

londonage

Age UK London Magazine Summer 2017



Age UK London's Projects

What are we doing for older Londoners?

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This edition of London Age is dedicated to celebrating our past projects and looking forward to the successes still to come.

Fit 4 Purpose, our hugely successful project funded by London Councils, came to a close at the end of March after four years - Kathleen Egan celebrates our achievements in working with over 500 older people's organisations in London,

Age Allies is our latest project, tackling agesim in London, and Richard Norman writes an article outlining what we'll do and what we hope to achieve.

We also introduce you to another of our new projects, The Way Ahead, which allows us to continue capacity building amongst London's older people's organisations. Through our Older Private Sector Tenants Project we have come across several harrowing stories of life as an older renter - some of which we share with you here,

Finally we have an excerpt from our blog (go online to read more!) as well as opinion pieces on the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy and the Queen's Speech.

I hope you enjoy reading, and thanks as always for your support.



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Top news

London Age survey

London Age is our flagship publication, with quarterly editions covering key age sector issues. We want to ensure you, our readers, are finding London Age as useful and informative as possible.

We have set up a short online survey we believe will only take three minutes to fill in. We would hugely appreciate your help in this area.

To fill in the survey please visit:
www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/BBC9V3C

OWCH ladies move in



The Older Women's Co-Housing project (OWCH) made history in December when it opened in Barnet to provide 26 women (aged between 50 and 87) with individual flats combined with communal facilities. Eight of these flats are for social rental.

All resident members are committed to managing the buildings and gardens

collaboratively. Moving in represents the hardwork of many people over nearly 20 years.

It is hoped that the project will prove that, by keeping members' brains and bodies active, they will prolong the quality of their lives and prevent excessive demands on the NHS and Social Services.

Find out more on the OWCH website:
www.owch.org.uk

TfL prosecute driver

Transport for London (TfL) has successfully prosecuted a minicab driver for refusing to take an assistance dog.

By law, private hire drivers must not refuse to carry a passenger because they want to travel with an assistance dog and operators are unable to charge extra on their fare.

Since TfL began prosecuting private hire drivers for not accepting assistance dogs in February 2015, 21 minicab drivers have been successfully prosecuted and fined a total of £7,055.

At City of London Magistrates' Court on Wednesday 19 April, 65-year-old Ali Ates of, Brooke Road, Clapton was found guilty in his absence of refusing to carry a passenger who wished to be accompanied by an assistance dog, fined £500 and ordered to pay £988 in costs.

Find out more on www.tfl.gov.uk

Fit 4 Purpose: successfully delivered

Age UK London's Fit 4 Purpose project, funded by London Councils, started in April 2013. Four years on, and now finished, the results have been staggering, with a huge impact felt across London's community of older people's organisations. Kathleen Egan, Operations Manager, Age UK London, talks to us about the achievements of Fit 4 Purpose, as well as the legacy of the project.

Age UK London (AUKL) has delivered the Fit 4 Purpose project for 4 years from April 2013 to March 2017. The overall aim of the project was to increase the sustainability and reach of 400 older people's organisations in London and thus improve the quality of life of older Londoners. The programme was successful in all outcome areas, meeting its strategic aims and having an overall impact on the age sector in London.

This project had three specific outcome areas:

- Older people's organisations to gain skills in financial and organisational ability
- Older people's organisations to have improved knowledge of best practice including legal and policy issues
- Older people's organisations to have an improved awareness of equalities and inclusion

Evaluation of the project was enabled by evidence gained, including: pre and post evaluation questionnaires for all workshops and events; quarterly case studies across all the activities which were widely disseminated including on AUKL website; surveys for briefings; collating online analytical data on the AUKL Opinion Exchange and Knowledge Hub; reports detailing how annual research is being used.

Fit 4 Purpose delivered results in the three specific outcome areas as follows:

Organisations to gain skills in financial and organisational ability

AUKL met all its targets for numbers of older people's organisations engaged (those who were satisfied or very satisfied with the activity) across a wide range of activities in this outcome area including:

- Governance Workshops
- Sustainability Workshops
- Quarterly Funding News briefings
- Support with grant applications
- Matching Social Media Champions
- Corporate Support Brokerage
- Workshops on how to access free resources online
- Workshops on using social media
- Workshop on 'Getting Your Organisation Online'

AUKL met all its targets for numbers of older people's organisations engaged

Evidence for success in this outcome area includes:

- Considerable interest shown in the Governance and Sustainability workshops



such that AUKL has now secured additional funding to continue a programme of workshops in these areas in 2017-18. AUKL has distributed a range of resources in these areas including good governance and financial management guides.

