



The Big Knit

Get knitting for Age UK! As part of our partnership with innocent smoothies, every little hat you send in will be pride of place atop an innocent smoothie bottle, adding an extra bit of joy.

And for every smoothie sold, we receive 25p to help us support older people who are facing later life alone. We need more fantastic knitters for this year's campaign, which is running until 31 July. Thank you to everyone that has sent in hats so far.



To find out more and to download our new range of knitting patterns, please visit www.ageuk.org.uk/bigknit or call **0800 160 87 87**.

Once your hats are ready, please send them to **Age UK, The Big Knit, Fruit Towers, 342 Ladbroke Grove, London W10 5BU** or drop them off at your local Age UK.

Dogs aiding dementia

Man's best friend has been a recent feature at Age UK Trafford, with Dave the Chihuahua one of several doggy volunteers visiting to lend a hand. 'Some people occasionally think he's a cat though,' laughs a member of the team.



Visitors to the centre have been relishing the positive effect pets can have on your health and wellbeing. Dave's owner Joanne, who is also in charge of dementia day support at Age UK Trafford, says 'It's hard to describe the moment when someone's face lights up and they have that connection with an animal, it helps in many ways. Some people had pets when they were children, so seeing a dog can help unlock those reminiscences and encourage the person to talk about those memories. Likewise, when the people were that bit older and had young families of their

own, they may have had a pet then, so their minds go back to that time. They will tell you stories about their lives back then with great confidence, even if they're struggling with their short-term memory.'

Recent research has found that physical and intellectual stimulation is increased by having visits from dogs in people with dementia. Whether they're reminding people of happy memories, or providing some enjoyable company, we think Dave and his friends really are the best in show. Nice!

Find out more: www.ageuk.org.uk/update

Celebrity Call Centre

We hope you managed to catch Celebrity Call Centre on Channel 4 in December last year in partnership with Age UK.

This Christmas special was a particularly personal experience for Debbie McGee, whose husband Paul Daniels passed away in 2016. Debbie answered a call from a lady who had recently lost her husband and was struggling with questions about life after death. Debbie used her own experiences to support the caller, offering her personal beliefs in an emotional discussion about coping with grief. 'I don't think it's possible to explain what grief is. One of the reasons is because grief is different to every single person. You are living your life with something missing and you just feel like you've got this great big hole in your side and you don't know what to do to cover it up.'



Photo credit: Channel 4

Many viewers took to social media to express their appreciation of Debbie's guidance. Thank you so much to Debbie and all of the celebrities who took part in the Celebrity Call Centre and raised awareness of the unexpected challenges we might face in later life.

Love Later Life Hero



This edition's Love Later Life Hero is Katalin Shirley-Smith, a former Age UK volunteer who celebrated her 100th birthday in February.

Katalin was a volunteer at Age UK Somerset for 16 years, into her 90's, helping over 100 people during her time there. Her befriender, Jenny, still visits her through the local befriending scheme and describes her as 'a bright and switched on lady'.

Katalin, a former translator during the war, grew up in occupied Europe and has lived an exceptionally full life, going on to work as a radiographer. Her milestone birthday party included her two sons, five grandchildren and many great grandchildren. Jenny was also delighted to be a guest at the party. 'She hides a light - such an amazing lady.'

We agree! Congratulations and thank you, Katalin, you're a true Love Later Life Hero.



Katalin Shirley-Smith blowing out candles

Do you know a Love Later Life Hero? Why not nominate them so that we can celebrate their achievements or celebrate them. To nominate a Love Later Life Hero, write to Rebecca Alton at the address below or email newsletter@ageuk.org.uk

Age UK includes the charity, its charitable and trading subsidiaries, and national charities (Age Cymru, Age Scotland and Age NI). Age UK is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales (registered charity number 1128267 and registered company number 6825798). The registered address is Tavistock House, 1-6 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9NA. Age UK provides a range of services and your gift will go where the need is the greatest. ID204141 05/19

Thank you for helping us to be there for older people



May 2019

The current state of care

Thanks to the help of our supporters, Age UK is able to lobby for issues that affect older people. I'm sure you'll agree that everyone wants to stay happy and healthy for as long as possible as we get older. But the reality is increasingly different. With an ageing population, the number of older people who require some form of care at home is growing, and the proportion whose care needs are not being met is also rising fast.



The lack of government funding for social care means increasing numbers of older people are being very badly let down, with many being left to manage alone for long periods - which can have a further devastating impact on their health.

