

# voice

AUTUMN/WINTER 2024



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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY + RECIPES + GARDENING TIPS + ADVICE + MUCH MORE





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first come first served basis.**



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# Foreword from the CEO

Hello and a warm welcome to this edition of **VOICE**. Age UK Bedfordshire's very own biannual magazine.

**R**egular readers will realise that there is an unfamiliar face peering at you from somewhere amongst this text. Let me explain. Our previous Chief Officer was Karen Perry. She was not only my boss she was also my wonderful, intelligent, funny, strong and loving wife.

Sadly, Karen passed away on the 12 March 2024, after putting up a remarkable show of determination in her 17 year fight against cancer. She had help from her children, Ryan, Victoria and Serena, from her work colleagues and the brilliant Board of Trustees but she led the charge. Oh boy, did she! It was a pleasure and a privilege to have loved and been loved by one of the greatest people I have ever known. She is no longer with us in body, but she will never be forgotten by those of us who were fortunate enough to have known her.

Shortly after I first met Karen in 2003, she took me to a Golf Club in Bedford, where the then County Council had organised a meeting to talk about the wonderful things they had planned to make life better for older people in the County. The hall was packed. I sat next to Karen having no idea about the County, as I had only just moved here. I was equally ignorant about the issues that many older residents of this lovely County have to deal with. A man approached her. He was an important man (apparently) within the council. He whispered to her and explained that their guest speaker



had not turned up! Would she mind going on stage and saying a few words?

No preparation, without a note or the aid of power point (remember that?) she proudly walked onto the stage and then took the room over with passion and a total disregard for pomp, she made it clear where this organisation stands when it comes to the issues that so many older people still face.

I made a note on my County Council issued note pad. It said: "Once seen, never forgotten" Little did I know then how true those words were. We hope that you find this issue interesting and entertaining. This is your magazine, so please tell us your stories. Let us know how you are getting on. With your permission we will publish them anonymously in our next issue. It is now my pleasure and privilege to carry the torch that my late wife lit.

**Steve**  
**Steve Perry**  
*Chief Officer, Age UK Bedfordshire*

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A tribute to Karen Perry

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# Telephone scams

Phone scams are a common way for criminals to con people out of their money.

## What is a cold call?

A cold call is a phone call out of the blue from a company or person you've never dealt with before, usually trying to sell you something. They aren't always scams, but they can be irritating.

## What are some common types of phone scams?

It can be hard to tell the difference between a scam and cold calling. But, it's good to know some common scams so you can be prepared.

- **Bank scams:** Watch out for calls supposedly from your bank about fraudulent use of your bank account or bank cards. Scammers might ask you for your PIN and tell you to give your bank card to a courier. Your bank would never do this.
- **Undercover police scams:** These can be calls from someone claiming to be the 'undercover police', claiming that they're investigating a member of staff at your bank and asking for your card details. The police would never ask you to take part in an investigation like this.
- **Computer or mobile phone repair scams:** The person may call and tell you that your device has a virus, and that you need to download software to fix it. This is actually spyware – an unwanted programme that runs on your device and can give scammers access to all your online information.
- **HMRC scams:** You may get a call from someone claiming to be from HMRC saying there's an issue with your tax refund or an unpaid tax bill. They may leave a message and ask you to call back. HMRC would never

contact you this way and would never ask you to reveal personal financial information such as your bank account details.

- **Council Tax scams:** Calls claiming to be about correcting your Council Tax band or giving you a Council Tax rebate. Your council would never call you about a rebate out of the blue.
- **Compensation calls:** This is a call from a company asking about a car accident you've supposedly had claiming you may be entitled to compensation. Don't engage in these calls. If you've had an accident, call your own insurance company on the phone number provided on your policy.
- **Texts with fake links:** You might receive a text asking you to follow a link to fix a problem with one of your accounts or to track a parcel. These links will often take you to a fake website and get you to log in, which scammers can then use to access your information.
- **Telephone Preference Service scams:** Watch out for calls asking you to pay to renew your membership of the Telephone Preference Service. The service is free and any calls asking you to pay for it are scams.
- **Pension or debt management offers:** Be wary of cold calls or texts from strange numbers offering products or services, such as pension or debt management.
- **Sales and investment calls:** These are unwanted or pushy sales calls, or investment opportunities that seem too good to be true.



## Fake caller ID

Scammers can mimic an official telephone number, which can trick you into thinking the caller is from a legitimate organisation, such as a bank or utility company. Just because someone knows your basic details doesn't mean they're legitimate. These details could include your name, address, your mother's maiden name and even your Direct Debits.

## How can I protect myself from scam calls?

There are things you can do to protect yourself from scams:

- **Say no:** Ignore a caller that asks you for personal information, such as your PIN, or tells you that your computer has a virus. A genuine organisation will never ask you for these details over the phone, in

an email or in writing.

