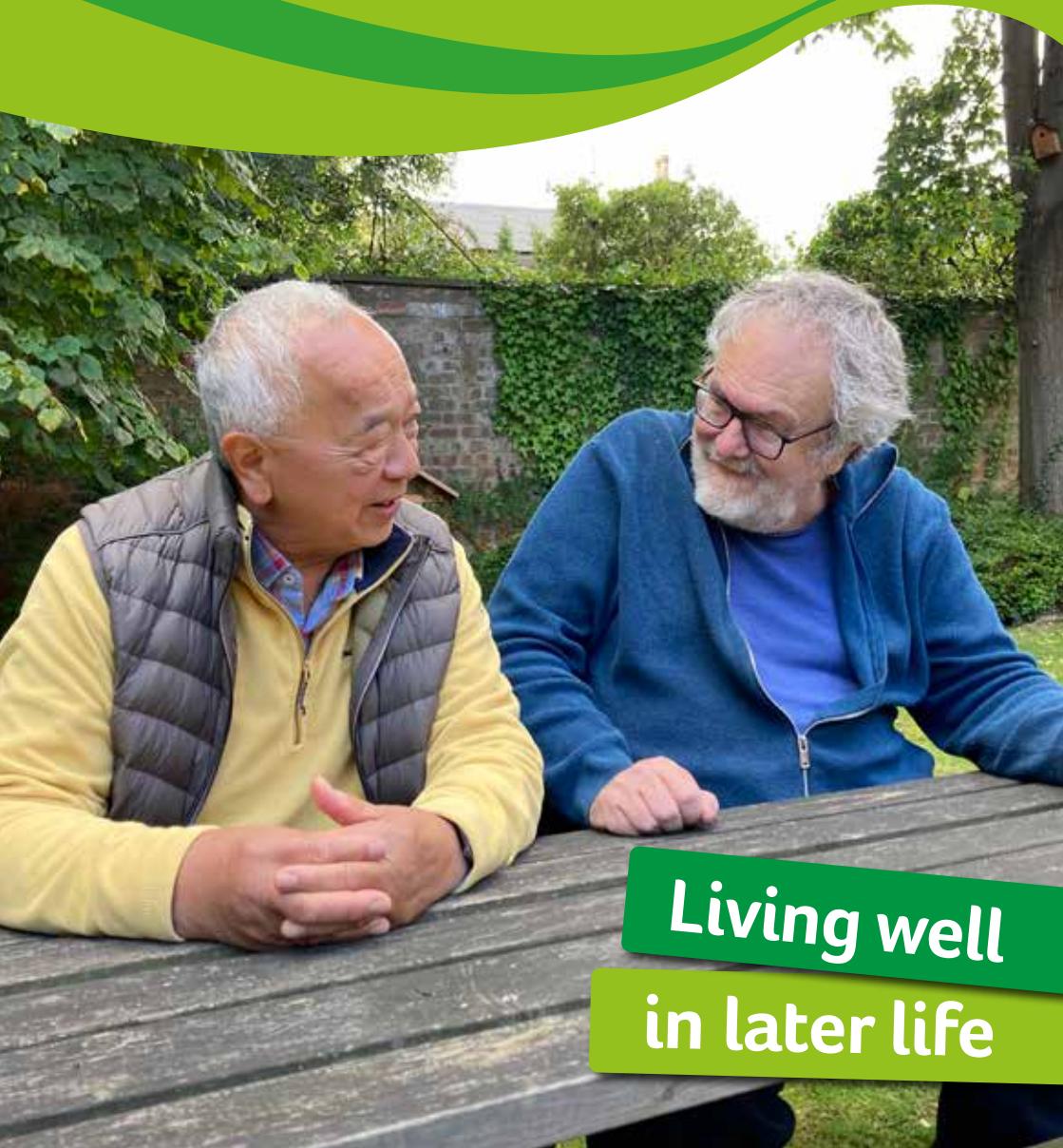


Advantage

Age Scotland's magazine: spring 24, issue 66

Age Scotland



Living well in later life

p14 The new Body Boosting Bingo

p20 Talking about a good death

p24 Bollywood playlist

Contents

- p6 Age Scotland's Elizabeth Bryan looks back on a decade in community development**
- p8 How Age Scotland grants are helping connect older islanders on Bernera**
- p16 The search for activists living with dementia**
- p18 Camaraderie in Scotland's older Polish communities**
- p22 Raising their voices - Luminare's singing network**
- p26 Dig deep into the benefits of gardening**
- p28 Support from utility companies**

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Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. Our magazine, Advantage, provides information, inspiration and ideas to empower Scotland's older people and their friends, families and carers.

