

londonage

Age UK London Magazine Winter 2015



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Samantha Mauger

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Welcome to the Winter 2015 edition of London Age! In a city as big as London, transport is always going to be a key area that people feel the effects of every day, and older people are no different.

We know that older Londoners care about transport in London. I recently attended the launch of Bolder Voices' 'Love Your Freedom Pass' film and can attest to the fact that they're passionate about the issue. You can read more about the journey they have taken inside this issue.

We also hear from Transport for London and get an inside look at their Customer Service Training and the lengths they are going to, to improve the experience for everyone who uses public transport in London.

We also have articles about a recent London Fairness Commission event, an upcoming play about ageing and, from Age UK London, we have an article from our latest Impact Report, which celebrates the work we've done with older people last year.

Finally, Donnachadh McCarthy gives us his final piece of Eco-friendly advice. We want to thank him for his contribution to London Age over the last year, and hope that the impact from those articles continues.



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Top news

Your Priorities 2015



Age UK London are again consulting with older people in the capital through our annual 'Your Priorities' questionnaire. The results guide us in what we will campaign on next year. You can fill in the questionnaire online or by hard copy and we can pay for postage or collect questionnaires if this is desirable.

You can access the online questionnaire by visiting <http://bit.ly/1k6B5IKor>, or if you have any further questions please contact Ben Donovan by email BDonovan@AgeUK-London.org.uk or call 020 7091 2592.

Age UK Richmond

Age UK Richmond's Love Later Life event, part of Older People's Week, was enjoyed by 300 locals participating in an action packed day of free activities including cookery and

exercise demonstrations, information and advice, complimentary lunch and goody bags and a free raffle with an iPad as the star prize. All services were showcased in an informative but interactive way.

Find out more by visiting Age UK Richmond's website: www.ageuk.org.uk/richmondupon-thames.



Courier Fraud

Age UK London have recently been holding joint workshops with the Metropolitan Police and below is information for older Londoner's about 'Courier Fraud'. In the last year alone there were 3052 recorded offences of this type within the Metropolitan Police Service Area, resulting in a total financial loss of over £3.7 million. This type of offence is particularly targeted at elderly victims with the average age being 70 years.

Find out more about Courier Fraud by visiting the Age UK London website: www.ageuk.org.uk/london.

Bolder Voices - A Journey

Clair Chapwell, Director of Bolder Voices Choir, tells us about their journey, and the latest film they have made to celebrate transport in London - 'Love That Freedom Pass!'



In 2011 I walked into my drama group at Age UK Camden's Henderson Court with a new song. The week before we'd been talking about how hard it was to live on a pension and how unfair it was that bankers were receiving massive bonuses. I'd written the song based on things people had said. Laurie White, Manager at Henderson Court, was keen to encourage the arts in the centre and dropped in, guitar in hand and accompanied us.

We didn't sound all that terrific at first but - oh - were we passionate! And, rare for older people, we were in control. We didn't have to be victims. Here was a chance to spend two minutes singing with other older people explaining our views. We started performing.

Gary Jones, CEO of Age UK Camden suggested we make a video and gave us a little start-up money. Godfather Gary we call him now. To fill out the sound, I approached the older singers I was working with at Elders Voice in Brent with Jenny Davison.

Recording was a revelation for all of us. Bhavesh Hindocha, an amazing professional filmmaker is completely unobtrusive. And then, suddenly, there is this amazing film.

The following year, when all the Age UK Camden day centres were threatened with closure we wrote, sang and recorded 'Ain't

Gonna Close Our Centres Down!' (including a trip to Downing Street!). Problems crossing the road before the lights changed? We wrote, performed and recorded 'Hey Mr Boris!' We ran two projects in care homes and wrote, sang and recorded 'Touch Me'.

Gradually the groups merged and became Bolder Voices. We sing the politics of age.

"I began to see it as a way of life, a way out of isolation... for many people..."

In the spring of 2015 we began rehearsing our new song 'Love that Freedom Pass!' As I had 'come of age' I was revelling in my new Freedom Pass. I asked Bolder Voices: "What would you do if you didn't have a Freedom Pass?" Many were startled, and hadn't considered life without a Freedom Pass. Several said their pension wouldn't stretch to any kind of travel, they just about made ends meet. I'd seen the Freedom Pass as a saving, which it certainly is. Now I began to see it as a way of life, a way out of isolation. For many people who might be stuck at home it was a way of seeing the world and meeting friends and family, instead of looking at four walls.

