

EngAGE

Winter
2021
FREE



INSPIRATION
for all!

TOP WINTER TIPS
SAFE AND WELL

Staying Healthy
IN WINTER

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Welcome



CEO Statement

Penny Thewis CEO

I'm not sure where 2021 has gone, but I didn't notice it going and now Christmas is almost upon us! The year began with another lockdown, and as I write this we are looking ahead to a winter with the uncertainty caused by the new Omicron variant hanging over us in addition to anxiety about rising household prices, fuel in particular. We know that this winter will feel more of a struggle than usual for many people.

Which is why we have filled this edition of EngAGE with ideas for trying to stay warm and well this winter, in the face of more challenges than usual. There are articles about:

Keeping moving – trying not to sit still for more than an hour at a time is a good rule of thumb, though it can be easier said than done

Eating well – including an unusual recipe for an oven-baked omelette

Getting your winter vaccinations – especially important this year as we have all been less exposed to infections over the last eighteen months

Making sure your home is warm enough – and if you are having trouble with the costs of heating your home, please contact our Helpline on 0345 450 1276 for advice. There are over 1m people eligible for Pension Credit who do not know it.

Keeping in touch with people.

My very warmest wishes for Christmas and for 2022, and I hope that you will stay well through the winter months.

Age UK Charity
Quality Standard

certified by
SGS



Inspiration for all



The Awards ceremony itself is an uplifting and joyous event, which will take place on Monday 25 April 2022.

**The Oxfordshire Care Awards 2022
Inspiration for All categories**

Newcomer to Care Award

- celebrates a new member of staff, who has shown empathy and responsiveness

Care Home Worker Award

- recognises someone who consistently provides high-quality residential care

Unpaid Carer Award

- recognises someone who freely gives their time, energy and skill to provide care and support

Community/Home Care Worker Award

- recognises someone who consistently provides high-quality home care

Care Team Award

- celebrates an outstanding team delivering great care, dignity and respect

Care Employer Award

- celebrates an employer committed to delivering excellent care

Long-Term Service Award

- recognises someone who has made a significant difference

Leadership Award

- celebrates someone who shows a strong personal commitment to dignity and respect through their leadership

Inspiration Award

- an organisation or business (not a health or care agency) that inspires others with its high standards of care and compassion e.g. a hairdresser, shop or library

Josie's Award

- celebrates an individual of any kind who in some way is making an exceptional difference to dignity in care. Josie Smith was a remarkable force for good in the lives of people around her, and especially in the lives of people who needed care and support; an unstoppable influence for the better! We want to celebrate!

The Oxfordshire Care Awards 2022

As I write this, I am digesting my disappointment that yesterday's Social Care White Paper does so little to address the difficulties our social care system faces as we go into the winter. We need to maintain our campaigning to ensure that everyone who needs care can get it, but we also need to do more to celebrate good care when we see it.

Across Oxfordshire, largely unseen and unsung, we know that every day, people are delivering outstanding care and making a real difference to people's lives. I want to encourage you to join with us in celebrating their dedication and commitment and raising the profile of the vital services they deliver.

Do you know a friend, an unpaid carer, a colleague or a company who deserves to be recognised and celebrated at the Oxfordshire Care Awards 2022?

If the answer to this question is 'yes', please make a difference yourself by getting involved and nominating them for an Award!

Nominations will open on Monday 10 January 2022 and close on Friday 11 March 2022, so why not make it one of your New Year Resolutions now to contact us on 0345 450 1276 or find out how to nominate someone on our website: www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire

The aim of the Oxfordshire Care Awards 2022 Inspiration for All! is to recognise and celebrate individuals, organisations, companies and groups who have demonstrated excellence within the care sector in Oxfordshire.

HOW ACTIVE ARE YOU?

*Try an
activity
diary!*

It can be difficult to keep active.
We have the best intentions,
but sometimes things just get
in the way.

At the end of every day, write down the
activities you have done and assign each
activity with a letter:

P was this Pleasurable?

A did it give you a sense of Achievement?

C did it help you Connect with other people?

M did it have Meaning to you?

Why was that activity important to you?



These activities don't have to be exercise. They could be reading, gardening, walking, cooking or any activity that has filled your day. Keep this diary for 1 week, writing down everything that you did. At the end of the week, look at your diary. Are there changes you want to make in your week to make more room for the things that give you **Pleasure**, a sense of **Achievement**, allow you time to **Connect** with others and give **Meaning** to your life?

Can you try a new activity? Can you give yourself time to go for an extra walk? Can you be still and mindful for 10 minutes? Can you make a new meal? Can you phone that friend you've been meaning to ring?

If you would like to attend one of our Face to Face or Zoom classes, please contact us so that we can send you the necessary pre-exercise form and add you to the register! Booking is essential so that we can ensure a safe number of participants.

