

Issue 4 Spring 2010

Looking forward to Spring

Nearly 12 months have passed since the 'official' merger of Age Concern Kensington and Chelsea and Sixty Plus. It's been a busy time for all the staff (and volunteers) as we work to blend our services and approaches.

We've made a lot of progress and hope that it feels that way to our members as well, but if you have experienced any difficulty at all in getting the right person at the right time, please don't hesitate to give me a ring. Feedback (positive or negative) will help us to get it right.

The next phase of our merger will be complete by the summer when Charles House (the address of our office on High Street Kensington) closes as part of the regeneration of that area. We'll take that opportunity to relocate all of our **Information and Advice** services, including **Wayfinders** and **Support Brokerage**, at our accessible office in Thorpe Close, off Ladbroke Grove. However, these staff members will continue to do sessions in the community and can do home visits as well as take telephone enquiries, so there should be no disruptions. In April, we will be



A taste of Spring – the crop of radishes grown from seed by Garden Guardians in their mini-allotment were enjoyed by Age Concern's appreciative staff members.

welcoming a **new Information Manager**, Mohammed Arani, and he will help the team to come together in one place.

Election hustings

By the time of the next newsletter in June, we will have gone through a national and local election and older people in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea are already giving their views to the candidates. If you weren't able to attend the lively session hosted by the LINK and the Kensington & Chelsea Older Residents' Forum, there's

another chance to hear the Parliamentary candidates on **Wednesday 21 April**, 10 to 1pm at Kensington Town Hall.

Inside this edition, you will find many opportunities for leisure, learning and healthy ageing. If you need any further information about any of the items listed, please don't hesitate to ring on **020 8969 9105**.

With Spring clearly on the way, our diaries will surely be abloom with activity as well.

Cynthia Dize
Chief Officer

Paying for social care

The Council is changing the way in which it charges for adult social care services. This is part of the Government's personalisation agenda (locally known as People First). **People First** is about giving you more choice and control over the support you receive through the Council, by letting you choose the services that suit you best.

To help put this into action, a new system of 'personal budgets' is being introduced for everyone eligible to receive ongoing support from the Council. A personal budget is the amount of money that the Council thinks is needed to cover the cost of your support each week, based on your particular situation. This money can be used by you to make your own arrangements, which could include employing someone to help you or using a home care agency of your choice. If you prefer, the Council can use the money to set up services and activities on your behalf, meaning you can keep your support arrangements as they were previously if you wish.

The Government informed Councils last year that a new way of charging for adult social care would be needed to fit with personal budgets. From August to October last year the Council consulted service users on this change and how it should be managed. All home care and meals service users were written to with a leaflet explaining the proposed changes, a questionnaire to feedback views and an

invitation to public consultation meetings, where the changes could be discussed. Most of those who participated in the consultation supported the idea that people who can afford to contribute to their support costs should do so.

A key decision has now been reached based on this consultation and the new contributions policy, as it is called, will take effect from 31st May 2010.

What will change?

Depending on your financial circumstances, you may need to contribute towards your personal budget, or even meet the full cost of your support. You will only be asked to pay if the Council assesses that you can afford to do so.

If you are already receiving support services through the Council, you will be written to with an explanation of how this change will affect the amount you pay. If you have not had a financial assessment, it is important that you have one to make sure that you are not asked to contribute more than you should. The financial assessment can be carried out in your home and is confidential.

If you choose to continue to use your personal budget to buy Council provided services, the following amounts will be charged against your budget:

- Attendance at a day centre will cost £20 per session (a morning or afternoon).

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- Home care arranged through the Council will cost £14.30 an hour.
- A meal will cost £3.20.
- The bathing service will cost £15.30.
- Transport to and from a day centre will cost £8 for a round trip.

If bought privately, rather than through the Council, these services may cost more, or less. The Council subsidises many services, so the contribution you may have to make does not cover the whole cost of the service.

If you have any questions about this change, please contact the Financial Assessment Team at Kensington Town Hall on **020 7361 2324** or email: fateam@rbkc.gov.uk

Editor's note: *Age Concern K&C employs a Support Planner to help people make the most of personal budgets. See page 24 of this newsletter for more information.*

'Small Sparks' – have you got a bright idea?

Building on successful projects in America, the **Small Sparks** funding was introduced in the UK by In-Control, an organisation helping people get real choice and control in their lives (see www.in-control.org.uk).

One of the many stories from Seattle, where this idea started, is about Mark, a young disabled man. His mother realised that he did not have many connections in the neighbourhood. So they dreamed up a project which would be useful for the area, one in which Mark could be the leader. They used a grant for their project called 'Walking the Wagon'.

Collecting magazines

They bought a trolley cart and set off to pull it around the community. They knocked on doors and asked for magazines people didn't want any more. Then they would ask if people wanted magazines from the cart. People flipped through the magazines and would ask 'who likes cycling round here (or trains, or cooking)?'

Mark would tell them who gave those magazines. He became known as the guy who put people in touch with each other. Soon everyone wanted to pull the cart.

'Walking the Wagon' became a feature of the local community and Mark was seen as a community leader.

Purpose

The purpose of **Small Sparks** is to reach out to people to create small scale community projects that benefit the neighbourhood and engage people with a common purpose.



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea offers grants of up to £250 to individuals who have an idea for a project to improve local community life. People must match the grant. They can do this in funding (e.g. as a donation from a local business), materials or volunteer labour. Most people use their time.

The idea is to make the application process simple and encourage feedback on the project by means of photographs, stories or attending a celebratory event once the projects are underway.

If you or someone you know has a bright idea, contact Bob Davis for more information.

Bob Davis

*Business Initiatives Officer
Housing, Health and Adult
Social Care*

020 7361 3711

Bob.davis@rbkc.gov.uk

Can Campden Charities help?

Are you finding it difficult to pay your fuel bills or replace a household item? Then this information could be for you

If you are a man aged 65+ or a woman aged 60+, have lived in rented accommodation in the old parish of Kensington for two years, have no savings and are on a low income, you may be able to get help from a local charity.

The **Campden Charities** may be able to help with a cash grant of up to £1000 and/or household items.

To qualify you must be on a low income, be in receipt of benefits such as Pension Credit or Housing Benefit. You must also live in the old borough of Kensington (the area north of the Fulham Road SW10 up to the north of the borough W10). If you are in receipt of a disability benefit you may not be eligible.

If you want to find out if you qualify, contact the Pension Officers Maureen Burrell or Jan Gates at The Campden Charities on **020 7313 3794** or **020 7313 3796**. We look forward to your call.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

The next meeting of the Kensington and Chelsea Older Residents' Forum will be held at the Small Hall of Kensington Town Hall on Friday, June 25th at 2.00pm. For more information about the forum, ring Nouredine on 020 7352 1336.

