come and visit. There are also fraudsters who want to enter into relationships for immigration purposes to gain access to the UK.

To ensure you don't fall for a scam:

- Be careful with your personal information - never give your full name and address or other personal details to someone until you're sure you can trust them.
- Be aware of the warning signs - for example if the conversation becomes personal very quickly, if they mention money, or if they ask for information such as your full name, address and birth date.

If you are ever in doubt about someone you could also report the person to the dating website. They can block them or bar them from the site if they are acting inappropriately or trying to scam people.

Dating if you're lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender

If you're looking to meet a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) partner, or just want to meet new people, you could try Stonewall's website to find community groups for older LGBT people in your area. Most dating websites can be used to find same-sex as well as opposite sex partners.

If you've started to have feelings towards people of your own gender for the first time, or perhaps you haven't felt free to express your sexuality before, you may find it helpful

to talk to someone about how you feel. You can call the LGBT+ Switchboard, a national helpline where you can get advice and support from trained volunteers. They also have details of local groups around the UK if you want to find a social group or some local support.

We all want different things from relationships, so don't make any assumptions about what your partner is looking for. At first it can be hard to tell if they're looking for a casual relationship or a more serious commitment - and you may not be sure of exactly what you want.

There's no magic way of knowing if your relationship will go the distance, but if you have a discussion about what you are hoping for in the future you can see if your expectations match up.

Things you might need to discuss as your relationship progresses could be:

- do you both want a sexual relationship?
- will you live together or separately?
- are you both interested in getting married?

Talk to your friends and family

Take some time to explain to your family how you feel and why you want to start a new relationship. You might also find that your friends and family aren't keen for you to start dating.

This can be especially true of grown up children who may feel that their other parent is being replaced. Then again, it's common for grown-up children to feel quite relieved that you've found a new partner, especially if they can see your new-found happiness.

We have booklets and factsheets on staying safe, scams and bereavement etc. Just give us a call on **01234 360510** and ask about our information booklets and factsheets.



Tomatoes

Lettuce & salad
leaves

Herbs

Strawberries

Raspberries

Raspberries like other fruits of similar sorts (blackberries, gooseberries etc) can be grown at home in pots or in the garden. They will need canes to stake them but will bear flowers and fruit at different times during the season. Raspberries are either summer or autumn croppers. They will continue to bear fruit for several years if you look after them. Varieties easy to grow include – Boyne, Canby, Chief and Early red are brilliant varieties.

In addition to the above there are many other vegetables and fruits that you can grow at home either in pots or in your garden among your flowers. Beans are another variety that you can grow next to your climbers or sweet peas. Peppers and chillies are easy to grow as are spinach, carrots, blueberries, and other berries. Try a few things then once you have the growing bug you can expand and have your own greengrocery in your garden and patio.

Happy planting.



What you didn't know about

Rita Beaumont

Chair of Age UK Bedfordshire Trustees

I have been a Trustee of Age UK Bedfordshire for a number of years and became the Chair in October 2021. By profession I was a nurse and became a NHS Clinical Manager with a very special interest in ensuring my elderly patients and those reaching the end of their life got the best possible care.

Who has been the biggest influence on your life?

My late Mum who taught me I could be anything I wanted to be as long as I worked hard and was honest

What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?

There is no such thing as a free lunch!

If you could hold on to just one memory from your life forever, what would that be?

Visiting China and seeing the massed regiments of the Terracotta Army ~ row upon row of amazing figures, just spell binding

What brief note would you write in a time capsule to be opened in 250 years' time?

Do not laugh ~ we really did wear these!!

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Guildford in Surrey and spent most of my childhood growing up in a village called West End near Woking

What was your childhood like?

Very happy, spend hours playing on the nearby common land with my friends, in the days when you knew it was time to go home because you were hungry!

What was the worst thing you did as a child/teenager?

Buckled my cousin's bike front wheel when I fell off it into a ditch ~ not sure she has ever forgiven me!

She shouted at me and I still cannot ride a bike!

Can you remember your first kiss?