EXERCISE CLASSES	CLASS TYPE	DAY	TIME
Cumnor (in person)	Chair-based exercise	Mon	11.15
Bicester (in person)	Strength & Balance	Mon	10:00am + 13.30
Bampton (in person)	Strength & Balance	Mon	14:00
Deddington (in person)	Strength & Balance	Tue	10:00
Tackley (in person)	Strength & Balance	Tue	12:00
Dean Court (in person)	Strength & Balance	Wed	10:00
Eynsham (in person)	Strength & Balance	Wed	12.00
Enstone (in person)	Strength & Balance	Wed	14.15
Strength & Balance	Zoom	Mon	10:00
Strength & Balance	Zoom	Mon	14:00
Strength & Balance	Zoom	Tue	10:00
Movement & Strength	Zoom	Tue	11:30
Strength & Balance	Zoom	Wed	09.45
Big, Bold & Balance*	Zoom (*Parkinson's class)	Wed	11:00
Chair-based	Zoom	Thu	09.45
Strength & Balance	Zoom	Thu	11:00
Strength & Balance	Zoom	Thu	13:00
Strength & Balance	Zoom	Fri	10:30
Strength & Balance	Zoom	Fri	13:30

For further details on our online exercise classes please call 01235 849 403,
email gg@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk or visit www.generationgames.org.uk.

ARE WE EATING ENOUGH?

The Malnutrition Task Force held its fourth Malnutrition Awareness Week recently, a national event raising awareness of the risks of malnutrition in older age.

It is estimated that one in ten of us aged over 65 are at risk of being malnourished. It is associated with increased risk of infections, hospital admissions and poorer recovery as well as long-term health conditions. Good nutrition and hydration are essential and can help maintain independence, reduce falls and generally improve our wellbeing (British Nutrition Foundation, 2019).

TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING

Regularly eating a good variety of nutritious foods plus drinking enough is important for good health and wellbeing throughout life. As we age, this becomes even more important, especially as our appetite and sense of thirst can start to reduce.

Losing weight is one sign that we may be at risk of becoming under nourished and it is easy to go unnoticed; here are a few potential signs to be aware of:

- Is planning, cooking and shopping becoming more of a challenge?
- Has your appetite reduced or are you generally less interested in eating?
- Is chewing or swallowing becoming more difficult?
- Are clothes looking too big on you, do you need to tighten your belt more?
- Are your dentures looser or is your jewellery slipping off?
- Are you catching more colds or infections and find it takes longer than usual to feel better?
- Are you feeling lethargic, struggling to get warm or noticing changes in your mood?

If you think you may not be eating enough, here are a few ideas that could help increase your appetite to start eating more:

- a bit of fresh air before meals can help stimulate appetite, so consider a short walk or pop out into the garden
- if what's cooking smells good, keep the kitchen door ajar
- drink after, rather than before meals, to avoid feeling full before you sit down to eat
- if you get full easily, try eating smaller meals but more frequently; also try eating more at the times of day when you are most hungry or eating your favourite meal of the day
- if you have a favourite TV show that you watch every day, get into the routine of enjoying a drink and a snack while you watch it
- when you can, arrange to eat with others: family, friends or at social groups like a local lunch club; we can often eat more without realising when we're enjoying the company of others and chatting

If you are concerned about your diet, weight loss, or finding it difficult to chew or swallow food and not spoken to anyone about it, then do contact your GP or Practice Nurse.

OVEN BAKED OMELETTE



Your usual omelette but even easier as it's baked in the oven... and you can add any vegetables you like but in this one we've used frozen mixed vegetables to save time plus a few brussels sprouts as is nearing Christmas! This oven omelette is nearly as nice cold the next day for lunch.

Recipe with Sprouts!

1-2 tbsp olive oil
8 medium eggs
300g frozen mixed vegetables
6 brussels sprouts, sliced into quarters
1 large tomato, cut in half, sliced thinly
100g grated cheddar cheese
2 tsp mixed herbs
1 tsp wholegrain mustard
Seasoning to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 180 degrees
2. Steam the frozen vegetables plus brussels sprouts for 6 mins or as packet's instructions
3. While vegetables are cooking, heat 1-2 tbsp olive oil in a medium size oven dish
4. Lightly beat the eggs in a bowl, add the mustard, herbs and any further seasoning
5. Add the cooked vegetables, slices tomato and grated cheese to the beaten eggs
6. Pour the egg mixture into the dish, return to the oven and bake 30-35 minutes, until the middle is set. If the top starts to catch, try covering with foil for a while.
7. Remove from oven and slice into 4-6 portions.



Every Movement Matters

Two inspirational stories to get you moving

It was over a year ago, pre-pandemic that we started working on this campaign. Little did we know, when the pandemic hit, that actually being physically active in whatever way you most enjoy, would be more important than ever. Inspiring others to be active in whatever way works for them was the idea behind this campaign. Here are two uplifting stories of what people in Oxfordshire have done from their own homes to keep active.