- **Report any scams:** Forward unwanted texts to 7726 for free so your mobile phone provider can flag potential scams.
- **Check the line:** Be aware that scammers can keep your phone line open even after you've hung up. Use a different phone, call someone you know first to check the line is free, or wait at least 10 to 15 minutes between calls to make sure that any scammers have hung up.
- **Use an answerphone:** You can use an answerphone on your landline or voicemail on your mobile to screen your calls.
- **Check your calls:** Get a caller ID device to see who's calling. But be aware that some scammers appear as a legitimate number, for example, your bank or utility company.





- **Try call blocking:** Some phones have call-blocking features to stop unwanted calls. If yours doesn't, you can use a separate call blocker. Some blockers come pre-programmed with known nuisance numbers and some allow you to add numbers to that list when you get a nuisance or scam call. You can buy call blockers from various retailers and some local authorities provide them.
- **Cut the cold calls:** Join the free Telephone Preference Service (TPS). This should cut the number of cold calls you receive, though it won't necessarily block all scammers. TPS has a service to stop cold calls to mobile phones too. Go to their website or text 'TPS' and your email address to 85095 to register.

- **Call the company:** If you get a phone call from an organisation asking you for personal information, contact the company directly using a known email or phone number to check the call is legitimate.
- **Avoid links:** If you've received a text asking you to follow a link, don't click on it. If you'd like to check if the text is genuine, contact the company directly either using their official website or phone number and enquire about your account that way.

#### Who should I contact if I've received a scam call or text?

If you've received a scam call, there's support available:

- **Action Fraud:** Contact Action Fraud to report a scam or get more advice on scams and fraud.

- **Your bank:** If you receive a call about your bank account or credit card that concerns you, you can speak to your bank by calling the centralised number 159 or by calling the number on the back of your bank card.
- **Telephone Preference Service (TPS):** Contact TPS to register with its service. There's a free call blocker to stop scam and nuisance calls available to those who are identified as most vulnerable by a doctor, Trading Standards officials or local councils.

There are also ways to report scam texts and WhatsApp users:

- **Texts:** Forward any unwanted texts to 7726 for free so your mobile phone provider can flag potential scams.
- **WhatsApp:** Report a scam WhatsApp user by opening the chat with the user you want to report, tapping on their name and then tapping 'report contact'.

#### What are the signs that someone's been scammed?

You may be worried that someone you know is being scammed. Look out for these warning signs:

- Unusual amounts of post or letters in their home.
- Evidence of large cash withdrawals or multiple cheque payments.
- Lack of money to pay for other things.
- Lots of phone calls from strangers or companies.
- Being secretive about any of these behaviours.

Some people don't realise they're being scammed, or refuse to believe it. They may feel that the scammers are their friends, or that their returns or prizes will come through if they continue to respond. This can make it very difficult to talk to them about getting help.

#### How can I help someone if they've been scammed?

Raise the subject with them sensitively – you could try

asking them about the calls and mail they receive. See if they might be willing to register for the Mail Preference Service and the Telephone Preference Service to help block some of the calls and mail.

- **Help them to report the fraud.** You can report fraud to Action Fraud on behalf of someone, or encourage them to report it. It's best that you get permission from the person before reporting the fraud on their behalf, but you can report the fraud without their permission.
- **Find support locally.** The government has advised that internet scams, postal scams and doorstep crime are all forms of financial abuse and are often targeted at adults who need care and support.

If you're worried that an adult who needs care and support has been affected by a scam, you can tell the local council's adult social services department. They'll make safeguarding enquiries and work to make sure that person is protected. People who ask to come into your home because they say they need help, for example to use your phone, or because they feel unwell or want to use the toilet.

#### The lasting impact of a scam

Often when we talk about scams, we discuss them in financial terms and don't talk about the emotional impact they can have. But they can leave us feeling embarrassed, unsettled and unsafe, and have a lasting impact on our confidence. They can also leave us feeling unsure about who we can trust. But if you've been scammed, it's important to reach out and talk about what's happened. It's nothing to feel embarrassed about – these scams are increasingly sophisticated and are purposefully designed to steal your money by posing as people or organisations you trust. They can catch you on a day you're busy doing something else, or just having one of those days. We've all had them.



## Bob and Eileen

My day started as usual  
With a cup of tea, in my chair  
My wife was sat beside me  
And she gently brushed her hair  
She decided we should  
go outside  
To enjoy the autumn sun  
And take in the surroundings  
She said this would be fun

We put on our coats,  
slipped on our gloves  
I put on my favourite cap  
And with a twinkle in her eye  
She said "You're still my  
handsome chap!"  
I took her arm, and gently smiled  
A tear fell from my eye  
"I'm such a lucky chap" I winked  
As I gave her my reply.

