

londonage

Age UK London Magazine • Spring 2014



Redefining ageing

Changing the way we think

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Comment

Samantha Mauger
Chief Executive
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Welcome to the Spring 2014 edition of London Age!

We are delighted to include a report on Positive Ageing in London's spring conference 'Redefining Ageing', which sought to do exactly that. Lord Filkin, one of the keynote speakers, gave an inspiring address on the opportunities and challenges of an ageing population.

Also in this issue we hear from Transport for London about the extensive work they are doing to improve their network for use by, amongst many others, older people. We welcome their efforts and are committed to working with them in any way we can.

Dominic Francis tells us about the fabulous MGCfutures programme which saw older and younger people come together to create and perform a play; the images of the experience show how exciting and successful the project was.

To complete the magazine, we have an introduction to Transport for All's latest campaign 'Sick of Waiting, of which we are a partner, details of the upcoming Capital Age Festival and some articles from our online Opinion Exchange.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of London Age and, as always, thank you for your support.

S. K. Mauger

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Top news

Age UK Sutton

Age UK Sutton is proud to be the recipient of a significant grant offer from the Big Lottery Fund. The grant, which was formally announced by the Big Lottery Fund on Tuesday 18 February, is worth almost £500,000 and will fund the development of Age UK Sutton's 'One Voice for Age' engagement group. In particular, the group will focus on three areas which have been specifically identified by local older people as requiring development, namely campaigning, advocacy and digital inclusion. Ultimately the group aims to reach and engage isolated and vulnerable older people, and envisions improved service delivery and access (particularly to reasonably priced transport) for older people in Sutton.



ISO

Age UK London have achieved both ISO 9001 and ISO 14001. Both respected awards signal our commitment to the highest possible standards and will continue to help us in our work across London.

Opening Doors London

Opening Doors London, the service for older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Londoners which is led by Age UK Camden, launched it's 'Raise a Glass' campaign on Sunday 9 March. The fundraising campaign, which has been launched at the same time as the new logo, uses the strapline 'We fought for your freedoms – you owe us a drink!', and asks people to donate £5 per month, the cost of a drink in many London pubs, to keep the service running. Find out more about the service, and the new logo, by visiting www.openingdoorslondon.org.uk



Redefining ageing

Gordon Deuchars, Campaigns and Policy Manager at Age UK London and a member of the Positive Ageing in London planning group, tells us about the London-wide forum's latest event.

Positive Ageing in London's spring conference attracted some 90 people, mainly from local older people's organisations but including some from the academic, policy and statutory services communities to hear a distinguished panel of speakers.

We had two high-profile keynote speakers. Mary Sinfield, Chair of the Older People's Reference Group for the New Dynamics of Ageing research programme, spoke first on 'Challenging Attitudes and Assumptions About Ageing'. Mary was particularly concerned that the many excellent research reports on ageing need to lead to assertive campaigns for real change. Lord Filkin CBE, Chair of the New Centre for Ageing Better, talked about the 'Opportunities and Challenges of an Ageing Population'. Lord Filkin also drew on his work leading on the 2013 House of Lords report 'Ready for Ageing'. He talked about some of the changes in attitude and practice which are needed to make Britain ready for ageing.

Questions and comments from the floor raised a wide variety of issues including the need for people not to be ashamed of their real age.

Dave Martin of Centre for Policy on Ageing/Trading Times talked about shifting boundaries between 'work' and 'retirement'. Professor Leela Damodaran of the University of Loughborough presented findings from the Sus-IT project, part of the New Dynamics of Ageing research programme, 'busting myths' about older people's use of digital

technology. Participants also heard illuminating presentations from Professor Bryan Manning of the University of Westminster and Professor Patricia Schofield of the Centre for Positive Ageing, University of Greenwich.

Questions and comments from the floor raised a wide variety of issues including the need for people not to be ashamed of their real age, the need to combat intergenerational divisions and make links with 'younger older people', and the links between this debate and the cuts to funding of local organisations and services. Housing, including new developments like co-housing, was pointed out as a neglected area in general debate about ageing and it was pointed out that the voluntary sector too has to tackle ageism internally. Some participants mentioned the importance of sport, leisure and the arts in supporting independence and making a creative contribution. The view was also expressed that as well as being positive about older people's contributions, we need to realistically acknowledge that ageing will have large economic costs and plan how to meet these costs.