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If you have news, events or issues that you would like Advantage to cover, please get in touch. We would also welcome ideas on how we might improve the magazine. To stop receiving Advantage, please get in touch with us on the details below.

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Welcome to your spring edition of Advantage magazine!

I don't know about you, but I'm looking forward to spring. After a wet and cold Scottish winter, it's good to feel the sun's warmth again. It sparks that welcome feeling of hopefulness. Spring strikes me as a better time for setting new year resolutions than January 1 – who wants to commit to spending time in nature when it's pouring with rain and dark by 3.30pm?

With that in mind, spring is the perfect time to launch our revamped Body Boosting Bingo. You can read about the new improved version of our most popular activity on p14. I can't wait to try it out.

Spring is also a busy time for our member groups across the country. You can read about what some of them have been up to in this edition, including the islanders on Bernera who received an Age Scotland grant (p8) and the first network meeting of our thriving Polish groups (p18).

Our partner organisations have been sharing their work too. Luminare has created an interactive map to show dementia-friendly singing groups around Scotland (p22) and Edinburgh Garden Partners are pairing up volunteers and older people to make the most of the growing season (p26).

I hope you enjoy this issue and, as always, we welcome your feedback. Please get in touch if you have something to share. We're always looking to highlight the great work going on across Scotland by and for older people.



Katherine Crawford, Chief Executive

Katherine M. Crawford

Katherine Crawford,
Chief Executive



Help & advice

when food prices bite

Guests at our Cost of Living Guide

The cost-of-living crisis is forcing many older people to make incredibly difficult financial choices between powering and heating their homes and the food they can afford to buy.

Age Scotland's Big Survey 2023 highlights the stark reality and toll the cost-of-living crisis has taken on older people's financial and physical wellbeing. Our latest research has revealed that 43% of over 50s in Scotland are cutting back on food spending, while 1 in 10 pensioners are skipping meals and 18% eating less healthily due to financial pressures.

One survey respondent told us: "The increase means I had to cut back on food shopping and often go for weeks with no food. It's making me unwell." Another said: "I stopped using my heating in May 2022. I only use one lamp in the evening, have stopped making bread and scones and wear a fleece dressing gown with a blanket when I sit in the evening. When I boil a kettle I make a flask of coffee as well as a cup of coffee."

Our helpline is also hearing from an increasing number of older people who are finding it near impossible to pay their energy bills, having cut down on all but the essentials, and who will now be at risk of falling into unmanageable debt as a result.



Launch | Age Scotland CEO Katherine Crawford and chef Fiona Burrell with copies of the new guide

Key findings from the Big Survey highlighting the impact the cost-of-living crisis has had on older people, include:

- **43% of over 50s are cutting back on food spending**
- **1 in 10 pensioners are skipping meals**
- **76% are concerned about food bills**
- **18% of respondents reported eating less healthily**
- **15% of respondents with less than £10,000 annual gross household income are using credit or taking on debt to cope with their finances**
- **60% of respondents are heating their homes less**
- **38% are socialising less**
- **5% are using foodbanks.**

In response, we have produced a free guide to help older people navigate the cost-of-living crisis which is packed with advice on energy bills, tips on how to shop smart and eat well when food prices bite, and recipes from top Scottish chefs, including Tom Kitchin and Tony Singh.

We marked the launch with a demonstration of cost-effective recipes, kindly hosted by chef Fiona Burrell at Edinburgh's New Town Cookery School.



Visit www.age.scot/costofliving to download the guide from our website or call us on **0333 32 32 400** for a printed copy

A job

well done:

saying farewell

to a charity

pioneer



Elizabeth celebrating with colleagues at the Wing Hong Chinese New Year lunch

As she prepares to retire, Age Scotland's Elizabeth Bryan, looks back over a busy decade working with the Community Development team.

On 1st February 2014, shortly after my 50th birthday, I started work at Age Scotland as the charity's community development co-ordinator.

I remember these early days well. The community development team was the biggest in the organisation with 14 staff. Age Scotland itself felt new with the name not yet familiar. I was so lucky to have colleagues around me who had worked previously with either Age Concern or Help the Aged who gave me glimpses into the work and ways of doing things by our predecessor charities.