- Over 20 organisations were supported with grant applications in the last two years, of whom 30% were successful in their funding applications.
- AUKL has now secured funding to continue the ‘Funding News Briefings’.
- In relation to Corporate Support Brokerage, AUKL now has a group of over 30 London based corporates who want to support older people’s organisations and they form AUKL’s Corporate Engagement Pathway.
- In relation to the activities to support older people’s organisations to go online, access free resources online and more effectively use Social Media – AUKL has now secured funding to continue a programme of Digital Literacy workshops partnering with, for example, Amazon Audible, Google, Spotify, Santander, Metrobank and other corporates.

Organisations to have improved knowledge of best practice including legal and policy issues

AUKL met all its targets for numbers of older

people’s organisations engaged (those who were satisfied or very satisfied with the activity) across a wide range of activities in this outcome area including:

- Opinion Exchange
- Age Sector Periodicals
- Health and Social Care Briefings
- London Age Express quarterly e-bulletins
- Quarterly London Councillors bulletins
- Revolve e-briefing to local Age UKs
- Workshops on Skill sharing
- Workshops on Action Learning
- Workshops on Digital Democracy
- Workshops on Understanding Data
- Consultations

Evidence for success in this outcome area includes:

- Over 10,000 people engaged with the Opinion Exchange and online Knowledge Hub over the lifetime of the project.
- In surveys to recipients of the bulletins the vast majority of the respondents want to continue receiving them. AUKL has secured funding to continue key communications outputs including the main bulletins.
- In relation to Skill Sharing Workshops, in response to demand, AUKL has secured funding to continue delivering these in areas

as identified in the post evaluation forms , i.e. 'Scams' and 'Planning Ahead'. AUKL has begun this programme and delivered a mini-conference in April with London Trading Standards, Barclays Bank and the Metropolitan Police and is now putting together a pan London project.

- Consultation with older people's organisations has been identified as a strategic priority in AUKL's new Strategic Plan 2017-2020. AUKL has secured funding from Hyde Housing Plus to carry out three consultations with older Londoners on housing and local neighbourhoods in 2017 to 2018.
- Over the lifetime of the project, knowledge gathered from older people's organisations contributed to 29 policy responses to consultations by official bodies including National Government, London Councils, the GLA, Transport for London, London Assembly, local authorities and NHS bodies. AUKL has secured funding for ongoing work to increase the voice of older people to influence key stakeholders.
- In relation to workshops on 'Understanding Data' AUKL is building a partnership with a number of universities on research data including Westminster University, and University College London.

Improved awareness of equalities and inclusion

Again, AUKL met all its targets for numbers of older people's organisations engaged (those who were satisfied or very satisfied with the activity) across a wide range of activities in this outcome area including:

- Quarterly age equality sector updates
- Annual age sector research
- Equalities Workshops
- Equalities customised resources including checklists and legal updates

Evidence for success in this outcome area includes:

- Through its equalities workshops AUKL has developed new partnerships with visually and hearing impaired organisations including, RNIB and the Pocklington Trust and is planning further partnership work.
- The Equalities Checklists and summary of the Equality Act 2010 has been updated and widely distributed and is now on AUKL website.
- The Annual Age Sector Research has provided an evolving picture of older people's wishes for social change and service development across all London boroughs, which will inform future work programmes to make London age friendly.

AUKL initially aimed to reach 400 older people's organisations in this project and has reached over 500 organisations. Every London Borough has engaged with at least one activity in the project providing the basis for further local partnerships.

AUKL has a direct link into local authorities to build further joint work. Additionally through the range of health and social care related 'Action Learning Workshops', e.g.' on Integrated Care, NHS Reforms, Falls and Frailty, Single Transformation Plans and Long Term Conditions – AUKL has a range of key NHS linkages.

Overall the project has strengthened the age sector in London both in terms of size and activity. AUKL is continually approached to build on the project success and further support the Age Sector infrastructure. Despite the pressure of austerity and reduced funding the number of active older people's organisations is being maintained and their need for support remains.