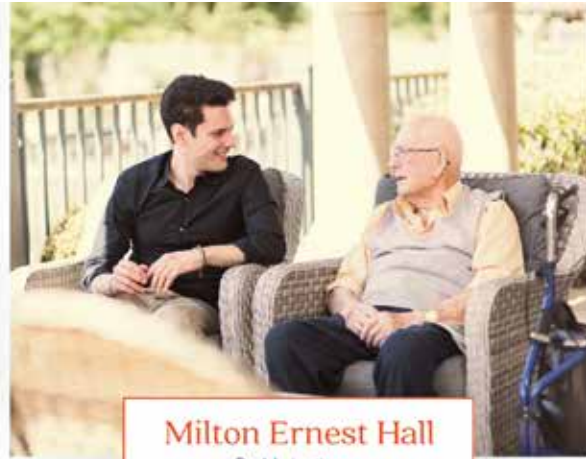
The autumn leaves  
were in full glory  
Colours of gold, and  
brown and red  
And they rustled in  
between our feet  
As I watched where we both tread  
We felt like we were young again

And, we blew into the cold air  
Our breath was making patterns  
We laughed, without a care.  
We watched a couple of squirrels  
Run from tree to tree  
I shouted "Careful up there, lads!"  
But, they simply ignored me!  
A loud noise echoed overhead  
As a flock of birds flew by  
Migrating somewhere  
away from here  
Where there's warm  
sunshine in the sky.

We then made our way  
back home again  
As the skies turned to dark grey,  
We chatted to each other  
Saying how we'd enjoyed  
our walk today  
As we approached our front door  
It began to rain,  
I turned to my wife and said to her  
"We'll do this walk again "  
We put our fire on and sat  
And watched the rain fall down  
And saw the leaves  
sway in the wind  
So golden, red and brown.







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# Be Kind to Your Feet!

We only get one pair of feet so it's important to take good care of them.

**B**ut many of us will develop some foot problems as we age, simply as a result of daily wear and tear.

Anyone who has experienced foot pain knows only too well how debilitating it can be. Over time, it can become a significant health issue because, if we can't walk comfortably, we're less likely to get out and about and take part in the social activities or daily exercise that is vital for our health and wellbeing.

## 1. Get checked

What's more, people who suffer from diabetes or arthritis should check their feet regularly and ensure they attend check-

ups as requested, as they are at risk of amputation if they don't seek timely treatment.

Fortunately, there's lots we can do to protect our feet and most common problems can be treated successfully by a chiropodist or podiatrist - there's no difference between the two, but most now prefer to call themselves podiatrists.

'As we get older, an annual foot health check is as important as a sight or hearing test,' says Mike O'Neill, Consultant Podiatrist and spokesperson for the College of Podiatry. 'Conditions like diabetes or circulatory problems can all be picked up by looking at the feet and common

problems like corns, cracked skin and ingrown toenails can be successfully treated.'

Unfortunately, though, unlike the free sight tests for over 60s, you will have to pay for an annual health check.

## 2. Get the right footwear

On a day-to-day basis, there's lots we can do ourselves. First and foremost, it's important to wear comfortable, well-fitting shoes.

'Many people wear slippers if their feet are hurting, but this can make things worse as slippers encourage you to shuffle rather than letting the joints work as they should,' says Mike O'Neill. 'A pair of trainers is the best option as these provide a good amount of shock absorption and stability and also support the arch. Plus, of course, these days trainers come in all kinds of colours and styles and you often see prominent people being interviewed on TV, wearing formal clothing with trainers!

## 3. Look after your nails

However, nails that become too long can press against the end of the shoe and the constant pressure can cause soreness, infection or ulceration. Toenails that have been poorly cut can also become ingrown. Good nail care can also help to keep feet feeling comfortable. Unfortunately, many of us find it hard to clip our toenails properly, partly because it can be hard to reach but also because they become tougher with age. If you can reach your toenails the best time to cut them is immediately after a bath or shower.

## 4. Keep feet moisturised

As we get older the skin on our feet starts to dry out, we lose the fatty pads that cushion the bottom of the feet, the joints start to creak and circulation is reduced. As a result, the skin on the soles of our feet and heels becomes dry and nails become brittle and more difficult to manage.

Daily application of a moisturising lotion will help to keep feet feeling soft and supple.



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# Keeping warm and well in winter

**K**eeping warm in winter is important as we get older as cold weather and winter bugs can affect us more than they used to. Winter weather can also stop us from getting out and about sometimes. But there are things you can do to stay warm and well and prepare yourself and your home for the winter period.

## Keep moving

A little bit of activity now and then is a great way to help you keep warm, as well as help you maintain strength and mobility. So try not to sit still for more than an hour at a time.

There's no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to keeping moving, so it's important you do something that feels right – and safe – for you.

## Get your winter vaccinations

Respiratory viruses are more widespread in winter, so it's especially important to get your vaccinations. Vaccinations are

particularly important this winter as flu and coronavirus levels are expected to rise.

You're entitled to a free flu jab from the doctor or pharmacist if you:

- are aged 65 or over
- care for someone, such as a friend or family member
- are under 65 and have a serious long-term health condition
- live in the same house as someone who is immunocompromised
- are in long-stay residential care.

When you get your flu jab, check if you're also eligible for the pneumo vaccine, which helps protect you from pneumonia, and the Shingles vaccine.

## Make sure your home is warm enough

Try to heat your home to a steady and comfortable temperature throughout the day in the rooms you use most, such

as the living room and bedroom – usually around 18°C (64°F) is ideal. If there are rooms you don't use, like a spare bedroom, turn off the radiators in that room and close the doors. This will help you save on energy costs while keeping warm in winter.