We had four sub teams at the time, known as North, South, East and West. South definitely served the best homemade cakes at team meetings! Community development was an able team, and I was impressed with their local work, the respect and affection members felt for them, and I still am. The commitment, services, activities and support provided by older people's groups across the country has always been a huge inspiration.



Elizabeth organised many successful Age Scotland conferences over the years

My role has partly been to bring more harmony to our work with older people's groups across the country including the charity's popular small grants programme and helping to connect members with colleagues in the wider charity. We have so many resources for members to tap into. I also really enjoyed working with Ambassadors to plan our national conferences.

Like all charities we have experienced our fair share of ups and downs. Funding difficulties resulted for a while in a much smaller but equally dedicated community development team. Just as we grew in number again COVID intervened. But we rallied and found alternative ways of working and keeping in touch. We also grew our services to provide greater support for men's sheds, older veterans, and ethnic minority older people's groups. Being out and about again is a joy we no longer take for granted.

I like to think that if our founding members of 80 years ago were to drop in on us today they would instantly recognise what we are about in community development, on the side of older people's groups enabling them to prosper.

It has been a real privilege to be part of the team and to get to know so many Age Scotland members over the years. As I leave the charity, I'm taking some fond memories with me and lots of inspiration from members on how to spend my 60s and live life well.



The group has covered nearly 900 miles on their trips

Island explorers take the road

The All Sorts Activities Club on the Hebridean island of Bernera has lived up to its name since receiving a Keeping the Doors Open grant from Age Scotland. Here Colin Halliday, Secretary and Treasurer, shares what the group has been up to.

The All Sorts Activities Club was formed in 2016 to provide a weekly social club for the older residents of Bernera (population approximately 260). Everyone is welcome and can take part in activities including board games, quizzes, talks and home baking with tea and coffee. Members provide some of the best home baked cakes and scones.

Our numbers have stayed fairly stable, with about seven regular attendees plus from time to time family visitors, including grandchildren. Many of our members live alone in our small rural crofting community and really look forward to the meetings on a Wednesday afternoon.

We have been fortunate to be supported by Age Scotland with small grants to help cover the cost of room rental at the Bernera Community



Members enjoying some home baking during a weekly catch up

Centre, fuel costs and refreshments. For this we are more than grateful as fundraising in a small community is not always easy.

In 2022 we had a three day trip to Iona. However, in 2023 with the cost of living increases, we could not afford a trip to the mainland and decided that we would have a monthly day trip to different parts of Lewis and Harris. We were lucky enough to receive a grant from Age Scotland under the Keeping the Doors Open scheme which helped us cover the cost.

We have covered nearly 900 miles, visiting Ness Museum in the north of Lewis, Gearrannan Blackhouse Village, the Iolaire memorial near Stornoway, the Isle of Scalpy and Rodal Church in the south of Harris.

A major part of the trips has been having lunch or afternoon tea at different hotels. For those of us who live alone and have to do all our cooking, being able to eat out is a great treat. It may amaze you, since some of our members are born and bred on Lewis, but people often say "I have never been here and it is beautiful".

Our aim is to provide members with a warm, safe place to meet socially, and encourage them to take part in activities that stimulate the mind and body. We feel that we are successful in this, with the help of Age Scotland.

Who would you nominate for an Age Scotland award?

Nominations for the 2024 Age Scotland national awards, which celebrate groups and individuals who deliver outstanding services for older people, will open next month.

As in previous years there will be five main categories – Volunteer of the Year, Member Group of the Year, Services to Older People, the Jess Barrow Award for Campaigning and Influencing and the Patrick Brooks Award for Best Partnership.

Winners will be announced at an in-person award ceremony, on 1 October (which is also UN Day of Older People) at the Radisson Blu hotel in Glasgow.

In more good news, film-maker Steve Jefferies will be making short films with all the winning groups and individuals to be shown at the ceremony in October. If you've had the pleasure of watching any of the previous videos of our winners – which are available on Age Scotland's YouTube channel - you will know how these beautiful films manage to capture just how important the winning groups and individuals are to the older people they support.

Each year the team who sift through the nominations are blown away by the exceptional work going on across the country to support older people. From people who have been volunteering tirelessly for decades to member groups that have overcome challenges to keep the doors open for older people, the standard of entries is always impressive.

