

Voices of Experience

We are the voice of older people in the London borough of Redbridge.

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter!

Find out what older people think of local services & get the latest news.

[Click here](#) to find out more!



Picture: Fairlop Waters

In this Issue!

Voices Update!	2
New Report By Age UK London - 'Access Denied' The Digital Champions Programme	3
Help Shape Local Housing Strategy! Survey on the London Ambulance Service	4
Boost Your Immunity This Winter! Who I Am Matters - Report by the Care Quality Commission (CQC)	5
New Library Opening Hours Nordic Walking in Valentines Park!	6
Your Route to Urgent Help Evening and Weekend GP Appointments	7

... *plus more!*

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Available in additional formats

Contact Us

➡ New Survey on Social Care Services

Social Care helps older people and those with special needs to access help with daily tasks, such as washing, dressing, eating and medication.

The Social Care system is currently under great pressure across the UK, after past governments have failed to reform or fund the council-run system properly. Plus, there are added pressures on Social Care, due to an increased need since the Coronavirus pandemic.



Are you getting the support you need?

The UK has an ageing population and the pressures on the Social Care system will only increase in the future. While living longer is seen as a positive, many older people will develop health conditions, which mean they will need help with their daily living. For example, the number of people with dementia in the UK is expected to more than double to 1.6 million by 2040.

There is a knock-on effect for the health service if the Social Care system is supporting fewer people and only those with the highest needs. Often isolated older people end up in hospital due to a fall at home. When people are ready to leave hospital, a lack of care in the community can lead them to be stuck in hospital for longer than required.

Therefore, our next Voices of Experience Survey is all about Social Care – asking for your recent experiences and views on what care should be available to individuals in need. The survey closes on 31st March 2023. ➡ [More](#)

“The diabetes nurse was full of useful advice!”

Join us today and have your say!

➡ Our Report on the Cost of Living

During October - December 2022, 154 local people in Redbridge completed our survey on the current cost of living pressures.

Findings suggest that older people are experiencing a ‘real and significant’ crisis.

A clear majority of respondents (91%) express worry or concern about rising costs and a large number (85%) have taken action to cut back on their bills and expenses.

Of those making cutbacks, around three quarters (73%) have reduced their household energy use, 43% have curtailed their social activity or holiday plans and 35% have cut down on meals, or switched to cheaper brands.



Over 9 in 10 people are worried about costs

After paying for basics, 43% of respondents have ‘money left over for luxuries’ while a larger number (48%) say they do not. 41% have had to use savings.

“I want a named social worker.”

Join us today and have your say!

A significant minority of respondents (39%) say that the current economic situation has affected their physical or mental health.

Key concerns include the ability to pay bills, level of savings, and possibility of falling into debt.

Read more in our full report, available on the website now. Hard copies on request. ➡ [More](#)

➡ Report By Age UK London - 'Access Denied'

Age UK London has released results of a Freedom of Information (FOI) request made to 33 London councils requesting information on the availability of support for people without internet access. The findings, based on the responses from the 29 councils who replied, are published in a new report entitled "Access Denied: Accessing council services without the internet."

The report finds that nine, or 31% of respondents, do not offer offline access to council tax reductions or housing benefit. Five, or 17% of respondents, do not offer any offline access to council tax rebates, council tax reduction, housing benefit and Blue Badge applications.

As part of its Mind the Digital Gap Campaign, Age UK London is calling for action to tackle the barriers that face older Londoners who are offline. It is calling for decision makers and providers not to exclude those who cannot, or choose not, to use the internet.



Some essential services are now online only

In addition, mystery shopping conducted with twelve London councils showed that offline alternatives mentioned in responses to the FOI requests, did not always exist in practice.

In just under half of all cases, the mystery shoppers were not able to obtain the information they sought about how it would be possible to apply for either housing benefit or council tax reduction without using the internet. Read more in the full report, available now. ➡ [More](#)

“Strength and balance classes have helped!”

Join us today and have your say!

➡ The Digital Champions Programme

Age UK Redbridge, Barking and Havering has launched a Digital Champion Programme to help older people in the region who want to get online and learn how to use digital devices.

Vital services such as banking, shopping and health services have become increasingly 'digital first' since the COVID-19 pandemic. But there are more than 3 million people aged 65 and over in the UK who do not use the internet, meaning there is a huge risk of older people being left behind.



Use your devices with confidence!

The scheme, which is part of a wider Age UK Digital Champion Programme being run through local Age UKs across England and Wales, will provide digital training sessions to help those older people who want to learn, to get online.

