

Westminster PLUS

Essential information for Westminster's older residents

Issue 12 – February 2011



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Welcome and news

Welcome to the latest edition of Westminster Plus, packed with the latest news, advice and information for residents aged 60 plus.

On page 8, you will find an outline of important changes being made to local care services over the coming months, as a result of government cuts. Find out how these changes may affect you, and who you can contact if you have any worries or concerns.

We all know we are living in difficult times, and it is vital that the council gets you the most for your money. We are therefore very grateful to Grosvenor House, A JW Marriott Hotel and The Daily Telegraph for again jointly sponsoring the Tea Dance, and Vertex for sponsoring the band. If you did not get a ticket in the ballot we hope you will be successful next time.

In the meantime, are you looking for other great events to keep you entertained? Turn to page 4 where we are giving

away tickets to prestigious cultural venues. You can also find out about other free and low cost activities across Westminster.

Are you always hearing things about the internet but worried about using it? See page 12 for details of local courses and useful tips, and hear from residents who have overcome their fears to become accomplished web surfers.

We also have our usual mix of advice, information and offers – covering everything from helping out in your local community on page 7, to news and what's on on page 14.

And last but definitely not least, don't miss out on our regular dose of expert health information on pages 6, 10 and 11, brought to you by NHS Westminster.

Wishing you all the best for 2011.



**Councillor
Lady Flight**
Westminster
Older People's
Champion

Christabel

Cabinet Support, 18th Floor,
City Hall, 64 Victoria Street,
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**Councillor
Sheila D'Souza**
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On the cover:
Ann Widdecombe
dancing at Tea
Dance 2010.



Strictly Tea Dancing

Ann Widdecombe was the guest of honour at the council's annual Tea Dance at Grosvenor House in December. She said: "I was delighted to once again slip on my dancing shoes and join Westminster residents in what was a fabulous event."

Guests enjoyed afternoon tea and local artist Philippa White presented Ann with a painting of the Strictly Come Dancing contestants.

You can watch a video and see pictures of the event online at www.westminster.gov.uk/teadance.



Keep dancing

The council's Tea Dance may happen only once a year, but that doesn't mean you can't keep on dancing in-between. Open Age organise dances throughout the year at Porchester Hall and Westminster Boating Base.

Call 020 8964 1900 to find out more.



New healthy heart services

Patients who suffer heart problems such as stroke and angina or heart attacks and heart failure, are now able to receive treatment in two centres based outside of hospital, each with a leading cardiac consultant. Patients will receive a more accessible and efficient service in the community. You must be referred to the service, so contact your GP directly to see if you're eligible.

**South Westminster Centre
St. George's House
82 Vincent Square
London, SW1P 2PF
Call: 020 7963 2444**

**Westminster Diabetes
Centre, 4b Maida Vale
London, W9 1SP
Call: 020 7316 1200**

Join the Abbey Centre



Have you visited the Abbey Centre yet? It's just around the corner from Westminster Abbey, with fitness classes, a cultural club, and a wide range of social gatherings. It's also the perfect place to pop in for a cup of tea in the friendly Wash House Cafe. Why not join today? If you are a Westminster resident aged 60 plus, membership is only £10 for the year.

Visit www.theabbeycentre.org.uk or call 020 7222 0303 for more details.

Out and about

Find out about things to see and do in Westminster, from making your own music to watching Swan Lake.



Spring into Spring

Shake off those winter blues with 'Spring into Spring', a day of exciting activities for Westminster's older residents. Try Line Dancing and Tai Chi, taster sessions in massage and reflexology, or learn chair-based exercises and stress reduction techniques.

You can also chat to advisors from the Falls Prevention Service, Advocacy Plus and the Pensions Service, and round off your afternoon with a performance and sing-a-long with the Church Street Community Choir.