Last year, for example, Haydays in Fife won the Member Group of the Year award after demonstrating resilience when their meeting place closed and returned bigger and better than before. Janie Douglas, chairwoman of



2023 winner Diana Findlay, with Christine Grahame (left) and Katherine Crawford

Haydays, said: “We see winning this award from Age Scotland as a recognition of the resilience and strength of older people within their community. Older people are making things happen and making it fun.”

Nominations for this year’s awards will open in May and the deadline for them will be 31 July.

The Age Scotland awards are always a highlight of the year and now, more than ever, we appreciate being able to celebrate the winners and hear their stories in person. We look forward to seeing who our 2024 winners will be.



Haydays, Member Group winner 2023

Find out more about the awards, read about our previous winners and download a nomination form at age.scot/awards

Free Will-writing service available to older people

Are you one of the 39% of over 50s who does not have a Will or doesn't have one that reflects their up to date wishes? Or are you one of the 5% who told us in our Big Survey that they cannot afford to make a Will at all?

If so, our free Will-writing service for older people can help. Understandably many older people, especially those on low or middle incomes, might be put off contacting a lawyer because they're afraid of the cost. But this service is free for older people.

When someone dies without a Will, there can be uncertainty, disputes and legal expenses. Age Scotland is therefore urging older people not to put off planning for future legal matters. Having an accurate Will is essential not only in ensuring that your money and possessions are distributed in the way you prefer, but also in helping alleviate stress for next of kin and loved ones at what will be a difficult time. It also gives you the opportunity to leave a lasting legacy by leaving a gift in your Will to support our vital work in the years to come.

In order to support an increasing number of older people to get a Will in place, Age Scotland is also encouraging over 50s in Scotland to take advantage of their partnership with Solicitors for Older People Scotland (SOPS), which enables this age group to write or amend their Will free of charge.



It's true that Will writing isn't the most pleasant – or sometimes easy – subject to talk about, so many people put it off. But it's important to plan for the legal and family issues which may occur in later life.

Not only is having an up-to-date Will a key part of ensuring your financial affairs are in order, it also gives you and your loved ones peace of mind, as well as preventing complications at an already distressing time.

SOPS will remove the stress of making a simple and straightforward Will or amending your existing Will in three easy steps:

- 1.** Contact Age Scotland on **0333 323 2400** (Mon to Fri 9am – 5pm) or by completing the form at **www.age.scot/FreeWillService**
- 2.** SOPS will then be in touch to arrange a date and time to chat to you.
- 3.** Consider leaving Age Scotland a gift in your Will.

Although it is not mandatory, we are very grateful to those who have used the free service and have left a gift in their Will to Age Scotland, which allows us to support older people for generations to come.



Visit **www.age.scot/FreeWillService** to find out more

Introducing Body Boosting Bingo 2.0

Since its launch in 2017, Body Boosting Bingo has been one of Age Scotland's most popular activities with older people's groups. The fun game of bingo, with a twist, includes accessible exercises that help build balance and strength, which are crucial to supporting physical health in later life – and plenty of laughs are guaranteed.

For anyone who hasn't played, Body Boosting Bingo is like an ordinary game of bingo, where numbers are called and players score them off on their bingo cards, aiming to get a line to win. The twist is that for each of the 30 possible numbers there is an associated movement to build strength or balance. There are options to do the movements standing or seated, so everyone can take part.

So why is a new edition needed? Well, the main reason for this 2024 refresh is to ensure that Body Boosting Bingo stays in line with the latest evidence on the best physical activities for older adults.

We're very grateful to have received advice from Dawn Skelton, Professor of Ageing and Health at Glasgow Caledonian University, and Dr Simone Tomaz, lecturer in Exercise Physiology at Stirling University. Their input has allowed us to refresh movements in the game, tweaking them to maximise the benefits they can bring to older people.

Having led games of Body Boosting Bingo for six years, we also had considerable insight into what worked for players, and what could do with improvement. As a result, we've replaced less popular movements with newer versions and updated the music score.



A community group enjoying Body Boosting Bingo | Promoting the fun bingo game to older people

To be more inclusive, we've added subtitles to demonstration videos, and players can choose audio instructions in English, Punjabi, or Cantonese. The demonstration videos feature older models, courtesy of the 'Generating Older Active Lives Digitally' project (which also part-funded the new edition), and you can now watch demonstrations both before and during the moving to music parts of the game.