“It's too costly to travel at peak times.”

Join us today and have your say!

The sessions are delivered by volunteer Digital Champions, who are trained to provide digital support to others. Those who take part in the programme can also get access to loaned devices such as tablets, allowing them to build their knowledge and practice their skills.

To find out more about Age UK Redbridge, Barking and Havering's Digital Champion Programme, or to sign up as a volunteer Digital Champion, please get in touch or visit the website. ➡ [More](#)

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➔ London Ambulance Service Survey

If you have used the London Ambulance Service (LAS) in the last two years, please tell Healthwatch Redbridge about your experience. What was good about the service provided, and what could have worked better?

Do you have any thoughts on how the LAS can work more effectively with other services (such as hospitals)?



Improving the LAS and NHS in London

Your answers will help London Ambulance Service to improve the way they work.

The survey is available now. ➔ [More](#)

**“Popping to the chemist
did the trick!”**

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Report on Local Long-Covid Services

Healthwatch Havering, Barking & Dagenham and Redbridge have published their report on the experiences of service users on the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Long Covid pathway.

The report was produced in collaboration with the Long Covid Clinic at King George Hospital (jointly managed between Barking Havering and Redbridge University Hospital NHS trust (BHRUT) and North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) and with primary care and community stakeholders within NHS North East London. ➔ [More](#)

➔ Help Shape Local Housing Strategy!

Redbridge Council writes “We need to determine how our housing services will be shaped over the next five years, and we would like local people to give us their views on the four key areas of increasing the supply of housing; housing & homelessness; improving the quality of homes and putting residents first.”

Cllr Vanisha Solanki, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness said ‘Our new five-year Housing Strategy will aim to respond to the many challenges we face as a borough, such as homelessness and increasing the supply of housing, whilst building on the foundations and achievements of our last strategy.



What are your views on local housing?

It will build upon key evidence and data that underpins our objectives and intended actions and feedback we receive from this consultation.

It's important everyone gets the opportunity to have their say, which is why I strongly encourage both residents and stakeholders to respond with your views to help shape the direction for housing in Redbridge.’

Share your views by 10th March 2023”. ➔ [More](#)

Your Views on Local Housing?

You can also share your experiences, views and thoughts with Age UK. Contact us in confidence!

**“We need a single point
of access.”**

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Boost Your Immunity This Winter!

The 'Boost your Immunity this Winter' campaign highlights the importance of the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine programmes in helping to stop the spread of flu and COVID-19, and reducing hospital-related admissions for both.

This is particularly important at this time when the health service is under severe strain.



Getting your vaccine is 'as important as ever'

The message is clear - if you're eligible for either the flu vaccine, COVID-19 vaccine, or both, boost your immunity this winter and take up the offer when invited.

If you are eligible you should hear from your GP, you can also find out more in the latest news article from the NHS. ➔ [More](#)

“I made new friends at the activity centre.”

Join us today and have your say!

Locally, the NHS writes “Recently in North East London we gave our four millionth Covid-19 vaccination. This is a huge achievement and a big thank you to everyone involved and to you for supporting the programme, coming forward to get your vaccinations and encouraging others to do so.

However, fewer local people are now coming forward for their vaccinations compared with last year. For most, the new booster will be their fourth Covid-19 vaccination but we are reminding people that it is still really important as our immunity decreases over time and new variants emerge. Read more in the full article. ➔ [More](#)

➔ Who I Am Matters - Report by the CQC

The CQC (Care Quality Commission) writes “Recently we have published a report on the hospital experiences of people with a learning disability or autism.

During February and March 2022, we visited eight hospitals in England which found that although there were pockets of good practice, people with a learning disability or autism are still not being given the quality of care and treatment they have a right to expect when they go to hospital.

Our report 'Who I am Matters' shines a light on the impact these failings have on people and their families.



'All staff' should have the training and skills

People told us they found it difficult to access care because there were no reasonable adjustments.

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution for communication. Providers need to make sure that staff have the tools and skills to enable them to communicate effectively to meet individual needs.

People are not being fully involved in their care and treatment. In many cases, this is because there is not enough listening, communication & involvement.

Specialist practitioners and teams cannot hold sole responsibility for improving people's experiences of care. Providers must make sure that all staff have up-to-date training and the right skills". ➔ [More](#)

“The telephone just rings and rings.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ New Library Opening Hours

Redbridge Council writes "Local people in Redbridge have backed plans to change library opening hours so they are available when most people have more leisure time, like evenings and weekends.