It was my friend's brother David as I wanted his Everly Brothers records ~ I think I was 9 at the time and in love with Don Everly after we had all been to see the brothers at the Ritz in Woking!

What did you think you were going to be when you grew up?

I was always going to be a nurse, spent hours bandaging my favourite bear Mr Edward till his stuffing started to fall out and my mother had to sew him up and knit him clothes to cover up his bald patches!!

What advice would you give to the next Prime Minister?

Remember we the voters are not stupid!!!

What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?

Concentrate on the things you can influence or change and not waste time on things you can't.

Who was the last person you hugged?

My friends dog Bella

Which radio station do you listen to more than any other?

I am a Classic FM girl

Are you a cat or dog person?

Oh a difficult one as I love both but I my



last little girl, a cat called Mitsi May, was probably my all time favourite

If you owned a sweet /florist/hairdressers/ grocers what would you call it?

Always fancied running a knitting wool shop called "Rita's Retreat"

If the sky wasn't blue, what colour do you think it should be?

A gorgeous sparkling yellow hue

Which book are you currently reading?

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens

Rita

Rita Beaumont
Chair of Age UK Bedfordshire Trustees



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OUR HOME IS YOUR HOME

NURSING | DEMENTIA | RESIDENTIAL | RESPITE CARE

Penrose Court is a private, luxury care home for the elderly situated in the market town of Biggleswade. They offer premier accommodation and the highest levels of care.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

T: 01767 777 000 • E: info@penrosecourt.com

www.penrosecourt.com

Carers Respite/Sitting Service

A service for carers in Bedfordshire

We will come and 'sit' with your loved one giving you a short break of one to two hours generally, enabling you to have some respite and do something without worrying about your responsibilities.



We can:-

Play board or other games

Sit and chat

Make tea or a light snack

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Summer Veg & Sausage Casserole

Ingredients Serves 4

- 8 pork sausages
- 2 peppers, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 red onion, cut into thin wedges
- 1½ tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- ½ lemon, zested and juiced
- 2 courgettes, halved lengthways, then sliced
- 250g salad tomatoes, cut into wedges
- ½ reduced-salt vegetable stock cube, made up to 150ml
- 100g baby spinach
- ¾ crusty bloomer, to serve

Method

- Preheat the oven to gas 7, 220°C, fan 200°C. Put the sausages, peppers and onion in a large roasting tin, about 35 x 30cm. Whisk the oil, oregano, garlic and lemon zest in a small bowl, then pour over the sausages and veg. Toss to coat everything well; roast for 20 mins.
- Stir in the courgette, tomatoes and stock and roast for a further 15-20 mins until the sausages are cooked through and the veg is tender.
- Fold in the spinach and squeeze over the lemon juice, then mix for 30 secs for the spinach to gently wilt in the residual heat. Serve with crusty bread.



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Blueberry & lemon fools

Ingredients

- 2 x 150g packs blueberries
- 1 tbsp caster sugar
- 2 tbsp water
- 1 tbsp finely chopped mint
- 4 tbsp 0% fat Greek yogurt
- 1 tbsp lemon curd

Method

- Put the blueberries in a saucepan with the caster sugar, 2 tbsp water and 1 tbsp finely chopped fresh mint. Simmer over a medium heat for 5-6 mins until the blueberries are syrupy and soft but still holding their shape. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.
- Once cool, set aside 2 heaped tbsp blueberries.
- Spoon 4 tbsp 0% fat Greek yogurt into 4 short glasses. Top with half the blueberry compote, then drizzle each with 1 tbsp lemon curd. Repeat with the remaining yogurt and blueberry compote. Drizzle another 1 tbsp lemon curd into each glass.
- To finish, divide the reserved blueberries between the glasses and garnish with extra mint leaves.