Advocacy Plus

Westminster Advocacy Service for Senior Residents (WASSR) has just changed its name to **Advocacy Plus**. The organisation provides trained advocates to represent you, free of charge, and makes sure your voice is heard on matters that are important to you.

A recent Advocacy Plus case

Our client is very elderly. Our advocate visited the client at home to find out why an

advocate was needed and found the client was very concerned about an insurance policy she took out in August 1997 to cover the cost of her funeral. The insurance policy was advertised in a magazine, using a very well known and respected TV personality, who often champions older people's issues and gave credibility to the insurance company. Our client says that no representative visited her to explain the policy. The policy, which costs £43.00 per quarter,

is quite unsuitable to our client's needs, in fact it is not worth the cost.

Our advocate is pursuing a complaint against the insurance company about their marketing methods and may be able to obtain some compensation, but the client's main concern is that no other older person should be duped as she was.

We work with and for people aged over 60. Our service is free, confidential and independent.

Call **020 7439 3131** or visit www.wassr.org to find out more.

Keeping it local

Whether you get an individual budget or pay for your home care yourself, you might be interested to know that **Age Concern Kensington and Chelsea** and **Vitalise** are planning to join forces to create a reasonably priced, trusted and flexible **care service** that will include personal care such as the ACKC bathing service, shampoos, shaves and nail cutting, as well as light housework.

This is a new way of working for us but we think that our local knowledge, consistent and well-supported workforce and easy access will be of interest to RBKC residents and their families.

We're hoping to launch this service in the next few weeks, but if you'd like to find out more now, please ring Emma on **020 8969 9105**.

Planning for the end of life

Information on end of life care and services is not often widely available and people's needs vary according to their personal beliefs and requirements.

The Council's **Borough Community Relations Advisory Group** will be holding a free public meeting on 21 May, 9.30am to 2pm, in the Small Hall at Kensington Town Hall for residents to hear about services available locally or outside the borough for residents who are in hospital, hospice, care home or at home.

There will be contributions from speakers who offer services or are knowledgeable about requirements of residents from different cultural or faith backgrounds.

The meeting will also offer residents and others an opportunity to ask questions and

make suggestions to services on end of life facilities.

For more information or to attend this event please contact the Council's Community Engagement Team on **020 7598 4633** or email communityengagement@rbkc.gov.uk

Farewell Sir Edward Elgar?

If you are holding any Elgar £20 notes, be aware that after June 30th, shops will not have to accept them and it is up to each bank whether it agrees to swap notes after this date. After that, only £20 notes with the image of Adam Smith will be legal tender.

So, if you have a stash – now's the time to cash in. (Or maybe save one for the grandchildren.)

Are you interested in eating well?

If you are passionate about food, and think that many older people do not have good nutrition, or have some good ideas about how to improve things please get in touch.

Many people do not get the chance to eat the kind of meals that they would like.

Food and Friends

Age Concern Kensington and Chelsea wants to develop projects to tackle this. One project in development is the **Food and Friends** project where we provide volunteer dining companions.

We want to develop other projects around nutrition and eating well which may include a



meals service, shopping or café visits.

If food is a subject close to your heart and you have ideas that you would like to discuss over the phone, or at an upcoming nutrition meeting, please get in touch with Lak on **020 8969 9105**.

'Dignity Champions'

The **K&C LINK (Local Involvement Network)** Older People's sub-group, has set up a 'Dignity Champions Group' in collaboration with RBKC **Safeguarding Adults** team. They are working to:

- Ensure the 'red tray' protected meal time system is implemented at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital
- Raise awareness of the Age Concern 'Hungry to be Heard' campaign in K&C
- Liaise with community health professionals on nutrition from the hospital setting into the community.

If you would like to know more about **LINK** please call them on **020 8968 7049**.

Free NHS health checks for older people

NHS Kensington and Chelsea is offering free health checks for people between the ages of 40–75 who have not already been diagnosed with heart disease, stroke, diabetes or kidney disease.

They will take place at twelve GP surgeries and pharmacies within the borough. They will also take place at:

Mobile sites

Tuesday: Dalgarno Estate

Wednesday: World's End Estate

Thursday: Holland Park

Friday: Sainsbury's Ladbroke Grove

Fixed sites

St. Charles Hospital Clinic:

Every second Friday starting on 26th February 2010, then followed by:

Kensington and Chelsea 
Primary Care Trust

- **Friday 12th** and **26th March**
- **Friday 9th** and **23rd April**
- **Friday 7th** and **14th May**
- **Friday 11th** and **25th June**
- **Friday 9th** and **23rd July**

If you would like more information or would like to book a slot at one of the sites please ring: NHS Health Check Booking Number: **0800 232 1531** (0300 123 9128-free minutes from mobile packages can be used).

Health + Well-Being

Health Wise – dates for your diary

Date	Activity	Time	Location
March 24th	Free Taster Session on Arts and Crafts	10:30–12:30	Kensington United Reformed Church, Allen Street, W8 6BL
March 26th	My Memories Café Games Day	2:00–4:00pm	Cremorne Sheltered Housing Scheme, Milman Street, SW10 0DA
March 31st	Free Taster Session with BookBreak (reading group)	2:00–4:00pm	Kensington United Reformed Church, Allen Street, W8 6BL
April 6th	My Memories Café Exercise Taster	2:00–4:00pm	St Peter's Church, 90 Kensington Park Road, W11 2PL.
April 7th	Free Taster Session Reminiscence with History Talk	2:00–4:00pm	Kensington United Reformed Church, Allen Street, W8 6BL
<i>Every Thursday from 8th April to 13th May</i>	Ageing Well	1:00–2:20pm	Sybil Thorndike House Kramer Mews, Old Brompton Road, SW5 9JG
April 13th	Talking to your GP	11:30–12:30pm	ACKC, 1 Thorpe Close, W10 5XL
<i>Every Tuesday from 13th April to 18th May</i>	Ageing Well	2:00–3:00pm	Quest Day Centre, 81–85 Clarendon Road, W11 4XQ
<i>Every Tuesday from 13th April to 18th May</i>	Ageing Well	10:00–1:15am (tbc)	Cremorne Sheltered Housing Scheme, Milman Street, SW10 0DA
April 14th	Free Taster Session Music/Singing (tbc)	2:00–4:00pm	Kensington United Reformed Church, Allen Street, W8 6BL
April 16th	Dementia Awareness Talk	10:00–11:15am	Cremorne Sheltered Housing Scheme, Milman Street SW10 0DA
April 30th	My Memories Café Exercise Taster Event	2:00–4:00pm	New Horizons, Cadogan Street, SW3 2PF
May 4th	My Memories Café Reminiscence Event	2:00–4:00pm	St Peter's Church, 90 Kensington Park Road, W11 2PL
May 5th	Eating Well Road Show	12:00–2:00pm	London Lighthouse, 111–117 Lancaster Road, W11 1QT
May 6th	Eating Well Road Show	11:30–1:30pm	Dalgarno Community Centre, 1 Webb Close, W10 5QB
May 13th	Eating Well Road Show	11:30–1:30pm	Chelsea Methodist Centre, 155a King's Road, SW3 5TX
May 20th	Eating Well Road Show (for Arabic speaking women)	12:30–2:30pm	Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre, 224 Acklam Road, W10 5YG
May 28th	My Memories Café Reminiscence Event	2:00–4:00pm	New Horizons, Cadogan Street, SW3 2PF
June 1st	My Memories Café Summer Party	2:00–4:00pm	St Peter's Church, 90 Kensington Park Road, W11 2PL
June 9th	Arthritis Seminar	2:00–3:30pm	St Mary Abbots Centre, 24 Vicarage Gate, Kensington, W8 4HN
June 18th	My Memories Café	2:00–4:00pm	New Horizons Centre, Cadogan Street, SW3 2PF