Malcolm

Tightrope walking at 72

In normal times Malcolm would go to an exercise class in a village hall and also go to the gym 2-3 times per week enjoying the variety of rowing, cycling, using the treadmill which he found quite energetic.

As Malcolm has a balance problem, he really wanted to focus on improving that. He likes to do a set of balance exercises every day that his physio at the Horton hospital gave him, for example: holding on to the back of the chair, raising yourself up on your toes which he repeats 10 times and then does the same but raising up the heels.

Tightrope walking along an imaginary line is another balance exercise that offers a real challenge:

'The most difficult exercise is when you walk putting one foot in front of the other. I can't do that completely unaided.'

He came to realise that the exercises he had started doing were helping him to improve his balance, feel stronger and fitter.

'I started off doing the balance exercises and I realised I was trying to do something that was helping me. I also wasn't going to the gym. I had to try and think of something that could be done at home. I suddenly thought the stair climb is meant to be very good for the heart. For my garden path walking I think I was thinking of captain Tom, although I wasn't being sponsored. In a way he inspired me. I started to build up the lengths, I thought, I'll get to 30, then I got to 40, and when I got up to 50 it was enough to stretch me. I needed something that was realistic.'

For the strength exercises, Malcolm works from exercises in a booklet. The push ups against a wall are one of the most difficult strength exercises, he feels. He is able to do ten repetitions and demonstrated doing them against his garage wall.

According to national guidelines, older adults should try to do strength and balance type of activity on at least two days per week and aim to do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity a week or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity or a combination of both. Malcolm was definitely ticking all the boxes in this regard.

During the pandemic with all the restrictions it has been a real challenge for all of us to try and maintain our fitness. Doing exercise has helped Malcolm psychologically, as it helped him to not feel trapped "you're not feeling that you are stuck at home at the mercy of everything. You are taking control," which is a really important mindset.

His practical tips he shared with us were:

'Start gently and try a different range of activities and see what suits you best. There's a lot of advice you can get that's been tailor made for people who are perhaps not so mobile. Try not to get discouraged, keep going, keep trying and find what works for you.'





Priscilla

Gardener and composter

Of course, we all know the benefits for our mental wellbeing in getting out into nature. Priscilla says:

there's something about being in touch with nature, it's very healing. Especially when you're not feeling right, if you've had a bereavement or an illness or you just want to think about something. There is nothing quite as good as getting your hands in the soil".

Priscilla lives in Dean Court with her cat George, and has a large garden that stretches back behind her house and ends in a small wild woodland area. Priscilla is originally from New Zealand and came to England in 1964. She enjoys reading as well as gardening and used to write pieces for newspapers and magazines. She gets so much pleasure from her garden, yet she does not describe her garden as a managed or manicured garden – more of a wildlife garden. What she really loves about the garden is that there is always something to do.

Her first forays into gardening were through compost as it represents a full circle of life to her 'something is born and it grows and it dies.

In decomposing it becomes food for the next generation which I think is wonderful. Our lifetimes are so short, and that's why I like nature I think. It's the feeling of connection.'

During the first lockdown in March 2020 Priscilla kept active by gardening mainly. She was actually very cross as she loved walking into Oxford, going to the cinema – all things that were no longer possible to do. Priscilla likes to be active daily.

'I've always done something every day. During lockdown it was different because you socialise less, you don't see as many people'

But Priscilla still appreciated the animals such as the birds in her garden and her cat George (who decided to come and live with her – he was a stray). But after a good day's gardening she says she feels "absolutely terrific!" She loves cutting grass,

'you're not feeling that you are stuck at home at the mercy of everything. You are taking control'



wandering up and down with the lawn mower (making sure to not run over any frogs). And after a long day gardening she allows herself a G&T.

On days when she does no gardening she does other activities such as housework, although she said she finds it "just a bit boring". Compared to gardening where you are "in touch with nature, there is always something new and different, a bird you haven't seen or heard before. Nature is wonderful."

At times when she is not so motivated to get out in the garden she says it's important to keep reminding yourself, 'yes, I've felt like this before. I got out and I felt much better afterwards. You always feel better for doing something'.

'To me it is essential to be active every day. I don't feel right going to bed at night if I've had an inactive day.'

Gardening is as physical as you want it to be.

'It's as much as you want to do. If you decide to do nothing, eventually it will still become compost. I like to do it [turn the compost] because it's a good way of keeping active. Quite often I'd go out and turn over the compost even if it doesn't need turning over.'

