

THE GREATER LONDON FORUM FOR OLDER PEOPLE LOCKDOWN NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2020

Dear Friends,

Please find attached the first, and hopefully perhaps the last, Greater London Forum for Older People (GLF) Lockdown Newsletter. Logistics and finance mean that's this can only be distributed using digital technology. We simply are not able to circulate this in paper.

Because we hope that you may find that it is a useful and informative read for older Londoners on lockdown in their own homes, we invite you to distribute this in cascade fashion to all those older people covered by your organisation or falling within your scope, for whom you have an email address.

Please also be aware that this Newsletter stems from the very close collaboration of the GLF with Age UK London on the Age Friendly London campaign. The mutual benefits of our partnership with AUKL over recent years, together with the knock-on effects for our respective organisations on the ground in London Boroughs, will be of real importance as we all seek to move from the difficult present into an unknown future.

The GLF is very fortunate to have secured grant funding for two years from both the Trust for London and also Awards 4 All. This will underwrite the costs of a part-time outreach worker who will be able to work with Borough Forums in supporting their training and development needs as we all navigate towards the future. We had confirmation of the TfL grant only in mid-March just when the lockdown commenced, so the recruitment of the worker needs must await significant easing of the national lockdown. There will be more information in due course.

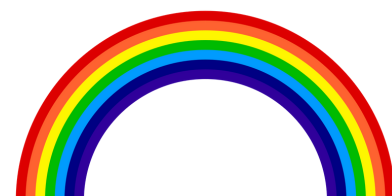
As the year progresses, we shall also be discussing with Borough Forums and other groups of older people, some elderly or with underlying health conditions, whether, and if so how, they can meet in groups in the interim period until either a vaccine or sound medical treatment is universally available. The implications for us all are troubling and will require very clear thought and care.

Do let us know if you have any suggestions that you may have for any second edition because, should it be needed, then we shall have been confined in safety for not just two months, but at least three or four.

Be safe, stay safe.

Asoke Dutta Tony Tuck
Chairman Secretary

Greater London Forum for Older People



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Abigail Wood

I'm delighted to have joined Age UK London as the new chief executive. My background is in running charity campaigns and I'm looking forward to leading Age UK London to deliver real change that makes a difference to the lives of older Londoners, and to campaigning to make London an Age-Friendly city.

We're in unprecedented times and older people are particularly affected by the lockdown measures that are currently in place. In this times the work of grassroots organisations like Forums is more important than ever. The work of the Forums across London and the different ways in which that are making the voices of older Londoners heard, raising concerns on their behalf and campaigning for change, is truly impressive.

It has been inspiring to see how older people's organisation across London, including Forums, local Age UKs and PAiL have responded to the challenges posed by coronavirus. Age UK London has been providing support by providing laptops to local Age UK's to enable older people to get online; adapting our campaign for age-friendly renting to concerns raised by coronavirus; and developing our resources on how to stay active during lockdown, which you can read more about overleaf.

As Tony Tuck wrote in his introduction, the close working between the GLF and Age UK London brings great benefits to both organisations and I look forward to continuing working closely with the GLF in the future.

STAY ACTIVE DURING THIS LOCKDOWN

Age UK London has been awarded £4,785 of National Lottery funding from Sport England's Community Emergency Fund towards its Park Walks campaign during the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. The grant will allow Age UK London to maintain its Park Walks Campaign during the lockdown - through creating a range of online resources for older Londoners.

Park Walks is a partnership project, with Ramblers Walking for Health, London Sport, Diabetes UK, Escape Pain and British Lung Foundation, which supports relatively inactive older Londoners to make and sustain lifestyle changes. With the onset of Covid 19, we have had to review the way the campaign is delivered, the funding will enable us to create and promote a wide range of accessible online resources, which will:

- give inactive older Londoners the tools and confidence to stay fit and mobile in their own homes whilst they are self-isolating
- support the mental wellbeing of older Londoners with their focus on positivity and enjoying nature from the safety of your home

You can find Age UK's extensive list of resources [here](#).



ACTION ACROSS THE CAPITAL

The 23 local Age UKs in London have supported hundreds of thousands of older Londoners across 31 boroughs over the past five weeks. Many of those receiving support had never previously contacted their local Age UK.

Anxiety about access to food and medicine are among the main reasons why calls to advice lines have trebled. To meet the challenges, Age UKs have redeployed staff and redesigned services with teams working flat out.