## Keep curtains open during the day

During the day, keeping curtains open can help allow warmth into your home.

## Put rugs down on wood or laminate floors

If you have wood or laminate floors, you may want to consider putting rugs down to better insulate your home.

## Get a home energy check

Age UK Bedfordshire offer home energy checks through the Warm Homes programme. We'll send a trusted handyperson to your home, who'll make sure that your home is energy efficient. If necessary, they'll also provide some free equipment to help you save money on your bills.

## Wrap up well

Wrapping up well, using jumpers, hats, scarves and blankets can help you stay warm over the colder months.

## Wear multiple layers

Wearing several thin layers will keep you warmer than wearing one thick layer, as layers trap warm air between them.

If you're heading out, make sure you take some extra layers – even if you don't need them immediately. It's a good idea to be prepared because the

## Block out draughts

At dusk, close all the curtains and keep the windows closed to block out draughts and help keep heat in when the weather's at its coldest. It can also help to keep doors closed around your home to stop draughts.

## Stop the spread of germs

As well as getting vaccinated, there are some other simple measures we can take to reduce the spread of illness. Regularly washing your hands with soap and water is one of the best ways to stop germs from spreading.

You can also:

- catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue
- choose to wear a face covering in busy indoor spaces, like shops
- leave windows ajar to let fresh air circulate when meeting people indoors
- avoid close contact with people who are unwell.

temperature can drop significantly when the sun goes down.

Wear warm nightwear, thick socks and slippers. Cold temperatures can disrupt our sleep. Wearing warm nightwear, as well as thick socks and slippers, can help you stay warm overnight.

## Stock up on cold and sore throat remedies and food

It's a good idea to make sure you're prepared – winter weather can be unpredictable and can stop you from getting out and about.

Think about stocking up on cold and sore throat remedies, as

## Eat well

It can sometimes be difficult to keep up the motivation to prepare meals. But it's good to try and keep to a routine where you can. Eat warming foods and drink hot drinks

Warming foods, like soup and stews, and hot drinks like tea can help you to keep warm, so try to have at least one hot meal a day and as many hot drinks as you can. Have a range of foods in your diet. Try to have a range of foods in your diet and try to eat fruit and

vegetables each day – frozen and tinned vegetables can be just as good as fresh. It's also a good idea to keep your cupboards stocked with some basics just in case you can't get out to the shops – whether due to illness or bad weather.

If you're struggling to eat enough or if you've lost weight. It's better to eat a bit of what you fancy than nothing at all. If the only thing you can face is a slice of cake, for instance, then you should have it.





### Apply for all the benefits you're entitled to

Winter is often an expensive time of year. If you're worrying more about money or you're struggling to pay your heating bills, it's a good idea to make sure you're receiving all the benefits you're entitled to.

There are also a number of financial help schemes that can help with your energy bills this winter.

### Look out for other people

There are lots of simple, practical things we can do to look after each other over the winter period.

Encourage the older people you know to look after their health – one of the easiest ways to do this is to make sure they've had their free flu jab and coronavirus booster vaccine.

Try to make time for relatives, friends and neighbours. Darker nights and cold weather can make it harder for people to get out and about and we can all end up feeling lonely or out of sorts. Calling for a chat, popping in for a cuppa or even sending a card in the post can really help let someone know you're thinking about them.

When it's wet or icy outside, it's easier to slip. You could help your neighbours get out and about safely by helping them keep their paths and driveways clear and salting their steps and slopes.

### Use a hot water bottle

Using hot water bottles is a cost-effective way to stay warm, especially if you put them under blankets or duvets to keep you warm while you're sleeping.

Make sure to never use a hot water bottle with an electric blanket.

well as food, in case it's harder to leave the house. Your pharmacist can give you advice on what might help if you're feeling under the weather. You might also want to get big bottle of water in case the water supply is interrupted.

### Take extra care outside when the ground is slippery

It's important to be careful when out and about. In the autumn, fallen leaves and rain can make the ground very slippery. And in winter, ice and snow can seriously increase your risk of falls.

You might find that shoes with non-slip soles or with a good grip are helpful. Consider

keeping salt and sand mixture handy to grit paths. You could ask your neighbours for help to clear paths or driveways in bad weather.

### Keep emergency numbers nearby

Whether it's rain, snow, ice or sleet, winter weather can make it more difficult to get out and about, so it's a good idea to note down important numbers and keep them by your phone in case of an emergency.

Call **105** in the event of a power cut – you can report a power cut and get information and advice if there's one in your area.

### Be aware of your heart and circulation

The cold can increase the risk of a stroke or heart attack, as well as hypothermia. If you think you or someone else is experiencing any of these symptoms, call **999** (or **112** from a mobile) immediately and ask for an ambulance.

For a **stroke**, think **FAST**:

**F** – Is the **face** drooping on one side?

**A** – Can the person raise both **arms** and keep them there?

**S** – Is **speech** slurred?

**T** – **Time** to call **999** if you spot any one of these signs.





## Autumn Gardening Tips

As the days grow shorter, and the leaves transform into a patchwork of golden and red, we know that autumn has arrived.

