



A guide to marketing communications

DAY CENTRE RESOURCES HUB - SECTION 5

These resources are for older people's day centres and organisations who may work with them. They aim to support day centre sustainability by improving knowledge about them, supporting their operation and encouraging joint working.



NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration
South London



MAY 2024



About this document

This document forms part of the Day Centre Resources Hub which can be found at <https://arc-sl.nihr.ac.uk/day-centre-resources-hub>. These resources are for older people's day centres and organisations who might work with them. They aim to support day centre sustainability by raising awareness and improving knowledge about them, supporting their operation, and encouraging joint working.

People who might be interested are those whose roles involve planning, funding, evaluating and referring or signposting to day centres. They might be people working in community organisations or considering partnership working with day centres. Others might work or volunteer in day centres or support other stakeholders, research service provision, or be carers of people who attend day centres.

This Resources Hub contains seven sections.

Each section is available as a downloadable Adobe Acrobat document. Alternatively, you can download one document that includes all seven sections. There are also Word or Excel templates that can be downloaded and used locally.

Documents can be printed in black and white by selecting 'printer properties' and 'print in grayscale'.

Each section is a compilation of useful material. We hope people will dip in to find specific resources relevant to their work and appropriate to their needs. A broad range of day centre stakeholders were involved in developing these resources. They address priority support needs identified by day centres and their stakeholders in various roles. They were created because a survey found that day centres felt unsupported and under-prepared for current and future environments. Day centre providers, professional decision-makers and community groups felt there needed to be more supportive and informative resources, and they had an appetite for joint working.

This work was funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research Applied Research Collaboration (NIHR ARC) South London, which brings together researchers, health and social care practitioners, and local people under different themes. It focuses on 'applied' research designed to solve practical problems faced by local people and their health and social care services. This work falls within the Social Care theme, which aims to support the sustainability of social care services.

- About this Resources Hub
- Why research matters
- Research evidence on day centres for older people
- Understanding outcomes and measuring impact
- **A guide to marketing communications**
- Workforce: staff and volunteer recruitment
- Case studies and inspiration

People who 'road-tested' the Day Centre Resources Hub said:

My overall reflection is that this is the type of resource I wish I had when I first started commissioning day services 7 years ago. I can see this being like a 'one stop shop' resource that collates examples of what good looks like and valuable hints and tips that can be considered by professionals from different sectors, whether it's policy makers, commissioners, or providers.

Commissioner

I found the resources really helpful and have already shared some with my team.

Assistant Locality Team Manager (adult social care social work team)

I found it very useful and I am sure that it will be used to enhance understanding and joint working.

Senior Social Worker

I would direct "commissioners" or those looking at local health and social care spending to see these pages and find the evidence to inform their plans for local services.

GP

The website is well structured and offers detailed information. The presentation is clean and easy to read. The content is right to the point on the topics. I particularly like the links to research and marketing.

South Croydon Day Centre for the Retired Co-ordinator

Suggested citation:

Orellana, K and Samsi, K (2024) Day Centres Resources Hub, London: NIHR Applied Research Collaboration South London and NIHR Policy Research Unit on Health and Social Care Workforce. <https://doi.org/10.18742/pub01-174>

Disclaimer and approvals

This project is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Applied Research Collaboration South London (NIHR ARC South London) at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. Researchers are also part of the Policy Research Unit in Health and Social Care Workforce, which is core funded by the NIHR Policy Research Programme (Ref. PR-PRU-1217-21002). The views expressed here are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care.

Ethical approval was awarded by King's College London (ref: LRS/DP-21/22-27013).

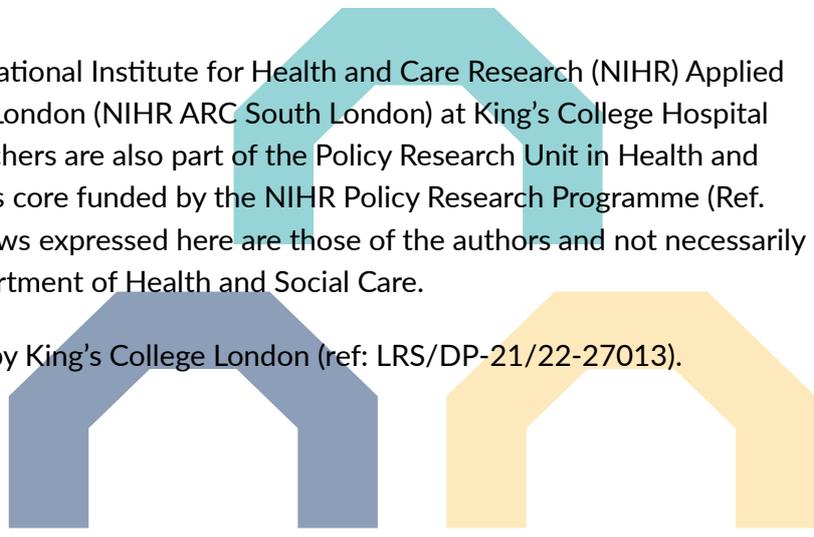


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A guide to marketing communications

This document explains marketing communications, why it is important for day centres to carry out marketing communications and who their potential audiences might be. It suggests ways that day centres can communicate and share information about themselves and the communication routes that might help them to do that.