.....TECH *Buddies*



*Bringing
the family
together*

Zooming the family in another country

David and Pamela recently moved to Oxfordshire from the West Country to be closer to family. We spoke to them about getting to grips with video conferencing on their tablet and how it has helped them:

'A Tech Buddy from Age UK Oxfordshire helped us set up Zoom with us in person. We used it a lot during the lockdown to speak to our daughter and go to church services that were held via Zoom.

We don't use it as much these days, but do enjoy speaking to our grandchildren who live abroad in America and Malaysia. It's hard for us to travel, we have health issues and the cost of travel insurance is very high. With zoom we can see our grandchildren running about and watch them growing up. It brings the family together!'

To find out more about Tech Buddy email techbuddy@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk or call Troy on 07584 148 507.

HOW YOUR LOCAL GOOD NEIGHBOUR SCHEMES CAN HELP YOU

Your local Good Neighbour Scheme is run by a team of volunteers who live in your local community and can help in a variety of ways:

- **Help with transport:** some schemes will only offer this to help you get to a medical appointment but some will also offer support for other trips
- **Help with food shopping**
- **Help with small tasks around the house or garden** such as mowing the lawn, helping with washing, paperwork, simple DIY jobs etc.
- **Befriending:** regular visits for companionship or going out together for a coffee.



To find out if you have a Good Neighbour Scheme in your local community, you can use the Network Directory via www.communitynetworkdirectory.org.uk Or, you can contact Age UK Oxfordshire on 0345 450 1276 and ask to speak to the network and we will send you the details by post.

Late Spring

An opportunity to remember that in the midst of the pain, there is still life left to live.

Our Late Spring groups are an Oxfordshire wide network of support groups open to both men and women aged 60+ who have lost a loved one.

We meet twice a month with coffee and cake to chat with others who understand. We look to the future together without forgetting. People wouldn't believe we are a bereavement group. They expect it to just be sad, but we laugh so much sometimes too!

For more details about Late Spring and for details of your local group, contact 01235 849434 or email us at latespring@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

Sessions running in | Banbury | Bicester | Didcot | Grove | Iffley | Kidlington | Wheatley | Witney



Memory Lane



**Why not
pull up a chair
and join us
for a trip down
memory
lane!**

Step back in time and join us for a nostalgic trip down memory lane. The groups meet virtually until restrictions ease, bringing memories back to life from the 1940s through to 1990s.

A seasonal reflection pack is available by post.

Meetings: First and Third Friday of the month, 2pm-3pm.

For more details and to book your place please contact 01235 849434 or email us at network@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1091529

DIGITAL GROUPS FOR PEER SUPPORT

Great Conversation & Some Fun!

Since the easing of lockdown restrictions, more events and social activities have been happening in person enabling us to reconnect face-to-face once again. However, some people are struggling with these changes, finding they are not ready to socialise in groups again or experiencing reopening anxiety. Additionally, carers can find it difficult to get alternative care in place to leave their loved ones to take part in events and activities.

As well as our online carer education sessions, which we discussed in the last issue of EngAGE, we have two online groups providing support to people living with dementia and their carers in a more informal way. We currently have 86 members of our Virtual Memory and Care2Share groups and so far in 2021 we have held 105 sessions.

Virtual Memory Group

Our Virtual Memory Group aimed at people living with dementia, gives members the chance to talk and take part in games that are tailor made to help evoke memories and prompt conversations, such as, 'Name that ice-cream', 'A question of sport quiz', 'Musicals', 'Favourite photos', and more. Members also share many laughs and may end up telling stories that even close family have never heard before.

Care2Share

Care2Share is our online safe space run by Dementia Advisers for carers to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences with those in a similar position. Some of our carers have formed friendships with others in the group and have met up offline for walks and a catch up over a cuppa when they feel comfortable doing so.

One of our Care2Share members said that, 'There is usually a highlight at every meeting, whether in extra information about the disease and valuable support systems or just the feeling of 'meeting up with friends', interesting conversations and sometimes humour too. I always feel more relaxed (at least for a while!) after the meetings and this definitely benefits my husband.'



**Dementia
Oxfordshire**

Connect • Inform • Support



Face-to-face
and online
groups providing
support to people
living with
dementia

If you would like to get involved in one of our groups, contact Katie Smok, one of our Dementia Advisers on 07827235441 or at katiesmok@dementiaoxfordshire.org.uk.

Our Virtual Memory Group and Care2Share both take place over Zoom, for which we can provide support in joining.



NHS

Oxford Health
NHS Foundation Trust

Oxfordshire IAPT Service

**TalkingSpace
PLUS**

Overcoming Anxiety & Depression Together

Feeling low?
Anxious? Stressed?

We can help you -
let's start talking.

01865 901 222

www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus



Free NHS talking therapies for people in Oxfordshire

WELCOME



Winter is here and we are encouraging everyone to take a moment and make sure that you have a personal winter plan.

Within this supplement, you will find lots of handy hints and tips to help you create your own winter plan.