As before, each game includes an instruction booklet and software that generates random numbers, has demonstration videos, and plays bespoke music to move along to. There's also a pocket booklet and 30-sided dice.

Ready to give it a try? We encourage current Body Boosting Bingo users to get in touch for a free upgrade. We're also resuming our free in-person games taster sessions and online games leader workshops for groups and services across Scotland.



To find out more visit age.scot/resourcesforwellbeing or call **0333 323 2400**



Activists enjoy the opportunity to share experiences

Join our About Dementia team

The About Dementia team is looking to recruit dementia activists to help shape future policy.

Do you want to help create a future for people living with dementia where they are valued and thrive? A community where people affected by the disease, including unpaid carers and wider family members, are supported every step of the way to live their best life? A world where dementia stigma is eradicated, every person is celebrated and measures are in place to enable everyone to do what they enjoy?

Then you share our vision, so let's make it happen!

We're looking to expand our team of people with lived experience of dementia who work alongside us, to make sure we're asking for the right things. And that's where dementia activists come in – people affected by the disease who can share first hand experiences and help bring about change that will improve lives.

Listening to and sharing the opinions of dementia activists with decision makers, including the Scottish Government, creates a powerful community voice that will influence future policy.



Getting together with others whose lives are affected by dementia has many benefits

We've worked with dementia activists in the past, and still do. Without them we couldn't have achieved the success we did through the Scottish Government's recently released 10 year Dementia Strategy. For example, the issue of carers' rights was raised by a dementia activist and now forms part of the strategy.

Now it's time to widen the pool and we're appealing to anyone with lived experience of the disease to get in touch. You will not be out marching, protesting or hounding politicians, you will simply be sharing with us the changes you would like to see take place and discussing upcoming issues.

Some of our recent opinion-gathering meetings, which are held online, have included a discussion around rare dementia and a conversation about upcoming changes to human rights legislation.

You set the pace for our conversations and the level of involvement is up to you – no one will be asked to take on more than they feel they can.

Current dementia activists say the role has given their life a 'new purpose' and others have made friends for life through their involvement. If this sounds like something you would be keen to take part in, please get in touch.



Email us at aboutdementia@agescotland.org.uk.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Celebrating camaraderie and connection with Scotland's older Polish communities

Since the first recorded migration of Polish people to Scotland in the 15th century, many millions have made the country their home.

During and after World War II marked one of the largest influxes, with Polish migrants moving to Scotland against a background of growing political turmoil in Poland.

In the past seven decades, the Polish community has flourished and are now well established in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Falkirk, Kirkcaldy and elsewhere. Some of the post-war Polish migrants, who came to Scotland as youngsters, are now older members of the community.

One of the earliest recordings of an older Polish person's organisation was Polish Connections Scotland. With the support from Lothian Region Social Work department, Polish organisations in Edinburgh and Age Concern Scotland, Ogniszko was set up to create Scotland's only Polish lunch and social club in 1995.

Now Age Scotland supports three thriving Polish older people's groups, Polski Klub Seniora in Aberdeen, Feniks: Aktywni 50+ in Edinburgh and Sikorski Seniors Club in Glasgow. All three groups were formed with the intention of reducing the feelings of loneliness and isolation and tasked with providing services to those who often face language barriers and challenges with social inclusion.

With the guidance from our ethnic minority community development officer, the community groups became Age Scotland members in the past year. Since becoming members, they have benefited from the community



Polish group members filling in the Big Survey | Energy advice at the Polish network event

grants programme to support and develop activities and/or to maintain their current programmes. They have also taken the initiative to be more involved with Age Scotland from attending training workshops to participating in the Big Survey consultation.

To celebrate and connect the three Polish groups, a Polish Older People's Network Meeting event was held in Glasgow's Sikorski Polish House in September 2023. This allowed members from the three areas an opportunity to gather and forge wider social connections.

The event included presentations by Age Scotland on benefits and energy, with topics translated on PowerPoint slides which were also printed out for distribution along with interpretation services to create an inclusive environment for the attendees.

A Polish speaking solicitor talked about our partnership with the Solicitor for Older People Scotland, which includes a free Will writing service, advice on legal issues and Power of Attorney.

