



City & Hackney

**Older People's  
Reference Group**

# *Winter Warmth*



## SEASONAL NEWSLETTER!



क्रिसमस की बधाई

**Merry Christmas!**

عيد ميلاد مجيد

**Buon Natale**

**ezi ekeresimesi**

**Feliz Navidad**

**Joyeux Noël**

聖誕快樂

**Mutlu Noeller**

**Frohe Weihnachten**

শুভ বড়দিন

καλά Χριστούγεννα

**December  
2021**

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# Winter Warmth

*Dear Friend,*

The Winter Season is here and Christmas approaches! What do we need to help us stay healthy and happy through cold, dark days mostly spent indoors, with seasonal ills plus Covid (Omicron version) lurking if we venture outside? We at the OPRG think it's all 'wrapped up' in the notion of "Winter Warmth" which we've chosen as our theme for this seasonal Newsletter. When you've read it through, we hope you will feel we're on the right track – and perhaps give us a call or send an email to add your own ingredients to our recipe. We would love to hear your thoughts and include them in our next letter.

There are many aspects to "warmth"- some of them relating to our bodies, but many more involving our minds and emotions. The kind of warmth we get by wearing extra clothing, turning up the heating or eating a bowl of spicy curry are all different – and important to our physical health and comfort. But for comforting our hearts and minds and spirits there is nothing to beat the warmth of a smile, the warmth conveyed in a thoughtful and loving message, the special warmth of company and the kindness of strangers when we are in difficulties.

To explore the many different kinds of "winter warmth", we have invited contributions from friends and colleagues in other organisations. You will find practical hints to keep your home (and yourself) physically warm, and guidance on how to get (or stay) connected to the communities you live in. Perhaps the most important message to take from them is that in making that vital switch from "cold comfort" to a warmer place – from being alone and lonely in a perishing bedroom to relaxing in a warm room in friendly company - is not achieved by clutching a hot water bottle but by the deep-down glow that comes from a sense of personal worth and purpose and engagement with others.

It's a two-way process and we're all in together. Of course we must keep an eye on the practicalities – dress warmly, keep food in the cupboard, check the heating works (at a minimum of 18 degrees) and keep moving for good blood circulation. But we also need to help build the fund of human warmth that we all rely on within our communities. We can do this (and stay Covid-safe) whether we are house-bound or able to go outside - picking up the 'phone or sending a few lines in the post or email,



can warm someone's day by showing we care. Making the effort can be more difficult in Winter when we tend to want to 'hibernate', but it does have enormous benefits for those we contact and to ourselves. Getting outside, even for a few minutes' gentle stroll to visit a neighbour or feed the birds, can work wonders: even better joining (or re-joining) a local group where you can enjoy the warmth of company and offer it to others. (If everyone stayed at home there would be no groups to join!).

I know that many of you already contribute to the warmth of community life in Hackney and the City. In the difficult months of the Pandemic I have been humbled and inspired by how older residents are living their lives, setting a fine example of courage and optimism. Our OPRG Survey Report, Living with Covid, is a testament to your resilience and fortitude. We are immensely grateful to our 85 respondents who gave feedback to ourselves and our Clinical Commissioning Group on their Covid-19 experience particularly with regard to the vaccination programme. The fund of human warmth and loving kindness present in our OPRG Membership promises to make even this peculiar winter a warming one. Please continue to be our Winter Warmers wherever you are!

Now I have to share with you the news that our OPRG Administrator, Sophie Ibotson, is moving to a new post in Newham and will be leaving Age UK on 17 December. Sophie has been a mainstay in our OPRG and the principal contact for our Members, many of whom have benefited from her helpful advice over the telephone and her e-newsletters, as well as meeting some of you at our sadly aborted attempts to restore face-to-face meetings. Sophie's technical skills have been invaluable in putting together our printed mailings and in helping to analyse and present data from our two surveys. Her (very) hard work, firm commitment to giving older people a voice, and meeting every challenge with kindness and understanding, has endeared her to us all. We are going to miss her hugely and she leaves with our heartfelt thanks and warmest wishes for the happy continuation of her service in East London. We are delighted Sophie wishes to remain in touch with us and hope to see her in the future.



Finally, we send our warmest thoughts and wishes for a happy and healthy Christmas Season to you and all those dear to you – please take all the recommended precautions and stay Covid - and Flu'-free!

*Cynthia*

(Dr. Cynthia White, Chair, City and Hackney OPRG)

# OPRG Update

## OPRG ADVISORY GROUP UPDATE

The OPRG is led by a steering group, called the **Advisory Group** (AG), which is made up of a number of older residents across the City of London and Hackney. The group is Chaired by Dr Cynthia White who also chairs a small **Planning Group** (PG) to facilitate detailed programme management and information gathering. Both groups are supported by the OPRG Coordinator at Age UK East London (AUKEL). The members of the AG are consulted on OPRG activities and important local matters, such as Hackney Council's Ageing Well Strategy, and provides a first-level platform for commissioners and health and care service providers to advise and consult the OPRG.