As the weather gets much colder and wetter, and the days get shorter, it is vital that we are as prepared as possible for when the season of coughs, colds and flu kicks in.

winter plan. Why not take a moment to have a read and check that you, your loved ones and neighbours are as prepared as possible?

For additional copies of this supplement, or if you have any queries, please get in touch with the **Age UK Oxfordshire** by calling **0345 450 1276** or emailing admin@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk.



TOP WINTER TIPS

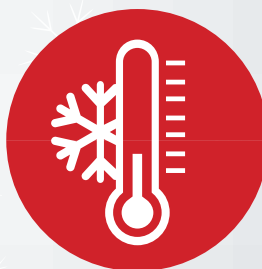
Make sure you have a pair of shoes/boots with good grips on the soles.

Remember to order your repeat prescriptions to cover the Christmas and New Year period.

Keep your bedroom window closed at night when the weather is cold - leaving it open means you're likely to breathe in cold air, which lowers body temperature and raises the risk of chest infections, heart attacks and strokes.

Stock up with cold, flu and sore throat remedies

Did you know that 18°C is the ideal temperature to keep your bedroom at and 21°C for living rooms? **To receive a FREE thermometer please ring 0345 450 1276.**



In case the weather turns bad, be prepared by popping a pint of milk and some slices of bread into the freezer, and put a carton of UHT milk in the cupboard

Make sure you know where your main stopcock is and check it is easy to turn. If water pipes freeze they can burst, so you need to be able to turn off the water at the main stopcock. If it is jammed, you may need to get it replaced.

Have you registered for your FREE Utility Priority Service? All utility companies (electricity, gas, water) hold a list of customers who, in the event of a utility failure, may need additional support but you need to register. If you are aged 65+, have a long term health condition or rely on electricity (e.g. to keep medicine cool, have home O2 or have a stair lift) then please call your utility company and ask to be added to their list.

STAYING WELL THIS WINTER



YOUR WINTER CHECKLIST

- ☐ Remember that your pharmacist is there to help if you are feeling poorly.
- ☐ Book your flu jab: if getting to your GP or pharmacist is difficult for you, why not ask your local Good Neighbourhood Scheme for help?
- ☐ There's more available to help you stay independent than you think: why not give one of the specialist agencies a ring and see what they can offer?
- ☐ Book your boiler service.
- ☐ Check whether you are claiming all the financial support you are entitled to.
- ☐ Write a list of emergency phone numbers and keep it by your bed.
- ☐ Plan to do something you enjoy each week
'Take notice': Be curious, savour the moment whether you are walking to work, looking out of the window at the world or talking to friends. Reflecting on your experiences can help you appreciate what matters.
- ☐ 'Keep learning': Try something new. Re-discover an old interest. Set a new challenge.
- ☐ 'Give': Have you got an hour to spare or a skill to share? You can make a real difference by volunteering, thanking someone or simply by smiling as you walk past.
- ☐ 'Be active': Try and increase the amount of physical activity you do each day by 10 minutes .
- ☐ Message in a wallet: have you got yours? Call AGE UK Oxfordshire to get yours.
- ☐ Check your smoke alarm is working.
- ☐ If you have an open fire/woodburner, remember to book to have your chimney swept.



USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS



Power cut?
Call 105

Feeling poorly call NHS
111

Age UK Oxfordshire
0345 450 1276

Oxfordshire County Council
0845 050 7666

Emergency Planning
01865 323 765

Falls Prevention Team
01865 903 400

Hearing Impairment Team
01865 894 925

Visual Impairment Team
01865 894 935

Oxfordshire Association of the Blind
01865 725 595

Parkinsons
0800 800 0303

Headway
01865 326 263

Stroke Association
0303 3033 100

Red Cross Mobility Aid Loan Services
01235 552 664

Benefits Advice



- 1 Many welfare benefits are means-tested (based on your income and savings) so before setting out to get a benefit check, you should gather up-to-date information on your income and savings, and your partner's savings.
- 2 You can get a benefit check by contacting your local advice agency, Citizen's Advice or Age UK Oxfordshire. There are also many easy-to-use calculators online. (e.g. www.benefitscheck.ageuk.org.uk)
- 3 There are other entitlements that are not dependent on income. You may be able to get **Attendance Allowance**, **Disability Living Allowance** or **Personal Independence Payment** if you struggle due to an illness or disability.
- 4 Check that you're not missing out on a **Council Tax discount** if you live alone or think you qualify then speak to your district council.

The Fire Services **SAFE & WELL** visits

Safe and well visits offer practical advice to older and vulnerable residents about the risks in their home that could lead to falls, fire, or any source of harm.

Firefighters or dedicated advisers will talk to the resident about smoke and carbon monoxide alarms (or fit them) and about how they can keep themselves safe in the event of a fire.