It's a season of change and preparation for the winter ahead. To make the most of your autumn gardening, we've compiled essential tips that will help you get your garden ready for the colder months. It's time to welcome the autumn season with open arms.

### Growing autumn plants

So, your Summer bedding is over and done with for the year, but this is the season where you can put down some serious roots. Woody plants 'take' particularly well now. The ground is in perfect condition. Still warm from the

Summer, but moist right through, thanks to seasonal rainfall.

Bare root roses, trees and shrubs are ready to make themselves at home in your garden. Try Hawthorn, Birch and Alder for lush green foliage, or Wild Cherry for those classic white blossoms.

### Vegetables to plant in autumn

Autumn is the perfect time to get some veg under way too. These are the best vegetables to plant in autumn:

- Onions
- Garlic
- Spring onions
- Carrots
- Radishes
- Turnips
- Spinach
- Kale
- Lettuce

All of these vegetables can be planted this time of year. You'll be reaping the benefits of fresh veg the following summer.

### Autumn bulb planting

Don't forget spring flowering bulbs need to be planted in autumn or you'll miss out on those beautiful sunny colours come spring.

- **Daffodils** - A classic sign of Spring, the daffodil is a great choice. Perfect for those of us who want something that's easy to take care of but can still give you an impressive display. Plant your daffodils between August and December, and they'll begin flowering between March and April. We love daffodils because they're hardy, can survive in sunlight or shade, and don't need a lot of space to thrive. Everyone can enjoy their sunny glow.

- **Tulips** - Who can resist the cheery charm of the tulip? These gorgeous flowers come in a whole spectrum of colours, so you'll be spoilt for choice. You'll need to plant your tulips between August and December. They'll flower between April and May, depending on which kind you choose. If you want





to get clever, choose early and late spring bloomers for a whole season full of tulips.

- **Crocus** - When you've lost all hope of winter ending, up come the Crocuses, marking the start of Spring. These dainty flowers are a great way to add some early colour to your garden. Plant your crocuses between August and December for flowers as early as February. Once you've planted them, they easily become naturalised. That means they'll spread out and keep coming back, year after year.
- **Hyacinths** - Welcome in the spring with sweet smelling Hyacinths. These stunning flowers will be the envy of your neighbours. Enjoy their vibrant colours and gorgeous fragrance. They're great for pollinators too. Plant your Hyacinths between August and December for an impressive display in March and April. They're easy to grow with the right care, and it's a good idea to stalk them so those beautiful heads don't topple over.
- **Allium** - At first sight you might assume these impressive looking flowers should only be tackled by the experts. But Alliums are really easy to grow with just a little care. As long as you give them some well-drained soil, plenty of sun, and plant them deep enough you'll be rewarded with a stunning display. Plant your Alliums between August and December, and they'll flower between May and June.

### Protect your plants

Make sure your more tender plants are ready for the coming colder weather. Move your tender perennials, like fuchsias, under cover for the Winter to keep them from dying off. Cut them back to around half their height to remove leafy growth that would otherwise go mouldy in Winter. Dig them up from borders, pot them up and move them under shelter, either indoors or in a heated greenhouse.

Your tender bulbs, like Freesias and Dahlias will also need moving. Dig them up 8 weeks after the flowers have died down, allow the bulbs to dry and knock the soil or compost off them. Store them in shallow trays in a dark, cool, but frost-free shed ready to plant the following season. Check them regularly and get rid any that are showing signs of rotting.

### Start your compost heap

If there is ever a best time to start a compost heap, Autumn is it. That's when the garden is generating rubbish from just about every direction.

This includes all the old bedding plants from borders and containers, crop debris from the veg patch and greenhouse, raked out moss from the lawn and fallen leaves from trees (though these are best rotted down separately in black polythene bags perforated with a garden fork to allow in a little air...to create leafmould.). Don't use any thick woody material unless you put it through a shredder first. For the best results use a proper compost bin to keep the heat in.

### Look after your lawn

When Autumn arrives, your lawn could be looking a little worse for wear after the Summer sun, but this is the perfect time to get back to basics. The ground is still warm enough to stimulate some new growth ready for next year so don't put those garden tools away just yet.

Thoroughly scarify your lawn to get rid of moss and dead

grass that can stop the lawn from soaking up moisture and fertiliser. If you notice, there are lots of weeds you can treat them using a lawn specific weed killer that won't damage the grass.

Once you've scarified your lawn it's a good idea to aerate it. This helps vital nutrients get down into the roots of your grass, it'll also improve drainage for those soon to come rainy days.

### Tidy your borders

Autumn is an ideal time to start improving your soil for next year's display. Get rid of any dying leaves and

stems from your borders before they start to rot, but you can leave stems with seed heads for the birds to enjoy. Have a good clear out of any weeds so they don't start to take hold in the colder seasons coming up.