## Meetings

The Advisory Group and the Planning Group have continued to meet during the pandemic, albeit online. It has been important for us to keep coming together, given that older people and their views have been so often side-lined during this major health emergency. The AG last met on 8 November. We discussed:

- Who should represent the C&H OPRG on the interview panel for the Age UK East London replacement for the OPRG Coordinator role;
- Sharing and recording the other work and volunteering that AG members do outside of the OPRG so that we can demonstrate 'extra value' to the CCG (who fund our activities);
- Current areas of concern for older residents and what the OPRG should prioritise e.g. in our forthcoming Focus Group series and in future Open Meetings. Issues included :
  - Dementia support and the Dementia Alliance
  - The Covid-19 recovery strategy
  - Welfare provision for older people (including care services and informal neighbourhood support)
  - Safety and Scams
  - Access to Primary Care
  - Social inclusion (Connect Hackney ends March, 2022)

Are there other priority areas you would wish to see included?

NB: via this Newsletter we are asking you to voice your support for **legally requiring masks to be worn in all social settings**, and for **the Government to act to end fuel poverty**.



Please share your views by calling Sophie Ibotson (AUKEL) on 0738451701 or emailing her at [Sophie.ibotson@ageukeastlondon.org.uk](mailto:Sophie.ibotson@ageukeastlondon.org.uk). **After 17th December** (Sophie's last day), please contact Age UK East London who will pass on your message to the new Coordinator once they are in post: [info@ageukeastlondon.org.uk](mailto:info@ageukeastlondon.org.uk) or 0208 981 7124

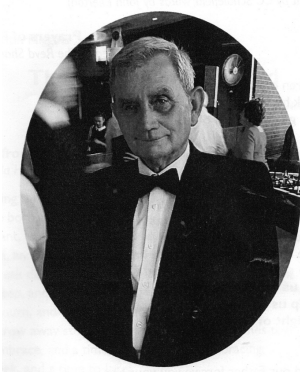
## FOCUS GROUPS

The OPRG Team held our first online focus group on 11 November 2021 alongside our partners at the CCG on the topic of '5 to Thrive' a local version of an NHS scheme designed to build positive mental health in our communities and help individuals lead happier lives. Attendees shared their views on how the content and presentation of the '5 to Thrive' website could be improved and be made more suitable for older residents. It was small but mighty! - and we made a number of suggestions which we hope to see put in place, such as:

- Paper materials and resources for residents who aren't online – for some, "the only 'line' they use is a clothing line!" as one of Advisory Group members would like to say;
- Making the website more accessible and user friendly to those who aren't computer savvy;
- What exactly people could do to fulfil the 5 key objectives i.e. 'stay connected, keep active, take notice, keep learning and give' – we stressed physical activity for those who are housebound and a fantastic way to 'keep learning' - investigate your family tree!
- Head to our contributions pages in this Newsletter to learn more about this uplifting '5 to Thrive' initiative from Martina at our CCG.

## PAUL JOHN HIGGINS, 20 NOV 1941 TO 31 JULY '21 (DEPUTY CHAIR OPRG)

Further to the announcement we included with the August Survey mailing, Paul's Funeral was held at St John of Jerusalem Church, South Hackney on 31 August 2021 at 12.30pm followed by Cremation at the City of London Crematorium E12.



Afterwards, Paul's many friends and colleagues were welcomed by his Family at the Wake at the nearby Lauriston Pub.

A number of OPRG members attended the moving Communion Service to remember Paul with gratitude for his valued friendship and devoted service to us and the community, and to comfort

one another in our loss. The tribute paid to Paul by Austin Higgins during the service made special reference to his long-standing and effective contribution to local organisations supporting older people. We echo that here, with the utmost appreciation of your sterling contribution to the OPRG as a member of our Advisory Group, Planning Group, and latterly as our deputy Chair. We will always keep a special place for you in our hearts, dear Paul, and try to follow your splendid example.

Electronic copies of Paul's service sheet are available from Sophie at Age UK, or we can post you a large-print copy on request. It contains two striking photos of Paul, one of which is reproduced here.

*Cynthia*



## **GOODBYE FROM SOPHIE IBOTSON (OPRG COORDINATOR)**



Age UK East London's OPRG Coordinator Sophie Ibotson will be stepping down from the role at the end of December. The OPRG Chair Dr Cynthia White and Advisory Group members will be supporting Age UK in finding a new coordinator to take on the role and we hope to have a new staff member by January. We will keep you posted!



From Sophie Ibotson at Age UK East London: *"It has been a pleasure working with the OPRG for the past two years and I will miss you all dearly. I would like to say a big thank you to Cynthia (Chair), Shirley, Paula, the Advisory Group and all of the Members for your support. I will carry the memory of your incredible dedication to the community and the OPRG with me for years to come."*

## **OPRG SURVEY 'LIVING WITH COVID-19' AUGUST 2021: REPORT & RESULTS**

Between August and November 85 OPRG Members sent us feedback. We are extremely grateful for the valuable information they provided. The first 76 responses form the basis of an extensive Survey Report co-produced by ourselves and the CCG. If you would like an e-copy or a hard copy please contact Sophie. Here is a summary of what you told us.