From Tuesday 3rd January 2023, Redbridge Central Library in Ilford joined Seven Kings, South Woodford, and Woodford Green libraries in opening on Sundays. Some branch libraries will be open longer on Saturdays, giving residents more opportunities to enjoy library services and weekend events.

In a recent consultation, 70 per cent of respondents were supportive of proposals that set out new opening hours based on visitor data around when libraries are most used."



Extended opening on weekends!

Cllr Kam Rai, Deputy Leader of Redbridge Council and lead member for Finance, Leisure, and Culture, said "We are pleased that local people have taken the opportunity to get involved in our consultation and given us their views on our library services. We know our libraries are really cherished across the borough, and that was clear from the many positive comments we got.

We've listened to the feedback, and it's clear people want libraries open at times which better suit their lifestyles and leisure time. Our flagship library in Ilford will now open seven days a week, and other libraries will be open longer on Saturdays, with some late evenings". ➔ [More](#)

"I need to be recognised as a carer."

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Nordic Walking in Valentines Park!

Our Falls Prevention Service, aimed at helping local older people to stay independent has launched a Nordic Walking activity in Valentines Park.

The walks take place on Wednesdays at 2.00pm and there are some spaces available.



Walks take place on Wednesdays

The walks have been greatly enjoyed, and are an opportunity to make friends as well as exercise and improve strength and balance.

To find out more, get in touch:

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"Good communication on the ward is vital."

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Cancer, It's Not a Game

North East London Cancer Alliance has been working for the last few months with Leyton Orient Football Club to reach out to older males who traditionally do not come forward with signs and symptoms of cancer, as part of the 'It's Not a Game' campaign.

Focusing on four of the main cancer types - bowel, stomach, lung and prostate - this engagement work aims to connect with people through sport to help diagnose cancer earlier.

Find out more on the website. ➔ [More](#)

➡ Your Route to Urgent Help

The NHS in North East London writes “Our A&E departments and 999 responders are facing extremely high demand at the moment. It may mean patients will have to wait longer to be seen.

Patients will be seen in order of clinical need. Unfortunately, this means those with more minor ailments who do not require urgent medical attention will face longer waiting times as the sickest patients will need to be treated first.



Getting the ‘right care’ this winter

You should only attend A&E if you need immediate care for something that is very serious or life-threatening.

If you feel unwell or have a minor injury, your local pharmacy can offer advice and some medicines. This can help you treat your condition yourself at home. Pharmacists can also help you see the right person, if you need to see someone else.

If you have a more serious illness, you should visit your GP practice website or NHS 111 online for advice. If you cannot access the internet, call 111 or your GP practice directly. A 999 call should only be used for life-threatening emergencies or serious injuries.

Knowing your best route to urgent care can help you find the treatment you need faster.”

Find out more on the website. ➡ [More](#)

“Getting physiotherapy has been a big help.”

Join us today and have your say!

➡ Evening and Weekend GP Appointments

GP practices across North East London have changed the way they provide evening and weekend appointments to ensure patients can get help more easily when they need it.

As of 1st October patients across the region are now able to book routine appointments, including for things such as vaccinations, health checks, and cancer screening, on weekday evenings from 6.30pm to 8pm and on Saturdays from 9am to 5pm.

These routine appointments can be booked via your GP practice in the usual way on the phone or online and will either take place at your local surgery or at a nearby NHS site in your local area.



Getting help ‘more easily when you need it’

In addition to this, GP Access Hubs will continue to offer access to urgent appointments on weekday evenings between 6.30pm and 10pm (8pm in Hackney and City of London), and on weekends and bank holidays from 8am to 8pm.

“I can’t go shopping without support.”

Join us today and have your say!

You can book these urgent appointments by calling your own GP practice as usual during working hours or by calling 111 out of hours.

If you live in Barking and Dagenham, Havering or Redbridge, you can also book by calling the GP hubs booking hotline on 020 3770 1888.

Find out more in the full article. ➡ [More](#)

➤ Christmas at Wanstead Activity Centre!

On Friday 16th December, our service users sat down to a delicious festive meal, complete with all the trimmings!

As with previous years, we pulled crackers, told jokes, looked back on the year and had so much fun!

Did you know?

We run a diverse range of activities at Wanstead Activity Centre, for local people aged 55 or over.



Tucking in to a delicious festive feast!

What's on offer?