The speakers all responded and entered into discussion on these points, and the conference finished with a panel session rounding up the key themes.

The presentations by Mary Sinfield, Dave Martin and Professors Damodaran, Schofield and Manning are on the Positive Ageing in London website which can be found at www.pailondon.org.uk



Lord Filkin CBE, Chair of the New Centre for Better Ageing

Come on board

Making transport accessible

London's transport system has changed beyond recognition over the last two decades. Are you getting the most out of the steps Transport for London (TfL) has taken to make it more accessible?



Customers are at the heart of TfL's service. If you have a Freedom Pass or a 60+ London Oyster card you can travel for free, or at a discounted rate, on all TfL services, 24 hours a day. Trained staff are on hand to help; you don't have to book in advance. This year, all of London's 24,500 bus drivers will receive refreshed training in how to serve disabled and older customers, including how to help wheelchair users access the priority space.

All buses are able to kneel to reduce the step-up. Drivers are expected to pull in close to the kerb and they should also make sure passengers have time to hold on or sit down before moving away.

All buses and most trains now have designated wheelchair spaces and clearly marked priority seats. Step-free access is available at one in four Tube stations, half of London Overground stations, across the whole Docklands Light Railway, the tram network and every single London bus route. TfL is also working hard to put in more lifts, ramps and level infrastructure meaning it's easier to access the platform, and avoid steps and gaps when boarding.

TfL's Travel Support card helps people communicate any assistance or information requirements they have with staff. Their specialist Travel Mentoring team offers advice on planning



journeys and their Mobility Aid Recognition Scheme helps anybody with a mobility aid who wishes to use their buses.

For those who can't use public transport, London has door-to-door services such as Dial-a-Ride, community transport, and subsidised taxis. If you hold a valid Blue Badge, you're eligible to register for a 100 per cent discount for the Congestion Charge, even if you don't own a vehicle or drive.

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On street, almost all London's pedestrian crossings are accessible, with tactile paving, audible signals and/or rotating cones on the push-button units. An increasing number now have Pedestrian Countdown systems to show how much time is left to cross the road.

London is growing and, to meet increased demand, the transport system is constantly improving. It's important to plan your journeys

ahead to avoid any disruption. TfL's online Journey Planner helps you do this, clearly stating which stations are step-free and which have steps and stairs, to help you choose the best option. They also produce a range of maps and guides, including the Step-Free Tube guide, Tube Toilet map and large print, black and white and audio versions of the Tube map. These are available to order online or through their call centre, which provide local rate travel advice. Audio and visual information is used across their bus and rail services, so you'll always know the status of your service.

It's a great sign that more and more older and disabled people are travelling by public transport. TfL knows there's more to do, but they want people to have the information and confidence to start using, or use more of, the transport options currently available.

Find out more by visiting tfl.gov.uk/accessibility; calling **0343 222 1234**; emailing tflaccessibility@tfl.gov.uk or by following [@TfLaccess](https://twitter.com/TfLaccess) on Twitter.

Coming of age

In February this year, the Michael Grandage Company completed a critically acclaimed season of five plays in London's West End. To accompany their fifteen-month residency at the Noel Coward Theatre, the company ran a year-long programme of education activities and events - including a Youth Theatre with a difference. Dominic Francis, Education Associate of the Michael Grandage Company, explains more.



We're in love with the young. So many initiatives are aimed at the under 25s you wonder what will happen to you when you reach 30, let alone 50. That's why when the Michael Grandage Company (MGC) created its Education Programme – MGCfutures – it wanted to reach out to people of all ages, not just its target group of 15 to 25-year-olds.

With previous experience of running 'intergenerational' projects, the team at MGCfutures knew how rewarding and beneficial the experience could be. There remain prevailing stereotypes of young and old people in society today – that all teenagers are hoody-wearing yobs, while 'pensioners' are rude and dismissive – but when you bring the two age groups together, around a neutral site like theatre, you find there is far more to unite than divide them.