At the end of what was a very successful network meeting, there was a sense of camaraderie and collaborative plans to prepare another network meeting in 2024.



To find out more about Age Scotland membership, call us on **0333 32 32 400** or visit **www.age.scot/membership**

How to talk about death

People wanted to help others who had been bereaved but were scared of saying the wrong thing.

The subject of end of life care has made headlines recently. Well known people, including Dame Esther Rantzen and Dame Prue Leith, have shared their support for assisted dying and in Scotland a private member's bill on assisted dying is expected to be debated at Holyrood this year.

However, open conversations around death and dying are all too rare among families and friends.

The Truacanta Project is working to change that by setting up support for local communities in Scotland interested in taking community action to improve people's experiences of death, dying, loss and care. Five projects, funded by Macmillan Cancer Support and run by the Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care, have been established including one in the Highlands involving Highland Senior Citizens Network, Creativity in Care and Highland Hospice.

The Highland project focused on facilitating local conversations about end of life. In Cromarty and Kinlochleven people took part in Highland Hospice Last Aid (a public education course) and End of Life Aid and Support for Everyone (EASE) courses. Creativity in Care held in person and virtual creative workshops using a variety of pre-prepared arts materials to support conversations exploring death, dying and grief.



Creativity on the subject of dying | Facilitating conversations about end of life

The participants in Cromarty, who ranged in age from 7 to 77, talked about their experiences of death and grief. Intergenerational connections helped people to discuss their shared grief.

The groups addressed the fact that we are all going to die, yet many of us don't have any plans in place. A wide range of conversations took place about planning ahead, making a Will, putting Power of Attorney in place and funeral planning.

The reality of what to expect when someone is dying was explained. Many people have only witnessed death in a TV programme or film. But a 'normal death' usually has predictable stages, the understanding of which can be comforting and help loved ones prepare for what is happening.

The difficulty of talking about death was also tackled. People said they wanted to help others who had been bereaved but were scared of saying the wrong thing. Those who had experienced loss shared suggestions that helped them, including sending a sympathy card sharing memories of the person who died, offering practical help – cooking a meal or walking the dog – or simply saying “I'm here for you”, “I'm thinking of you”.

Finally, the group shared helpful resources with a view to keeping up conversations about death.

Putting singing on the map

Luminate, Scotland's creative ageing organisation, has created an interactive map to show dementia inclusive singing groups in Scotland.

Having run Scotland's Dementia Inclusive Singing Network for the past four years, it has seen the network grow from a handful of members to more than 70, including more than 20 singing groups. The Network now includes groups from Shetland to the Borders, and is always ready to welcome more.

Morven McIntyre, the Network co-ordinator said:

“Our interactive Network Map is an easy way to find singing activity offered across the country for people affected by dementia. You can search by postcode or by area, and once you find a suitable group we have links to contact details and a little bit more about each group.”

“We want the map to be a growing resource and a valuable tool for people living with dementia and their families and carers.”

The Network includes community choirs and singing groups that are open to all but are designed to be dementia inclusive, as well as those that have been specifically created for people living with dementia and their carers. They all have strong local community roots.

The Network is free to join, but every group needs to complete a simple self-assessment form which helps Luminate to ensure that every group is working in a way that is inclusive for people living with dementia.

Luminate's work aims to ensure that older people in Scotland have the opportunity to take part in creative activities, regardless of their circumstances. The Dementia Inclusive Singing Network is a vital part of Luminate's programme, supporting choirs and singing groups nationally, and helping people living with dementia to find creative opportunities in their communities.



Members make friends and reminisce at network gatherings

In recent years, documentary programmes such as My Dementia Choir, fronted by actor Vicky McClure, have demonstrated the enormous potential for connection, enjoyment and wellbeing that singing in a choir or group can bring to those living with dementia.

Dementia UK says that listening to or participating in music – for example, by singing, dancing or playing instruments – can help people living with dementia develop and maintain relationships and improve their wellbeing.

It can:

- **help people express their feelings and ideas, verbally and non-verbally**
- **act as a prompt for reminiscing**
- **help people to ‘tell their story’ and share their personal history**
- **encourage social interaction**

Visit the interactive map here:

<https://singing.luminatescotland.org/find-a-choir-or-singing-group>

Bollywood tunes spark cherished memories

Late last year the Age Scotland office in Edinburgh played host to a joyous and colourful morning of Bollywood entertainment provided by some very talented musicians, singers and dancers.