Dig out your annuals and spread a thick layer of well-rotted manure or bark chippings over the top. Don't worry about digging it in – let the worms do the job for you. If you have a lot of fallen leaves you could make your own leafmould, it's one of the best fertilisers out there, and it's free!

## Dates for Your Diary



**British Summer Time Ends**  
(Clocks go back one hour)  
Sunday 27th October (2am)

**Valentine's Day**  
Friday 14th February

**Halloween**  
31 October

**St David's Day**  
Saturday 1st March

**Diwali – keep pets indoors!**  
Thursday 31st October

**Shrove Tuesday**  
Tuesday 4th March

**All Saints Day**  
1 November

**St Patricks Day**  
Monday 17th March

**Guy Fawkes Night (Bonfire Night) keep pets indoors!**  
5 November

**Mothering Sunday**  
Sunday 30th March

**Remembrance Sunday**  
10 November

**British Summer Time commences - Clocks go forward one hour**  
Sunday 30th March (1am)

**Christmas Eve**  
24 December

**April Fools Day**  
Monday 1st April

**Christmas Day**  
25 December

**Maudy Thursday**  
Thursday 17th April

**Boxing Day**  
26 December

**Good Friday**  
Friday 18th April

**New Years Eve**  
31 December

**Easter Sunday**  
Sunday 20th April

**New Years Day**  
Wednesday 1st January

**St George's Day**  
Tuesday 23rd April

## Age UK Bedfordshire's Home Help Service

Need some help around the home or someone to do the shopping or gardening? Someone you can really trust?

If you or someone you know and care about is finding it increasingly difficult to keep their home neat and tidy and to carry out day to day chores such as ironing, the laundry, vacuuming or shopping; The Age UK Bedfordshire Home Help service is available to all people over the age of 50 years who can't carry out such tasks easily due to age or ill health/disability.

We directly employ over 80 home help workers throughout Bedfordshire. All of whom have been recruited for their mix of kindness, experience and crucially the "would I like this person to visit me on a regular basis?" question. All new recruits are police checked and two ex-employer references are also taken up. You may simply need someone to pop in once a week for an hour to make sure the kitchen and bathroom are spotless and to dust and vacuum through. Or perhaps you need a home help who can do all of the above as well as prepare a light snack or do the weekly shop – some clients enjoy accompanying their home help when shopping, others are happy to hand over their shopping list and let us get on with it. All of our home helps are selected not only for their home making skills but also for their helpful and friendly nature.

The service is designed to help older people live in their own homes, in a dignified and independent manner for the rest of their lives.



### What can I expect from the Home Help Service?

We provide a service designed around your needs. Therefore, a trained assessor will visit you at home without any obligation and discuss with you (and if you prefer a friend or family member) what you want and how frequently you want it done. There is only one stipulation, which is that the minimum service we can provide is one hour a week.

Your home help will be trained, vetted, police checked and fully supervised.

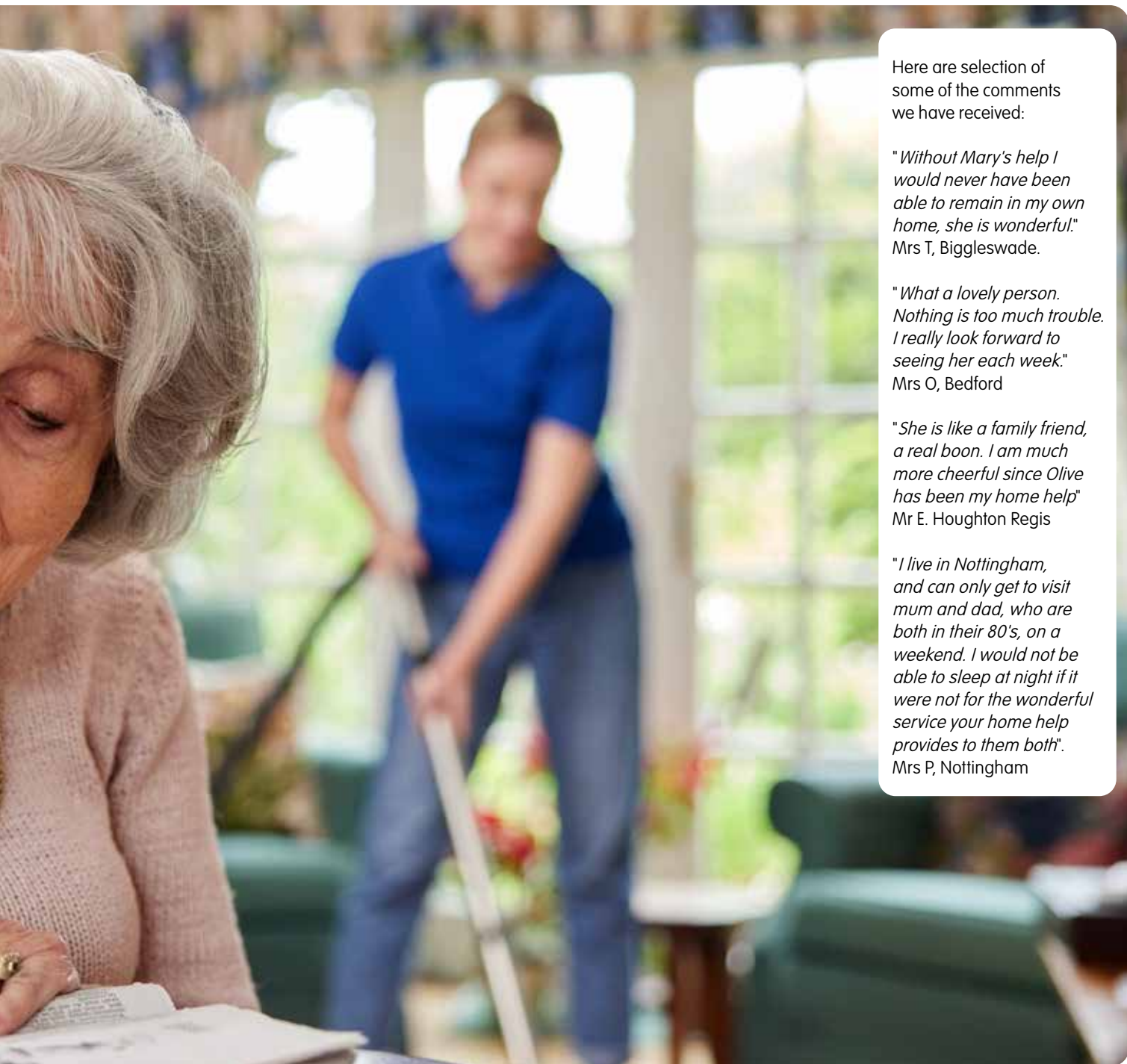
We will provide a home help who is cheerful, friendly, efficient and has a helpful nature. Many of our home helps have been with us for over 15 years.