I got my absolute best line for the song from my American Auntie Jane in the US. I told her that, in London, older people had free travel



and I was writing a song about it.

“Oh,” said she, “I don’t really agree with that.”

“Why not?” I asked.

“Well,” she said, “Governments are broke – they can’t really afford it.”

“Auntie Jane!” I said, “There are people using Freedom Passes who fought in Korea. I’ve lived here 42 years, paid my taxes all this time! And isn’t it better for the environment, having 60 people on a bus rather than all using cars? Anyway, what about all those people in the Caymans whose clever lawyers are getting them out of paying a single penny in tax!”

“I never thought of it like that,” she said.

Thank you, Auntie Jane for my favourite line in the song! But if my gentle Aunt Jane felt like that, how many others felt like that? I was determined that with this video we would really get it out there. I decided when we brought this video out we should launch it properly.

More than with any other Bolder song, audiences responded to ‘Freedom Pass’. It made them wave their Freedom Passes. It made people want to get up and dance!

“Love that Freedom Pass! Love that Freedom pass! Use it here, use it there, use it everywhere!”

I realised as a songwriter I’d written a lot of songs about how terrible it was to be older. It looked like older people appreciated not



always having to be victims.

Time for the video shoot. Bhavesh filmed as we toured round London on every form of transport imaginable (watch the video if you don't believe me). We started out at Henderson Court and off we went.

The Launch. London Councils were thrilled that the Freedom Pass had been chosen as a subject for a song. Since the film began in Henderson Court, Manager Laurie contacted the local MP Tulip Siddiq, mentioning that she might like to encourage her friend Sadiq Khan MP, newly nominated Labour candidate for Mayor of London, to also become involved.

After the launch Tulip told me: "Sadiq and I go to so many boring meetings – it's so nice to hear singing for a change from real people!"

We were also delighted to have wise words from Godfather Gary and Sam Mauger from Age UK London, amongst others.

Bolder Voices meet weekly on a Wednesday, at Elders Voice, 181 Mortimer Road, NW10 5TN in Kensal Green. We sing in a wide variety of venues, from supermarkets to Central Hall Westminster. If you'd like to know more please contact us by visiting www.boldervoices.org emailing Clair on chapwell@blueyonder.co.uk or calling 07958 204551.



Customer Service Training

Transport for London are rolling out Customer Service Training for all of their staff, and here we get a glimpse into what happens in these sessions and how that will help older people's experience of using public transport in London.

London is changing, and so to is the Tube. In November 2013 we announced to our customers our plan to transform customer service on the Tube. As part of this programme, we have committed to provide training and development for all staff. This innovative training programme includes training specifically concentrating on supporting our disabled and older customers in using our network.

Making the Tube Fit for the Future

Our plans build on our learnings from the London 2012 Olympic Games, when more people used the Tube than ever before. The way we serve our passengers is changing, with staff moved from ticket offices to ticket halls where they can better serve customers. This programme of investment is being delivered in order to meet increased demand and transform the service we offer you when travelling in London.

Throughout these changes and in the future, staff will be more visible and available to make your journey even easier. All stations will continue to remain staffed at all times, and there will be more staff available to offer assistance to customers where it is needed most.

Your journeys around the network should be

made easier by the changes we are making to our stations. Staff will be more visible and able to assist you purchasing tickets. There will be three main areas where you can find staff if you do need assistance: by the ticket machines, by the gateline, and at information points. We have also introduced a brand new uniform across the network, making staff easily identifiable.

Through these changes and in the future, staff will be more visible and available to make your journey even easier...

Innovative training to ensure Every Journey Matters

In delivering our modernisation programme, all our station staff are receiving 5-days of customer service training. This is a new programme of training, being delivered in an innovative and engaging ways. This training is interactive, and involves practice-based learning, designed to equip staff with the skills they need to provide world class customer service.

This training is based on our four commitments. These form the basis of the Tube's unique approach to customer service:



- Every Customer Matters
- We let our personalities shine through
- We do everything we can
- We share what we know

These four statements describe how we work to make our customers feel welcomed and valued as we assist them travelling around London. Our aim is to give our customers the best experience, from the moment they start to plan their journey to the moment they reach their destinations. This training programme helps our staff to deliver this, by encouraging staff to listen to customers and treat them as individuals; to use their knowledge and add a personal touch; and to go out of their way to help customers in every way they can.