How to get the most from your GP visits

Some people find themselves dissatisfied with the outcome of their GP visits. Below are a few points to consider whenever you visit your GP.

The right information

Around 80 per cent of the information your doctor needs to make a correct diagnosis comes from what you say. The remaining pieces of the puzzle are found when you're examined and from tests.

This verbal information – known as your 'history' – is important and is often obtained in two ways:

- your answers to their questions
- what you say without being prompted

Never be afraid to give your doctor information, as very little of it will be unhelpful. Often it's a little piece of information that you feel is irrelevant that cracks the diagnosis.

Give your doctor as much information as you can. If there's anything you think they need to know – that you're taking supplements or over-the-counter medication, for example – say so. Doctors are human too and may forget to ask certain things.

Clarification

In everyday life it's easy to misunderstand something and get the wrong end of the stick. In medicine, it's even easier.

It's assumed that patients and doctors are speaking the same language. But doctors tend to

use technical language and words that mean one thing to them and something completely different to you.

Never be embarrassed to say if you don't understand what your GP is saying.

In your medical notes, your GP will often use abbreviations that are universally understood by doctors but may mean something else entirely in normal language. Patients who exercise their right to see their medical records are advised to have someone interpret them, to avoid confusion or worry.

Breaking bad news

There's never an easy way to break bad news and it's not something GPs enjoy.

No matter how much a GP might prepare or even rehearse, luck and professional judgement are both involved when trying to give bad news in a sensitive manner. Your GP may know you well enough to gauge how you wish to be told and how you may react. However, even in such cases, it doesn't always go smoothly or to plan.

Your GP may choose to break the news in a direct, almost clinical fashion, believing this is what you want. If they've got it wrong, it may come across as if they don't really care.

Some doctors try to maintain a positive outlook even when all seems negative, which may seem confusing. You may feel your GP is making light of the

situation. As you get to know your GP you'll be more aware of how they'll react in certain situations.

None of us likes to prepare for the worst, but often it's a good idea. It might be helpful to tell your doctor how you'd like to be told such news should the need ever arise. This lessens the chance of them getting it wrong.

When receiving bad news, few people take much else in. Often it's best to take some time to let things sink in, to think about the questions that have arisen and to go back when your mind's a bit clearer.

Your GP will support you in coming to terms with your new situation and share ideas of how others have managed. They may not have all the answers, but they'll help you to find them.

Remember: Talking to your doctor clearly and understanding what they're saying to you is the basis of every successful doctor-patient relationship.

If you have ever been told, 'It's because of your age', or do not feel your GP takes your concerns seriously, come to this one-off session and find out how to get the most out of your GP visits.

Talking to your GP

Date: Tuesday, 13th April

Time: 11.30–12.30

Venue: 1 Thorpe Close, W10 5XL

Speaker: Emma Turner (advocate)



Lily's *Eat Smart* Column

Do you suffer from poor nutrition?

We are well aware of the tragedy of malnutrition in poor and developing countries, but in our world of well-stocked supermarket shelves and year-round availability of fresh foods we are all too often unaware that this is a problem that can also hit closer to home.

Malnutrition, or undernutrition, occurs when a person doesn't get enough of the essential nutrients needed to maintain health because they consume an inappropriate amount of calories or get inadequate vitamins and minerals from their diet. It is a serious condition in that it can lead to a number of health problems, including a compromised immune system and increased risk of infections, muscle wasting, respiratory problems, anaemia, fatigue and depression.

Good nutrition is especially important for older people.

Health conditions that make it difficult to eat healthily or interfere with the way our bodies use nutrients affect us more as we age. Stroke, arthritis and Parkinson's disease can make meal preparation a challenge. Chronic illnesses, long-term use of drugs, and multiple

prescription medications can interfere with appetite or require a restricted diet. Dental problems, gum disease, difficulty swallowing, or memory loss can mean that people sometimes do not eat at all. Access to shops, a limited budget, loneliness, or depression further compound these problems. And if you suffer from digestive disorders, such as Crohn's disease, diverticulitis, or Coeliac disease, your body may not absorb adequate amounts of nutrients even if you are eating a healthy diet.

With so many potential stumbling blocks, getting enough of the more than 40 different essential vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients needed for health can be a real challenge. No single food provides all of the nutrients that we need, so a good place to start would be to make every effort to eat as wide a variety of different foods from the major food groups as possible. In particular, choose plenty of starchy foods such as bread, cereal, rice and pasta, and try to have at least five servings of fruit and vegetables each day. Also include some dairy products and meat, eggs, fish or meat

alternatives such as beans and pulses. Avoid fad diets that eliminate entire food groups as they can put you at risk of deficiency of important nutrients. Likewise, limit alcohol and sugary and fatty foods as they can suppress hunger and, although supplying calories, lack vital nutrients.

If you suffer from any of the conditions listed above, have lost weight recently or have any doubts about how much or what foods you should be eating, consult your GP or ask him/her to refer you to a registered dietician.

Healthy eating tips: For added protein and nutrients, spread peanut butter on toast, bread or sandwiches; sprinkle chopped nuts or seeds on cereals, salads and yogurt; and grated cheese on sandwiches, soups and pasta.

If you have difficulty getting out, join a shopper service such as the one offered by Age Concern Kensington and Chelsea or sign up for Meals on Wheels.

To have your questions answered, write to Eat Smart, c/o ACKC, 1 Thorpe Close, Ladbroke Grove, W10 5XL

This column is not meant to give medical advice. Consult your GP before changing your diet, taking up exercise, or if you have a persistent problem.

Stroke support

North Kensington Stroke Support Group was launched on 22nd January 2010, in partnership with Open Age.

The group involves a small but growing number of stroke survivors, carers and volunteers, who meet on alternate Fridays, 11am–1pm, at the Positive Age Centre on Peabody Estate, Dalgarno Way, W10 5JW.