Fit 4 Purpose has reached a large number of organisations working with older people, as well as many individuals. Since it began...

Organisations

500 organisations working with older people have been reached, either through 1:1 support, attending workshops or being matched with one of the project workers or social media volunteers

Opinion Exchange & Knowledge Hub

16,000 individuals have engaged with the Age UK London Opinion Exchange and Knowledge Hub

Boroughs

All **32** London boroughs, as well as the City of London, have been reached by the Fit 4 Purpose project

Commendation

99% RAG rating was given by London Councils for an evaluation of our delivery against targets in 2015-16

“I’m more confident to provide information about pensions and access to advice.”
Angela Fox of Age UK Kensington & Chelsea, following a Fit 4 Purpose Pension Reform Workshop

“I’m able to organise information events, individual help and support in accessing relevant bodies for people in my group.”
Khudeha Razi from the Waltham Forest Asian Seniors Club

“The workshop was very informative and helpful... I will definitely pass this on to residents who wish to apply for funding, through resident focus groups, events and meetings.”
Sindy Jassal, Catalyst Housing based in Ealing, after a Sustainability Workshop

Briefings

More than **800** organisations have received at least one of our briefings; there are seven quarterly briefings in total.

Find out more about Fit 4 Purpose online...

Age UK London Opinion Exchange:
www.ageuklondonopinionexchange.org.uk

Age UK London Knowledge Hub:
www.ageuklondonknowledgehub.org.uk

Age Allies: Working to make London a more age friendly city

Richard Norman, Age Allies Programme Officer, tells us about Age UK London's latest project.

The Age Allies Programme is an Age UK London project designed to improve the experience of older Londoners as they interact with organisations and services in their everyday lives. Funded by the City Bridge Trust until the end of 2019, it will develop and deliver a programme of half- day workshops that look to improve service delivery and attitudes towards older people in London, with participants pledging to make a difference to older people by making one small change each in attitude and behaviour. This will be cascaded by a network of Age Ally Champions that promote the agenda within their own organisations.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines an age friendly society as one in which service providers, public officials, community leaders, faith leaders, business people and citizens recognize the diversity among older people, promote their inclusion and contribution in all areas of community life, respect their decisions and lifestyle choices, and anticipate and respond flexibly to ageing related needs and preferences.

In relation to business and the commercial sector, there is a specific need to be age friendly, in order to engage with the increasing consumer role of those aged 65 and older. The UK's Department of Business and Innovation Skills (2010) has noted that because of the ageing population, businesses and service providers should prepare for older people's changing consumption patterns and

adapt their products and services according to their needs.

While race and gender, for example, have for some time been prevalent equality issues, ageism has now become the most widely experienced form of discrimination across Europe. Thankfully ageism rarely takes the form of blatant insults or abuse. However, though the prejudice faced by older people may more subtle, it can still have profound effects on self esteem and wellbeing.

The Age Allies insight focus groups took place in April this year. Working with more than forty older people, these groups identified where the participants experienced ageist attitudes and behaviours and how their needs were not being met. The summary report illustrates the breadth and depth of issues across all areas from health, housing and transport services to the media, leisure and financial sectors.

Subsequent meetings I have held with focus group participants who have identified themselves as potential volunteers has reinforced for me the strength of feeling behind issues raised in the groups and revealed a desire to make positive changes.

With such a broad range of areas and issues highlighted, the big question has been where to focus. Issues that were raised around housing and transport, for example, could easily justify specifically targeted programmes in their own right.



Our answer to this question has been to focus on how the workshops will be delivered. The aim will be to facilitate activities and exercises which will enable the participants to uncover their own negative or stereotypical attitudes and assumptions about older people. The commitment they then make to change will be personal and meaningful for each person. This approach will not depend upon the service area or organisation type. By affecting people on an individual, personal level they will have the opportunity to develop more positive attitudes in their interactions with older people.

Over the next few months I will be working with some older volunteers to design the workshops and develop the skills they will need to participate in their delivery. At the same time I am making contacts with organisations and businesses across London and talking to them about the programme. Initially I am seeking to run some pilot workshops with real organisations to test and refine the workshop content and impact. We aim to commence roll out of the programme in early autumn following a launch event.

The target for the next two and a half years of the programme is to deliver at least sixty workshops to people in a wide range of businesses and organisations across London.

