

Update

*The latest on what you
have helped us achieve*



May 2022

Welcome to your May Update newsletter.

Remembering Roy

We were deeply saddened to learn that Roy, one of our beloved storytellers who featured in a number of Age UK's campaigns, had died. Ruth Lowe was Roy's telephone befriender and enjoyed regular calls with him. Here she pays tribute to a very special man.

"Roy's involvement with Age UK was a source of tremendous pride for him. He would ask me if I thought the campaigns he'd been involved with had encouraged people to sign up to services like our Telephone Friendship Service. The idea that other people would have received the new lease of life he had was very important to Roy.

I was telephone friends with Roy for six and a half years. He had lost his wife a few months earlier. He was struggling; he didn't have children, so he was very lonely and finding it difficult to adjust to life without the woman he'd spent more than 50 years with.

We both loved reading, so we'd regularly discuss the books we had on the go. He was interested in history, so one of the things I did was to buy a copy of the book he was reading at that point.



Roy sang as part of a choir, which was a huge part of his life, right up until lockdown. He would often sing 'You Are My Sunshine' to me. He had a beautiful voice.

Roy wore his heart on his sleeve and wasn't ashamed to talk about his feelings. He was a positive person who saw the best in people and situations, and he was hopeful for the future. We could all learn a lot from his example.

On behalf of all of us at Age UK, thank you Roy for being part of our family.

If you or someone you know might benefit from receiving a regular phone call as part of our Telephone Friendship Service, head to ageuk.org.uk/friend to find out more.

Thank you for helping us to be there for older people who need us most

Living with dementia

There are currently around 900,000 people in the UK living with dementia. Age UK spoke to Wendy Mitchell, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's at 58. Here, she tells us about her second book, 'What I wish people knew about dementia', and what she's learned about life with the condition.



How do you cope with your diagnosis?

"I never concentrate on my losses. The list of what I can't do anymore is probably very long, but I don't dwell on that."

What brings you joy?

"In my working life, I was as guilty as anyone else of wishing for the weekend or the next holiday. Now there's nothing I enjoy more than walking in my village and just looking at things that, if you blink, you'll miss. People out for a walk, chatting, will miss a beautiful robin singing in a tree. For me, those are joyous moments."



What was the inspiration for your second book?

"I wanted to show dementia in more depth, but I also didn't want it to be all about me. [In this book] I wanted to allow other people to have a voice, to show the public that it's not just me living like this, it's other people. There's nothing more comforting than hearing that one phrase 'That happened to me' - and no one judging, no one questioning, no one doubting."

I can't tell you how heartening it is to hear that my books have helped someone else. It makes all of the bad days worth it."

A diagnosis of dementia can be overwhelming, but it doesn't necessarily mean someone has to stop doing things they enjoy. For our tips on living well with dementia, visit ageuk.org.uk/living-well-with-dementia

To read our full interview with Wendy, head to ageuk.org.uk/wendy

How we're helping, thanks to supporters like you, in 2021:

📞 The Age UK Advice Line has answered **205,796** calls from older people, their friends, family and carers.

📞 We've supported **180,753** telephone friendship calls for lonely older people.

📄 Our information and advice webpages have been visited more than **17m** times.

Find out more: ageuk.org.uk/your-impact

Cracking down on fraud with Lloyds Banking Group

We're delighted to be working with Lloyds Banking Group to help tackle fraud through our Scams Prevention and Support Programme, delivered by our network of local Age UKs.



In England and Wales an older person becomes a victim of fraud every 40 seconds – that's more than 800,000 older people every year. Scams can have a devastating emotional and financial impact on older victims, seriously damaging their quality of life and wellbeing. This is why our Scams Prevention and Support Programme is so vital, helping older people increase their knowledge and confidence in recognising and dealing with attempted scams, reducing the number of people falling victim and supporting those who do in their recovery.

Reporting scams – the basics

- If you receive a call and suspect it to be a scam, hang up the phone.
- If you are suspicious about an email you've received, forward it to **report@phishing.gov.uk**
- If you are suspicious about a text message you've received, forward it to the number **7726**, which is free-of-charge.
- If you believe you are the victim of a fraud, please report this to Action Fraud online as soon as possible, or by calling **0300 123 2040**.

Your mind matters

Mental Health Awareness Week take place in May. It's a time to raise awareness of the importance of good mental wellbeing. This year's theme is loneliness, something which 1.6 million older people say they struggle with often.

Loneliness can have a big impact on our mental health as we get older, but sometimes the problem gets overlooked. Being worried, low or out of sorts aren't just part and parcel of getting older – they're important signs that someone isn't feeling as well as they should be.

We've all faced a lot of challenges over the last couple of years – not least being apart from those we care about – so it's also natural to feel overwhelmed by it all at times. If things are starting to get on top of you or someone you know, there's support out there that can help.

You'll find lots of information on our website at **ageuk.org.uk/mind-matters**, or call the Age UK Advice Line free on **0800 169 65 65**, 8am to 7pm. You can also request our free 'Your mind matters' guide.