You can expect them to treat you with respect, to carry out your wishes and to be open and transparent in their dealings with you.

In the most unlikely event, that you have a complaint, you can expect us to treat it seriously, to listen to you and to act upon it in order to bring about an outcome that is to your total satisfaction. Your home help is fully insured against accidents and accidental damage.

We know how difficult it is to trust a stranger and to invite someone unknown into your





Here are selection of some of the comments we have received:

*"Without Mary's help I would never have been able to remain in my own home, she is wonderful."*  
Mrs T, Biggleswade.

*"What a lovely person. Nothing is too much trouble. I really look forward to seeing her each week."*  
Mrs O, Bedford

*"She is like a family friend, a real boon. I am much more cheerful since Olive has been my home help"*  
Mr E. Houghton Regis

*"I live in Nottingham, and can only get to visit mum and dad, who are both in their 80's, on a weekend. I would not be able to sleep at night if it were not for the wonderful service your home help provides to them both".*  
Mrs P, Nottingham

home. With this in mind we aim to ensure that the same home help visits you each time, on the same day of the week and at the same time of day.

A record of your home help's visit and what work they did, will be left with you immediately after each visit.

#### **How do I pay?**

Is made monthly in arrears by Direct Debit

#### **Are there jobs the home help can't do?**

Home helps are not insured to move heavy items of furniture or to work off anything higher than a step ladder.

Neither can they undertake any work if they consider it constitutes a risk of harm to themselves or their customer.

For example cleaning outside windows on a step ladder placed on an uneven or slippery surface.

We do not allow home helps to work in a smoky environment and ask customers to refrain from smoking in the same room that a home help is working.

We do not provide personal care, this includes assisting clients to dress, wash or take medication.

#### **What have existing clients said about us?**

In a recent survey 98% of our customers said they thought

the service was either good or excellent.

Find out more by emailing [enquiries@ageukbedfordshire.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ageukbedfordshire.org.uk) or telephoning **01234 360510**

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# Voluntary Trustees Recruitment

We wish to recruit new people to join our Board of Trustees.

**A**ge UK Bedfordshire is an independent local charity, dedicated to making Bedfordshire a great place in which to grow old. Age is different for everyone and its challenges and demands are individual. At Age UK Bedfordshire we are many things to many people – a source of advice, information, companionship and practical support. We put the interests of older people living

in Bedfordshire at the heart of everything we do, helping them to achieve and maintain their independence and wellbeing.

Age UK Bedfordshire has been supporting older people across Bedfordshire for over 30 years, especially those who are frail, vulnerable or have no family living nearby.

We are looking for Trustees who have a range of skills and experience including leadership and senior management in areas such as health sector,

social work, local government, financial, religion.

The Board of Trustees work with the Chief Executive at a strategic level to ensure the organisation is effective within its aims and objectives. The Board is made up of 6 Trustees who meet with the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive, approximately every two months, to discuss the wider obligations and challenges of the specific sector in which we work.

The successful candidates would ideally be able to demonstrate:

- Being able to take joint responsibility with the Board and Chief Executive to ensure the charity complies with good practice and legal obligations.
- Through the Chairman and Treasurer work with the Chief

Executive and their Deputy to ensure finance and resources are adequate for the needs of the organisation.