Overall we are delivering 100,000 days of training – our biggest ever training programme. Nearly 4,000 staff have been trained already, and we plan to complete this

next year. This is a huge commitment to our staff and our customers and is a fresh approach to training and development from TfL.

During the five day customer service training, staff are receiving enhanced training on how to assist all our customers, including older customers and those with hidden disabilities. A session has been developed by Transport for All and Inclusion London and covers accessibility within stations, and how to appropriately approach and help customers with both visible and non-visible impairments. These sessions include a presentation by a disabled user of the network, which is followed by an opportunity for staff to engage in role plays with actors.

Staff have very been positive about this training. So far, over 80% of staff who have participated feel their ability to provide excellent customer service is being improved



by the training, and 90% feel that after the course they are confident in dealing with accessibility needs.

Staff have also highlighted the accessibility aspect of the training as one they particularly enjoyed. One staff member said:

“The disability presentation and practice session at the training was unique and very valuable. It provided deeper insight into the challenges disabled people go through and has helped my team and I know how to best assist them when they are using our services”.

Staff also valued how we are enabling them in providing individual support to customers. A station staff member said: “It’s so important that staff interact with our customers. When stations are noisy, some passengers can

miss announcements; being updated on line closures by staff can save them time on their journeys.”

Moving forward

These improvements will continue to be delivered into 2016, when our training will be complete, staff will be situated in ticket halls and out of ticket offices, and better able to deliver great customer service to assist customers around our network.

We are always keen to speak to our customers and find out your experiences of travelling on the Tube. Feedback can be given to any of our station staff, through our stakeholder engagement teams, via the customer service centre on 0343 222 1234 or online at www.tfl.gov.uk/help-and-contact/.

Boris & Ingrid

2Theatre tell us about 'Boris & Ingrid', a play that explores age issues, and how you can get involved and see the show when it premieres in 2016!



How many times do we think about the elderly like those odd people disconnected from the present and complaining about everything? How does it feel when your best years are far in the past and you enter in a 'waiting' routine while losing systematically all friends and values of your generation? Is their loneliness inevitable?

2THEATRE thinks there are ways to engage

the elderly with the present while having a great time. That's why we started the project 'Take care of your oldies', an outreach program based on the show 'Boris & Ingrid'. Boris & Ingrid is a piece of absurd physical theatre about an ageing immigrant couple.

The show mixes forms including grotesque body-mask, comedy, mime and puppetry while addressing difficult issues of old age. A life defined by vegetables, routine & a quirky



sense of humour is illustrated through Lecoq-inspired performance and live music played on classical instruments and kitchen utensils. In their age though, a profound sense of loss and an odd comfort in the presence of death, are unavoidable.

We are now happy to announce that in collaboration with Age UK London and the Pleasance theatre, 2THEATRE is putting on a special event of free theatre for the elderly at the premiere of Boris & Ingrid! If you are over 65 you will get a free ticket for the show at the Pleasance theatre in Islington on

January 31st 2016.

The show will be performed at the Pleasance theatre in January and February 2016 and we have 40 free tickets for Age UK members for the first 2 performances (31 January, 1st February at 7:30 pm) and special discount for the rest of the days (2nd, 3rd at 7:30 and 4th 2:30pm & 7:30pm).

Find out more and, if you're an older person, book your free ticket for the premiere on 31 January by visiting the website Pleasance Theatre website: <http://bit.ly/1m3DPsr>.

Blog: London Fairness Commission

In an excerpt from one of our recent blog posts, we explore the London Fairness Commission and a consultation event that was run for older people to express their views on fairness and equality in London.

We've just run an Open Space event with the London Fairness Commission to test whether older Londoners think London is a fair city and what should be done to make it fair, or fairer. The Commission is an initiative supported by several major London funders to find out what Londoners think about this and present the findings to 2016 Mayoral candidates. You can find out more on the London Fairness Commission website.

What's fair or unfair in society is a matter of opinion and isn't easy to separate from people's general beliefs. The Commission has defined it in practice as covering income and wealth, housing, transport and opportunities (especially for employment). There is an obvious link with equality and inequality, and the Fairness Commission points out in various ways just how much inequality exists in London.

The Fairness Commission's initial report found that just over half of those who responded thought London is a fair city although majorities thought some aspects of life, like housing, were unfair in London. In the survey, people aged 55+ were slightly more likely than average to think London life is fair. That is not necessarily surprising overall, but the report itself points out that there is huge inequality in income and wealth among older people (see also my previous post on pensioner poverty figures). You could also

take into account that '55+' as a category covers quite different generations of people who may have very different experiences.