Where: Greenside Community Centre, 24 Lilestone Street, London, NW8 8SR
Time: 12-4pm
Email: Denis at penfoldhub@nhhg.org.uk
Day: Saturday 12th March
Call: 020 8762 3082

Visit Westminster's music library



Westminster Music Library is a haven for music lovers, with an extensive collection of books, scores, sheet music and journals and over 700 Mozart CDs. You can also try your hand at making your own music by using the digital piano or trying out state of the art composition software, all free. Regular live and free events and performances are also held.

Visit www.westminster.gov.uk/musiclibrary or call 020 7641 1300 to find out more.

Where: Westminster Music Library, 160 Buckingham Palace Rd, London, SW1W 9UD
Open: Monday to Friday 11am-7pm and Saturday 10am-5pm

Did you know...
...you can renew your library book online?
Visit www.westminster.gov.uk/libraries


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Get out and about with our free ticket scheme

Did you know that you can get FREE tickets for concerts, exhibitions, talks, films and theatre shows through the council's Out and About scheme?

So far, offers have included giveaways to prestigious venues like Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, Tate Britain, Wigmore Hall and English National Opera.

Westminster resident Dadou Elvin has already benefitted from the scheme: "With a pension it would be impossible to afford the cost of tickets normally...it makes me feel very good to be able to attend these performances, and be able to take someone along for company."

"With a pension it would be impossible to afford the cost of tickets normally... it makes me feel very good to be able to attend these performances"

Dadou Elvin



Other FREE things to do in Westminster

- Exhibitions at The National Gallery.
- Monday lunchtime recitals at The Royal Opera House.
- Lunchtime concerts at St. Martin-in-the-Fields.
- Street entertainment on Covent Garden Piazza.

Contact the venues for more details.

WIN ballet and concert tickets

As part of our Out and About scheme, we're giving away two tickets to English National Ballet's performance of Swan Lake on Tuesday 22nd March at 7.30pm and two tickets to the Royal College of Music's Sinfonietta on Thursday 24th March at 7.30pm.

Call the Senior Passport line on **020 7641 1444** before 7th March to enter and find out more. See **www.westminster.gov.uk/outandabout** for full terms and conditions.



Flu facts

The worst of the cold weather may now be over, but it's still worth getting your yearly flu jab if you haven't already.

Flu can affect you throughout the year and, as you get older, you might be more susceptible to catching the infectious disease. Luckily, flu vaccines are quick and easy to get via Westminster's health service.

Westminster resident Maureen Blache had her vaccine at the Victoria Medical Centre. She said: "I have my flu vaccine every year. When you get older you worry about your health more, so I find it a very helpful preventative measure. I think it's



important for people in my age group to have it done."

Pharmacist Anar Tejani said: "Residents at risk of catching flu are encouraged to pop into their pharmacy and have their vaccine done. It's quick and simple but will be a great benefit."



Q&A

What is flu?

Flu is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus. It is not just a heavy cold.

Who should be vaccinated?

The flu jab is FREE if any of the following applies to you:

- you are aged 65 or over
- you live in a residential or nursing home
- you are a carer
- you have a particular health condition

- you have a chronic heart or chest complaint, including asthma
- you have chronic kidney or liver disease
- you have diabetes.

How to get vaccinated

- Speak to your GP, practice nurse or pharmacist to arrange your vaccination.
- For further information and guidance visit **www.westminster.nhs.uk** or call Westminster's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **0800 587 8818**.

Helping hands

Have you ever considered becoming a volunteer?
Find out about the benefits of helping others in Westminster.



Volunteering is a great way of helping the community. But it is also a fantastic way to meet new people, keep yourself active and learn new skills. The Volunteer Centre Westminster (VCW) can help find the perfect volunteering role for you – from gardening and teaching, to working in charity shops or shopping for a neighbour.

If you're interested in becoming a volunteer, why not visit the VCW at their offices in Praed Street, Paddington? They'll sit down with you and find out the sorts of things you're interested in and the skills that you have. Then they'll tell you about any volunteering roles on offer which are most suitable for you. The VCW office is open between 10am and 3.30pm, Monday to Thursday. And don't worry if you can't get along to Praed Street – just give

them a call on **020 7402 8076** or register online at **www.volunteer.co.uk**.