The event marked the launch of the Bollywood Memories Playlist project, a joint enterprise created by Age Scotland, the Scottish Ethnic Minority Older People's Forum (SEMOPF) and the Playlist for Life organisation, which helps curate playlists of personally meaningful music for people living with dementia.

Spearheaded by Rohini Sharma Joshi, Age Scotland's diversity and inclusion manager who also supports SEMOPF, the project focused on building a playlist of Bollywood songs that mean something to older people from South Asian communities. The idea was to spark memories of important or significant music and that would feature on their own 'playlist for life'.

Rohini worked with community groups across Scotland and beyond, gathering Bollywood favourites and tunes that brought back personally meaningful memories. The final playlist features 189 tunes, which adds up to a whopping 14 hours of listening.

The Playlist was launched in November, featuring beautiful performances from musicians Savita, Herman and Vibha, and community singing group Glasgow Sitare. There were also some singalongs and impromptu performances from attendees who wanted to share their passion and favourite memories of Bollywood music.

Special guests Anas Sarwar MSP, leader of the Scottish Labour Party and Foysoil Choudhury MSP, Scottish Labour - Lothians region, shared their own childhood memories of Bollywood favourites and the power of music.



The Playlist launch featured music and memories

As Rohini said: “The Bollywood Memories playlist is something different and goes further than simply talking about music, and the launch event was a brilliant opportunity to come together to enjoy singing and discover more about how beneficial music can be for health and wellbeing, particularly as we get older.”

Playlist for Life’s policy and public affairs officer, Mehar Shagufta agreed: “It was wonderful to work with SEMOPF and we’re so grateful to Rohini for gathering these Bollywood favourites and tunes that bring back personally meaningful memories for people of South Asian heritage.”

“It was a joy to witness the performances and see everyone singing along to their favourite tunes. We encourage everyone to listen to the playlist and hope that it sparks cherished memories and brings you joy!”

Search **Age Scotland** on Spotify to find the **Bollywood Favourites** playlist or use Playlist for Life’s Automatic Playlist Maker to pick out tunes to add to your own playlist.



Sharing the joy of gardening



Gwyneth has recently started sharing part of her garden with a volunteer from Edinburgh Garden Partners. Edinburgh Garden Partners (EGP) match older people who have a garden with volunteers looking for space to grow. Garden partners will spend time learning from each other, enjoying the garden and sharing ideas.

What is it about gardening that can help lift your mood?

The fresh air and seeing the wonders of growth and the magic of it. It's wonderful to be outside, it feels natural. You can breathe better and get lost in thought.

I can be feeling tense and then I go out into the garden for a little while and I find my shoulders relax and it's healing. I have a heart condition and I think it's good for that too, being outside, breathing deeply, and the gentle exercise. It's good for everything!

How do you feel when you're working in the garden?

It's marvellous when things begin to come to life after a long cold winter. When you've been waiting for it for so long and then you see the first little snowdrop. The first flower in my garden is witch-hazel – it's a bright yellow against the greyness of winter, and it smells nice too. I am severely sight impaired and the pale colours of spring are particularly excellent for blind people. You can smell the garden too – the flowers have lovely fragrances but also the soil and the grass when the lawn has been cut – it's all part of it.



Volunteers and older people enjoy gardening together | Unearthing a crop of radishes

Do you enjoy gardening with someone else?

I have recently been matched with a garden partner from Edinburgh Garden Partners. She is going to start growing veg in one of my beds this spring. We've only just started but it has been wonderful. We've talked about what we will grow and what can be grown when. I'd given up hope on growing much veg in my small garden.

What do you get from gardening that you don't get from other hobbies?

Being in the garden gives you the freedom of being close to nature without having to go anywhere. Gardening takes you out of yourself completely and you lose track of time. It gives me a feeling of wonder like a child – I think that feeling still exists as you grow older.

Would you encourage others to be part of EGP?

I would say it is marvellous – it's great to have someone making use of the garden and growing vegetables, and the social side is also wonderful. I've already recommended it to a friend.



Find out more at www.edinburghgardenpartners.org.uk

Sign up to the PSR for extra support from utility companies

As the cost-of-living crisis continues to bite, Age Scotland is working alongside utility companies to ensure that older people have access to important information to support their wellbeing.