### **Taking Precautions**

- Generally people are likely to take personal precautions, such as washing hands (95%), using sanitiser (83%) and wearing a mask (79%).
- On precautions that also rely on the environment, and others, confidence is at a lower rate – avoiding crowds and enclosed spaces (72%), distancing at home (66%) and keeping a two metre distance (55%). Often, practicalities are cited.



- Habits acquired during recent lockdowns, such as hand washing, use of sanitiser, face masks, distancing and not shaking hands or hugging, will be commonplace in future.

## Vaccinations

- The vast majority of people (92%) feel well-informed to make a decision.
- The TV (64%) and GP (54%) are clearly the most common sources of information. Online sources – the internet (29%) and email (17%) are least utilised.
- A small minority of people (4%) do not intend to have both Covid-19 jabs.
- Two thirds (64%) are willing to have a booster and 70% intend to have a flu jab.
- 62% are willing to have both jabs at the same appointment.
- Three quarters of people (74%) are trusting of health professionals.
- Around three quarters (72%) have already recommended the vaccine to others, while an additional 16% intend to. Just 7% do not.
- Notification – for the first jab, GP letters, phone calls and texts are received in roughly equal numbers. For the second, texts are notably more popular.
- Booking - for the first jab, the vast majority of respondents booked through their GP – by phone or online. For the second, online booking rates increase.
- Attendance - the majority of respondents (61%) received their first and second jabs at Health Centres or Clinics.
- A broad majority (80%) found the booking process to be easy and convenient. Most were able to secure their timing and location preferences.
- Experiences at clinics are clearly positive, with good organisation reported

## Living through the Pandemic

- Many respondents express a desire to 'get on with life'.
- As time has progressed, it has been generally easier to cope.
- Those with routines, hobbies, social networks and gardens are most resilient.
- The internet has been instrumental in enabling socialising and working at home.
- 42% have known others who have contracted, in some cases died of the virus.
- The easing of restrictions has been a source of relief.
- Some are anxious about 'returning to normal' and mixing with others, while a similar number are not.







# Mask-Wearing Campaign



## LEND YOUR VOICE TO OUR CAMPAIGN!

Our City & Hackney OPRG Planning Group welcomes the Government's move to bring back compulsory mask-wearing on public transport and in most indoor venues as part of 'Plan B', to help control the rapidly-spreading Omicron strain of Covid which is doubling with infections doubling every two to three days.

However, we believe the government should urgently **enforce mandatory mask-wearing in all indoor venues** including hospitality, also in outdoor venues where physical distancing is difficult. Face-coverings/masks are a major defence against spreading Covid infection, crucial for older and vulnerable residents. Scientists advise us to employ mask-wearing as a vital part of our Covid-19 protection strategy: we think it is irresponsible to fail to maximise it.

Another area of concern for the OPRG Planning Group **is the impact of fuel poverty** on our older residents. It is a human right that older and vulnerable people should be able to afford to heat their homes to the recommended temperature, and keep them well-lit for comfort and safety. The sudden and unprecedented recent rise in energy prices threatens to double gas and electricity costs this winter and beyond, making them unaffordable for many people on low incomes, risking devastating effects on their health, well-being – and safety.

Please write to your local MP and the Mayor London today to campaign for

- Mandatory face-coverings to be urgently enforced in all enclosed public spaces and outdoor areas where physical distancing is not possible;
- A comprehensive support scheme to abolish fuel poverty, designed to offset the projected huge increase in energy costs.

We have included an outline letter which you are free to use and/or adapt. You can write to your local MP at: [inserting their name], c/o The House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA or email them using the addresses below:

- **Diane Abbott** *Hackney N & Stoke Newington* - [diane.abbott.office@parliament.uk](mailto:diane.abbott.office@parliament.uk)
- **Meg Hillier** *Hackney South and Shoreditch* - [meghilliermp@parliament.uk](mailto:meghilliermp@parliament.uk)
- **Nickie Aiken** *Cities of London and Westminster* - [nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:nickie.aiken.mp@parliament.uk)
- **Sadiq Khan** *Mayor of London* City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London, SE1 2AA or [mayor@london.gov.uk](mailto:mayor@london.gov.uk)



# Health Precautions

## THE VIEW FROM MY CHAIR

“There’s a Long, Long Trail a-Winding unto the Land of My Dreams ... “. This song comes to mind whenever I hear a new warning from Health Experts about the next phase of the pandemic! Will it ever end?? We were already noting the rising Covid infection rate, Winter virus risks, and the lack of official measures to deal with them in our last OPRG Newsletter, accepting that, for older people, “living with” these risks for the foreseeable future meant taking simple precautions whilst others were ditching their masks and mingling in public.