Gwynneth works as a volunteer receptionist at the Volunteer Centre Westminster. She said:

“When I retired I wanted to find something to do which would provide a challenge and let me use my skills. I have found that volunteering gives me the chance to meet many people and there is a

great sense of achievement when we hear that people have been successful in finding a placement.”



Gwynneth Williams

A sample of current volunteering opportunities:

- **Lunch Club Assistant** – Help out at lunch club
- **Charity Shop Assistants** – Various opportunities in Westminster's many charity shops
- **Befriender / Volunteer Visitor** – Visit older people at home for an hour or two, once a week
- **ESOL Teacher** – Help teach English to foreign language students
- **Gardener** – Help the less able keep their gardens tidy

Volunteer Centre Westminster, 53-55 Praed Street, Paddington, London, W2 1NR, 020 7402 8076, info@volunteer.co.uk, www.volunteer.co.uk.

Changes to care

Last year the council carried out a consultation on changes to adult social care services.

Our proposals included the possibility of:

- Raising the threshold at which people are entitled to social care services.
- Asking people who can afford it to pay more towards their care.
- Offering day care for physically frail older people on fewer sites.
- Ending the day service for younger adults with physical disabilities at 42 Westbourne Park Road.

Many people made their views, concerns and suggestions known on the proposals, through events and questionnaires. We would like to thank all of those people who took part in the consultation. Westminster's Cabinet Members have considered these views and have made the following decisions:

- The level at which those who are eligible to receive services funded by adult social care will change. Only people whose needs and risks are assessed as 'substantial' or 'critical' within the nationally set levels will continue to receive these services. Those no longer entitled to this care will be signposted towards a range of preventative services and information on other support available.



- Those who can afford to will be asked to contribute towards the cost of their care – we estimate that only just over 10% of people will be asked to contribute more towards their care as a result of this decision.
- Sherbourne House day centre will be closed, but day care for physically frail older people will continue at Elgin and Pullen Centres, with improvements made.
- Day services for adults younger than 65 with physical disabilities will end at 42 Westbourne Park Road (The Princess Diana Centre). Investigation will be carried out on this site to make suggestions for its future use. The potential options include its use as a Health and Social Care Dementia Resource Centre, a general community centre with a particular emphasis on disability, or re-development or sale of the site.

What happens next?

We will be reassessing all of those people who are currently considered below the 'substantial' and 'critical' levels of need, to make sure they are in the correct category. This will begin immediately and will be done as quickly as possible to reduce uncertainties. All individuals who are reassessed and have services withdrawn from them will be contacted six months later to ensure they are coping and to offer any support or reassessment if necessary.

All those who are affected by these decisions will be contacted; again this may not be immediately but as and when their needs are being assessed and their budgets are due to be calculated.

People whose needs or financial situation change significantly should always draw this to the attention of the council and are entitled to reassessment.

What to do if you think you might be affected

Those affected do not need to take any action as we will contact everyone directly; however we appreciate that this may be a difficult or confusing time for some people, so if you have any questions please call **020 7641 1175**.



The full report on the outcome of the consultation and frequently asked questions are available online at www.westminster.gov.uk/careviews.

Your NHS

Get some useful advice and find out what's available to you through Westminster's health service.

HEALTH
FOCUS



Age UK Westminster also provides, or can direct you to, a range of support services such as:

- information and advice
- day centres and lunch clubs
- befriending schemes
- bereavement counselling, depression support, person-centred therapy
- exercise programmes.

Call 0800 00 99 66 for more information.

Keeping happy

Events like poor health or bereavement are more common in later life, and can understandably cause unhappiness and even depression. If you're feeling particularly unhappy, there's lots of help available to you.

A new service called Westminster Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) service is now available to help people cope with feelings of worry, panic and anxiety. The service offers one-to-one sessions, community-based classes, and mood management sessions all run by qualified psychological wellbeing practitioners and therapists.