The need for a local support group was raised in 2008 when The Stroke Association's Family and Carer Support Service was set up in the borough. The Community Neuro Team, part of the Neuro Rehabilitation Service for NHS Kensington & Chelsea, had indicated a need for longer term support for people who had experienced stroke, especially isolated older people and younger people of working age.

Peer support enables stroke survivors to learn from each other, socialise and make new friends, facilitating recovery. A comprehensive consultation

exercise was carried out among the clients of the Stroke Association Service.

Over 11,000 Londoners suffer a stroke each year, of whom more than 2,000 die. Stroke is the second biggest killer in London and the most common cause of disability. People who have had a disabling stroke often lose friends and colleagues, impacting on their confidence to mix socially, especially if they have communication difficulties.

Almost a third of all people who experience stroke will go on to have aphasia or dysphasia (damage to the part of the brain which controls language), often making it difficult to read, write and communicate.

Stroke survivors develop coping strategies more readily when they are in contact with people like themselves. A significant number remain depressed, with a need for psychological and/or emotional support.

Part of the ethos of the new group is to create a

supportive environment where clients and their carers can share experiences and learn new ways to manage their lives. The group also provides basic level, seated exercise for clients. The half-hour workout is followed by stroke education, a time when clients and carers learn how to manage their conditions better, look after their health, and be informed about what is available to them locally in the borough. Speakers are invited and the group has plans for other activities of interest at intervals through the year.

Carers are welcome at the group. Some use the time for respite, and others are happy to socialise over tea and coffee. Carers play a significant role in the lives of stroke survivors and their unique concerns are catered for with emotional support and signposting to some of the excellent borough services tailored to meet their needs.

To find out more, contact Florence Joseph on **020 8968 2194** or e-mail: florence.joseph@stroke.org.uk.

Air pollution and health

Why we should all be looking closer to home

On average we spend 90 per cent of our time indoors, whether in our homes or at work. It is therefore important that the air we breathe is of a good quality and does not have a negative impact on our health. Some people are particularly vulnerable to poor air quality including older people and individuals with lung and heart conditions.

What can cause poor air quality in the home?

Household products, such as cleaning sprays, air fresheners, cosmetics, paints and varnishes can all lead to an accumulation of pollutants known as volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

Biological contaminants which are small enough to be inhaled include mould spores, dust mites, and pet dander (pet's skin, urine and saliva).

Fuel burning appliances, e.g. gas stoves, can release pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and fine particles and are also a potential source of carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is produced when fuels such as gas, coal and wood burn without enough oxygen. It is a potentially fatal gas that is colourless and odourless so can build up without you being aware.

Smoking any form of tobacco releases tar droplets, carbon monoxide and over 4,000

chemicals and can linger for over two hours. Breathing secondhand smoke increases a non-smoker's risk of lung cancer by 24% and heart disease by 25%.

Traffic pollution can impact on the quality of air in your home. If you live near a busy road it is likely that levels of pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and fine particles are above national health-based limits.

What are the associated health effects of indoor pollutants?

Exposure to VOCs can cause eye, nose, and throat irritation, headaches, nausea and dizziness.

Biological contaminants can trigger allergic responses, hay fever-like symptoms and worsening of conditions such as asthma.

Carbon monoxide prevents blood carrying oxygen around the body and can therefore be extremely dangerous. Lower levels can cause headaches, dizziness, nausea and flu-like symptoms. High levels can lead to coma and death.

What can be done to improve indoor air quality?

- Keep your home clean, dry and well ventilated, especially when cooking or showering.

- Dry clothes outside where possible to reduce dampness.
- Limit the amount of household products used in your home and avoid using sprays.
- Ensure that fuel burning appliances are installed and regularly serviced by a qualified and registered engineer.
- Install a carbon monoxide monitor in your home and regularly check its batteries.
- Avoid smoking in your home.
- Ventilate your home away from sources of traffic pollution.
- Help improve local air pollution by walking and cycling instead of using your car.

Useful contacts

- **Healthy Homes Scheme** – If your house is cold or damp and you sometimes struggle to pay your bills call **0808 202 6204**.
- For help and advice on how to make your home smokefree please call our Smokefree Homes Officer on **020 7341 5721** or to give up smoking contact the Kensington and Chelsea **NHS Stop Smoking Service** on **08000 859 147**.
- If you would like any further information on indoor air quality, asthma or air pollution or to attend a discussion session, contact the Air Quality Promotion Officer on **020 7341 5683** or Ruth. Lawless@rbkc.ac.uk

New Health Trainer Service launched in Kensington & Chelsea

The Kensington & Chelsea Health Trainers service has just been launched.

Six Health Trainers have been recruited and trained to offer one-to-one advice to anyone wanting to improve their general health.

They will talk with you about the things you do that affect your health, and the things that you could do to improve your health.

Health Trainers can give you confidential advice on:

- eating a healthier diet
- becoming more active
- feeling more confident
- joining in activities
- making new friends
- stopping smoking

Your Health Trainer will help you draw up an action plan for you to take away. Your plan is aimed at helping you achieve the goals you have set for yourself, plus they will give you a diary to record your progress.

You can then meet with your Health Trainer up to six times to discuss your progress and get support to achieve your goal.

Where are Health Trainers based?

You can meet with one at several community venues, including the Age Concern – Sixty Plus office, or at a venue that is convenient for you.



How can I get more information or make an appointment?

Just call our office on **020 8962 5730** and leave a message or email us at healthtrainers@westway.org

One of our friendly Health Trainers will get back to you within 48 hours.

News from My Memories Café

My Memories Café is still running once a month at the New Horizons Centre in Cadogan Street and St Peter's Church in Notting Hill. Come join in a fun afternoon of varied activities and delicious cream cakes and tea.

This year we have had free

complimentary massage sessions and some lovely live music. The sessions are aimed at people who have concerns about memory loss and carers are very welcome to come along.

If you would like to find out more about the Café, please ring Angela on **020 8969 9105**.

For more Health and Well-being information see the insert in this Newsletter.

Garden Guardians update

The snow has melted at long last and the spring bulbs are popping their heads over the parapet. With a longer colder winter, most plants have been suspended in deep freeze, just like your frozen peas. Some of your plants may not have survived the severe frosts, but don't despair as most plants are quite hardy. So keep your eyes peeled for small spurts of green growth.

Spring will be delayed for a few weeks due to the weather, but by the time you are reading this all the daffodils should be up and blooming, so have a look at the garden in Elkstone Road if you are passing by (around the corner from Golborne Road, W10), as we planted lots of daffodils and tulips.

RBKC is getting green all over

The spaces on our new **mini-allotment** have been taken up by two members who are keen to cultivate their Kensington carrots and Chelsea cabbages.