Food and essential items

Emergency food parcels delivered by volunteers have been crucial. Age UK Camden and Age UK Kensington and Chelsea are delivering over 100 food parcels per day whilst Age UK East London are focussing their food parcel delivery on people that have recently left hospital. Many Age UKs are also delivering hot food and dropping off shopping and prescriptions. Age UK Sutton are making sure volunteers always 'check in' on residents when dropping shopping off.

Advice lines, telephone befriending and staying connected

The advice lines for all 23 of the local Age UKs remain open and the number of calls received has never been so high. Age UK Lambeth's advice line was used for 13,000 minutes in just one week!

No one should feel like they have been left alone and telephone befriending services have been vital. Age UK Wandsworth's small army of volunteers are providing telephone befriending to over 400 people.

Maintaining social connections despite social distance is crucial and social activities organised online range from book clubs, jazz concerts and cooking classes to coffee mornings and exercise.



Age UK Wandsworth



Age UK Camden volunteers (by Annabelle Williams)

THE MAYOR & THE LONDON-WIDE RESPONSE

Whilst the UK government are responsible for the national response and Councils responsible for their own community action plans, a number of pan-London bodies are overseeing a regional response. In the capital the Mayor of London, Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade and the Greater London Authority (GLA) are playing a role as part of London's Resilience Partnership. Along with London Councils these bodies have established the London Strategic Coordination Group (LSCG) to coordinate an effective London-wide response focussing on communities and businesses.

One of the LSCG's sub-groups is the Funders, Community and Voluntary Sector Sub-Group to which Age UK London contribute, to ensure that the experiences and challenges faced by the local Age UKs inform plans.

The Mayor of London has contributed £5 million to the London Community Response Fund to support community and voluntary organisations affected by the impact of the coronavirus. Overall, the Fund is £16 million and 319 projects had received support by 26th April.

Other coronavirus response initiatives overseen by the Mayor and the GLA include the Pay It Forward crowdfunding scheme offering businesses a way to pre-sell goods and services; providing temporary accommodation to over 1,000 homeless Londoners; and the 'London Together' campaign to highlight the acts of kindness and community support across the capital. The GLA's online hub can be viewed online [here](#).



HOME FIRE SAFETY GUIDE

TAKE EXTRA CARE IN THE KITCHEN

- Fit a heat alarm in the kitchen, they detect the increase in temperature caused by fire but will not be set off by cooking fumes.
- Never leave pans unattended when cooking.
- Don't cook if you are tired, have been drinking alcohol or taking medication that might make you drowsy.

If the pan does catch fire:

- Don't tackle the fire yourself or try to move the pan.
- Never throw water onto it as this can create a fireball.
- If you can do so safely – turn off the heat.
- Leave the room and close the door. Shout to warn others to get out, stay out and call 999.

STAY SAFE WHEN YOU GO TO BED

- Close all doors as this helps to prevent fire spreading.
- Switch off and unplug electrical items such as TVs and avoid charging devices like mobile phones when you sleep.
- Only leave essential appliances switched on, such as the fridge or freezer, and turn all others off.
- Make sure candles are out before you go to bed.
- Check your cooker and heaters are turned off.

KEEP YOUR HOME SAFE

Alarms

- Fit at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home and in any room where a fire could start.
- Remember to test all your alarms monthly.
- Fitting interlinked alarms will give everyone in your home the earliest warning of fire.

Smoking

- It is safer not to smoke.
- Try to smoke outside and make sure cigarettes are put right out.
- Never smoke in bed, or anywhere else if you think you might fall asleep.
- Do not leave a lit cigarette or pipe unattended.
- Use proper ashtrays and never throw hot ash into the bin.
- Keep matches and lighters well out of the reach of children.

Candles

- Candles, tea lights and incense burners should only be placed in stable, heat-resistant holders.
- Keep candles well away from curtains, furniture and clothes.

Heating and electrics

- Sit at least one metre away from heaters.
- Keep heaters well away from anything that can catch alight.
- Don't overload electrical sockets.

NEWS FROM POSITIVE AGEING IN LONDON (PAiL) AND AGE PARTNERS

PAiL is pleased to be part of the Age UK London / GLF Newsletter and to keep older Londoners informed, entertained, involved and if possible empowered during this crisis.

PAiL are producing regular Newsletters every fortnight and would be happy to include you or your organisation in our mailing if you contact us at positiveageinginlondon@gmail.com. We hope that you will both forward our Newsletters to your members and also send us useful information, advice or links that we can share with our members and on our website [here](#).