The Prime Minister may be catching up with us – in a recent TV briefing he announced that masks are again legally required in shops and on public transport. He also singled out older people as particularly vulnerable, suggesting we avoid infection by staying at home as much as possible and asking the population generally to use common-sense when socialising at Christmas.

It is the first time since early in the pandemic that the vulnerability of older people has been addressed. There is a continuing rise in the numbers of unvaccinated older people being admitted to hospital with Covid and sadly dying from it. We now know that the new Omicron strain of the virus spreads more rapidly and freely attacks even those who’ve had two jabs. Medical experts are also warning against pressing GPs to prescribe antibiotics for bacterial infections because those that are still effective – and many are not - need to be saved for very sick patients and for dentistry. All in all, not the best news.



But the good news is that we are in a much better position now than a year ago. We know that pandemics tend to progress in waves and that new variants are common. Our scientists have developed effective vaccines against Covid and are well-



equipped to adapt them to new strains. But it takes time to understand their characteristics, and meantime special measures may be needed to limit their spread. Pfizer and Moderna booster jabs still appear to offer good protection, and for those unable to have them, there are now new and very different anti-viral drugs available that can be taken in tablet form at home.

We also know that, because Covid thrives in cold weather, we must maximise our protection in winter. Whilst The UK as a whole has achieved an encouraging initial vaccine take-up, we urgently need to improve the response in North East London. Please encourage everyone you know to 'Get the Set!' – all three jabs, including the all-important 'booster'. Booster jabs are vital for reversing waning immunity, particularly in older people because we had our jabs first. These jabs are much more powerful than Jabs 1 and 2 for

- reducing the risk of getting infected (and passing the virus on);
- reducing the severity and length of the illness if we do pick it up;
- reducing the need to be treated in hospital, and
- reducing the likelihood of having long-lasting effects ("Long Covid").



Besides Covid, there are lots of other bugs out there: colds and flu' are back, also Norovirus, stomach bugs and many others. But we don't have to get infected. In addition to getting Covid and Flu' jabs we can stay safe by wearing a well-fitting mask wherever and whenever we are with other people, washing our hands frequently, keeping our distance and opening windows to let fresh air in and viruses out. (I wear my mask everywhere when I'm out, and I ask my visitors to do so.) We recommend writing to MPs to get mask-wearing made a legal requirement in public places. (See our suggested letter).

The highest Covid infection rates in our area are currently amongst children and young people, but many are unwilling to be vaccinated. Do take every opportunity to discuss your fears with younger family members and reassure them that these jabs are safe. The Astra Zeneca jab relies on methods that have been in use for very many years (e.g. in Flu' jabs). Even the 'newer' vaccines (like Pfizer and Moderna) have been tried and tested for 20 years. Let the young ones know that their jabs will protect you, too.

Consider taking the measures suggested in this Newsletter to boost your general physical and mental health - and if you do feel 'under the weather', contact your GP. Your local pharmacy will also give you valuable help and advice, and find effective alternatives to untested, homemade remedies. (These days, "vinegar and brown paper" are not recommended!).

Do remember that a third of people with Covid don't have symptoms. To be sure you are healthy, order FREE "lateral flow" tests from the NHS and do them twice-weekly - they are much simpler than they used to be. You are asked to report the results to the NHS, whether negative or positive, to help track where the virus is, and how many people are affected. You will be helping us all to stay safe and beat Covid!



# ***THERE'S MANY A SLIP BETWEEN .....??***



**CUP AND LIP” – (well that, too, as I look guiltily at the unsavoury evidence on the front of my jumper) - but what I want to talk to you about is slipping, tripping and falling down both at home and when we’re out and about.**

Every year, peaking in winter, more than one in three people over 65, mostly women, suffer a fall which for many brings life-changing injury and even death. Have you any idea (I hadn't!) of the size of the burden they place **on our services and how much they cost? The bill to the NHS and social care from hip fractures alone is an estimated £6 million per day or £2.3 billion per year, figures that can never put a price on the human suffering involved.**

To help “save our NHS” which is at breaking point due to Covid, we’re constantly being urged to get our jabs to reduce our risk of serious infection requiring hospital treatment. I’ve been thinking that another important way of helping the NHS now that Autumn is covering our pavements with slippery leaves and rising fuel costs are tempting us to delay switching on the lights when it gets dark, is to make a conscious effort to take every care to walk safely and stay upright! This will achieve big savings in our over-stretched NHS and Social Care budgets, free up space in ambulances, hospital beds and GP surgeries, protect our own health and independence, and avoid stress for those we depend on.













I learned to do this from my Mother who became very safety-conscious after tripping and breaking an arm when rushing to answer the ‘phone when I called her from abroad, - no mobiles then! But I lapsed and went on to fall 5 times in the street and once at home, requiring 3 visits to A&E and 6 months of home-based physiotherapy. All avoidable!