They can also provide advice and signposting on alcohol use, staying well and warm, and scams and doorstep crime prevention.

If you work or support vulnerable people in their own homes, there are two things you can do.



Referring someone for a safe and well visit

It's easy – you can do it quickly and easily on the council's website.

If you have spotted any of the following, then consider a referral:



- There are no working smoke or carbon monoxide alarms in the property.
- The resident may find it difficult to react quickly in the event of a fire or emergency.
- They are using electrical equipment with trailing leads, lots of extensions or possible unsafe wiring.
- There are large amounts of post or other indications that the resident is being targeted directly by possible scams.
- The resident has made comments that they have concerns about staying safe.

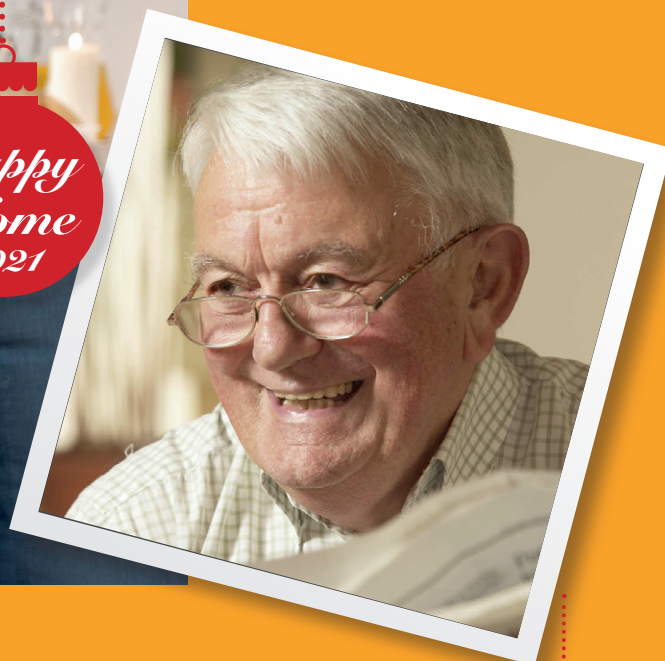
There's no cost for a safe and well visit. It's just practical advice and peace of mind.

People can also request a visit for themselves, either via the council's website or by calling 0800 325999 (this is customer services, where they have the information to book people for a visit).

Tell Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service what you think about the safe and well visits...

Were you aware of safe and well visits? Did you know some of the things you should be looking out for? Are you up to speed with where some of the greatest risks lie?

They'd like some feedback through their online survey. It will only take a couple of minutes to answer but will provide useful information to help improve the service.



WARM HOME Discount Eligibility

Much is being made of the £140 WHD as a way to counter the impact of the price rises on vulnerable people but we should bear in mind that it has quite strict eligibility requirements and often those who are digitally excluded will find it difficult to apply. It is usually paid in March the following year. For Pre-Payment Meter customers this will usually be in the form of vouchers. Remember the WHD applies to electricity bills. You can sometimes apply for it off your gas bill but you have to have a dual fuel supplier.

Please Note:

Utilita's WHD has now closed for the year.

Core group (automatically receive it)

If you receive the guarantee credit element of pension credit (the other element is called the savings credit element) and your name (or your partner's) was on your energy bill as of 4 July 2021.

Just be aware that not everyone receiving a state pension will receive the guarantee element of pension credit. If someone you know is on the state pension and struggling, they may be able to apply for pension credit – an estimated 1 million people don't know that they can.

More info here:

<https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit>

'...an estimated 1 million people don't know that they can. apply for Pension Credit'



Broader group

This is essentially only supporting low income families with children under 5 or people with disabilities / limited capacity to work. However, each company has different criteria and some do include people receiving just the Savings Credit element of Pension Credit (who don't fall into the care group) and people with disabilities.

Check which suppliers are offering WHD and when their applications open here:
<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2021/08/energy-firms-accepting-applications-for-the-warm-home-discount-t/>

Or contact your company using the customer services phone number printed on your bill.

Park Homes residents can register interest for the 2021 scheme here:
<https://www.parkhomeswhd.com/>



**HOW TO
PREVENT
FRAUD
and protect
yourself**

‘My mother had a couple of near miss phone scams’

Scams are a type of fraud that consists of a range of tricks that are designed to try and cheat people out of their money or identity and they can be done in many different ways, including by telephone.

Oxfordshire resident ‘Andrew’ (not his real name) talks about the impact of telephone scams on his mother, who has dementia.

‘My mother is over 80 and has dementia. She now lives with a great person who came to us via Homeshare Oxfordshire and who keeps an eye on things. The chats they have help give structure to the day. I visit once a week; we go for a walk, I help with errands and spend time with her.

Recently, she has received a few telephone scams. She responds to them because she is nice: she is very trusting and wants to believe people are telling the truth.