Working with Age UK London, MGCfutures ran

a series of 'Taster Workshops' in April 2013. These were for anyone aged 50-plus interested in joining twenty-five young people who met once a week to explore different careers within the theatre, and also to devise work in response to MGC's opening season. The only criteria for applying was that participants be willing to try new ideas. No previous experience of acting was required – in fact, we actively encouraged those who had never stood on a stage before.

We're in love with the young. So many initiatives are aimed at the under 25s you wonder what will happen to you when you reach 30, let alone 50.

We met nearly thirty people, from whom we recruited the ten older participants to join the younger ones. The MGCfutures 'Youth Theatre' now ranges in age from 15 to 85! And just like the younger members, the older ones were a true cross-section of society - from the retired social worker to the former cabaret singer. Together they made a crunchy bunch.

The MGCfutures 'Youth Theatre' now ranges from 15 to 85!

At first we suggested the older members attend the sessions once a fortnight, but with typical gusto they insisted on coming every week. Any concerns we had about tiring them out were soon dispelled, as most of them had more stamina than those fifty years their junior! During workshops,





when told participants could sit down if they needed to, it was the under 25s who dropped first.

For their final performance, the group took over the theatre for a day, the younger members taking responsibility for all the different elements of production.

The group met once a week for six months, creating two shows that they performed on stage at the Noel Coward Theatre. Both were in response to plays by William Shakespeare – A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Henry V – in productions directed by MGC’s Artistic Director, Michael Grandage. For their final performance, the group took over the theatre for a day, the younger members taking responsibility for all the different elements of production – directing, designing and marketing the show. The audience of over three hundred people included family and friends, members of the Henry V Cast and Creative Team, plus supporters of MGC.

'It was amazing to come on stage and have such a large audience applauding us,' says Kurban Haji. 'I've always enjoyed watching plays,' adds Rachel Douglas, 'but it's taken me nearly seventy-five years to realise I could actually be on stage!' Like so many of the group, Gwen Skull made an unexpected discovery: 'Much to my surprise, I realised I could make people laugh, which was wonderful.'

Perhaps most importantly, a group of thirty-five people, of all ages and backgrounds, had become a company. Friendships were formed that crossed social and cultural divides, which will continue beyond MGCfutures. This was due to the passion, commitment and mutual respect of all the group’s members - young and old. The Youth Theatre had truly come of age.

Sick of waiting

Patient transport in London



Lianna Etkind, Campaigns and Outreach Co-ordinator at Transport for All, tells us about her organisation’s new campaign on patient transport.

Patient transport isn’t working for patients

Patients missing their hospital appointments... because of patient transport.

Patients waiting several hours to be taken home after their appointment... because of patient transport.

Patients unable to use buses or trains... deemed ineligible for patient transport.

These are just a few of the reports we’ve heard from people who’ve been let down by hospital transport. While some hospitals work hard to offer excellent transport, it’s clear that for many, patient transport, designed to ensure that everyone can access healthcare, isn’t working.

Sick of Waiting is the campaign for reliable, accessible patient transport for everyone who needs it. The way that patient transport is commissioned has recently changed, with Clinical Commissioning Groups holding more power. So there’s never been a better time to tell hospital trusts that they must guarantee that patient transport works for patients. Patient transport is often contracted out to private companies such as G4S, MPS and DHL. But with big discrepancies between transport at different hospitals, we need common standards to ensure all trusts provide a quality service.

Minimum standards in contracting

We’ve joined up with the National Kidney Federation (NKF), Age UK London, The Greater

London Forum for Older People, Healthwatch Newham and London Region National Pensioners Convention. We want to see minimum standards on things like waiting time and eligibility criteria written into patient transport contracts. We want to ensure that hospital Trusts have the power to hold to account the private companies who deliver patient transport.

But we can’t do it without you

- We want to hear your stories of patient transport
- Have you, a relative or friend used patient transport in the last year?
- How did you find it? How long did you have to wait to be picked up? How was the driver? How was the discharge lounge?

Excellence in patient transport

It isn’t all gloom and doom; there are examples of NHS staff going the extra mile for patients. We were very impressed to hear of Guys and St Thomas’s, where a Patient Transport Forum brings together patient transport users, nurses and patient transport staff to monitor the service and look at what can be improved.

