

## London Age – Spring 2015 – Q1 2015/16



Welcome

Welcome to the Spring 2015 London Age!

This issue we have a focus on dementia – Age UK London is a member of the pan-London Dementia Action Alliance and while we are committed to raising the voice of all older Londoners, we want to recognise the particular difficulties that people with dementia can experience with being heard.

We have articles by Esther Watts from Alzheimer’s Society, about creating a dementia friendly London and Methodist Housing Association about some of the ways in which they care for older residents with dementia.

We also have an article outlining three action areas Age UK London has been working on to ensure older Londoners with dementia are represented throughout the work we do.

Donnachadh McCarthy has written the second piece in his series on ‘eco-friendly elderly’ with hints and tips on how to reduce your electricity bill.

We also have news of Age UK London’s latest campaign, ‘Tell Me!’, which outlines recommendations for public bodies to provide older people in London with better information, including the need for ‘Information Open Days’.

Age UK London

Funded by:



This is the text content of London Age – Spring 2015 – Q1 2015/16. The full, designed magazine will be available online and in hard copy as soon as possible.

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## **News in Brief**

### **World Pride Power List**

Opening Doors London, the regional LGBT older people's service based at Age UK Camden and run in partnership with Age UK London has been recognised in the Pride Power List 2015.

Age UK Camden's CEO Gary Jones said: "This generation of LGBT older people face more isolation and mental health issues than their straight peers. Opening Doors London has a small staff team but nearly a hundred volunteers and ambassadors who provide support groups, befriending and peer support, training and campaigning. We are delighted with this recognition. We also need funds to keep going and more details are at [www.openingdoorslondon.org.uk](http://www.openingdoorslondon.org.uk)."

See the full list at [www.worldpridepowerlist.com](http://www.worldpridepowerlist.com)

### **Health Fair**

Preparations are underway for the biggest over 60's health event of the year! It takes place at Kensington Town Hall on October 2nd and this year will be a celebration of all that our local community can offer to maintain good mental, physical and emotional health.

Groups, organisations and service providers from every arena of life in Kensington & Chelsea are showcasing their workshops, activities, information, demonstrations, talks, health checks, and performances! All for the entry fee of only £1.

This will be the event not to miss – full of colour, music, and positivity. Come and discover what you can do for good health. Highlights include a 7 choir performance and song workshop, table tennis, jewellery workshop, pampering and alternative therapies, raffle, tai chi, belly dancing and all sorts of exercise.

For more information, contact Kathe on 0208 960 8137 or email [kjacob@aukc.org.uk](mailto:kjacob@aukc.org.uk)

*An interview with Esther Watts, Alzheimer's Society, Project Manager for Dementia Action Alliances (Greater London)*

## **Creating a Dementia Friendly London**

*So your job is to make London dementia friendly?*

Yes, but I need a lot of help. Creating a dementia friendly London is not just my job, dementia is everyone's business. People with dementia and their carers need to be able to go about their business, to live well, but they need a little extra help and support. We want them to carry on visiting shops, banks, post offices, using public transport, and enjoying the delights of London for as long as possible so it is important that the public and the people they meet know about dementia and can respond to their needs. If they always went to the football we want them to carry on: Millwall, Leyton Orient and Tottenham Hotspur are involved in our project. If they like the theatre the Prince Edward Theatre in Soho and Shakespeare's Globe are working to become dementia friendly but we want every local theatre to get in on the act. The aim is to keep on adding members and expanding the horizons of people with dementia, because life doesn't end with a diagnosis.

*I understand you coordinate the Pan-London Dementia Action Alliance. What are the aims of the group?*

It is simple really, the Pan-London Dementia Action Alliance (PLDAA) exists to make life easier for people with dementia\* in London. Each member draws up an action plan to make their organisation's commitments – three actions they will take - and they are published on the Dementia Action Alliance website. These actions might be promoting Dementia Friends information sessions among staff to raise awareness of dementia. The Metropolitan Police has trained 20 staff as Dementia Friends Champions to do just that, as have Historic Royal Palaces, NHS England (London region), the London Fire Brigade, and others. Between them they have made over 1,000 Dementia Friends already.

*What is Dementia Friends?*

A Dementia Friends session is a 45-minute face-to-face session, it is fun and interactive but whilst playing games and hearing about people with dementia's experience, people learn a little bit more about dementia and how to make their experience easier in society. It is a social movement with over 1 million Dementia Friends already in the UK. Go to [www.dementiafriends.org.uk](http://www.dementiafriends.org.uk) to sign up for a session or to do our online version.