We managed to get a small crop of radishes from our trial run with seed planting, but am afraid they have all been munched up by the hungry workers in the office.

There may be a chance to get a larger allotment spot, so in the meantime you could start with a window box to grow some herbs or little vegetables like spring onions or a pea. We can help you with some seeds and germination, as we have access to the Westway Development Trust gardeners' greenhouses, so we can give the seeds a good start on their way to becoming fully fledged veg to accompany your Sunday roast.

We'll keep you all informed about the progress of our current allotmentees and hopefully we will have more space to grow in the future. If you would like to grow flowers instead, there are lots of edible flowers, such as nasturtiums, marigolds, banana blossoms, cornflowers or jasmine and many more. But please

don't eat just any flower as some may be poisonous or may have been sprayed with pesticides. If in doubt, spit it out or call me and I will check in my poison flower book.

I came across an old gardening book from the 1930s with some interesting takes on pest control. There is what they call, 'finger and thumb work', whereby you get the pest, be it aphid or vine weevil, between your finger and thumb and squeeze and if you happen to do greenfly on your roses you will acquire green-fingers in a few seconds without all the bother of having to inherit them.

Then the best one for sorting out your slug problem, 'Innumerable weighty pamphlets on slug-control are obtainable. Obtain a 10lb one. Read it out to the slug. If the slug doesn't play the game, slug it with the pamphlet'. The old chestnuts are the best. Finally, 'The secret of weeding is never to begin'.

On that note, our volunteers

Garden Guardians



Before (above) – and after (below): Garden Guardians at work clearing the leaves from an enormous plane tree in Earl's Court



are still here and ready to help out in your gardens, so now Spring is on its way

call me on **020 8969 9105** and a volunteer will be allocated to give you a

hand in the garden.

These before and after photos are from a garden in Earl's Court, which has reputedly the largest garden tree in London. The plane tree is very big and the leaves that were cleared were almost knee-deep in the garden. Mrs B. likes the tree and was happy for the leaves to be cleared, a good job done by volunteer Chieh.

So a big thank you to all the volunteers, Alan, Carey, Chieh, Charles, Jean, Libbie, Martin, Peter, Sue, Jacob, Interact, and our new allotmentees, looking forward to those turnips or Swedes as you English call them. We can't do it without all your help, so may a million rose petals fill your dreams. Thanks,

John Nugent
Garden Guerrillas

Botanical protection

If you have a front garden, we can supply some burglar deterrent plants such as roses, pyracantha, mahonia or your own favourite prickly plant as well as new spyholes or door chains – all free of charge.

Community Safety

Action against burglary – Safe and Sure Road Shows

Age Concern Kensington & Chelsea (incorporating Sixty Plus), in partnership with the Home Office, Age UK, Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhoods Teams and RBKC Trading Standards, have organised and delivered eight road shows called **Action Against Burglary – Safe and Sure**. These events happened between Thursday 18th Feb and Wednesday 10th March.

The aim of the road shows was to raise awareness of scams and bogus callers and to enable participants to learn how to avoid becoming victims of crime.



The events took place across the Borough, with two in Chelsea at Cremorne Sheltered Housing and Jenningsbury House and Kingsmill House, one in Earl's Court at Mary Smith Court and five in North Kensington at the Venture Community Association, Pepper Pot Day Centre, EPICS Day Centre, Canalside House and Al Manaar Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre. This last one was with an Arabic interpreter.

The turnout was good for all the road shows and most importantly, the message was

got across very well. Attendees had a chance to see some scenarios about scams, as performed by Ivanhoe Norona and his colleague, local councillor Pat Mason.

These little scenarios gave a 'real' flavour of situations that can happen to anyone and showed how easy it is to get tricked into them.

PC Kathleen Aubeelack (K&C Crime Prevention Team – Metropolitan Police) and other members of the Metropolitan Police have been heavily involved in the delivery of the road shows, providing valuable information and tips about how to keep safe in your own house.

We can summarise the advice in a sentence:

- 'If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is', as you can see in the picture on this page of one of the tea towels distributed by Andrew Neal after his presentation.

The messages from the road shows are:

- If someone knocks on your door, you are in charge of your own house and no one should enter if you don't want them to.
- Remember to keep your door chain on.
- If you don't have a door chain, but want one, Age Concern-



Sixty Plus can fit one for free. Call us on **020 8969 9105**.

We can also provide free spyholes and other equipment like fireproof letter boxes. These will be installed by Staying Put.

Tasio Cabello
Volunteer and Community Services Manger

STOP PRESS

During one of the roadshows, a resident told us that she'd heard about a new scam where someone pretends to be from the council's 'Performance Measurement Team' and wants to conduct an interview. Don't believe it!

The council is undertaking no such exercise, and anyway, if someone from the council wanted to talk to you, they would make an appointment first.

Community Safety

Safer neighbourhoods in Kensington and Chelsea

The Community and Police Engagement Group (CPEG) is the new name for the Police Community Consultative Group. This new name better reflects its role – putting residents first. The CPEG is a borough-wide volunteer-led community organisation, which acts both as a conduit and a bridge between the community and the police.

There are four sectors, within which there are 18 wards. Each of the wards has a Safer Neighbourhoods Team, working with a panel of residents and the hope is to get representation from all parts of the borough onto the panels. The ward panels meet with the Safer Neighbourhoods Sergeants to discuss a range of community safety issues.

If you are interested in finding out more, you can contact your ward team on the telephone numbers included in this mailing.

Eileen Menzies
Vice-Chair, CPEG



Police Community Safety Officers Kim Coutts and Nick Fletcher with residents of Thomas Darby Court, Lancaster Road

Community police consult residents

As part of their Community Engagement work members of Notting Barns Safer Neighbourhood Police Team make regular visits to talk to residents of Thomas Darby Court.

Joining the residents for coffee mornings, the police are able to chat with them about issues that affect them in their community.

During one coffee morning the residents said that they would like to recycle their Christmas Cards, but they were unable to take them anywhere. PCSO Nick Fletcher offered to collect the cards if the residents collected them up, and brought them to Age Concern for recycling.

GET IN TOUCH

For more information about the CPEG, ring the Administrator, Jerome Treherne on 020 7361 2782, jerome.treherne@rbkc.gov.uk.

In an emergency, ring 999.

For non-emergency police assistance, ring 0300 123 1212.

Volunteers

Valentine's Party 2010



Older K&C residents enjoy themselves at the annual Valentine's Day party

Every year, we try to hold our annual Valentine's Party on the Saturday nearest to Valentine's Day. This year, we originally planned our party for Saturday February 13th but had to bring the date forward one week in order to secure the services of the highly popular band George and His Friends.

That decision turned out to be somewhat of a blessing in disguise as we also managed to secure the help of several kind volunteers who might otherwise have been romantically engaged with their SOs (Significant Others) on the actual Valentine's weekend.