One scammer said that her cousin in America needed £8000. Luckily, she phoned me before she gave out any money, and I reminded her she did not even have a cousin!

There was another scam attempt a few weeks ago. She had her debit card out and was ready to pay them £3000, but she did not know how to use it. She says she must be really losing it, but I tell her they are running a very sophisticated operation and they tell a very convincing yarn.

We can’t remove her phone because it is her link to the outside world. Without it she and her friends would not be able to keep in touch. I know there are some call screening services but they are not fool proof for someone with dementia.

Having the person from Homeshare does give me piece of mind. I know that she is keeping an ear out for suspicious calls and I remind my

mother to pass over the phone if someone is wanting information. Her Sharer has been briefed as to what to say!

Leaving a reminder note...

I’d say to anyone who feels vulnerable to scams to have an action plan. When a scammer calls, tell them a relative or other trusted person handles your financial affairs, there is no need to confront them on the telephone. A note can be placed by the phone as a reminder.

Limiting any damage...

Also, as I have Power of Attorney for her financial affairs, I’ve set it up so she only has access to a current account in which there are limited funds. She does not have direct access to her savings accounts. This means she can get money out of the account to pay for smaller household costs, but the damage is limited if she does get scammed’.



From February 2022 Age UK Oxfordshire will be launching a scams information service, with scams awareness talks for local groups (either online or face to face) and individualised advice for people who are at high risk of being scammed. Access will be via our helpline by calling **0345 450 1276** and asking for the helpline or emailing **helpline@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk**. If you are interested in either level of the service please get in touch and we will add your details to the waiting list.



Telephone scams and other types of scams

As you have read in the case of Andrew and his mum, the worry of being scammed doesn't just affect older people but their families too. Thankfully, there are lots of resources to help you find smart ways to protect yourself from potential scams:

Age UK Information Guide 5

'Avoiding scams', which you can order by calling 0800 169 6565 or look at online here: www.ageuk.org.uk

Citizen's Advice consumer line 0345 404 0506 and their online information here: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer

The '**Little Book of Big Scams**' from the Metropolitan Police can be ordered by calling 020 230 1228 or downloaded from their website here: www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/fa/fraud/personal-fraud/prevent-personal-fraud

- You could do what Andrew set up for his mum - arrange your bank accounts so that limited funds are available on a day-to-day basis in an account with a debit card. A secondary account in the background receives all your regular income and has direct debits for your main bills, plus a regular small transfer to your 'day-to-day spending account'.
- You could use a phone which lets you see the number of the person calling, or if you need a more thorough system you could look into setting up 'call guardian' systems which help you screen callers by forcing any callers to introduce themselves prior to being put through to you. When you answer the phone you get a recorded message of this 'introduction' and can then choose if you speak to them or not. There are also other types of call blocker, which can be purchased and attached to most phones.

**CALL
159 to
connect to
your bank**

Reporting scams and suspicious emails or texts

For emails, forward them to:
report@phishing.gov.uk

The National Center for Cyber Security will investigate the email. Please be aware that you may not hear back from them regarding whether or not it is a scam.

For text messages, forward them to:
7726

It's free and will report the message to your network provider. Please be aware that you may not hear back from them regarding whether or not it is a scam.

If suspect someone is trying to trick you into giving out personal financial details by pretending to be from your bank, you can now dial just one number and it will connect you to your bank so that you can check whether the contact you've had is genuine and get advice. **159 is a new national number you can dial and choose your bank from the list of options. This means you don't need to try to find out the right number to call – just remember 159.** Calls are charged at the normal national rate for your provider and are included in free minutes packages. Remember, if it was a telephone scam call, that scammers sometimes keep the phone line open so use a different phone if you can or wait 10 minutes before dialling.

Get help and support

If you think you've been a victim of a scam or fraud, you can report this to **Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040**. They can also refer you to Victims First for ongoing telephone support, if needed.

Community Groups



PHONE FRIENDS



Volunteers Needed!

Phone Friends provides local, older people who feel lonely with a regular, free, friendly phone call.

We are looking for friendly people who are happy to chat on the phone.

Whether you can call 2 people or 10 people, you can make a real difference.

We offer you out of pocket expenses, training and support. In return, you will join a great team of volunteers.

GET IN TOUCH!

If you want to sign up or find out more about becoming a volunteer, you can do so via the following:

Ring us on 0345 450 1276

Email:

phonefriends@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

Visit:

www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/our-services/phone-friends/

CHATTERBOX WITNEY

Pop along and join us at our coffee morning for a warm cuppa, a slice of cake and a chat.

A Social morning for all with a chance to meet your local Networker for Information and Advice.