*How do you make the whole of London dementia friendly?*

It is a two-pronged strategy. The Pan-London Dementia Action Alliance comprises of organisations who operate across London – I've mentioned a few but we also have Transport for London, Social Care Partnership in London, London Ambulance Service, the

Royal Academy of Arts plus charities like Royal Voluntary Service and Age UK London. We are extending membership to other sectors like housing, business and the tourism sector.

On the ground in London there are seventeen local Dementia Action Alliances at borough level with two more launched in Dementia Awareness Week in May: Hillingdon and Ealing. Havering DAA has 76 members made up of local groups, businesses and health and social care partners! We are working with local authorities and volunteers to encourage DAAs in boroughs across London (see map). We aim to make the whole of London dementia friendly – all boroughs.

*Yes, what about dementia friendly communities? Is that something else altogether?*

No, they are all part of the same thing. To register as a dementia friendly community you need a local action group and named contacts who have a proven track record and plans for the future, and a DAA ticks that box. So far two DAAs have registered as Dementia Friendly Communities in London, Richmond and Waltham Forest, but more are in the pipeline.

*What actions can an organisation take to make become dementia friendly?*

Promoting awareness of dementia, becoming a dementia friendly employer (see Alzheimer's Society's website for details of the guide recently published), appointing a Dementia Champion to make sure that they are considering the needs of people with dementia in relation to their services, and looking at their environment and whether simple signage or other modifications might help people with dementia to get around more easily.

A supermarket might open a 'no hurry' lane for people with dementia to use on the same day a community café runs. It is about thinking about how to make life easier for people.

But the key is really people. If staff and volunteers are confident to communicate, if they feel happy to approach someone and ask if they need some help, then London will be a more dementia friendly place and that is better for everyone: tourists, people with a mild learning disability, you, me and our parents and grandparents.

*Can you share examples of the difference members of the Pan-London DAA or local DAAs have made?*

The London Fire Brigade is doing brilliantly, they have their own Dementia Friends Champions who have responded to the challenge of one of their Borough Commanders to make Bexley's fire station staff Dementia Friends (122 were made). Sessions are also being held for all 132 Fire Cadets pan-London and a bespoke mental health awareness package which includes dementia, has been created and is being delivered to all front line staff.



Photo: London Fire fighters and cadets in Bexley wearing their badges with pride!

Transport for London has included information on dementia in its training update for all 24,500 bus drivers across the capital and is looking to raise awareness of staff on the London Underground. Dial-A-Ride is training Dementia Friends Champions to give staff Dementia Friends sessions and is in the process of changing the rule that people with dementia must be accompanied to use this service, meaning more people can get a lift without a chaperone which was inhibiting many from using this service. The Houses of Parliament are working to become dementia friendly and we are giving sessions to other elected representatives across the capital.

Local DAAs are holding events, gathering Dementia Friends Champions and acting as a central conduit for raising awareness all over London. They are working with local authorities, schools, shops, charities, the health sector, arts organisations and businesses. Together we can make London dementia friendly. Look us up on the DAA website for your local alliance or contact me [esther.watts@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:esther.watts@alzheimers.org.uk)

*\*The word dementia describes a set of symptoms that may include memory loss and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language. Dementia is caused when the brain is damaged by diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease or a series of strokes. Dementia is progressive, which means the symptoms will gradually get worse.*

*Methodist Homes (MHA) is a charity providing care, accommodation and support services for 16,000 older people throughout Britain. MHA are one of the most well-established care providers in the sector and amongst the largest charities in Britain delivering services for more than 70 years. Here, they tell us about one of the ways in which they help residents with dementia.*

## **An Expression of Self**

Eyes bright, beaming broadly as she sings, bounces in her chair and shakes a tambourine, Margery is almost unrecognisable. Or, to look at it another way, she is more recognisable than she has been for a long time.

Margery was known for being effusive and talkative – until she developed dementia. Like so many others with the condition, she lost much of her ability to communicate. But with music therapy at her MHA care home in London, Margery has an alternative, non-verbal means of creative self-expression – enabling her to continue displaying the sparkly person she never stopped actually being.

“Music therapy’s key benefit is how uplifting it is for people’s moods,” says Ros Flowerdew, Music Therapist for three of MHA’s London care homes (Riverview Lodge in Kingsbury, Kenbrook in Wembley and Willesden Court in Willesden). “Sometimes people can sing even if they can’t talk. It strengthens their sense of self and helps alleviate things such as depression, anxiety and frustration. It’s also useful for care staff – it can help them to engage with and build relationships with residents.”

MHA, the national charity providing accommodation, care and support to 16,000 older people nationwide, has been providing music therapy in its dementia care homes since 2008 (funded on charitable income, to be provided without charge). It is the largest employer of Music Therapists in the UK. More recently, independent research carried out at its care homes brought some very positive results.