It goes without saying that it’s an entirely different matter if you are prone to dizziness or blackouts, have muscular issues or impaired hearing or vision. I had none of these – but I still fell over: I rushed about, carrying too much, my mind on everything but what was around me – so I caught my foot in a raised manhole cover and crashed down into the traffic on London Wall (my arms were too full to save myself); twice slid full-length on slimy veg. and pigeon droppings in the market (didn’t see them); skated to the ground on builders’ waste (my soles had lost their grip), and caught my foot in

a large polythene bag (not looking). I also nearly came to grief when my shopping trolley wheel jammed and fell off (I was moving too fast and the trolley was defective).

I've had plenty of near misses at home, too – slipping on water on the kitchen or bathroom floor, catching my foot in rucked-up rugs, leaving things out and colliding with them in the dark, reaching up to high cupboards or trying to change a light bulb. All this is riskier when you live alone and have no-one to help with everyday tasks or point out dangers you may have overlooked. But now I hope I'm a reformed and more responsible character, having worked out these rules that I try hard to remember and live by.

-  I pay attention to what's around me;
-  I don't rush – I know I may save time only to lose much more;
-  I keep a hand free to steady myself – and I don't carry too much;
-  I make sure glasses, walking aids, trolley, are fit for use;
-  I keep a mobile 'phone handy (at home and outside);
-  I don't skimp on lighting; I light the way to the bathroom at night;
-  I have removed loose rugs;
-  I mop up spills immediately or put newspaper down to dry them;
-  I've switched to well-fitting, lace-up shoes with soles that grip;
-  I don't allow myself to over-reach, or teeter on steps. I seek help.

I'd love to hear your 'rules'. Together, we can make life a lot safer and better – and help our community too.

*Cynthia*

# Introducing...

***This next section is an opportunity for other local groups and organisations to introduce themselves to you and how they might be able to help you stay 'warm' this winter (in more ways than one!)***



City Connections helps residents and workers in the City of London to access health, wellbeing and support services that are local to them. During the pandemic it has been harder for people to know what support is available to them, and we have found that many people have felt isolated.

We have kept in contact with residents with regular 'welfare calls' and have offered practical help where we can, such as arranging food and medication deliveries. The Wellbeing Coordinator, Kevin, has also helped people to access a range of wellbeing services including employment support, a listening ear and talking therapy services, and counselling. And we have supported people to get online for the first time by loaning them a tablet device and giving them coaching on how to use it. Many of our clients have enjoyed our online activities – including meditation, virtual tours, and music and poetry groups!

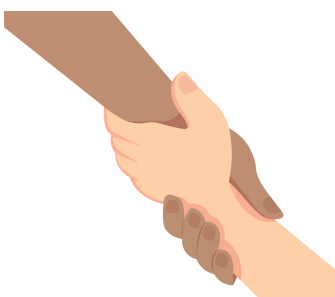


Our Community Engagement Officer, Ruby, now supports the community to lower their electricity and gas bills while staying warm in the winter with one-to-one calls and workshops on the Empower project, accessible to anyone living in City and Hackney. She also runs a carers support group, which hosts regular meetings and events.

**Kevin Jones and Ruby Farrell** - City Connections

## **CITY AND HACKNEY SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD**

In the past year, we have worked on lots of different projects. This includes work with Age UK and the police to see how we can keep residents safe online, looking into the safeguarding issues that have come up as a result of Covid-19 and putting on a yearly safeguarding adults week.



Whilst I hope all of you will be looking forward to the Christmas period with family and friends, it is really important we take care of ourselves and those around us during this time. I have put together a top five tips around keeping yourself and others safe over the winter:

- 1 If you are worried that a person you know is being abused or neglected**, it is really important that you report this to adult safeguarding or the police. You could be saving someone's life!
- 2 Many people can feel lonely or isolated** at this time of year and may need emotional support, there are services out there that can help people reach out to others for friendship
- 3 Everyone has a right to basic services** such as food, medicines, heating. If you know someone who does not have access to this, please get in contact with the council who may be able to provide support
- 4 There can be a lot of scams at this time of year**, both online and in real life. Ignore cold calls or junk emails and do not give your financial details to anyone you do not know or trust.
- 5 If you or someone you know needs to access essential services** such as health or social care, then this is open and available for you to access. Please do not feel scared to ask for support.

See page 22 for important safeguarding contacts!

**Raynor Griffith (Manager)**

## Five to Thrive in the Winter Season

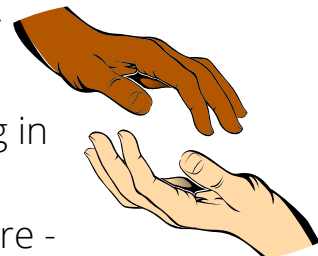
Winter is here, the time of year when we feel the biting cold and dark days, when we spend most days indoors. It can be a very lonely time especially with the added burden of Covid-19. It makes us recall and long for the past. The good news is that we can overcome these Winter challenges by re-setting our minds with things that make us happy! Five to Thrive, a national scheme with a local flavour, offers us 5 ways to improve our happiness - much needed by us all in these cold and difficult times". Here they are:

**Connect:** any connection with another person (or animal) is good - just a smile at someone when you are out, phone or write to someone (friend, family) you have not contacted for a while- Phone people- don't wait for them to call you. Find ways to laugh and remain positive. Meet up at local social club if possible. Check on your neighbour, share a cup of tea and have a good old chat.