Staying warm and well at home, in properties that are adequately heated, maintaining energy efficiency and staying safe with advice about CO2 are all part of a package of support we provide through partner organisations.

One of the key projects we are involved in is getting the word out about the Priority Services Register – PSR – which is free to join for anyone over 60, people who have long-term physical or mental health conditions, a disability or additional language or communication needs.

The PSR is an initiative that helps utility companies - including energy suppliers, electricity, gas and water networks - to look after customers who have extra communication, access or safety needs. It helps them tailor their services to support households that need extra help with everyday energy matters such as bills.

Most crucially, though, in the event of a power cut, gas or water supply interruption, it enables suppliers to act swiftly in supporting their customers most in need.

For example, a customer might require medical equipment that relies on electricity or water to be always operational. In the event of a power cut, those on the PSR will be prioritised to receive support, such as



portable generators or bottled water deliveries, while they are waiting to get the supply turned back on.

You or a loved one might require more tailored communication needs, such as braille, larger font, or a language other than English when dealing with your energy needs. By being a member of the PSR, you can have peace of mind knowing that these alternative formats are available.

PSR customers will also get prior notice when electricity or gas needs to be switched off for essential maintenance, to allow them to plan ahead.

Alastair Kerr, from Scottish Water, said: “We’re proud to be working alongside energy companies in Scotland to promote the Priority Services Register which enables us all to provide extra help for customers who may have additional support requirements.”

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Find out more by visiting www.thepsr.co.uk or www.psrscotland.com. Simply input your postcode and the website will direct you to a sign-up form. You can call **Age Scotland’s free Helpline** on **0800 12 44 222** for information and help to sign up.

Help us

to help

older people

who are alone



Thousands of older people in Scotland live in isolation. Many go days or even weeks without speaking to anyone. For these people, Age Scotland can be a lifeline.

Our dedicated friendship line supports hundreds of lonely and isolated older people who receive a weekly friendship call. We chat about lots of different things, providing companionship and a friendly ear.

Those who receive a friendship call tell us how much it means to them. They describe it as a highlight of their week and comment on how much they look forward to their weekly chat.

Together, we can be there for those older people who need us most. With donations from kind-hearted people like you, we can continue our fight to support older people, end loneliness, and be there for people who have no one else to turn to in later life.

With your support we can answer every call for help. Just £5 enables us to provide a friendship call to a lonely older person, giving them someone to chat to and brightening up their week.

.....

Visit **www.age.scot/donate today** to donate online. You can also call **03330 15 14 60** or complete the form opposite and send it to us at FREEPOST RSBS-KEHC-GBBC, Edinburgh EH9 1PR.

Can you support our work?

Your donation could make a real difference to the lives of older people in Scotland.

Title Initials Surname

Address:

..... Postcode:

By providing us with your telephone number and email address you are consenting to us contacting you via phone, text and email: Phone Email

I would like to make a donation of: £10 £20 £50 or £

by **Cheque** (made payable to: Age Scotland)

Card payment (MasterCard Visa CAF CharityCard)

Card number: / / /

Security code: Valid from: / Expiry date: /

I would like to make my donation worth 25% more

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Yes, I want Age Scotland* and its partner charities to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations. I am a UK tax payer and understand that if I pay less income tax and/or capital gains tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

No, I am not a UK taxpayer, and/or I do not wish to Gift Aid my donations.

Date:

Keeping in touch with you

We* would like to keep in touch with you and provide you with updates on our work and how you can support us. We will never sell your data and we promise to keep your details safe and secure. You can change your mind at any time by phoning 0333 32 32 400 or writing to us. For further details on how your data is used and stored visit www.agescotland.org.uk

I do not wish to receive communications by post

*Age Scotland is part of the Age UK Network, which includes its charitable and trading subsidiaries and national partners (Age UK, Age Cymru and Age NI). Age Scotland is an independent charity dedicated to improving the lives of older people in Scotland, within a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland. Reg No: 153343 Charity No: SC010100. Registered Office: Causewayside House, 160 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1PR.

*Leave light,
not loneliness*

**No one should feel
alone in later life.**

A gift in your Will to
Age Scotland will ensure
that lonely and isolated
older people in Scotland will
have someone to talk to for
friendship and reassurance
in years to come.

**Leave light, not loneliness.
Leave a Legacy to
Age Scotland.**

 **age** Scotland

Watch our film at:
www.age.scot/legacy
0333 323 2400