“A major point to music therapy is that it’s interactive,” explains Clare Monckton, MHA’s other London-based Music Therapist (covering The Meadow in Muswell Hill, and Lawnfield House).

“There are definite wellbeing benefits for residents in enjoying a musical performance, but music therapy is about them becoming part of the music. The therapist encourages people to interact using musical cues and they might sing or play a percussion instrument. It’s guided by the resident – we don’t impose music on them, we enable them to use the music to express how they feel.”

Music therapy sessions can be one-to-one or held in groups, and either way the benefits are apparent. Sessions will usually start with a greeting song, with the therapist welcoming residents by name. As the session goes on, the therapist might play a song on a guitar or

keyboard, encouraging (though never pressuring) residents to join in by playing drums, xylophone or singing, and responding to musical cues. It is not uncommon for people who are usually unresponsive to participate actively in the music, tapping along to the rhythm and smiling and engaging with those around them.

A small feasibility trial carried out in 2013 within two MHA care homes in Oxfordshire and Wiltshire gave some very promising insights into music therapy. Clare and Ros were both involved in analysing the data that was gathered over five months from 14 residents, with the trial led by MHA's Lead Music Therapist Ming Hung Hsu, and Professor Helen Odell-Miller of Anglia Ruskin University.

In the trial, people who regularly received music therapy had demonstrable wellbeing benefits, as measured by methods including dementia care mapping, compared to a control group. Furthermore, they enjoyed these benefits for a significant period after the therapy session had ended. Though only a small feasibility trial, Ming described the outcome as "positive" and added, "I hope it sets the path to help us understand how music therapy works – the mechanisms of it." The results have been presented at international music therapy conferences.

Clare notes, "Music therapy helps to create a cohesive, positive atmosphere within a care home. It's a shared experience between residents, relatives and staff. Music therapists find out more about people during sessions – what they like, what their interests and pasts are – and we can share this with care staff. So they might engage residents by singing their favourite songs with them while delivering care."

Anecdotal evidence of the benefits of music therapy abounds. In some cases it may help to reduce, or even eliminate altogether, the need for psychoactive drugs.

Ros tells a story of a resident who became very frustrated and anxious when her arm needed to be put into a cast, but was calmed by a music therapy session.

"You can change the tempo and dynamics of the music," she says. "So you might start off with music to help people vent agitation or frustration, but then gradually slow it down to something calmer."

"Our most important musical instrument is our voice. Every resident has their own voice, and music and singing are very human ways of interacting – even if you can't speak."

*For further information about music therapy, visit [www.mha.org.uk](http://www.mha.org.uk) or call 01332 221 920.*

*Age UK London is a member of the pan-London Dementia Action Alliance and, as such, wants to represent older Londoners with Dementia in the work that we do. Here, Ben Donovan, Research and Policy Officer at Age UK London, and the staff team Dementia Champion, outlines the work we are doing in this area.*

### **Age UK London's Dementia Action Areas**

Age UK London is committed to raising the voice of all older Londoners and recognises the particular difficulties that people with dementia can experience with being heard. As the population ages, there will be a growing need to support people with dementia to become involved and active in their local communities and networks. With a desire to ensure that older people with dementia are given equal opportunity to engage with us, we have joined up with the Dementia Action Alliance and set three separate areas of action;

1) Reviewing our approach to different activities to identify any changes needed to make them dementia friendly

We do this by incorporating dementia-friendly guidelines into initiation and planning meetings for projects, activities and events that we run. Our recent 'Ageing Without Children' and 'Impacts of Welfare Reforms' events have been organised in accordance with this ethos. Similarly, we encourage people with dementia to engage with the research we undertake and have recently done a large research project in Kingston focused on the needs people with dementia have from their local services.

2) Train and raise staff-awareness in dementia

Having attended 'Dementia Friends' training, an internal 'dementia champion' has volunteered to keep the staff-team informed and aware of developments in the relevant dementia-related literature. In recent months, a best-practice toolkit has been disseminated within the staff-team along with regular updated research summaries and statistics.

3) Raises awareness of the pan-London Dementia Action Alliance to encourage involvement.

We always try to raise awareness of dementia and the Dementia Action Alliance through our publications both on- and off-line. By being a part of the Dementia Action Alliance, we increase our ability to promote the needs and views of people with dementia at a local and regional level and would encourage involvement in this growing alliance to ensure that the voices of the 100s of 1000s of people with dementia across the country are being heard and considered.'

*Age UK London's latest campaign, 'Tell Me!', aims to improve information provision from public bodies for older Londoners.*

### **'Tell Me!'**

Age UK London has launched 'Tell Me!', a campaign which outlines recommendations for public bodies to provide older people in London with better information, including the need for 'Information Open Days'.