Tackling the energy crisis

The steep rise in energy costs is a worry for many of us – not least older people on low incomes who were already making impossible choices between heating their homes and eating properly. Age UK is working hard to influence decision-makers and call for better support for older households who simply won't be able to make ends meet.

We're urging the Government to introduce a package of support which will lessen the impacts of the energy Price Cap rise, which sets the limit on how much energy companies can charge and is a key reason why bills have gone up. In its current form, the Chancellor's package doesn't go far enough. We're calling for people who are eligible for Cold Weather Payments to receive an additional £500. We're also calling for the extension of the Price Cap beyond 2023 so bills won't rise again.

We're pleased our call to double the value of the Household Support Fund has been listened to. This means an additional £500 million will

be given to local councils so they can support people who need extra help with their bills.

However this is still much more that needs to be done to help older people make ends meet given how rapidly the cost of living is rising.

It's also vital that everyone who is eligible for Pension Credit, a benefit for people over the State Pension age, gets it. Right now, too many older people are missing out – either because they aren't aware they could claim or think they won't be successful. But claiming Pension Credit can also help older people access other financial help, so it's always worth seeing if you can make a claim.

Concerned about the cost of energy?

Call the Age UK Advice Line on **0800 169 65 65**, 8am to 7pm, 365 days a year.

For more information on claiming Pension Credit, visit ageuk.org.uk/pension-credit

An update on social care

All over the UK, older people are working around the clock to care for their loved ones amid the UK's broken social care system. Age UK is working hard to support older carers, make their voices heard and fix social care for good.

Joyce, pictured, became a full-time carer to her husband David after he had a severe stroke. It's been a grueling experience for Joyce. Age UK's Advice Line and campaigning work have been crucial for the couple - giving them a place to turn and a way to make their voices heard.

We've also been working to influence the recent Health and Care Bill. In this Bill the Government makes some fundamental changes to how the NHS is run by introducing Integrated Care Systems (ICS) and reforms some aspects of care.

We have been campaigning to make sure this Bill works for older people. This includes asking



for the patient voice to be part of ICS, getting a new workforce plan for social care and fighting the changes to the cap on care costs that would stop most people with modest means benefiting from the cap.

To find out more about our campaigns, visit ageuk.org.uk/campaign. For information and support for carers, call the Age UK Advice Line free on **0800 169 65 65**, 8am to 7pm.

Send in your Big Knit hats by 30 June

This year's innocent Big Knit is drawing to a close. If you've been busy knitting little hats for the tops of innocent smoothie bottles (each one sold means a 25p donation for Age UK), please pop them in the post or drop them off at your nearest Age UK shop.

The address is **Age UK, The Big Knit, Fruit Towers, 342 Ladbroke Grove, London, W10 5BU.**

Find out more at ageuk.org.uk/bigknit



Thank you for helping us to be there for older people who need us most

Catching up with Michael and Terry

You might remember seeing Michael and Terry featured as part of Age UK's Christmas appeal, **Make Christmas a little brighter**. Recently, they've been sharing more about their lives – read Michael's celebration of his mum, and Terry's recollections of the D-Day landings.

Michael celebrates 'Mumsy'

Michael, 71, is one of many older people who feel lonely. In fact, the only people Michael hears from regularly are his Age UK telephone friend Gemma, who's helped him enormously, and his mother – herself in her 90s.



"Mumsy, as I call her, will be 94 in April. When she was younger and living in Jamaica, her family was quite affluent. When she married my dad and came to England, though, things became quite different for her. It was a real culture shock. She became an NHS nurse, as did her sister. My mum enjoyed having a job that allowed her to help people.

"When I was a child, she was a very laid-back mother. She brought me and my siblings up with good manners and taught us to be self-sufficient. I put her longevity down to her excellent diet. She still cooks meals for herself and always has plenty of vegetables. Her mind is very sharp. She watches Countdown, when she's not watching her soap operas, and is always able to do the sums in her head, never using a calculator."

To read more about Michael's story, visit ageuk.org.uk/michaels-story

Terry's wartime memories

Terry, 99, shares her recollections of World War II and the vital part she played.



"I had no idea what to train for in the army, so I trained to be a store woman, issuing food, clothes, and things like that. They suddenly opened a new Waterproofing department. I was called up and I was wondering what I had done. I thought I was in trouble! But it was someone asking me if I'd like to go and work for this new department.

"The next thing we knew, all these boxes started turning up. In the boxes was everything that was necessary to waterproof the engine of a vehicle.

"We guessed that this must be for invasion, for vehicles that needed to come off boats or something to go onto land. That turned out to be true. Of course, on D-Day we saw them. The trucks came off the back of the Kitchener Ducks and into the water once they landed. Very few of the trucks were lost because of the work we had done. D-Day was the first time we knew what we had been working on."

To read more about Terry's story, visit ageuk.org.uk/terrys-story

Thank you for helping us to be there for older people who need us most