So what did the people at our joint event yesterday think? The participants came up with a really varied list of discussion topics and actions. They included both issues specific to older people and questions affecting the whole community. Group discussion topics which the participants chose themselves were:

- Community: Did we have it, have we lost it, can we make it?
- How do we facilitate people to help people; older people supporting older people?
- What is the definition of 'fair' in relation to this debate, taking into account that both older people's and younger people's services have been heavily cut?
- Digital inclusion/exclusion – are we excluding people in the way we communicate?
- What can be done to help pensioners feel safe?
- Facilitating downsizing in line with decline.
- Developing more independent living resources to prevent social isolation.

It will be really interesting to see how this develops and what influence it can have.

You can read the full blog post, and more, by visiting www.ageuklondonblog.org.uk.

Eco-friendly Elderly: Consumers

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 last in a four part series on how older people can be eco-friendly.

The consumer society is destroying nature and costing a fortune. Councils spend £2.5 billion of our council tax to dispose the wasteful packaging that the four big supermarket chains alone produce.

This money could be far better spent on services for the elderly. The good news is that there are loads of ideas that will cut your waste and help your pocket also.

E-cloths for example will clean your windows and kitchen surfaces without the need for any cleaning products. (www.e-cloth.com). Buying pre-used products cuts costs and eliminates the energy and raw materials used for new items.

It's silly to raze beautiful rainforests and waste money for new furniture when loads are available second-hand. Websites like ebay, freecycle and Gumtree are good sources of quality pre-used goods. You can also get rid of unwanted household clutter and even make a few bob.

Cutting down on food-waste is important as a lot of energy and water goes into making food. Stir-frying is a great way to use up vegetables that are about to go off. Check your fridge before shopping to avoid waste and take your own shopping bags with you.

We waste eight billion bags every year in the UK!

We consume far more water via food than from our taps. It is estimated that 5,000 litres of water are used per day, per person, to supply us with all the food and goods we consume. A litre of orange juice takes 1,000 litres of water to produce and a cup of coffee takes 140 litres! Why not grow some of your own food if you have a garden or a community plot.

Mint is easy and cheap to grow. Drinking your own mint tea once a day instead of a coffee, would save 50,000 litres of imported water per year! Planting fruit trees and shrubs is ideal for the elderly as they take little maintenance. This would help reduce the 80% of fruit that Britain wastefully imports from abroad and provide free healthy fruit.

These are just a taster of the hundreds of eco-ideas that can save the elderly money and the planet at the same time. So why not try one this week?

Article written by Donnachadh McCarthy FRSA (3 Acorns Eco-audits) and funded by the City Bridge Trust's Greening the Third Sector project.



Age UK London Impact Report 2014/15

At Age UK London we published our annual Impact Report in October, and here we give you an overview of our work in 2014/15 as well as an in-depth insight into the work done in through our Fit 4 Purpose programme.

Age UK London is committed to developing a movement that celebrates older Londoners in the Capital and challenges negative perceptions and stereotypes. We are committed to highlighting the journey towards an age friendly London, and hope you will join us in this.

During 2014/15 we planned our 'Tell Me!' campaign, highlighting the challenges faced by some in finding answers, guidance and information to questions they face about daily living. This followed on from the digital campaign 'Wealth of the Web' that demonstrated the inequality of access and usage in the digital age.

Age UK London's programmes had an emphasis on digital and information equality.

Positive Ageing in London continue to go from strength to strength grappling with topics that are new on the 'life course' agenda. Two key conferences focussing on 'Age Friendly Cities' and 'Ageing Without Children' drew interest from London and beyond and fuelled debate, and highlighted areas where further work, support and research could shape future policy and practise.

Age UK London's programmes had an emphasis on digital and information equality. Know Your Rights, supported by the Mayors Office, highlighted the importance of benefit maximisation and keeping warm and well in winter. Keeping safe and warm were the focus of our work with UK Power Networks, whilst 'Technology Together' focussed on keeping older people digitally connected through the support of local young people.

A focus on ensuring older people have the support they need when looking to buy-in external service and support at home has been the focus of the Trusted Traders development. This aims to ensure a listing of traders with correct paper work and insurances is available with telephone support to people needing help with finding what they need.