Dr Geraint Price (pictured), Clinical Psychologist for the Westminster IAPT service said:

"It is natural to experience feelings of worry. However it is when those feelings don't go away that you should seek help and advice. Our team of professionals will work with you to come up with a programme of support."



The service is confidential and is provided in a range of doctor's surgeries and health centres across Westminster. The service is available either by referral from your GP or self-referral.

To find out more call 030 3333 0000, email westminster.iapt@nhs.net or visit www.westminsteriapt.org.



Act FAST – know the signs of stroke

If you suspect you, or someone you know, may be having a stroke, it's important to know the signs so you can respond.

When a stroke strikes act **F.A.S.T**:

Facial weakness: can the person smile? Has their mouth or eye drooped?

Arm weakness: can the person raise both arms?

Speech problems: can the person speak clearly and understand what you say?

Time to call: 999 for an ambulance if you spot any one of these signs.

Understanding the signs and symptoms through **F.A.S.T** will help you spot the signs of stroke so you can help family, friends and others should a stroke occur.

Visit www.nhs.uk/actfast for more information.

Keep your feet in shape

Need help keeping your feet in tip top condition? If you have a problem with your feet, then you may be eligible to visit the Basic Foot Care Service. The first appointment includes a full clinical podiatry assessment, where a podiatrist discusses your foot condition and advises if you are eligible. To make an appointment you must be referred by your GP or health care adviser.

**Basic Foot Care Service,
Anchor Court, 2 Carey
Place, SW1V 2RT
Call: 020 8962 3930
Email: cbo@nhs.net**



**Call 020 8964 2727 or
visit www.westminsterhealthtrainers.com to find
out more.**

Get fit in 2011

Health Trainers are local people who have been specifically trained to help Westminster residents make changes to improve their overall health and wellbeing. During six one-to-one sessions, a Health Trainer

will work with you to develop a Personal Health Plan which targets the areas of health you want to improve. Health Trainer Mukuka Mulenga said: "We can provide you with relevant local information and recommend appropriate services that can offer additional help and support."

Get online

If the thought of using the internet fills you with dread, don't worry. There are a variety of courses to get you online with confidence.



One of the courses on offer is MyGuide – organised by charity Open Age. Shar Noor, who teaches the course at Church Street Library, said: “It’s all about educating people about what is available online. Some people don’t realise how much the internet could improve their lives, whether it be paying their council tax in minutes without having to head to the Post Office, or helping isolated people with mobility problems to keep in contact with their relatives.

“The course is broken down into bite-sized chunks to avoid information overload and we cover everything from how to buy a computer and internet security, to using Facebook and taking digital photographs.”

Hugh Bradley who enrolled on the course in December said: “I wanted to take this course because everybody’s talking about the internet...every poster you see and everything you read in the papers always tells you to go online nowadays.

“Courses like this teach you that using the internet is easier than you think and there really is no need to be worried.”

Hugh Bradley



Hugh Bradley and Rod Cudd

Did you know...
...you can pay your council tax online?
Visit www.westminster.gov.uk/pay


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“I know a lot of people who are terrified of computers because of things like identity fraud, but courses like this teach you that it’s easier than you think and there really is no need to be worried. It’s safer than answering the door to a stranger, for example.”

Rod Cudd, who started off as a student on the course and is now a mentor, said: “I was computer illiterate but I now use the internet for banking, to buy things on Amazon and to email. It makes life easier, and it even got me a job. My advice would be to come along and try it.”

Useful things you can do online

Pay for your council tax, parking tickets and resident parking permits, visit: www.westminster.gov.uk/pay

Get pension and financial advice, visit: www.direct.gov.uk/en/Pensionsandretirementplanning

Find your nearest hospital, doctor or pharmacist, visit: www.westminster-pct.nhs.uk

Get health, travel and beauty tips, visit: www.saga.co.uk

Go online dating, visit: www.sagaconnections.co.uk

Top tips to stay safe and secure online

- When you’re shopping online, look for clear signs that you’re buying from a reputable company.
- Use safe ways to pay, such as PayPal or credit/debit cards.
- On an online auction site, learn how it works and learn to pick good sellers.
- Use your common sense to avoid scams – if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Visit www.getsafeonline.org for more top tips.