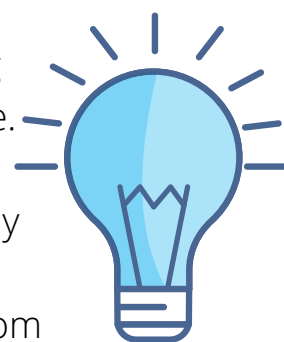
Make use of video Apps to connect with loved ones and friends such Skype, WhatsApp. Find online community apps in the NHS apps library. Join a local Christmas carol singalong. For people who have memory problems or dementia what about trying a singalong screening at a local cinema. There are Dementia-friendly screenings at Hackney Picturehouse and (monthly) at Castle Cinema.

**Be kind:** Be generous of spirit, helping others and offering your services wherever you can. Make sure that this activity feels fulfilling - this can be through volunteering- for example helping in foodbanks, schools or fundraising for a charity - but also from more simple acts such as thanking people more or listening more - or even donating canned foods to local food banks or donating clothes to charity. Just any little act of kindness.



**Keep active and healthy:** a few minutes a day of any kind of exercise can really help you feel better- this can be sitting exercises, short walks, whatever you can manage - but set aside time to do this daily: maybe time to give up or reduce your consumption of alcohol, sugar, or quit smoking? Live Well - NHS ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk))

**Keep learning:** this doesn't have to be formal learning- try to do a puzzle, crossword, look at a programme on TV about something you know nothing about, learn a few words in a different language. Take up a new interest or hobby that makes you feel happy and focused while you are doing it. Take up arts & craft or knitting. Why not try out a new recipe or watch a cooking programme and cook something new. How about reading a chapter or a verse a day from preferred holy book or a novel?



**Stay mindful:** set aside time to really look at something - for example old photos, birds in the park. Think about how you feel in the present - spend a minute thinking about your breathing. Take a moment to pray or meditate and reflect on what you feel grateful for, feel the calm and peace around you. Listen to some music. For people with dementia why not listen to some 'oldies' M4D Radio - Welcome To M4D Radio.



# DEMENTIA IN WINTER- HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Winter is here and with it comes a few new challenges and for many especially for people living with dementia it can be more challenging. Along with the harsh weather, winter also brings the joy of the festive season. This should be a happy, merry time of year filled with 'magic of the festive season', but for many people with dementia it can feel very lonely. Many don't receive invitations to events due to people's perception of their condition. Since Christmas is about giving, we should try and involve people with dementia in events. Including them in reminiscing about Christmas in the "old days" will most certainly bring a smile to their face; a very nice gift to give this season!



The dropping temperatures pose a risk for people with dementia as most may not necessarily dress appropriately for the colder weather. So, try and look out for neighbours, and loved ones and ensure they are dressed appropriately to keep warm especially if they plan to go outside. Cover all exposed skin. Hats, scarves and gloves are particularly important. Also, keep the home safely and comfortably warm, with no risk of burning.

Icy surfaces at this time of year can increase the risk of slips and falls, so make sure that footwear is appropriate. Buy boots with Velcro instead of laces to make dressing easier. If you invite someone for a Christmas visit, make sure access routes are ice and snow-free.

Darker days can increase anxiety, confusion and sleepiness in people with dementia. Make sure that lights are turned on earlier and make the most of the short daylight hours.

- Open curtains during daylight.
- Install special bulbs that simulate sunlight.
- Encourage some physical activity each day such as sitting exercises, go for short walks if possible.
- Sign your loved one up for an online 'Singing for the Brain' session.



We truly hope you all have a pleasant Christmas time. Stay safe and look after those around you.

**Martina Agho** City and Hackney Dementia Alliance and 5 to Thrive

# HACKNEY'S AGEING WELL STRATEGY

I hope as the weather gets colder and the days get shorter that you are looking after yourselves. The end-of-the-year brings with it festive cheer as well as an opportunity to reflect on the past twelve months and our hopes for the year ahead. We want to share with you some opportunities you might like to take up in the New Year to help you keep fit, make it easier to get on-line, and connect with the full range of support that's there for you if you find you need some extra help this winter (and beyond).

You may know that the Council have launched an 'Ageing Well' Strategy that is looking at how our services can be improved to meet the needs and interests of older residents, as well as **how we can make the Borough more age-friendly**. Part of this is about how we can continue to offer our residents programmes like those mentioned below, as well as how we can respond to your concerns around things like safety, housing, and building communities that encourage people to socialise.