Where: Corn Exchange, Market Square, Witney, OX28 6AB

When: 10am-12pm every 1st Thursday of the Month - Starting Thursday 2nd December

For more details please contact

01235 849434 or

email: network@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk



GADGET & IT SUPPORT

Whether you need help with your phone, computer or tablet, Age UK Oxfordshire and our team of volunteers can support you to develop your skills and be involved, safely, with the online world within which we all now live.

- Stay connected with family/ friends over skype/ zoom
- Do shopping online
- Set up an email account
- Join a virtual group or activity
- Learn how to use your IT Gadget

HELP
to STAY
CONNECTED
ONLINE!

Where: Woodgreen Library, Woodgreen Leisure Centre, Woodgreen Avenue, Banbury OX16 0AT

When: 10am-12pm every 3rd Friday of the month

For more details and to book your place please contact 01235 849434 or

email: network@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

BETTER HOUSING BETTER HEALTH

Energy prices worries

At Age UK Oxfordshire we are hearing from many people who are concerned about the energy price rises and what to do if their energy company closes down.

We signpost many people over to Better Housing, Better Health as they can support Oxfordshire residents with information and advice over the phone regarding your options.

If you hear that your energy company may be closing, don't worry as you will automatically be passed to a new provider. They will then contact you to let you know how to contact them, should you need to.

If you are thinking of switching or looking for a 'fixed-price' deal then please get advice from an organisation such as Better Housing, Better Health beforehand.



0800 107 0044

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Creative Corner

What is your most creative achievement?

David: An icon I painted. It's based on the Russian Methodist painting and very stylised. The icon was the result of a seminar that I attended to understand the application of gold leaf in paintings and I was privileged to be guided by a leading icon painter (Irena Bradley). She was so dedicated to producing a lasting product that she mixed all her own paints from the original minerals and used several layers of gold leaf applied to an absolutely smooth prepared painted surface. I also found a simple serenity while I was painting the icon learning that you should not set a time schedule to finish.



David Cook on a group painting expedition in Florence Park, Oxford



Celebrating life with painting

Age Friendly Oxfordshire profiles:

David Cook has had a life-long interest in art, and had previous roles in the technical and service departments of Morris Motors/ British Leyland and Unipart.

He is currently a member of Oxford Bury Knowle Art Group and is one of Age UK Oxfordshire's Age Friendly Creative Ambassadors

What does creativity and culture mean to you?

David: My painting is a way to celebrate my culture and my life at different points in time. Why do I paint? To concentrate and relax. Photographs can act as a record, but with modern manipulation they can also be modified in the same way that painting can omit (or add) to the scene recorded. Painting allows greater expression: I feel and you can do it without a lot of expensive equipment (or computers). It is relaxing because you need to concentrate on the drawing/painting and exclude other thoughts or actions. Anyone can do it. You should try it yourself and be surprised!

How does taking part in creativity and culture impact on your life?

David: After my wife passed away, I missed all the conversations and having a laugh. My paintings provoke a lot of conversations and given me the chance to meet a lot of interesting people.



Saint James Icon

What would you recommend to someone that had not done anything creative or cultural for a while or never?

David: It doesn't cost much for a basic art materials: you can make a quick sketch with these. The quality of paper is the important thing and a range of pencils. I recommend joining an art group for information and to meet people out of your normal sphere.

Not all members are serious 'artists' but are interested in art. They are normal people seeking to understand or improve their ability through group meetings, with speakers and demonstrations of differing media and techniques, and visits to locations during the summer months.

A group can help you learn and try things. Don't be afraid to ask questions, people are ready to help.

I belong to the Oxford Bury Knowle Art Group who meet monthly in North Oxford Community Centre who will welcome anyone interested in art.

See website for details and sample gallery of members work:

<https://www.oxfordburyknowleartgroup.co.uk>



1. **Phoenix** Book-cover for book written by David's 16 year old grand-daughter.
2. **Dancing Jeans**
David: "Another possible example of observation or even domestic history. Notice, no underwear. As a painting it breaks so many rules but looks right.
It may be a cultural comment. It certainly took my eye and was at first only a photograph because I couldn't paint the picture from where I was in the middle of a cabbage patch. My brother-in law said that it reminded him of what happened every Monday when he was a child."
3. **Overhead transporter bridge being removed**, Cowley assembly factory, Oxford
4. **Watching the Cricket** Based on a scene David saw at Oxford University parks.
5. **The derelict paint plant South Works** (now part of the Garsington Road Trading Estate), Cowley, Oxford.

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/our-services/the-oxfordshire-age-friendly-creative-network-oafc/>

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If you would like to hear about our events, campaigns and how you can support local older people, please tick your contact preferences below. You can opt out at any time.

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**HELP US
HELP YOU**

STAY WELL THIS WINTER

nhs.uk/flu vaccine

This is not a full list of conditions. If you have a long-term health condition, talk to your GP surgery or local pharmacist to see if you are eligible for a flu jab.

**Cheril Sowell,
Registered Nurse**