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Strawberry Blondies

Ingredients

- 100g** unsalted butter, cubed
- 200g** white chocolate, roughly chopped
- 2** large eggs
- 175g** caster sugar
- 150g** plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- 100g** strawberries, hulled and halved
- icing sugar, for dusting (optional)

Method

- Preheat the oven to gas 4, 180°C, fan 160°C.
- Line a 20cm square baking tin with nonstick baking paper.
- Put the butter and half the white chocolate in a bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Stir occasionally until melted. Leave to cool slightly.
- Put the eggs and caster sugar in a large bowl and whisk until thick and creamy. Pour the cooled chocolate mixture over the top and fold together until fully combined. Gently fold in the flour.
- Toss the remaining chocolate in a little dusting of flour and stir three-quarters into the blondie mix.
- Spoon the mixture into the tin and level the surface. Toss the strawberries in a little dusting of flour, then scatter them over the top along with the reserved chocolate. Bake for 40-45 mins until lightly browned (check after 30 mins – if browning too much, cover loosely with foil for the remaining cooking time).
- Cool completely in the tin on a wire rack. Cut into 16 squares. Dust with icing sugar, if you like.



Charlie Chuckles

Why do we tell actors to break a leg?
Because every play has a cast.

Once my dog ate all the Scrabble tiles.
For days he kept leaving little messages around the house.

Why the big pause?" asks the bartender.
The bear shrugged. "I'm not sure;
I was born with them

Why did the chicken go to the séance?
To get to the other side

What sits at the bottom of the sea and twitches?
A nervous wreck.

A man tells his doctor, "Doc, help me. I'm addicted to Twitter!"
The doctor replies, "Sorry, I don't follow you ..."

.....

**I'd rather have Fingers than Toes,
I'd rather have Ears than a Nose.
And as for my Hair,
I'm glad it's all there,
I'll be awfully sad, when it goes.**



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Bereavement Support Payment

If your spouse or civil partner has died you may be able to claim Bereavement Support Payment to help ease some of the financial worries you may be facing.

- What is Bereavement Support Payment?
- How much Bereavement Support Payment could I get?
- Am I eligible to claim Bereavement Support Payment?
- How do I claim Bereavement Support Payment?
- How will the changes affect my existing Widowed Parent's Allowance?



What is Bereavement Support Payment?

Bereavement Support Payment is money that you may be able to claim if your husband, wife, or civil partner died after 6 April 2017. This benefit isn't means-tested, so you can make a claim regardless of your income or whether you're in work. But there are certain eligibility criteria outlined below. Bereavement Support Payment has replaced Bereavement Allowance (previously Widow's Pension), Widowed Parent's Allowance and Bereavement Payment.

How much Bereavement Support Payment could I get?

There are two different rates of Bereavement Support Payment:

- You could get £2,500 followed by a further 18 monthly payments of £100.
- If you're responsible for a child under the age of 20, you could get £3,500 followed by 18 monthly payments of £350.

These payments aren't taxable and are disregarded when calculating your entitlement to means-tested benefits and the benefit cap.

Am I eligible to claim Bereavement Support Payment?

You can claim Bereavement Support Payment if:

- the bereavement happened on or after 6 April 2017
- you were under State Pension age when your spouse or civil partner died
- your partner paid National Insurance Contributions for at least 25 weeks in any single tax year since 1975
- you were living in the UK at the time of the death (or another country that pays bereavement benefits).

How do I claim Bereavement Support Payment?

There are several ways you can claim Bereavement Support Payments. You can:

- call the Bereavement Service helpline on 0800 731 0469 (textphone 0800 731 0464)
- download a claim form from the GOV UK website
- contact your local Jobcentre Plus to have a form sent to you by post.

Once you've completed your form, you need to take it to your nearest Jobcentre Plus or you can send it to the following address:

**Bereavement Support Payment
Mail Handling Site A
Wolverhampton
WV98 2BS**

You should claim Bereavement Support Payment within 3 months of the death to get the full amount. For every month later you claim, you'll receive one fewer monthly payment.

How will the changes affect my existing Widowed Parent's Allowance?

If you're currently receiving Widowed Parent's Allowance you will continue to do so at the rate of £122.55 as long as you're still receiving Child Benefit.

There are a range of other financial benefits and entitlements that you may be able to claim.

- Housing Benefit
- Universal Credit
- Attendance Allowance
- Carers Allowance And more.

For more information please call us on 01234 360510

Fundraising

In these hard times we are still providing all our services to older people and have continued to do so throughout COVID.