Online courses in Westminster

MyGuide courses with Open Age

Level: Beginners/ Intermediates

Duration: Four weeks

Where: Church Street, Maida Vale, Paddington, Queen’s Park and St. John’s Wood libraries

Cost: FREE

Seniors Online courses with Open Age

Level: Beginners

Duration: Six weeks

Where: Maida Vale and Paddington libraries

Cost: £1 per hour

Reaching U courses

Level: Beginners

Duration: Varies

Where: Various libraries and other locations

Cost: £1 per hour

To find out more call the Senior Passport line on 020 7641 1444, go to www.westminster.gov.uk/seniorsonline or pop in to your local library.

In the loop

Useful information to keep you up-to-date and informed.



Living City Awards

Many of Westminster's finest local heroes were celebrating on 20th January at the annual Living City Awards. Awards categories included 'Making us healthier' and 'Changing our neighbourhood', and there were six winners in all – each receiving a grant of £500 to help them continue the excellent work they do for the community.



Dolly Cuthbert, winner of 'Bringing us together'

Give yourself peace of mind

Have you made a lasting power of attorney (LPA) yet? An LPA is a legal document that allows you to choose someone you trust to make decisions about financial or health matters on your behalf, should there be a point in the future when you no longer wish to make those decisions, or if you lack the mental capacity to do so yourself. You can find detailed guidance and forms from the Office of the Public Guardian at www.publicguardian.gov.uk/forms/guidance_booklets.htm. For more information or for help to fill in the forms call the Safeguarding Adults line on **020 7641 2176**.



The census is coming

The next census is due to take place in March 2011. Every returned census form is equal to approximately £5,000 of funding to the council and many of the services we take for granted every day depend on it. Because every penny counts these days, it's essential that you complete your census form and help provide what your local community needs – like hospitals, schools, housing, roads and emergency services. Forms will be sent to your home around 7th March. Please call **01329 444 972** for more information.

More choice and control for community care.

Important changes are being made to the way Westminster provides simple community equipment like walking sticks, bath seats and toilet seats; designed to improve the quality of life of residents who have disabilities, mobility problems or long term health conditions.

At the moment, residents are assessed by their occupational therapist, physiotherapist, district nurse or care manager before being issued with these products via the council's equipment provider. From January onwards, residents assessed as requiring community equipment will be given a prescription to take to a local accredited pharmacy in exchange for the items.

Residents issued with a prescription will have the choice to upgrade their standard equipment to a higher model, using their own money to pay the difference. This is known as a 'top up'. Residents who don't meet the assessment criteria will be pointed in the right direction to browse and purchase equipment for themselves.

This new initiative is designed to maximise choice and control for all residents, and speed up how quickly a person can get their equipment.

For a full list of community equipment available and locations of accredited pharmacies, visit www.westminster.gov.uk/commcare. Alternatively you can also call the Senior Passport line on **020 7641 1444** for information.



Are you a carer?

Time for Me Westminster runs a supportive programme of activities and trips so carers who are over 50 and live in Westminster can have fun, improve their health and wellbeing, boost their confidence, receive support and make new friends. Sessions take place weekly and activities include art and local history trips, dancing and singing.

To find out more or suggest which activities you would like to take part in, contact Jane Turner at Open Age on **020 8964 1900** or email JTurner@OpenAge.org.uk.

Feeling lonely?

If you feel a bit isolated and need someone to chat with you might be interested in the Befriending Project, which links older people with new friends.

Contact Kate Ferguson on 020 7227 0645 for more information.



Complete your census & help tomorrow take shape

The census collects information to plan services. It's essential that you help shape what your local community needs – like schools, hospitals, housing and roads. So make sure you complete your census questionnaire on 27 March 2011.

For further details call 01329 444 972.

Westminster City Council

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020 7641 6000
westminster.gov.uk



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