With a minimum of ten participants in each workshop we will reach more than 600 people, with each one making a change in attitude and behaviour. Within at least thirty of these organisations we will identify a volunteer Age Allies Champion. With our support, that volunteer will further develop the aims of the programme within their workplace, among colleagues and the community.

By becoming an Age Ally and participating in the programme, organisations and businesses will gain the benefits of improved practice. With an Age Allies Champion in their team they will continue to develop, one small change at a time, and demonstrate that they are on the path to age friendliness. Despite the considerable demographic bounty that the ageing population represents for business, progress among businesses and service providers towards attracting and including older consumers has been slow. By respecting the diverse needs of older consumers rather than treating them as a homogenous group, businesses and service providers can avoid making assumptions about people which may lead to inappropriate customer care and unsatisfied consumers.

***Find out more by visiting our website:
www.ageuklondon.org.uk***

‘Your Priorities’: How do you decide what you will work on next?

Age UK London works for older people who live in the capital. All of our work is for their benefit. In order to ascertain our top priorities, each year Age UK London undertakes a survey of older Londoners to inform our upcoming work. Ben Donovan, Research and Policy Officer, Age UK London, shares what this year’s findings were.

‘Your Priorities’ is an annual research project that Age UK London conducts in order to increase understanding of the day-to-day issues affecting older people in the capital.

By framing the research around eleven distinct issues and seeking the feedback of older Londoners themselves to evaluate their experiences in relation to these issues, ‘Your Priorities’ really takes into account the cumulative voice of older people in London and contributes towards the knowledge base that Age UK London uses in informing campaigning and programme activities.

This year, nearly 300 participants provided their anonymous feedback on issues ranging from ‘transport’ to ‘condition of neighbourhoods’ and ‘computer access’ to ‘housing’, each providing an assessment of relative happiness with these areas and giving further explanatory details outlining this assessment. Participants also provided anonymous demographics information that enabled comparative analysis of responses across a range of equality characteristics.

The full paper will be used internally to contribute towards future action-planning and decision-making but a small selection of the findings from the research are as follows:

Priority one

There was considerable concern reported across all demographic criteria in relation to ‘condition and tidiness of neighbourhoods’. This was the worst-scoring category by all ranking methods, with common issues of fly-tipping, dispersal of uncollected rubbish and poor condition of pavements and roads all being frequently mentioned. Happiness with this issue has deteriorated in time with cuts to public services and has implications moving forward as purse-strings continue to tighten.

Priority two

Across most of the categories referred to, it is the youngest (55-64) pre-retirement age-cohort who reported the lowest levels of happiness across a number of different issues. Interestingly, this was evident in relation to perceptions of ‘attitudes and behaviour to older people’ and ‘diet and fitness’ despite them being the youngest of our respondents. It would be interesting to look further into whether there is a broader psycho-social element here in relation to attitudes to ageing.



Priority three

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there were notable differences in reported ‘access to and ability to use computers and the internet’ when analysed by age. Whilst this trend is changing year-on-year, the 85+ age-range still report far higher levels of unhappiness in relation to this area. This has clear implications in relation to the ‘digital by default’ trend that pervades many areas of daily life and risks disadvantaging large groups of older people.

Priority four

Concerns in relation to health and social care were remarkably consistent and it is concerning that, with an ageing population, the current situation in relation to getting appointments has been so negatively reported upon. Long waiting lists and lengthy

delays in getting appointments point to an inadequacy in terms of staffing and meeting demand. With an ageing population with potentially a greater demand of health and social care support requirements over time, there is a risk that this problem is only going to become ever more manifest.

Age UK London would like to thank everyone who participated in this study either by directly providing a response or by raising awareness of the project within their organisations’ memberships.

If you would like more information on ‘Your Priorities’, or would like to take part next year, please contact Ben Donovan on 020 7091 2592.

To read the full report, please visit the Age UK London website.

The Way Ahead Project

Kathleen Egan tells us about the City Bridge Trust funded 'The Way Ahead' project which helps Age UK London continue to support age sector organisations in London.



In the context of an 'ageing' London and growing numbers of older Londoners, including those who are vulnerable, older peoples' organisations are increasingly important.

Age UK London has been funded by City Bridge Trust to engage with over 500 older people's organisations in London - improving their capacity to support older Londoners and boost London's civil society.