At Queens Hospital in Romford, there’s a wealth of information in the hospital foyer about transport – maps, timetables, and information about how to claim back travel costs for people on low incomes. We think that more hospitals should make it this easy for people to plan their journeys to appointments.



A number of hospitals ensure that patients have tea and coffee on offer in the patient transport lounge while they wait to be picked up after their appointment.

Languishing for hours

However, those hospitals which are leaving patients languishing for hours after their appointment need to sort this out. We have heard from patients who've had to pay huge amounts for taxis, because they were afraid to rely on patient transport. We've heard from people who have had the driver refuse to transport their wheelchair. We've heard from people who've had to write off their whole day, for the sake of a fifteen minute doctor's appointment.

Together with Freedom of Information requests we are making to the Trusts, we're compiling a report on patient transport in the capital, which we'll present to CCGs and Trusts, asking them to ensure patient transport meets patients' needs.

We'll be having an Accountability Assembly in the autumn, at a central location to be announced, where members will put their questions directly to Trust managers, and we'll present our Patient Transport Charter. We haven't set a date yet, but we'll keep you updated.

With your help, we can win this

The good news is that there is precedent for Trusts listening to patients and improving their transport procurement process. In 2013, David Hencke, a journalist, was appalled when his wife, a stroke survivor, was left waiting for more than five hours to be taken home after her appointment.

He took this up with the West Hertfordshire hospital trust, asking them to strengthen their management of the patient transport contract. The result?

Medical Services, the company which holds the contract for transport services, will now contract some patient ambulance services to a taxi firm where people are mobile enough to get in a taxi, so people who aren't mobile enough to get in a taxi will get priority ambulance treatment. They'll also review ambulance rosters to put more on at the weekend and employ an additional member of staff at Watford, reducing the strain on overstretched staff. As well as this, West Herts Hospital Trust is changing the procurement of new contracts. This includes financial penalties for breach of contract – all patients not to wait for more than two hours is written into current contracts.

A great win for patients that showed that with persistence, these contracts can be improved for patients.

David said: "Far too many people are happy just to grumble rather than complain if the NHS service is not up to scratch. This shows, if you do complain, you can get something done."

Please help us complain and report the failings constructively. Together we can win these improvements, so ill people no longer have to wait for hours on end to travel to the healthcare they need.

Good or bad, we would like your reports of patient transport. We will use this evidence to help convince Trusts that patient transport contracts must put patients' needs first. Please answer our very short survey. You can fill it in online, at <http://bit.ly/1neLX26>.

You can phone us, on **020 7737 2339**, and answer the questions over the phone. If you are part of a group of older people, we could post you some surveys to hand out.



Capital Age Festival 2014

Portrait of a man

Susie Miller, Artistic Director of the Capital Age Festival, tells us about this year's event, Older Men and Expression, which runs at various locations between the 1 and 15 July



We chose this year's theme 'Older Men and Expression' to link up new ideas, arts practices and work that attracts older men and new audiences. This year we have more events, happening in more London boroughs than ever before, including:

Portrait of a Man – The Exhibition

Saturday 14 June - Thursday 31 July
9.00 - 17.00 daily, FREE

The View Tube, The Greenway, Stratford E15 2PJ.

The Portrait of a Man exhibition is the result of public engagement and photography based workshops with older isolated men who are based in Southwark and Tower Hamlets. The project has

been funded by Arts Council England and the GLA, with portraits by Dave Lewis, a short film by Fiona Whitty and contributions from the older men in the group who explore ideas and beliefs about 'maleness' and how this has changed over the past half-century to begin to define what it is to be a man today.

CAF 2014 Launch

21st Century Tea Dance
Tuesday 1 July, 13.00 - 15.00

The Albany Douglas Way, Deptford, SE8 4AG.
Box Office: 020 8692 4446 (Tickets £5)

Entelechy's Tea Dance Team kindly host the launch, join us for a mix of live music from resident



swing band The Jive Five comedy, dance, poetry and much, much more!

This year we have more events happening in more London boroughs than ever before.