- Support the Chief Executive through the Chairman, in order for her to carry out the management of the Charity.
- Act with integrity and in the interests of the organisation and its clients and staff.
- Jointly with the Board, to take and give advice and guidance to and from the Chief Executive as required.

### How to apply:

Please contact the Chief Executives office to express an interest by sending an email to [jo.rising@ageukbedfordshire.org.uk](mailto:jo.rising@ageukbedfordshire.org.uk)





## Camp Fire Stew

serves 4-6

### Ingredients

- 2 onions, roughly chopped
- 2 red peppers, deseeded and roughly chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 4 celery sticks, thickly sliced
- 2 carrots, peeled and thickly sliced
- 300g/10½oz peeled butternut squash, cut into 2cm/¾in cubes
- 500ml/18fl oz chicken stock
- 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 4 tbsp tomato purée
- 400g tin cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 400g tin kidney beans in chilli sauce
- 1½ tbsp Cajun seasoning
- 1 tbsp sweet smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp Tabasco sauce
- 600g/1lb 5oz lean, thick gammon steaks, cut into large pieces (any visible fat trimmed)
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

### Method

1. Preheat oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6.
2. Spray a wide, ovenproof casserole dish with the cooking spray oil.
3. Add the onion and peppers and stir-fry for 4–5 minutes over a medium–high heat to soften.
4. Add the remaining ingredients and bring to the boil. Cover and bake for 1½ hours, or until the gammon is tender and the sauce has thickened.
5. Season and serve with steamed vegetables.



## Chocolate Croissant Bread and Butter Pudding

### Ingredients

- 6 stale all-butter croissants
- 300g/10½oz chocolate hazelnut spread
- 6 free-range eggs
- 200g/7oz caster sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 750ml/1 1/3 pint full-fat milk
- butter, for greasing
- 100g/3½oz dark chocolate
- icing sugar, to dust

### Method

1. Slice the croissants in half lengthways and spread the insides with a generous amount of hazelnut chocolate spread.
2. Whisk the eggs and sugar together in a large bowl until the sugar has dissolved. Add the vanilla extract and milk. Whisk until well combined.
3. Grease a deep baking tin or ovenproof dish with butter. Preheat the oven to 160C/150C Fan/Gas 3.
4. Cut the croissants up into chunks and arrange in an even layer in the dish so there are no big gaps.
5. Pour the egg mixture over the croissants a bit at a time, until no more can be absorbed (you might not need it all). Add the dark chocolate, sandwiching it between the croissants and filling in any small gaps. Dust the top with icing sugar.
6. Bake for 30 minutes or until risen and golden-brown. Serve hot.





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- Sara



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## Charlie Chuckles

**A gingerbread man went to the doctor's office complaining of a sore knee.**

"A sore knee?" the doctor asked. "Have you tried icing it?"

**How do you know when Santa's around?**

You can always sense his presents.

My friend just won the Tallest Christmas Tree competition. I thought to myself, "Great. How can you top that?"

**What did the tree say after a long, cold winter?**

What a re-leaf!

**What did the wool hat say to the scarf?**

You hang around while go on ahead.

Three friends stranded on a deserted island find a magic lamp. Inside it is a genie who agrees to grant each friend one wish.

"I want to go home," says the first friend. The genie grants her wish. "I want to go home, too," says the second friend. And the genie sends him back home. "I'm lonely," says the third friend. "I sure wish my friends were back here."

Child going to his first day of school, he looks worried, his dad asks him, "What's wrong?" Nervous, the child asks, "How long do I have to go to school for?" "Until you're 18", says the father. The child nods, and thinks about this quietly. When they get to the front gates of the school, the child says, "Dad, you will remember to come and get me when I'm 18, won't you?"



1. What is the capital city of Canada?
2. In what year did World War II end?
3. What is the largest planet in our solar system?
4. Which famous scientist developed the theory of general relativity?
5. Who painted the Mona Lisa?
6. In what year did the Titanic sink?
7. Which planet is known as the "Red Planet"?
8. What is the chemical symbol for gold?
9. Which country is known as the Land of the Rising Sun?
10. What is the smallest prime number?
11. In what year did the United States declare its independence?
12. Who is the Greek god of the sea?
13. Which gas do plants absorb during photosynthesis?
14. Who wrote "To Kill a Mockingbird"?
15. In what year did the Berlin Wall fall?





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# Quiz Answers

Answers

1. Ottawa.
2. 1945.
3. Jupiter.
4. Albert Einstein.
5. Leonardo da Vinci.
6. 1912.
7. Mars.

8. Au.
9. Japan.
10. 2.
11. 1776.
12. Poseidon.
13. Carbon dioxide.
14. Harper Lee.
15. 1989.

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## Hub Care Support: Empowering Older People in Bedfordshire with Choice, Control, and Affordable Quality Care

At Hub Care Support, we understand that finding the right care for yourself or a loved one can be daunting. It's a deeply personal decision, and as care needs evolve, it can become difficult to find consistent, high-quality support through traditional care agencies. That's why we're here—to offer a more flexible alternative that gives older people the choice and control they deserve.

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