Age UK London is active in 'The Way Ahead' initiative to build the resilience of these civil organisations. Strengthening the 'age sector' will impact beyond our initial twelve months funding through supporting sustainable, skilled and 'well equipped' older peoples' organisation to take forward 'The Way Ahead'.

Strengthening the 'age sector' will impact beyond our initial twelve months funding

A wide ranging workshop programme of support to these organisations has now begun.

This includes in the areas of:

- Scams and fraud awareness
- Planning for small older peoples organisations
- Active citizenship
- Managing long term conditions – self care
- Positive mental health
- Local community organising to improve your neighbourhoods

For further information, please phone Kathleen Egan 0207 820 6775.

Age UK London will also be working with older people to respond to policy initiatives in London, for example in relation to housing, to ensure they are 'age friendly'. For further information, please email Gordon Deuchars on GDeuchars@AgeUKLondon.org.uk.

The future of London's transport

Gordon Deuchars, Campaigns and Policy Manager, Age UK London, gives an overview of the Mayor of London's draft Transport Strategy and shares details of how you can help Age UK London respond to Transport for London's consultation.

'Transport for London recently started a public consultation on a new Mayor's London Transport Strategy reflecting Mayor Sadiq Khan's policy priorities and existing forecasts for transport needs in London over the coming decades. Many of the targets proposed in the draft Strategy are in the 2030s, 40s or even 2050. You can see and respond to the proposals at www.tfl.gov.uk until 2 October.

From the point of view of older people there will need to be detailed examination of many of the proposals. At a launch event in June, part of the reasoning TfL presented was an acknowledgement that having more older people in London will lead to an increased need for the transport network to be accessible and to provide a good experience for passengers. TfL also argued that major new developments like Crossrail 2 are needed to prevent existing transport services from being swamped by increased passenger numbers in future.

Proposals in the draft strategy include:

- Delivering more frequent Tube services to achieve a fast, accessible, affordable and reliable network across the whole of London.
- Expanding the transport network, helping to improve journeys and unlock housing developments and create thousands of jobs across London.
- Forging ahead with Crossrail 2, which is vital to the success of the wider UK economy by creating 1.2 million new jobs and more than one million new homes.
- Transform London's streets and cut car journeys by three million each day. A major focus on helping Londoners reduce their reliance on cars aims to increase the proportion of people walking, cycling and taking public transport to 80 per cent of journeys by 2041. There will be a record investment in walking and cycling, Liveable Neighbourhoods, and building developments designed around walking, cycling and public transport as the Mayor aims for all Londoners to do at least the 20 minutes of active travel they need to stay healthy each day.
- Working to ensure London's entire transport system is zero emission by 2050. To help support the Mayor's wider ambition to radically improve air quality across London and make London a zero emission city. TfL will work to make London's entire road transport system zero emission by 2050.
- Maintain investment in London's extensive bus network to keep it one of the finest in the world and fully zero emission by 2037. As well as making it easier for passengers to plan their journeys, bus routes in central London are being changed to give more reliable journeys. Excess capacity will be used to serve new opportunity areas in inner and



outer London where they will support new housing and jobs. Improved driver training, easier access to journey data and additional bus priority measures will also be introduced to improve the experience of using buses. From next year, all new double-deck buses will be hybrid, electric or hydrogen.

- Creating a London suburban rail metro service to improve rail travel in outer London.
- Delivering a 'Vision Zero' approach in London to make its streets safer for all.
- Improving accessibility across London to enable all Londoners, including disabled and older people, to travel spontaneously and independently. The Mayor and TfL will work hard to halve the additional journey time required by those using step-free network only, so that journey times on the step-free network become comparable to those on the wider transport network.

- Take advantage of the latest innovations to improve passenger experiences
- Securing new revenue sources to support the delivery of vital transport infrastructure across the capital.

We would encourage anyone who is interested in London's future response to ageing to look at the transport strategy proposals and consider responding to them. Age UK London will be working with older people and local groups to respond. While the overall way that the strategy has been presented seems to be age-aware, the devil may be in the detail!

If you are interested in discussing the Transport strategy from an "age" point of view, I would very much like to hear from you on GDeuchars@AgeUKLondon.org.uk

The Queen's Speech – How does it affect older people?

Gordon Deuchars, Policy and Campaigns Manager, Age UK London, explores the Queen's Speech and what it could mean for older people in London over the coming years.