We do not receive any Government funding or funds from the National Age UK therefore we seek and apply to Trusts, and other funding organisations alongside undertaking fundraising events and generous donations or legacies by people who know about the good work we do.

To give a glimpse at the costs we have:-

- A Home Visit to complete a benefit form costs around £10
- An assessment so we can provide help at home such as Home Help or Gardening costs us £20

To continue to have up to date systems in place such as telephones and IT costs over £20,000 per year.

You can help us to help older people by donating regularly by setting up a standing order to our bank:

CAF Bank Limited
Account Number 00005163
Sort Code 40-52-40
Account Name Age UK Bedfordshire

Or make a one of donation or leave us a legacy in your will – all very simple to do.

There are other ways to help us. As you shop by registering us as your nominated charity if you shop with Amazon. Instead of using the Amazon website go to Amazon Smile and register our charity (Age Concern Bedfordshire on Amazon Smile). We then get donations as you spend and it does not cost you a penny so long as you shop on the Smile site.

There is another site you can register us with and this is Give as You Live. Just register and shop with over 5,000 stores through the site or download the App on your phone. Nominate us as Age UK Bedfordshire on this site and away you go.

Every penny raised goes towards helping older people in our local Bedfordshire community. So get clicking and shopping and help us to help older people



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Dates for Your Diary



Saturday 23 April
 St Georges Day
Monday 2 May
 May Bank Holiday
Thursday 2 June (Whitsun)
 Spring Bank Holiday
Friday 3 June
 Platinum Jubilee
Sunday 19 June
 Father's Day
Tuesday 21 June
 Summer Solstice (Longest Day)
Monday 29 August
 Summer Bank Holiday
Sunday 30 October
 British Summer Time Ends
 (clocks go back one hour)
Monday 31 October
 Halloween
Tuesday 1 November
 All Saints Day
Saturday 5 November
 Guy Fawkes Night (Bonfire Night)
Friday 11 November
 Armistice Day
Sunday 13 November
 Remembrance Sunday
Wednesday 21 December
 Winter Solstice (Shortest Day)
Saturday 24 December
 Christmas Eve
Sunday 25 December
 Christmas Day
Monday 26 December
 Boxing Day
Saturday 31 December
 News Years Eve
Sunday 1st January
 News Years Day

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Can you afford to make your home safer?

By Simon Symcox, founder of AHM Installations (www.ahminstallations.co.uk)

ahm
installations

Our homes have become central to our lives during the pandemic.

Being able to move safely around the house and access the bathroom are fundamental parts of daily life, so if you can't do these things safely then it's time for a change.

It's hard to know where to start and cost is understandably a concern. Did you know there is financial help available for some, with the Government's Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)? Search 'DFG gov uk' on the internet or call your local council for more details.

When it comes to updating your bathroom, it might not be as expensive as you think. Sometimes people worry that they need a full wet room, but often a low-level access shower is the best option.

Find a supplier you trust. The big, recognised brands are usually the most expensive. Smaller, specialist companies will take time to understand your needs and help you whatever your budget.

That's what I pride myself in doing. My wife Julie and I set up AHM Installations 20 years ago because we wanted to help make people's lives easier.

Call our family-run team anytime on **01234 987681**

In an
emergency
GET OUT
STAY OUT
CALL 999



**Bedfordshire Fire and
Rescue Service**
Southfields Road
Kempston
Bedford
MK42 7NR

Phone: Bedford
(01234) 845000

E-mail:
contact@bedsfire.com



Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Your Bedtime Checklist



Close inside
doors



Turn off and unplug
electrical appliances
not being used



Is the cooker
turned off



Are the heaters turned
off and fireguards if
needed are put up



Candles and cigarettes
all put out



Keep the door and
window keys where
you can find them



Make sure all exits are
clear



Phone by the bed with
an emergency number
to hand

Preventing Protecting Responding



Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service have 14 strategically positioned Fire Stations; five wholetime stations, one day crewing station and 8 retained stations.

An emergency communication centre, training centre and headquarters are located on the same site and there are other offices located in the north and south of the Service.



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