In this period of economic and political uncertainty, Age UK is here for anyone who needs support with care advice. Our free advice line is open 365 days a year and our expert advisors can help to inform older people and their loved ones about their rights, how to navigate the complex care system and provide

information about what options may be available to them. We also have a range of free factsheets and guides which provide impartial information and advice. If you or a loved one is struggling, please pass on our advice line number to them: **0800 169 6565**.

Through our Care in Crisis campaign, we are also calling on the Government to recognise the danger social care is in, and lead a process to develop a long term solution incorporating the views of older people and people living with disabilities and all parts of the health and care sector.



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Remaining at home

We all know the importance of feeling secure and settled at home. There are half a million older people living in privately rented properties and three quarters of them have a disability or health condition. And yet, because of fear of eviction, our research shows that older renters are not asking for adaptations in their homes that will help them to stay independent and healthy.

Thanks to our supporters, Age UK is working hard to help older people and their families know their rights and existing support, as well as bring about real legislative change to protect them and future generations from feeling unsettled at home.

This is why we have just launched a campaign to improve housing for older people, and ensure that older private renters are secure at home. Please email us at campaigns@ageuk.org.uk if you would like to share your experiences.



Saving free TV for over 75s



You may remember from our January edition of *Update* that we were launching a new campaign calling on the Government to keep TV licences free for the over 75s.

For over a million of the oldest people in our country, the TV is their constant companion and window on the world. And now it's under threat.

We found that more than 50,000 UK pensioners could be pushed below the poverty line if free TV licences are scrapped.

More than 80,000 people signed our petition, which we handed in to Number 10 Downing Street.



Together, we have demanded that the Government takes back responsibility for funding free TV licences for everyone over 75. If you want to stay up to date with our campaign please visit our website www.ageuk.org.uk/switchedoff

Find out more: www.ageuk.org.uk/update



Celebrating our volunteers this National Volunteers Week

Volunteers' Week is a time to say thank you to our wonderful volunteers! From 1-7 June, hundreds of events will take place across the country to thank volunteers for their invaluable contribution. To celebrate, we're paying tribute to one wonderful volunteer, who gives his time to Age UK Milton Keynes's Peartree Centre.

Dick Evans feels like 'part of the family' at the centre, and has even coined a special name for the older people he spends time with there. The 66-year-old, who's been volunteering there for six-and-a-half years, affectionately refers to them as 'recycled teenagers' – a term they're very keen on.



'People love it,' laughs Dick, who's also a musician and incorporates his gift into his work. 'Lots of the older people are very young at heart, and it's great they can keep that and if we assist in bringing that out.'

'When I first started I didn't know what to expect. After about four or five weeks, I started really talking to the people coming in, and discovered what lovely memories they

had. I started to find out about the ins and outs of their lives, and they began to become a big part of my mine – just as I became a part of theirs. The more time passed, the more I developed this rapport with them and it became one big family.'

Thank you to Dick, and to the many other volunteers who support older people all over the country, for your commitment. You really are making a huge difference.



To find out about Volunteers' Week events in your local area, or how you can become a volunteer like Dick, visit www.ageuk.org.uk/volunteer

Find out more: www.ageuk.org.uk/update

Spring gardening tips

The season is upon us to dust off our green fingers and start taking notice of those hedges! As we enter in to glorious Spring, there's no better time to enjoy being outdoors and help the local ecosystem along.



Age UK supporter, and celebrity gardener Christine Walkden has given us some top tips for ensuring your green spaces will be making the neighbours jealous, and also how to encourage wildlife to thrive in an outdoor space of any size.

Christine suggests planting rose bushes and fruit trees to attract the native UK birds that will be looking for a tasty meal. Bees and other insects will also benefit from us growing our own herbs, either outdoors or on a windowsill, as their flowers are a source of pollen. And it's

key to remember that all wildlife needs a fresh source of water – so why not leave a bowl out for them to enjoy?

It's always lovely to spy wild birds nesting at this time of year. If you have space, bird boxes with various entry hole sizes will help to boost the varieties of species you can attract to your garden. If you don't have a garden, hanging a bird feeder with a variety of nuts and seeds will attract a range of birds to your garden – with the added bonus of entertaining you.



If you or a loved one is interested in learning more about gardening, you can listen to more of Christine's advice on our website at www.ageuk.org.uk/gardening

Find out more: www.ageuk.org.uk/update