As readers will know, issues relevant to older people played a bigger part in the recent General Election campaign than might have been expected beforehand. The Queen's Speech on 21 June included the announcement of a Social Care Green Paper and consultation (resulting from the way in which the campaign opened up discussion on this issue).

Caroline Abrahams, Charity Director at Age UK, said in response:

"We are very pleased that the Government is pressing ahead with a Social Care Green Paper.

"A sustainable solution for social care is urgently required and for Age UK this needs to include a cast-iron Government commitment to fill the yawning funding gap; help for the 1.2 million older people with an unmet need for care; measures to improve quality and keep providers and care staff from quitting; and some kind of compulsory 'risk pooling' to protect everyone of all ages from catastrophic care costs.

"We hope that ideas like these will form the starting point for the Green Paper. The proposals set out in the Conservative Party Manifesto were insufficiently thought through and involved a major shift of financial liability onto older people and their families, and there was a lack of clarity as to what they might receive in return which

might make such policies fair and worthwhile from their point of view. There was also no recognition that many older people and their families are already paying a great deal for social care and not always receiving a good service in return. It is critical that this consultation process results in real reform to the social care system which is so desperately needed."

Many older people will be glad that for the time being, the "triple lock" ensuring rises in the value of the State Pension, will remain in place as will Winter Fuel Payments to older people. Both of these still appear to be vulnerable to change in the medium term.

It seems clear that older and younger generations voted quite differently in the election. Some commentators have suggested that the vote reflects an intergenerational division or conflict, while it's open to debate how real or widespread this is at the level of individual attitudes.

The Queen's Speech also included a commitment to examine possible improvements to Mental Health legislation and services, which could potentially benefit older people among others, and bills on Patient Safety, Financial Guidance and Claims and Data Protection. The latter will potentially affect a wide range of organisations including charities.

For more policy responses visit our website.

Older Private Sector Tenants:

Real stories

Over the last year London Age has included several articles on the topic of older renters; as well as dedicating an entire edition to the topic. Here are four real stories from older renters.

These real life accounts of what life is like as an older private sector tenant come from a series of interviews conducted by Ben Donovan, Research and Policy Officer, Age UK London. They revolve around four of the main themes we have found people raise as key issues; security; finances & rent; repairs, maintenance & landlord relationships; and health & moving home.

Security

‘My wife and I have only rented for 5 years so can be given an eviction notice at any time. We love where we live but we live in fear of what’s coming in the post the next day. Our



building has been bought out by three or four different massive companies, each with their own policies and plans for refurbishment. We’ve already seen other neighbours kicked out as owners want to refurb and charge a higher rent. A Section 21 can be issued at any time and my wife has a disability. It would be very hard for us to find somewhere else with 2 months notice and who else will take us as tenants with me approaching retirement and my wife with deteriorating health and a possible need for future home adaptations?’

Finances & Rent

‘I’ve been renting since moving from overseas 7 years ago but, after my landlord left the property to a local estate agents, my rent has gone up £300 in 3 years which is an increase of 16% a month. They never even visited on those occasions – they simply gave one month’s notice of the increase because prices had gone up in the area. In that time, my salary has gone up by 2% so I have to make cuts elsewhere. The accommodation hasn’t changed but the rent goes up and any ‘cushion’ I had from my pay has gone. I can’t afford holidays, my lifestyle has taken a hit and, since the latest increase, I have had to cut down on food. Rent costs take up 75% of my salary. I wrap myself in a duvet rather than put the heating on now. They say tenants have rights but if you can’t afford rent, there’s no hope of being able to pay legal fees.’



Repairs, Maintenance and Landlord Relationships

‘The property would be fine if it was maintained but the landlord doesn’t do repairs. She just wants to take the money and not do anything. The property is in very poor condition with mould and very poor ventilation and the washing machine is also broken. I have to cope with the mould and now I use a laundromat to do my washing. In the past, I had to buy my own cooker as the one supplied with the property didn’t work. Because these white goods that came with the property are broken and aren’t fixed, I have the expense of getting replacements. I worry about the future as my health will deteriorate and I can’t rely on the necessary repairs and adaptations being dealt with.’