The availability of information in a form that it is understandable, comprehensive and able to assist with decision-making is often not considered until it is really needed. This is particularly felt at times of change to personal circumstances and this could be considered particularly pertinent to older people who are more likely to experience changes such as retirement, changes in health and the loss of a partner.

This all comes at a time where cost-savings are increasing reliance on digital forms of information-provision, and yet large numbers of the population do not use computers, the vast majority of whom are older people. Local bodies and the NHS are keen to ensure that

they do provide better, accessible information and it is the intention of this paper to provide some useful evidence from the experiences of older Londoners to assist them in this aim.

‘Tell Me! Improving Information-provision for Older Londoners’, looks at access to information from public bodies such as Local Councils, NHS Trusts and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in the capital, and is based on findings from older people in 25 London Boroughs.

While public bodies try hard to communicate with their communities, the report shows that, of those who tried, 35% couldn’t find information about home care, 29% couldn’t find information about specialist transport options and 27% failed to find listings of local health support services.

A key finding was that some older people found obtaining information online or over the phone particularly difficult; reasons cited for older people not being able to find information include not having internet access, websites not enabling easy access to information and answer-phone automated response systems not having relevant options, resulting in long periods on hold.

One recommendation is for public bodies across London to host ‘Information Open Days’ – the full list of recommendations are:

1. Involve older people in the design and testing of websites to ensure suitability.
2. Ensure that information-providing websites of public bodies have the necessary inclusive design for people with visual impairments and have this tested by people with visual impairments.
3. Provide or support easily accessible assistance/training to assist those people who are willing but lack computer-skills.
4. Improve outcomes for phone-call information-provision by reviewing caller waiting times, automated-machine effectiveness in sign-posting and caller feedback on successful resolution of queries.
5. Support and resource the voluntary and community sector networks so they can ensure that relevant information (including printed) can be disseminated directly to older people.
6. Make use of widely-distributed local newspapers and other publications to impart specific information.

7. Develop information-provision within the community. Leaflets in libraries or doctor's surgeries were frequently cited in respondent feedback as being useful to those without computer-access.
8. Maintain or support some form of face-to-face information-provision for those people who need it. Consider implementing scheduled 'Information Open Days' to enable one-stop, face-to-face support.

*Read the 'Tell Me!' report and find out more about the campaign on the [Age UK London website](#).*

*Donnachadh McCarthy FRSA, from 3 Acorns Eco-Audits, recently gave Age UK London an 'eco-audit'. He was so helpful to us as an organisation that we asked him to write for London Age and here he gives us the second in a four part series on how older people can be eco-friendly.*

### **Eco-friendly Elderly – Electricity**

Older people spend more on electricity as they are often at home more or live alone with no one to share the bills. The average energy bill for the elderly is £1,400, which means many live in fuel poverty. Electricity is also the largest source of carbon emissions as it is mainly produced by burning fossil fuels. Reducing electricity wastage is good for our pockets and for the planet.

#### Top Tips to Cut Electricity Bills:

1. Electric heaters are nearly 3 times more expensive than gas central heating. If you don't have central heating and are near a gas-supply, you can get free central-heating system installed if on pension credit.
2. Electric immersion-heaters should have a timer and lagging jacket. Make sure temperature control is not above 60C. Hot-water for showers and sinks is 40C. Legionella prevention requires 60C in community residential homes and other large premises.
3. Halogen spot-lights are expensive to run e.g. 20 spotlights for 6 hours a day, cost £306 a year! Remove spotlights you don't need and replace the rest when they blow with LEDs, which cost about £30 a year to run for 20 lamps.
4. The main cost of using a washing machine is water-heating. Use cold wash for non-soiled coloureds. 30C for normal wash. Electric-driers are expensive. Used once a day, costs £211 per year. Use washing line rather than drier/spin programme.
5. Avoid using electric towel-rails. An 800 watt towel-rail 12 hours a day for 6 months of the year would cost £245!
6. Traditional non-spray irons use a third of the electricity of spray-irons.
7. Electric kettles use 3,000 watts. Fill with a cup to only boil the water needed!
8. Turn off electric equipment at the wall, including washing machine, tv and gas-cooker plugs, to save about £50 per year!

Old hard-to-heat houses can qualify for grants to install renewable electricity or solar hot-water from the ECO-scheme. Ring 0300 123 1234, to see if you qualify. If you have spare

capital, solar electricity's guaranteed financial returns beat current bank interest rates.  
Average 4kw system costs about £6,000.

Alternatively, you can simply switch your electricity supply bill to companies such as Good Energy and Ecotricity, who supply all their electricity from renewables such as solar, hydro and wind.

So why not start saving yourself some money and the planet today!

*More information:* [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk) *Tel:* 0300 123 1234