**What's coming Up?** There are some exciting things in the pipeline such as courses tailored especially for older people, intergenerational conversations and events between young and old(er) residents, supporting better health and wellbeing in the community, and designing public spaces that are inclusive and accessible – not forgetting to equip them with comfortable, friendly seating!

## Support this winter

The Find Support Services feature helps residents locate advice, classes and activities in Hackney and the City. If you need help but aren't online, **Hackney's Customer Services Team** on 0208 356 3111 can guide you in finding what you need. We can also assist if you're struggling to pay for gas and electricity or are at a crisis point with food supplies.

## New Age Games

The New Age Games is a free sport and physical activity programme for Hackney residents aged 50 and over which includes specialist exercise classes for people with long-term health issues e.g. stroke rehabilitation. **To register**, visit the website at <https://hackney.gov.uk/new-age-games> or contact Darren English on 020 8356 4897 or [darren.english@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:darren.english@hackney.gov.uk). For more local support services, please see our 'Contact List' page.

We look forward to welcoming you! **Soraya Zahid**



# NHS COMMUNITY VOICE



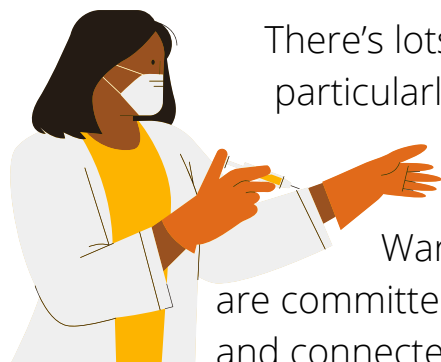
The pandemic has had a big lasting impact on all our lives, throwing into focus the importance of looking after our health and wellbeing.

Now more than ever, as we head into winter, it is vital to “get winter ready” by doing all we can to protect ourselves and each other from Covid-19 and other illnesses, and to make healthy choices, so we have the best opportunity to live well. We must remember that our mental health is just as important as our physical health.

As we prepare for the big changes taking place in April 2022 when Health and Social Care come together under the umbrella of “Integrated Commissioning”, NHS Community Voice is broadening its role to become **“Community Voice”**. We are working to address the health and care issues that matter most to you, ensuring that everyone who needs it has access to the resources available. Our Steering Committee has a wide and diverse range of community representatives bringing your views to the table. We are setting up Task Groups to delve deeper into the priority concerns you register with us and seek action on them where policy and service decisions are made.

We are initially focusing on **(1) access to GP services for young people who are seriously under-provided; 2) a review of Dental services and the shortage of Dental GPs; and 3) Mental Health, in response to the devastating impact Covid has had on this across all age-groups.**

Our first Task Group met on 6 December to begin examining Dentistry. Please keep in touch and share your feedback. We need strong community-based evidence to secure change.



There’s lots of false and confusing information out there, particularly about vaccines, making it difficult to know who to trust.

We are grateful to our partner OPRG for working to bridge the ‘information gap’ through this festive “Winter Warmth” newsletter. Together with all our local partners, we are committed to helping our communities keep well-briefed, active and connected - key factors in improving wellbeing. For now, the best

thing we can all do to help protect ourselves and our loved ones is to follow the latest government measures and guidelines.

Keep safe and warm, and all the best this Christmas Season and in 2022!!

**Lola Njoku** NHS Community Voice

# Snug as a Bug

## TOP TIPS FOR STAYING WARM AND WELL THIS WINTER

### Keep your home well-heated

**Maintenance:** Before it gets colder, check that everything is working and get help if it's not. If you're a tenant, you can ask your landlord to check that your gas heating system and appliances are safe at least once a year. If you own your home and are on means-tested benefits, you may qualify for a free annual safety check.

**Heating costs:** For help with heating bills ask Age UK East London (AUKEL - see Contacts List) for a Benefits check and advice on any other financial support you may be eligible for. Call your supplier for assistance with paying bills – pensioner households should not be at risk of disconnection in winter.

**Prepare for freezing temperatures:** Don't get caught out! Keep extra food in the cupboard/freezer in case you can't get to the shops (and spare toiletries, face-masks and lightbulbs, too). Arrange home deliveries by 'phone or online. Water pipes can freeze and burst, so make sure you know where your main stopcock is and check that it's easy to turn the water off. Keep salt/sand handy to put on steps/paths when it's icy (from a local DIY shop or a public grit bin).

### Think About Your Health

**Medicines:** Order repeat prescription in plenty of time and ask if your pharmacy delivers (in case you can't to get out!). Keep simple cold, flu, sore throat remedies in stock (check their expiry dates). Ask your GP about prescribing a vitamin D supplement to keep you strong and healthy during the winter months.

**Food and drink:** Try to eat at least one hot meal a day and drink plenty of fluids – at least 6 mugs. Not drinking enough can cause de-hydration and an emergency visit to A & E. (Find any excuse for a warming cuppa!) A hot drink before bed or a flask by your bedside can also help you keep warm. Not eating enough and becoming underweight is bad for your health, especially in winter, as it makes it harder to keep warm and fight infections. Speak to your GP if you're worried about weight loss.