Health and Moving Home

‘I’m fortunate really as I have a secure

tenancy held below market rent. However, it is a big property and I would prefer to move somewhere smaller. The problem I have is that I want to keep my tenancy rules and I will lose them if I move. There are no affordable housing options to move to in this area as values have gone up massively since I moved in. I know how things can be with less security as well so I feel kind of trapped. My mobility is deteriorating too so I have visions of not being able to go upstairs and having to sub-let the upstairs room to keep financially viable whilst not being able to go up there.’

For more information, please visit the Age UK London website.

Using funding it has received from the Nationwide Foundation, Age UK London’s 18-month project will focus specifically on the challenges and vulnerabilities faced by older renters in the capital.



'A 21st Century Tea Dance'

The Age UK London blog has been relaunched and we have some great new content. As a taster, we've included the below piece, written by Danny Elliott. A longer version is on the blog,

I was invited to go to 'Iced Tea: Chill Pill meets a 21st Century Tea Dance', a special edition of Entelechy Arts' regular Tea Dance at The Albany featuring Chill Pill, a group of spoken word artists. Spitz Music provided incredible jazz musicians who performed throughout the afternoon. They could play anything - and did - changing the mood of the room, and changing the mood of the room. Chill Pill also performed - several poets did sets which were thought provoking.

Despite the excellent performances (and I do really admire the fact that this Tea Dance attracts such incredible talent - older people deserve the best) the stars of the show were the older people themselves. They were involved in everything that was happening, either as writers, performers or directors.

'Meet me at The Albany', an older people's group linked with the Theatre, had been to Deptford Market and filmed market traders talk about their first experiences of love. The film was screened for us and was fantastic - you felt those being interviewed opened up to an older interviewer more than they would have done to someone younger. One of the Chill Pill performers wrote a poem called 'Blank Cheque' while she ate lunch with some of the older people before the dance. She had asked them what they would do if they were given a 'blank cheque' (a reference to a newspaper article that day) and wrote a poem inspired by their answers.

The most moving part of the afternoon came when the audience were asked to recite a 'half-remembered poem' and were told that

'the less-remembered the better'! One older lady recited a poem she had learnt as a child in the Caribbean for a school inspection. She got a few lines in, and stopped; she said she couldn't remember. 'That's fine', the MC said, 'but try again... maybe another run up to it will unlock the memory?' She started again, and she got through the whole thing. You could see her mind transport her back to a sunny, warm climate, a more innocent time, a younger body - and it was so incredibly emotional, we all stood and cheered. Another lady quoted a few lines of a poem that were also the last words her father had ever said to her. Someone else quoted a stanza from 'If' by Rudyard Kipling.

And then there was the dancing! The dance floor was packed. People danced in their seats. People danced in pairs, and in threes. People swung each other round. One older lady danced with her zimmer frame, and I counted seven wheelchairs on the dancefloor at one point - it was beautiful, all backed by the best live music I've heard in a long time.

Kurban Haji, a regular attendee, and the person who invited me said: "It's changed me completely. I'm doing and enjoying things and meeting more people than I ever have. It's up to you how much you want to give - you can take it as far as you want. I'm never bored, always busy. Arts and culture have an incredible impact on the individual."

I completely agree with him.

To read the original version of this blog, and more, visit www.ageuklondonblog.org.uk.

In the hotseat...

Carl Francis, Customer Service Administrator at the Age UK London Business Directory shares his thoughts on his role.

Why are older people's issues important to you?

Older people are often under-represented in modern issues. Working for Age UK London has made me realise how vital the work for older people is, but also how much more we need to do!

What projects are you involved in?

Tons! I started off helping a local charity shop to raise funds for older people by increasing donations of stock. I worked on an intergenerational project, where younger people helped older people to use the internet. I've also worked on the Business Directory for the past 2 years, helping to protect older people from rogue traders.

What are the biggest concerns you hear from older people?

Older people often tell me that they can't afford certain things. This is extremely worrying, as many of them won't have a high income to rely on. We need to think of ways to financially

support the older generation. Digital inclusion and loneliness and isolation are two other issues I see on a regular basis.

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

There are far too many to name just one. Whenever you hear an older person thank you for the work that you've been doing, it really makes it all worthwhile!

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

As I write, this is my last day! But I truly hope that Age UK London will continue to run projects that will enable them to keep fighting for the rights of older people. It's been a pleasure working with everyone here, and I am confident they will all continue to support older people to the best of their ability.

For more information on the Age UK London Business Directory call 0800 334 5056 or visit:
www.aubdlondon.org.uk

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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:
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