Planning for the event started last autumn when the three organisations, Age Concern Kensington & Chelsea, Open Age and The Venture Centre got together to ensure an enjoyable day for everyone. Potential

donors were approached for funding and prize contributions while transport providers, caterers, entertainers, etc., were requested to provide their services. Invitations were sent out to the four most northerly wards of W10 and W11, namely St Charles, Golborne, Notting Barns and Colville.

The party started at 12.30pm with welcome drinks (beer, wine and soft drinks) and music provided by Rick King. Then lunch, with choices of tasty chicken or meat, or vegetarian pasta with couscous and salad was served from 1.00pm.

Rick's popular music numbers soon enticed couples out onto the floor to dance to the rhythm of familiar tunes. At around 2.00pm a quiz was conducted by our MC Tina and one proud winner managed to get all the answers correct. Then, George

and His Friends took to the stage and the dancing began in earnest. Our ever-cheerful Leslie (see photo) in his big party hat left his wheelchair behind to invite lovely ladies out to dance and show them some of his latest moves.

At around 3.00pm we took a short break for a raffle conducted by Tina and Lauren, and many fine prizes were won by lucky guests, after which we had afternoon tea with the special Valentine's Day cake baked by a local patisserie. George and His Friends resumed their entertainment and dancing continued until around 4.30, when happy guests gradually started drifting homewards.

Fortunately, the weather was very kind to us for that particular day which was sandwiched between two of the most bitterly cold spells seen in the UK for decades. Maybe somebody up there likes us after all!

I would like to give my warmest thanks to all our kind volunteers who so generously gave their time and energy to help us out on the day: Cai, Jose, Dino, Tina, Shallarie and her daughter Lauren, Hotham, Sajni, Jennifer, Lydia, Ava, Stella, Rosanna, Teresa, Catherine, Laura, Sarah, Santiago and Panpailin. (I hope I haven't forgotten anyone.)

But most of all I'd like to thank poor Pamela who came out of her warm and cosy home to drive one of the minibuses on the day despite having a very bad cold.

Martin Burke

Volunteers

Wayfinders – calling for more volunteers

Do you think of yourself as a good neighbour? Do you want to know more about the services that are available to you and other older people in Kensington & Chelsea? If so, read on.

By now you have probably heard of the **Wayfinders**. They are our gateway to information and services for older people locally.

But what does that mean? It means that Wayfinder volunteers aim to be the main port of call for older people in Kensington and Chelsea who

need information, whether that is answering questions on pensions or wills, finding a handy person or help to get to a new activity class. If they don't know the answer, they will find someone who does.

Wayfinder volunteers work out in the local community and, like you, they care because it is their own community and their own neighbours they are helping.

The more volunteer Wayfinders we have, the more we can do – which is why we need your help. We

are looking for more volunteers who are happy to train up to become Wayfinders.

You don't need any previous experience and you can choose how many hours you want to contribute.

If you can spare some time to help us reach people who don't have access to the information that they need, we would love to hear from you. Call Stephanie or Redi on **020 8969 9105** to find out more or for an application form.

Internet shopping is easy

Internet shopping can be for anyone. If you need a bit of help with shopping, there are a number of options - you can join our mini-bus shopping trips or ask for a volunteer to go with you to the shops. But if you want the full range of choice that a big store can offer, and the convenience of home delivery, **internet shopping** might be for you.

A number of supermarkets, including Waitrose, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Asda, have online shopping services with home delivery. We're thinking of offering a new service where you can ring us

on a specific day, give your order and delivery details over the phone, and a volunteer will input the order online. If you prefer, you could come into the office and go through the order with a bit of help, or maybe learn how it's done yourself. (You might even decide to learn more about the internet as a result.) Some supermarkets make small charges for delivery and we can go through these with you.

If this is something you would like to know more about, please ring Martin or Stephanie on **020 8969 9105**.

Readers needed for K&C LINK

Kensington & Chelsea LINK (Local Involvement Network) is setting up a 'reading group' and would welcome all residents and workers from the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea to join us.

The aim of this group is to allow local people to work in a supportive environment to ensure that selected social care information from the council is clear and easy to understand for the average Joe/Josephine.

The first meeting will be set up in February 2010. Anyone interested in joining should contact K&C LINK staff on **020 8968 7049** or by email at rbkclink@hestia.org

New Horizons

Centre offers affordable courses in dance, poetry, foreign languages



As an activity centre, New Horizons offers an impressive array of exercise, dance and other physical activity classes for the over 50s, catering for all levels of fitness.

There is much more to good health than improved physical fitness. The Centre also provides a host of more sedate opportunities for fun and learning.

If words and language are your thing, you can choose from poetry, creative writing, a read-aloud book group and a range of foreign languages.

Arts and crafts

If you enjoy creating things with your hands, why not give crochet, tatting, jewellery making, or one of the art classes a try? Local colleges offer fewer and fewer affordable opportunities for mature students to learn but at New Horizons you can take a course in, for example British History, English Literature or History of Art.



The Centre's instructors are never short of ideas to make their classes informal and fun. For example, the French students have even enjoyed an outing to Calais, the Chelsea Belles singing group is in popular demand for local performances and the Art History students regularly do their learning in London's museums.

'In the News'

With the Centre's reputation growing, members of the current affairs group 'In the News' were recently addressed by the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Rt. Hon. John Bercow

MP, whilst on a visit to New Horizons.

With so much going on, the Centre offers something for everyone. So, come to New Horizons and you may be surprised to find yourself discovering new interests, enjoying something you didn't think you would like, meeting like-minded people, or all of those things.

New Horizons is open weekdays from 9.30–4.00.

New Horizons
Guinness Trust Estate
Cadogan Street SW3.
Tel.: 0207 590 8970
www.new-horizons-chelsea.org.uk

'Time for Me' – Spring activities for carers

Here we are at the beginning of year three of **Time for Me**.

Time for Me is specifically for carers who care for a family member or friend, are unpaid, over 50 and resident in RBK&C. During this time we have done much, from trips to the seaside, theatre, galleries and museums, to relaxation and de-stressing, as well as learning about services available to carers.

The number of carers involved in the project has grown to over 90 and hopefully during the coming months many more will join us.

The activities described below are open to carers. If you are interested in knowing more or to book a place, please call **020 7590 8970**. Some of the activities are free, but for some we do have to make a small charge.

Thursday April 8th: Time for Me is having a **2nd birthday lunch** here at New Horizons. There are places for 12 people and the cost will be £3 each. You will need to say if you are vegetarian when you book your place. Lunch will be at 12.30pm. *Book your place as soon as you can.*

Thursday April 15th: *The Real Van Gogh, The Artist and His Letters.*

This wonderful exhibition is at the Royal Academy and is not to be missed. There are nine

tickets at £5 each – call quickly as they will disappear fast. Everyone wants to go! We will meet there at 11am.