During the last year we have focussed on the City of London, developing an organisation to meet the needs of local residents and engage with people working in the City, enabling them to volunteer among older people in the City and beyond. The Healthwatch City of London service continues to reach deep into the community, linking local people with decision makers in Health and Social Care.



Tell Me!

Improving information-provision for older Londoners

The Age UK London Trading company continues to offer a range of products and services for the over 50's and generated over £362,500 in grants to Age UKs in London.

Key partners are our member Age UKs with whom we work closely and who remain close supporters of our work. This mutual relationship of trust enables us to extend our reach and impact to many more communities of older Londoners across the capital.

Together we look forward to 2015/16 and beyond and embrace the opportunities and the challenges that lay ahead. Together we remain privileged to be working with such a great, diverse number of older Londoners

across the capital.

Fit 4 Purpose

Fit 4 Purpose, funded by London Councils and in partnership with Opening Doors London, is now in its third year and continues to be a great success. Reaching 439 older people's organisations across all 32 London boroughs as well as the City of London, the impact, upskilling and capacity-building from the project has been felt across the capital.

Range of Fit 4 Purpose

Workshops in Governance and Sustainability, Practical Fund-bidding Support, Digital Democracy, Introduction to Social Me-

dia, Getting Online, Data, Research and Impact Measurement & Equalities have been run over the last three years. More than 30 workshops took place last year and enabled older people to share the knowledge gained throughout their boroughs.

A suite of briefings for Councillors and professionals highlight challenges and opportunities to organisations working with London's diverse older population. London Age, an age-sector periodical, is produced quarterly. In the last year more than 800 organisations have received at least one of our briefings.

An online 'Opinion Exchange', featuring opinion pieces and discussion forums, triggers debate and ensures older people's organisations are able to respond to the changing needs of users. 7023 people have engaged with the Age UK London Opinion

Exchange since Fit 4 Purpose began.

Giving back to the boroughs

Everything we do is designed to have a direct impact on the work done with older people in your borough. Our briefings and workshops help local older people's organisations grow and provide better services, point professionals to sources of knowledge and give Councillors added information about the older people they represent.

Commendations

Our Fit 4 Purpose programme achieved a 99% RAG rating by London Councils for our delivery against performance targets in 2014-15.

To find out more about Age UK London's work visit www.ageuk.org.uk/London.

Since Fit 4 Purpose began...

Individuals

7023 individuals have engaged with the Age UK London Opinion Exchange directly

Organisations

439 organisations working with older people have been reached through Fit 4 Purpose

Opinion Exchange & Knowledge Hub

7023 individuals have engaged with the Age UK London Opinion Exchange and Knowledge Hub

Commendation

99% RAG rating was given by London Councils for an evaluation of our delivery against targets in 2014-15

In The Hotseat...

Greg Stevens, Sales Supervisor, Age UK London Trading, shares his thoughts on his role.

How do you come to be working for Age UK?

I started off as a volunteer for Age Concern Redbridge and moved on to paid advocacy work. Later I became an advice worker and after that in 2004, I became interested in the social enterprise business which raises money to fund our services in London.

Why are older people's issues important to you?

I see we are all in it together and I find it really rewarding to play a part in Age UK London's work to relieve financial pressure, isolation and depression and to help improve and celebrate later life.

What projects do you run?

I promote and supervise sales of Age UK Home, Car & Travel insurance, Funeral Plans, Personal Alarms and other products & services such as Stairlifts. We offer friendly face to face and telephone contact taking both local and national calls at this and 3 other offices.

What are the biggest concerns you hear from older people?

That use of a computer or tablet is difficult and just how expensive gas & electricity prices have become in relation to state pension rises.

What has been your best experience in working with older people?

In my current post it has been arranging travel insurance for war veterans going to D-Day Normandy commemorations and understanding the sacrifices that were made. Having time to help people understand detailed policy terms and conditions which can give peace of mind.

What is your vision for your work at Age UK London?

Continued customer choice from a wide range of quality products and services tailor made for older people. Great customer service from our dedicated sales team and bright, warm and inviting outlets in which to come in and see us.

Editor

Danny Elliott

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London Age highlights issues which affect older people in the capital. It is produced to support Age UK London's mission to improve the quality of life for older Londoners and to enhance their status and influence.

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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: delliot@ageuklondon.org.uk

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To find out more about Age UK London Trading please visit www.ageuk.org.uk/london or call 0800 328 6089.