Currently the main concerns of PAiL are:

- Getting a positive message over to decision makers and the media of the ongoing enormous contribution we seniors can and do make to the economy and society, even from our own homes;
- Overcoming the digital divide that faces the millions of older and poorer people without access to online information, computers or smart phones;
- Together with partners like EngAgeNet, we are running a campaign to demand that, when it is safe to end the Lockdown, then the exit strategy should include older and active people with no ageist discrimination;
- Finally, PAiL together with age partners such as the NPC and U3A, are trying to develop an action plan to realise the dream of making London Age Friendly.

Although a critical factor in ending lockdown will be the widespread use of a vaccine for COVID-19 and proven effective medical treatment, PAiL is advocating a well-resourced partnership to ensure that there is an Age Friendly action plan for London as part of the national Exit Strategy. Further information is available in our regular PAiL newsletters.



Picture by Hourglass charity

ELDER ABUSE IN THE COMMUNITY

An increase of elder abuse in the community could be a hidden impact of the COVID-19 emergency. The lockdown measures – necessary as they are for tackling coronavirus – will create a pressure cooker environment for abuse, with vulnerable older people at particular risk.

Research shows up to 14 per cent of older people may experience elder abuse in the form of physical, emotional, financial or social abuse. With large numbers of people losing their jobs and unable to pay their rent, it was likely more people would move to live with older parents or other relatives out of financial necessity.

Elder abuse is any mistreatment of an older person by another person they have a relationship of trust with. It is a lack of respect and violates an older person's basic right to feel safe. Often that person is a family member or carer, but it could be a friend or neighbour who they depend on. Elder abuse could cause stress, anxiety and depression and lead to an increased risk of ill health, hospitalisation and early death. It may be in the form of physical or financial abuse - all ways for another person to take over or control the life or property of an older person. Some forms of elder abuse are criminal acts, for example, acts involving theft or fraud.

If you have any concerns about an elderly relative or neighbour you can contact:

- The Silver Line 0800 4 70 80 (24 hours a day)
- Action on Elder Abuse helpline: 0808 808 8141
- 101 non-emergency number or call 999

THE OLDER PEOPLES' FORUMS OPERATING IN LONDON IN 2020

The London Forums are an important source of disseminating essential information through and campaigning on improving local, regional and national policies. The role of the London Forums is to ensure that the voices of older people are heard and that they influence the way in which services and policies are planned and delivered, maintaining and improving the wellbeing of older people. Their activities are planned to engage well with older people to help alleviate loneliness and build confidence through involvement and knowledge. In these difficult times the need for the grassroots organizations is fundamental in engaging with decision makers, to protect the rights of older people and safeguard their health and wellbeing. Please contact the [GLF](#) if you would like contact details for any of the London Forums.

Barnet Seniors' Association

Barnet Seniors' Association (BSA) is a local voluntary organisation which has developed from the 55+Forum and the Older People's Assembly. BSA works closely with Barnet Council and the NHS in order to influence policy plans and practices. BSA holds two public events a year, which are sponsored by the Council and open to the general public.

Brent Pensioners' Forum

Brent has the most diverse population in the UK and Brent Pensioners' Forum represents that diversity. The forum holds monthly members' meetings, chaired by Vi Steele in Brent Civic Centre. The strong relationship with Brent Council has been very beneficial, Councillors regularly attend members meetings and engage well with Forum's committee to inform and improve services.

The Greenwich Pensioners' Forum

The Forum meets on the last Friday of the month at Woolwich Town Hall. The Forum plays a key role in influencing change through representation by forum members on health and social care strategic committees; lobby the appropriate authorities on issues affecting older people. Members enjoy a wide range of social activities and events.

Bexley Pensioners' Forum

The Bexley Borough Pensioners' Forum is very much involved in the local authority and health agencies decision making process, highlighting older people's issues and concerns. The Forum members meet four times a year in the Civic Centre to hear a number of speakers on a wide range of topics of interest and concern to older people. We publish a quarterly newsletter for our members which include updates of the Council's activities.

Enfield Over 50s' Forum

Our Forum continues to support and inspire the older community within the Borough. With a membership of 5,500 it encourages members to keep fit, active and involved. The Forum holds meetings at the Civic Centre, Millfield House and other venues. It has campaigned for fairer funding for the local authority and NHS, and for free TV licenses.

Haringey over 50s' Forum

2019 saw the Forum gaining momentum with the help of Public Voice, whose mission to improve the lives of the people who live in Haringey and the public services they use. In the last few months, the HO50s has forged a closer alliance with PV as it prepares to launch Circles a programme of social meetup events which will run alongside Reach and Connect. The Forum has organized a number of useful & fun events.

