

Dear PAiL Colleagues

We hope that you are all keeping well, safe and secure in this time of the coronavirus crisis. We want to keep you informed about our activities, information we have received and campaigns in which we are involved and will be sending you regular newsletters.

Please find below a summary of our response to the Mayor and GLA in which we have submitted a brief list of key concerns, issues and suggestions to better communicate with and support we older Londoners, from all our diverse backgrounds, including those unable to access the internet or smart phone technology.

If you are able to print off any of these or raise issues by phone with friends who may be facing this situation that would be very helpful. as well as contacting local council representatives, support hubs, mutual aid groups to raise these issues and ideas with them.

We hope that if you have any issues of concern or examples of best practice you will share these with us

Best wishes and stay well

Chris Walsh

On behalf of Positive Ageing in London .

Update for members

POSITIVE AGEING IN LONDON -RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS IMPACT ON OLDER PEOPLE

OUR CONCERNS

- Not all older people are the same and have differing needs and concerns
- Older and poorer people without access to computers and smart phones are in danger of missing out on much of the information, support and advice that is currently being disseminated on-line.
- There is a risk that some older Londoners will be neglected in terms of support While the most frail and vulnerable older people are already mostly known to the authorities and rightly getting support, there are others who – while not currently frail – are at risk of deteriorating physically or mentally over a period of 12 weeks.
- The profile needs to be raised of the positive contributions older people can and wish to make as active citizens.

WHAT IS NEEDED NOW?

1. Recognising all older people's needs and concerns

We need assurance that older people's needs are at the forefront of action being planned.

- The Mayor should send a letter to all older Londoners recognising their needs, explaining what to do and how to access support, but also emphasising the positive role that they can play
- The Mayor needs to promote and champion active older people who are contributing as part of moving towards an age friendly London in the future

2. **Developing helpful and credible information for older people they can access**

Important information needs to be produced for print in addition to online

- The Mayor needs to send a regular hard copy letter to Older People providing core information and updates which can be distributed by volunteers and in partnership with local and London wide free papers distributed to homes.
- Providers of services need to ensure information is easy to understand and accessible by phone and hard copy
- Websites for organisations need to be updated regularly and provide a telephone contact so people can ring and chat through issues.
- Age related voluntary organisations need to be funded and supported to network to ensure their members are kept informed

3. **Promoting physical activity in the home**

Physical inactivity over a prolonged period can lead to reduced mobility and increased risk of falling.

- There needs to be simple guidance issued to older people on exercise in the home

4. **Tackling loneliness**

Physical isolation can lead to social isolation and in turn loneliness and depression.

- Good neighbour schemes and mutual aid groups need to be encouraged and publicised
- Fund telephone befriending and bereavement services to allow them to expand

5. **Ensuring older people do not get left out in terms of support**

Whilst there are support mechanisms being developed there is always a risk that some people fall between the cracks and their needs go unmet.

- The Mayor, local authorities and other bodies to ensure these services are well publicised
- Get feedback from older people about access to these services and other issues
- Support the work of Pail and partner older organisations to obtain feedback on how the roll out of support is working, with best practice being disseminated to others and problems flagged up for immediate review

6. Ensuring safety in the home

There is a risk of financial and other abuse by unscrupulous volunteers, opportunistic scammers or indeed even their partners

- The Mayor in liaison with the police and banks needs to publicise guidance for older people on recognising scams and abuse and how to report it
- Post people and other regular delivery people to safely check on older people

7. Helping older people with technology and internet usage

Many older people are not accustomed to using the internet to obtain information or shopping or for socialising

- The mayor to work with government on publicising the benefits of on-line experience and simple guidance and training
- Internet providers to provide free access for older people
- Work with service providers to ensure that older people's needs are built into the design of new technologies

8. Getting a proper evidence base on what is happening to older people

The enormity of change affecting older people needs to be properly understood

- Support for surveys e.g. EngAgeNet and UCL survey on social and emotional impact of coronavirus and for these early findings to be shared immediately with policy makers and age organisations
- PAIL and other age organisations to advise on issues and questionnaires

WHAT PAIL IS DOING

We will

- carry out *rapid assessments of older people issues* via our networks to identify live issues and communicate these to policy makers and service providers.
- monitor the situation and produce regular reports
- encourage older Londoners to help and support others and play a part in community and voluntary efforts, while not putting themselves or the NHS at risk