Also featuring Portrait of a Man, a short film commissioned by CAF and made by Tony Price, which captures performances by 4 of our partner organisations; Sage Dance and Counter Dance Companies, Bolder Voices and Breathing for Singing (Harefield Hospital). We follow the groups as they take their performances to new environments, a pub, an office, an older people's centre and a hospital.

We will also be screening Portrait of a Man at Through the Lens a programme of short films, Monday 7 July 15.30 at The Russet, Hackney. The programme includes:

A Play in a Play by Tony Price, 4 short films that sing the politics of Age by Bolder Voices and Bin Ageism by Magic Me with the BFI, Oaklands School and Loud Minority.

The full programme includes a workshop with Siobhan Davies Dance and Entelechy Arts at The Garden Museum, a film screening with Waltham Forest Libraries, a concert with Breathe Arts Health Research at St Thomas' Hospital, Dance workshops and performances at Oxford House with Green Candle Dance Company, comedy writing workshops with Humourisk in Barking, performances as part of The Sparked Fun Palace at The View Tube, Stratford and Journeys - The End of The Line by 3rd Thought, presented by 1st Framework in Canning Town.

For a full list of events please contact us for our festival brochure.

If you would like to receive a festival brochure in the post please send your contact details to info@capitalagefestival.org.uk or leave a message on **0207 820 6788**. Follow our project documentation by visiting www.capitalagefestival.tumblr.com

See you in July!

Age UK London Opinion Exchange

The Age UK London Opinion Exchange launched exactly one year ago and is part of the organisation's 'Fit 4 Purpose' project, which is funded by London Councils.



The Opinion Exchange features opinion pieces and discussion forums on issues relating to older people, to trigger debate and ensure older people's organisations are able to respond to the changing needs of their users.

Since it launched, over 2,100 individuals have been on the website, with over 240 people visiting per month in 2014. Almost 100 opinions have been posted in that time, leading to an incredibly active website with posts going up every three days and commenters adding to the debate.

We wanted to give you a taste of what the Opinion Exchange is like, so have published two opinions below, both by our most prolific poster Lynn Strother. We hope you enjoy reading them and

we look forward to seeing you at www.ageuklondonopinionexchange.org.uk soon.

Home Care Visits (published November 2013)

There has recently been a lot of publicity around home care visits. How can anyone be 'cared' for in 15 minutes? By the time the carer has taken off their coat, greeted the person they have come to see, checked how they are feeling and whether they are having any problems and whether the person is comfortable and dressed appropriately then, if this was not a call to provide personal care, the carer then puts their coat back on and says goodbye. That will take all of the 15 minutes – where is the care? Where is the respect and dignity? How can food be provided or the

cupboards checked to see if there is enough food? What about the giving of medication? People take time to swallow a lot of tablets. If you are housebound, vulnerable, older, a person with disabilities or mental health problems you need more than a flying visit especially as often it is a different carer for each visit.

There has recently been a lot of publicity around home care visits. How can anyone be 'cared' for in 15 minutes?

The good thing is that a conversation has started about the issue and we must ensure that it is not just talk but action. The Care and Support Minister Norman Lamb has said that from next April the Care Quality Commission (CQC) is proposing to look at whether home care visits are long enough to respond to people's needs. They will also consider looking at how staff working conditions might be impacting on care. The CQC will assess:

- Whether the service is able to respond to people's needs in the allocated time
- Whether the care is delivered with compassion, dignity and respect
- How many staff have zero hour contracts
- The levels of staff turnover

But one of the major problems is that staff are not paid for the time they travel between their clients. Does it really make sense that a person could be travelling for ½ to 1 hour to spend 15 minutes with a person? This aspect of the system has to be included in the CQC assessment. What about the support that the staff receive?

One of the major problems is that staff are not paid for the time they travel between clients.

In many ways the staff are also victims in this system. Many went into this part of the care system to care and they are not allowed to do so as the time limits are unreasonable. What training do they receive? Is there a career structure? Staff

also need to be valued. Therefore the CQC should also be assessing the support, training and career structure for staff.

We also know that many people are afraid to make any complaints in case there is some sort of retribution – either that the care is stopped or that there will be resentment by staff. So the surveys asking what you think of the care service usually come out very positive instead of giving the true picture.