Hammersmith and Fulham Pensioners' Forum

Our forum works in partnership with the Kensington and Chelsea over 50s Forum.

We do not function as most forums do, but only hold six well organized coach trips per year. Our members attend many of the courses, talks, trips and events which the Kensington and Chelsea forum annually organize. We support campaigns which will help improve the wellbeing of older people living in the borough.

Islington Pensioners' Forum
The Islington Pensioners Forum is a membership organisation established in 1986 providing a voice for the pensioners of Islington about the issues affecting them. We champion the rights and dignity of pensioners, locally, London-wide and nationally and our aim is to reduce isolation and loneliness. The forum holds monthly meetings in Islington Town Hall on key issues of interest to older people.

Kingston Pensioners' Forum
Celebrating our 25th year of helping older residents of Kingston tackle loneliness & social isolation. We give older people an active voice in stating their needs and concerns on local and national issues. We hold monthly open meetings in The United Reform Church on a range of topics with expert speakers. We campaign and lobby on many issues.



Forums meeting at Houses of Commons – Question Time

Havering Over 50s' Forum

We are a non-political organisation who offer a platform where the over 50's can find information and raise issues which are of a concern to them. We hold monthly meetings in the Council Chamber at the Havering Town Hall, covering a wide range of topics. We had great plans this year to provide community events providing information and advice as we had received funding from a major Insurance Company, unfortunately this is now on hold.

Kensington and Chelsea over 50s' Forum

The Kensington and Chelsea over 50s' Forum is funded to deliver 156 annual activities and events. It holds three annual conferences in Kensington Town Hall on current issues of interest and concern to our membership of over 2400. The Forum is the critical friend of the local authority and works closely with the Bi-Borough commissioners, West London Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS and our two MPs. We have a health & wellbeing website which receives visitors worldwide.

Lewisham Pensioners' Forum

The Borough of Lewisham is among the most diverse Boroughs in London. Lewisham Pensioners' Forum was established over 30 years ago to be the voice of the older people of the Borough. We are inter-cultural and bring speakers from all the professions to enlighten and educate our members about the services available to them, and entitlements they may have. We are renowned for the work we do, such as the Health Fairs, sessions on SCAMS, Inheritance and Wills.

Merton Seniors' Forum

The Forum works closely with the Council and committee members attend a number of strategic meetings representing older people's views. Members meetings are held in a number of venues and are well attended.

The forum holds events to highlight issues such as scams, local services to help older people and has been very productive in producing a well supported newsletter.

Redbridge Pensioners' Forum

The Forum has continued to meet twice a month to provide our members with opportunities to:

- Participate in campaigning and to promote their interests at national level (e.g. to prevent the BBC reinstating TV licence charges generally for people over 75) and locally (e.g. by contributing to consultation on their needs for local health service reorganisation and the development of community 'hubs') and develop links with council and other voluntary organisations,
- Receive advice and information on health issues, local events and activities,
- Provide a social environment for people to enjoy.

Greater London Forum for Older People

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Seniors' Action Group Ealing

We organise at least one public meeting per year, along with a seminar or extended committee meeting if this is deemed more appropriate. In recent years the focus has been on health and social care issues.

Close contact is maintained with local councillors and MP's so that the voice of older people in the Borough is clearly heard. We have about 200 members. No membership fee is charged.

Sutton Seniors' Forum

Unlike some local Forums in London, SSF does not have any staff or premises. However we do have a very active and enthusiastic committee who work very hard to ensure that the older people in Sutton, do have a voice and are represented.

We have continued to keep in touch with our members who are on email. Additionally, committee members agreed between us we would phone each of the members who are not on email.

Wandsworth Older Peoples' Forum

The Forum's aim is to be a voice for older people in the Borough of Wandsworth. We have monthly meetings with speakers of interest. We have a committee which meets monthly and discusses a wide range of what the authorities are doing and what we think they should be doing. We held a Conference last November on Age-Friendly Cities .

Westminster Senior Citizens' Forum

The Forum was founded on 7th November, 1996. Our aim is to provide advice and act as an information resource for older people in the City of Westminster and also to lobby on various issues on their behalf. The Forum holds four meetings a year, plus an AGM in Westminster City Hall, Victoria Street, SW1. Covering a wide range of subjects of importance and concern to the Senior Citizens of Westminster. We also include speakers from the world of entertainment, sports and leisure.

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