Fitness sessions: Due to popular demand, there will be more sessions on helping you to stay fit and healthy. The first is on Wednesday May 5th and the second is on Wednesday May 19th. Both will be at New Horizons, 2–4pm. You do need to call to book your FREE place.

Wednesday April 28th: PCSO Wood will help you to stay safe at home and on the streets.

How important is this for you? Who would look after the person you care for if you were hurt or injured? Come and find out how you can go about your life safely. PCSO Wood will be here at New Horizons at 2pm and will give you lots of tips, ideas and suggestions on staying safe. Book your place with a simple phone call. This session is FREE.

Wednesday May 12th: A visit to Fulham Palace with a gentle walk along the riverside at Putney. The Palace is the old home of the Bishops of London and a favourite watering hole of Henry VIII. This outing is FREE. We will meet at Putney Bridge Station at 11am. Call to say if you are coming.

Thursday May 20th: A shopping trip to Blue Water. Come and join us for a day out, a stroll

through one of the biggest shopping centres in the country and an opportunity to spend those saved up pennies! We will go by minibus, leaving New Horizons at 10am. There are 14 FREE seats available on the bus so call to book yours.

Wednesday May 26th: Sloane in Bloom.

In May, the Sloane shopping area comes alive with floral art displays for the annual Sloane in Bloom competition. For a week, Sloane retailers bloom with beautiful floral displays, judged by the RHS. Come and stroll along, see who will be the winner. Call to say if you are coming.

Thursday May 27th: Chelsea Flower Show. There will be ten tickets available at £5 each. These will be for the 3.30pm entry and you can stay until closing at 8pm. You will need to call quickly as these tickets go very fast. Meet at New Horizons at 2.30pm.

Wednesday June 9th: *Swan Lake* at the Royal Albert Hall.

This English National Ballet production has captivated audiences worldwide. The dramatic story and spectacular sets and costumes will captivate and entertain you. We have nine tickets at £5 each, you need to call quickly. We will meet there at 6.30pm.

Continued on page 20

Readers Section

Gift Aid

Gift Aid now also applies to money raised on the sale of unwanted items we donate to our local charity shop, (like British Heart Foundation, Sue Ryder Care and others)

So if you are a basic rate taxpayer, next time you take clothing, books, bric-a-brac, etc. to a charity shop, remember to fill the Gift Aid Form as the shops can claim an extra 20% of the value of your sold items from the Government. That is a boost to their income—just by leaving your details on a form. The charity will do the rest.

This extra money will go further in helping the charity with the cause they support.

John Mendes

Tipping with a smile

In spite of the change in the law from 1st October, restaurant owners can still keep the service charge to add to their profits, instead of giving it to the staff. Every time you eat out and want to reward the waiters for their service for being diligent and helpful on the top of enjoying the food, leave gratuities separately to the staff – in cash.

Some restaurants add on

service charge automatically, so if paying by card, when you are presented with the bill, just pay for the basic amount (food and drinks) before the service charge is added. Then leave the service charge or tip in cash because if you leave the full payment on the card, theoretically the service charge/tip still belongs to the proprietor.

Remember that some waiters only get the minimum wage or less. Tips paid in cash go towards a more acceptable salary that they may take home – and service with a smile.

John Mendes

Continued from page 21

June 14th to 20th is National Carers Week. The theme this year is 'A life of my own'. Carers will have opportunities to speak about what they need to have in order to have a life of their own. RBK&C will be holding several events across the borough to enable this to happen. Time for Me will be holding two events giving you the chance to have some time off.

Wednesday June 16th: Canal Boat Trip to Camden, including a visit to the famous Camden Market.

The cost is £5 to carers, there are 9 tickets and we will meet at Little Venice at 10am. You must call to book your ticket for the boat.

Thursday June 17th: The second event is a new idea that

we hope you will like – A Picnic In The Park.

We will meet in Holland Park, by the Cafe at 1pm with each of us bringing a dish of their choice to share with everyone else. You could make something special from your country, or make or buy anything you fancy. It will be an opportunity to relax, enjoy the company of friends, make new friends or just 'chill out'.



Friday June 25th: New Horizons Summer Party.

You will need to buy a ticket for this annual, happy, lively event. Details are not available at the moment. Call New Horizons to purchase your ticket at the end of May. Tickets are limited.

So, come and join us to wash away those winter blues, meet old friends, make new ones,

have some quality time for yourself.

And if you know of other carers who are over 50 and live in RBK&C and who haven't heard of Time for Me, do pass on the information and tell them to give me a call on **020 7590 8970**. I am always happy to talk with carers.

Coming soon: a trip to the dreaming spires of Oxford, Holland Park Opera, trips to the seaside, a strawberry cream tea, visits to beautiful gardens, specialist talks and hopefully a guided tour of the Houses of Parliament and much, much more. So watch out for the next programme.

Judy Graham
New Horizons
Cadogan Street, SW3
020 7590 8970

Activities + Leisure

Mobile phone and camera surgery

On Friday 26th February we had a very lively mobile phone surgery at **New Horizons**. I think we will also have to call them digital camera surgeries in future because there were a similar number of cameras to phones.

People sought advice from the young volunteers on how to send a text message, add a contact after a call, upload pictures and what features to look for when buying a digital camera. We would like to hold more surgeries later in the year.

If you are interested in attending, please call Ben Long at Age Concern K&C on **020 8969 9105**. We will hopefully be able to hold surgeries in the north, centre and south of the borough.



A volunteer helps to fix a phone at New Horizons mobile phone surgery

Thank you to the volunteers from Imperial College Volunteer

Centre and Tamezin Girls' Club for helping out.

Over 50? Bored with bingo? Tired of television?



Then why not come and try something different at **Open Age?**

With about 100 weekly activities in Kensington and Chelsea, we believe there is something for everybody!

So if you're passionate about painting, curious about computers or if exercise is more your thing then get in touch.

Our activities include: dance (ballet, tap, Latin, belly dancing, line dancing and more), creative writing, art, languages, computers, philosophy, history, gentle exercise (on chairs or standing), Tai Chi, yoga, social groups with speakers, singing,

lip reading, sewing and needlework, gym sessions, cookery, swimming, trips and outings, complementary therapies.

We have three dedicated centres:

- Positive Age Centre – North Kensington **0208 960 4853**
- New Horizons – delivered by a consortium: Open Age (lead partner) and Age Concern Kensington and Chelsea (incorporating Sixty Plus) in Chelsea **0207 590 8970**
- Computer Centre and main office at 1 Thorpe Close, W10 5XL **0208 964 1900**

We also run activities from community venues across the borough including brand new sessions in Central Kensington at Kensington United Reformed Church!!