**Get a personal alarm:** You might feel unsteady, or more isolated than usual. But a personal alarm worn around your neck/wrist can help reassure you by putting you in touch with a chosen person to help you (e.g. a friend, relative or the emergency services). To apply for one, contact the Adult Social Care Team, GP, social worker.

# Useful Contacts List

- **Age UK East London (AUKEL):** 0208 981 7124 or [info@ageukeastlondon.org.uk](mailto:info@ageukeastlondon.org.uk)  
we regularly pick up voicemails
- **OPRG Coordinator:** 07384 511 701 (this number will remain the same after Sophie leaves)
- **AUKEL Befriending:** For weekly calls from a friendly volunteer/or to volunteer yourself: 020 8981 7124 or [befriending@ageukeastlondon.org.uk](mailto:befriending@ageukeastlondon.org.uk)
- **AUKEL Digital Support Service:**
  - Linessa: 07539 433 997
  - Recheal: 07514 664 913
- **Local Coronavirus Helpline:** 020 8356 3111, 9am to 5pm, Mon - Fri
- **City and Hackney Alzheimer's Society** (for Information on local singing for the brain): 020 8533 0091
- **Alzheimer's Society Dementia Connect** (Info, Advice, Local events): 020 8533 0091
- **Healthwatch** (for reporting and feeding back on healthcare services:
  - **Healthwatch City of London:** [info@healthwatchcityoflondon.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchcityoflondon.org.uk)  
020 3745 9563
  - **Healthwatch Hackney:** [info@healthwatchhackney.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchhackney.co.uk) // 0808 164 7664
- **North East London CCG:** 020 3688 2300 // [nelondon.nelenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:nelondon.nelenquiries@nhs.net)

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS

- **City Connections**
  - Kevin Jones – 020 3957 9844 // 0743 273 6495 // [kevin@cityconnections.org.uk](mailto:kevin@cityconnections.org.uk)
  - Ruby Farrell - 020 3957 9847 // 07514 670270 // [ruby@cityconnections.org.uk](mailto:ruby@cityconnections.org.uk)
- **Community Voice:** Lola Njoku - 0203 9607456 // [lola@healthwatchhackney.co.uk](mailto:lola@healthwatchhackney.co.uk)
- **Ageing Well Strategy:** Soraya Zahid - 020 8356 4979 // [soraya.zahid@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:soraya.zahid@hackney.gov.uk)
- **Dementia Alliance:** Martina Agho
- **Connect Hackney:** 020 7923 1962 - If you would like to receive their printed magazine, Hackney Senior, please email [zelina@connecthackney.org.uk](mailto:zelina@connecthackney.org.uk)
- **Adults Safeguarding Board:** Raynor Griffiths - [raynor.griffiths@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:raynor.griffiths@hackney.gov.uk) (for personal safeguarding concerns and emergencies, please see overleaf)
- **Dementia Alliance / 5 to Thrive:** Martina Agho - [m.agho@nhs.net](mailto:m.agho@nhs.net) // 07387 778242

## EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

- **Police:** 101 or 999
- **City of London Social Care:** email: [adultsduty@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:adultsduty@cityoflondon.gov.uk) or tel: 020 7332 1224 or out-of-hours: 020 8356 2300
- **London Borough of Hackney Social Care:** email: [access@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:access@hackney.gov.uk), tel: 020 8356 6262 or out-of-hours: 020 8356 2300
- **Food support service:**
  - Hackney - 020 8356 3111
  - City of London - 020 7606 3030
- **Support for scams:**
  - [www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk](http://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk)
  - Action Fraud online: [actionfraud.police.uk](http://actionfraud.police.uk) or by phone: 0300 123 2040
- **Samaritans** (for a friendly voice when you're in crisis): 116 123 tel: 020 8356 6262 or out-of-hours: 020 8356 2300
- **Citizen Advice Consumer Service:** They give practical and impartial advice to consumers on how to resolve a consumer problem: 0808 223 1133
- **ELFT 24-hour mental health crisis line:** 020 7771 5807
- **National Covid-19 helpline:** If you have questions or need help with Covid-19 vaccination to order your lateral flow test: 119

# ***Join the OPRG***

**Would you like to join the City and Hackney Older People's Reference Group** and continue to receive information through our newsletters and invitations to meetings? Membership is free and there are no obligations - we value the connection with you. **If you are already a member**, then why not pass this copy of our newsletter to a friend and encourage them to become a member too!

Fill out the below, tear out this page and send it to the *OPRG Coordinator at: OPRG, Age UK East London, 82 Russia Lane, Bethnal Green, E2 9LU*

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Phone number:**

**Email address:**

**Date of birth:**

Gender (optional):

Disability (optional):

Ethnicity (optional):

**Do you consent to being contacted by Age UK East London:** Yes / No