We can help you get fit with chair exercises and yoga, or if you prefer something livelier, Zumba at the nearby Cherry Tree. If you fancy something more intellectual, why not join us for a game of bridge, read along at the book club, or learn how to get the most of your smart phone, tablet or computer. Creative? Then arts, crafts & knitting may be for you.

“Remote consultations don't work for all.”

Join us today and have your say!

Activities are £3 per session. There is also a daily lunch, with Monday - Thursday meals at £5, and £5-50 on Friday. As we are a charity we do not make a profit - all proceeds are ploughed into the centre.

To find out more, drop in, Monday to Friday 10am - 2pm at The Allan Burgess Centre, 2 Grove Park, Wanstead, E11 2D. You can also give us a call on 020 8989 6338, or visit the website for the latest information. ➤ [More](#)

➤ Glaucoma Awareness

Robyn Asprey, Development Manager at Glaucoma UK writes “Between 2015 and 2035, the number of people living with glaucoma in the UK is expected to increase by 44%. With an ageing population and modern technology making earlier detection possible, more and more of us will find ourselves affected by glaucoma.

If you are living with or have recently been diagnosed with glaucoma you are not alone and Glaucoma UK are here to help you.

Glaucoma is a complicated disease. Put simply, it is a group of eye diseases that damage the optic nerve, usually because there is high pressure in the eye. Most people experience no symptoms in the early stages because usually, glaucoma affects your off-centre, or peripheral vision first.



Book regular eye tests

Often the only way to know if you have it is to have regular eye tests.

Being diagnosed with glaucoma might be unexpected and frightening but Glaucoma UK will give you all the information, advice and support you need to feel confident in your glaucoma journey.

Book your eye test today, even if you are not worried about your vision now, it may save your vision in the future. For more information on glaucoma, visit our website or call our helpline between 9.30am and 5.00pm on 01233 648170. ➤ [More](#)

“I need a written letter for reference.”

Join us today and have your say!

➔ Keeping Well This Winter - Tips from Age UK

This winter might be even tougher than usual, but there are lots of practical things you can do to look after yourself.

Age UK has compiled an online resource, containing information, advice and tips - on topics including maintaining your mental and emotional wellbeing, managing your money, how to access booster jabs, looking after each other and staying well in colder weather.

The page also includes videos and downloads.



Helping you to keep well this winter

The resource is available online now. ➔ [More](#)

Latest Newsletters

- ➔ Age UK - Health and Wellbeing Newsletters (Sign Up!) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Redbridge Council Newsletters (Sign Up!) ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Alzheimer's Society - Dementia Together Magazines ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ One Place East - Newsletter, December 2022 ➔ [More](#)

Please send us a link to your latest newsletter!

Health & Wellbeing Roundup

- ➔ The latest news, campaigns and events from Age UK ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ The latest news from Barts Health NHS Trust ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ The latest news from Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ The latest news from North East London NHS Foundation Trust ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS fast tracks life-extending prostate cancer drug to patients ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Emergency funding is urgent for adult social care, says London Councils ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Living with dementia virtual reality programme wins national award ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS offers second monkeypox jab to everyone eligible ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ World's first drug to delay diabetes development has been approved ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Dates have been announced for nurses 'biggest walk out in history' ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Hundreds of beds taken up by flu patients every day ahead of winter ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Parents of under-fives and pregnant women reminded of flu eligibility as hospitalisations rise ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ 1 in 5 patients with rheumatoid arthritis went undiagnosed during pandemic, study finds ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS launches NHS 111 online campaign ahead of winter ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Therapy campaign launched to improve health and ease loneliness ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS delivers 15 million COVID-19 boosters ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Dramatic drop in care vacancies urges the government to launch recruitment campaign ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS gives GP teams direct access to tests to speed up cancer diagnosis ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ QC urges government to fund better pay for care staff to tackle 'gridlocked' system ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS catching more cancers earlier than ever before ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS strikes deal for potentially life-saving breast cancer drug ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Average care worker earns less than over 80% of wider workforce ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ People with learning disabilities 'not always protected from abuse' - CQC ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ Care sector 'unsustainable' without more support, warn providers ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS rolls out new electric vehicles to help patients and the planet ➔ [More](#)
- ➔ NHS set to boost GP workforce ahead of winter ➔ [More](#)

HOW ARE YOU?

In our adult years, the lifestyle choices we make can dramatically increase our chances of becoming ill later in life.

Making small changes now can improve your health right away and double your chances of staying healthy as you get older. It's never too late to start.

Talk to your doctor or nurse about your health today.

BECAUSE THERE'S ONLY
ONE YOU