If you would like someone to talk through your options (including getting transport to our activities) please call Chris on the number below.

We also have a very successful employment support programme for people over 50 wanting to get back into work! For more details ask for Mary.

For more information please call Open Age on: **0208 964 1900**.

Free opera tickets for older audiences

Opera Holland Park is delighted to announce that the previous subsidised tickets for our older audiences will now be free during the 2010 season as part of our **Inspire Project**. It is one of Opera Holland Park's missions to encourage all members of the community to experience and discover opera and classical music, introducing this magical art form to as many people as possible, especially those who may find it difficult to participate otherwise.

We have a thrilling season on offer this year:

Pelléas et Mélisande by Claude Debussy

Carmen by Georges Bizet

Don Giovanni by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Fidelio by Ludwig van Beethoven

La forza del destino by Giuseppe Verdi

Francesca da Rimini by Riccardo Zandonai

Opera has its share of laughter, drama, tragedy and, of course, some of the most beautiful music ever written. We believe that it is possible for everyone to enjoy this spectacular theatrical experience.

The performances are held under the canopy in Holland

Park, 1 June–14 August 2010. Tickets are available for all 46 performances in the season. If you are over 60, you are eligible to apply. You may apply for up to two tickets.

To apply for tickets, please contact Opera Holland Park for an application form on **0845 230 9769** (Monday–Friday, 1–5pm), e-mail: boxoffice@operahollandpark.com or by post: Opera Holland Park, Box Office, Old Stable Yard, Holland Park, London, W8 6LU.

Completed booking forms must be returned no later than Friday 23 April 2010.

Open Age – free trips for unpaid carers

An exciting new programme of FREE trips is aimed at unpaid carers (of any age 18+) who live in the north of RBK&C. Funded by the Borough and co-ordinated by Open Age, the current programme runs until the end of March. Further trips are planned throughout the year. Trips on the programme include a shopping trip, visit to the cinema, trip to Windsor Castle and a visit to see a top West End Musical. For further information, please call Open Age on **020 8964 1900**.

Open Age – Teleconferencing pilot for isolated older people in Kensington & Chelsea

Since the 1990s, RBK&C has

had one of the highest rates of lone pensioners in London. This RBK&C funded teleconferencing pilot project aims to help address the loneliness, depression and unhappiness that can be associated with isolation. Open Age are co-ordinating the project aimed at those aged 50+ who are housebound. Six participants join in weekly group 'conference calls', led by an Open Age facilitator, where we discuss topics such as current affairs, hobbies and interests, recipe exchanges and local information.

Please call Open Age on **020 8964 1900** for more details.

Rhythm for Life

Do you fancy trying something new this spring?

Rhythm for Life offers free instrumental music lessons for beginners aged 50+

- Taught by specially trained music students from the Royal College of Music
- No musical knowledge needed
- Lessons start in mid-April and run weekly for 12 weeks
- Lessons last for one hour
- Instruments (recorder, drums or keyboard) provided

To sign up or for further information, contact Rosie Perkins on **020 7591 4781** or email rperkins@rcm.ac.uk

Computer Corner – ACKC on Twitter

Twitter is a service which allows people to keep in touch through a series of short messages. It is based around the simple question ‘What’s happening?’ Messages can be sent via the internet or as a text message. In order to be able to send a message (called a tweet) you need to register. This can be done at <http://twitter.com/>.



It is a free service, but if you use your mobile to tweet (it is also a verb meaning to post a message on Twitter) you will be charged at your standard rate by your mobile phone operator.

You can keep your tweets private for only people you select by ticking the privacy box in the settings section or you can keep them open to the public. Messages can be no more than 140 characters long, but you can include links to other web sites which will provide more information.

Once you are registered you will have your own home page where you can leave messages. People use this simply to state the facts about what they are doing or what they are thinking. Organisations are increasingly using Twitter to publicise what they do or to advertise future opportunities. Find out what is going on in RBKC at the council’s page: <http://twitter.com/RBKC>.

One of the phenomenons of Twitter has been the rise of people following other people’s tweets. These have often been people in the public eye. One of most followed people in London and an early user of Twitter is Stephen Fry <http://twitter.com/stephenfry>, with over 1 million followers.

Some way behind Stephen Fry is the **Age Concern K&C Intergenerational tweeter** <http://twitter.com/ackcig>. This page currently doesn’t have any followers so please have a look and start following it, because it will be regularly updated with exciting information about forthcoming events, projects and the services we can provide.



Twitter was used in the 2008 US elections to drum up support for Barack Obama, to coordinate protests after the Iranian election in June 2009 and during the 2008 Mumbai attacks to coordinate the emergency response.

ASK THE WISE OWL

Q

After a financial assessment from the council, I've been given a **Personal Budget** – money to pay for my care. I need some help with bathing, dressing and also cleaning and shopping. I do not want to use an agency – I want my own worker. If I find a suitable worker, what do I need to consider? *Mrs B, Kensington*

A

Dear Mrs B,

That's great – now you can choose who you want to provide your care. But with rights, come responsibilities. Your Personal Budget (money from the Council) is classed as public money – it has to be used in a legal way. Here are some of the things you need to think about:

Is your worker eligible to work in the UK?

You will need to make sure your worker is entitled to live and work in this country, for example you could ask to see their passport or their work

Call us on **020 8969 9105** if you have difficulty reading this newsletter. You can request your copy in large print or on tape. We can also email the newsletter to you which will be more environmentally friendly.

permit/visa and you will need to keep a copy.

Becoming an employer – what else does it involve?

Directly employing someone means you become an employer. As an employer, you will have responsibility for paying your worker(s). This means you will have to make sure they receive the correct wages and that the correct NI and tax contributions are paid. You can use a payroll service to work this out for you if you wish.

Health and safety – employer's liability Insurance

Being an employer also means you have responsibilities for the health and well-being of your staff. You will need to get Employer's Liability Insurance which will cover you should your employee have an accident whilst working for you.

Your safety

As good practice, you should take two references for your employee and ideally obtain a check from the Criminal Records Bureau. Obviously, if your worker is a friend or a relative

If you would like to make a short contribution to the *Newsletter* or read about a particular topic, please contact Age Concern K&C on 020 8969 9105.



you will probably feel you don't need to do this, but if you employ someone you do not know, this is very important.

Contract of employment

You will need to provide your employee with a contract of employment

This will include details of your employee's place of work, rate of pay and how many hours they work.

This is just a brief list of some of the things you should consider. When you are allocated a Personal Budget, you can be referred to a 'Support Broker' who will help you with these practical issues, so you can make the most of your choices. Please do get in touch if you would like any further information.

Beverley Wray

Age Concern K&C

Personal Budgets Support Broker

020 8969 9105

Beverley.wray@ackc.org.uk

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