Get involved at your local level – watch out for the CQC consultation in the spring and respond, contact the CQC and see if you can be involved in their assessments, join us in asking for a system which really provides good quality care, respect, dignity and compassion and really caters for people's needs. Let's not forget that people are paying for this service and it is not cheap.

Older People – Contributors or Burdens? (Published June 2013)

Another week and another 'bashing older people sports' time! This week it's employment.

First there are the vitriolic letters in the Metro – apparently most over 65's have their own home, two cars and say they are hard up because they have higher fuel bills... In fact anyone working over 65 is greedy – we have had our day and so any one over 65 should give up work to allow young people to take their jobs.

I am not sure that many people would feel that younger people could bring the skills and experience needed.

I am not sure where they are getting their facts unless they are part of Cameron, Clegg and Miliband's circle. I am also not sure that many bankers, politician, judges, lawyers, hospital consultants, GP's, corporate Chief Executives etc. would feel that younger people could bring the skills and experience needed to provide the professional knowledge and standards required or



are the professional workforce exempt from this rant by younger people? Is it only people like you and me this particular demand refers to?

There is also the 'awful suggestion' that young people are 'trapped' into living at home with parents they cannot stand which causes depression and suicide. But how many of these young people are paying rent? Their food? Helping towards the utilities etc.? Most times – living with parents may not always be a bed of roses but it is cheap. And what about the feelings of the parents? Are they happy with the situation – can it not cause parents depression too?

Older people cannot win - first we are a burden on society, yet when we go to work to earn money to pay for our future care needs and pay tax - we are greedy.

Older people cannot win – first we are a burden on society – how can the country cope with this ageing society which contributes nothing (the volunteering, childcare and caring count for nothing in the eyes of this young culture). Yet

when we go to work to earn money to pay for our future care needs and pay tax – we are greedy.

So what's the solution? Instead of putting generation against generation we need the banks to lend money to manufacturing, building and small businesses to create job opportunities which in turn provides taxes and more money in people's pockets so they are more likely to go and spend. The banks led us here now it is their duty to lead us to a more prosperous future for all generations.

You can read and comment on both of these articles, and many more, at www.ageuklondonopinionexchange.org.uk

As well as inviting you to read and comment on existing articles, we'd love you to get involved by contributing your own opinions. If you would like to write an article about any subject related to older people in London please email your article, or an idea for one, to Danny Elliott, Communications and Campaigns Officer at Age UK London on delliott@ageuklondon.org.uk

IN THE HOTSEAT

Q&A **Danny Elliott**, Communications and Campaigns Officer at Age UK London, shares his thoughts on working with older people.

How did you come to be working for Age UK?

After completing an MA in Multimedia Journalism, I started working for an international development charity as their Communications Manager, so I went straight into charity communications. I joined Age UK London in March 2013, so I'm no longer, quite, the new kid on the block!

Why are older people's issues important to you?

Older people are often left without a voice, individually and as a demographic, and Age UK London exist to represent them; I'm glad to be part of that. I also lived with my Granda in the past, and was able to see, first-hand, the opportunities and difficulties of being older.

What projects do you run?

On the communications side, I run everything that Age UK London does online; the website, blogs, Opinion Exchange, Knowledge Hub and social media. As part of the Fit 4 Purpose team I produce this magazine, and produce a monthly, London-wide e-bulletin. I also deal with all media enquiries, run workshops for older people around digital

skills, write and design a variety of publications throughout the year and support all other departments with their communications work. On the campaigning side, I support our Policy and Campaigns Manager with the work he does running campaigns across London on a variety of issues.

What one thing would you ask the local borough to do to improve things for older people?

I would urge them to keep as many face to face services as possible and, alongside that, do more to train older people in digital skills – it's not right to think that this problem will simply go away over time and we all need to do what we can to help more older people get online.

What is your vision for the future of your local Age UK?

To continue to promote and represent the views of older Londoners on the issues they feel need to change.

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Age UK London works across the capital to improve the quality of life for older people and to enhance their status and influence.

If you have any comment on the magazine content or ideas for the next issue, we'd love to hear from you:
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