Case studies and examples are given throughout, some of which are downloadable as separate documents.

Further resources are signposted to.

1. A brief introduction to the importance of marketing communications

Marketing includes a broad range of activities, including communicating and building and maintaining relationships. These all contribute to securing the sustainability of your organisation. Marketing does not only mean selling. It is also about communicating value (i.e. quality of service), establishing credibility and nurturing relationships. Marketing communications involves making conscious efforts to share information and keep in touch.

Aims include increasing awareness of your day centre, what it has to offer and to spark interest in it. Ensuring your service is known about is key for sustainability. Awareness-raising aims to result in new relationships, often broadly directed at the general public or, more directly, at others who work in a similar field. This awareness raising tells people that the day centre exists and about the services provided.

A further aim is to build relationships with groups of people or organisations who are already in touch with your organisation by keeping them informed. It may be volunteers, unpaid carers of people who attend the day centre, commissioners and other funders, or local organisations with whom you have worked (e.g. community groups or companies involved in corporate volunteering schemes). Madeline Powell and Stephen Osborne have studied day centres for adults with disabilities that are run as social enterprise^a organisations. They asked day centres

about their views of “marketing”, how marketing was undertaken and how successful efforts were. They discovered that “building long term relationships rather than focusing on short term transactions is important for public services and is critical for fundraising.”[1]

Marketing communications is not only about formal communication routes. Informal communication outside a service is part of marketing communications. This means that staff and volunteers who make phone calls to carers or speak with a visiting professional, for example, are involved in marketing communications.

2. Who are potential audiences for day centres’ marketing communications?

Knowing your audience is crucial for marketing communications work and the potential audience for day centres is very varied. Audiences are also important “stakeholders” in your organisation.

Day centres will want to make efforts to engage with:

- Older people who are looking for some support, care or social contact and activities during the day
- Family members or carers who might be considering the use of a day centre for the person they support
- Students or trainees looking for a placement in a day centre to broaden their work experience (e.g. social work, occupational therapy or medical university students, or health and social care college students)
- Job seekers
- Potential volunteers
- Donors, grant-making and other funders, or organisations who can help with funding, or where a contract is already in place
- People putting together or updating directories about local services (e.g. organisations contracted by a local authority (LA) to do this as part of the LA duty to make information available)

- Local community and other organisations that want to work with the day centre somehow (e.g. organising employee volunteering, donating money, gifts or items as prizes, local schools interested in intergenerational working, organising information visits)
- People working in roles who might make referrals or signpost to day centres (e.g. carer support organisations, Admiral Nurses, community nurses, occupational therapy, social services, social prescribers/link workers/care coordinators^b or others based in GP surgeries or in community organisations)
- Local councillors with influential decision-making roles about funding or choosing or reviewing committee members (e.g. Overview and Scrutiny Committee,^c Healthwatch^d).

Certain groups may need more of an introduction to day centres. They might have preconceived ideas about what a day centre is and does. Others might have had previous experience (good and bad) which influences their views of day centres. Hearsay may have informed some people's views.

Good marketing communications can help inform the GPs, link workers and other health and social care professionals who are “social prescribers”. Social prescribing is a new profession and not all workers will be familiar with day centres. They can refer people who have non-clinical needs to services (e.g. day centres) to support the person’s health and wellbeing but they should be properly informed, and your marketing communications are an important part of this.

Some people may know of people who attended a day centre and who did not have a good experience. Some people assume that a day centre involves sitting on chairs around the edges of a room all day with the television on. Others may know day centre volunteers or have heard of people who have benefited from a family member going to a day centre.

A widespread old-fashioned view of day centres makes it important for your communications to be informative and to illustrate that attending a day centre can be interesting and attractive, with activities that are appropriate for a range of people.

3. Where and how can day centres undertake marketing communications?

Places and formats for undertaking marketing communications are many and varied. They include websites, social media, printed materials, local radio stations and newsletters. They can also include face to face events, meetings, videos, photos and sharing individual stories. A short piece about each of these now follows. Some examples are included, and more are signposted to.

 **Marketing communications can also be undertaken through blogs, podcasts, exhibitions and networks.**

More about these (and the formats covered in this section of our resources) can be found in [King's Improvement Science's publication 'Communication: a practical resource'](#).^e

Websites are an increasingly important source of information for many individuals and professionals. For some, websites are a first point of call.

However, online information about day centres [2] and information for carers on local authority websites [3, 4] is very variable in detail and quality. It is important to ensure that information is available online, and that information is accessible and inclusive. This contributes to respecting and protecting the rights of people with disabilities, including people living with dementia and their carers [5]. Although many older people do not use the internet, the Covid-19 pandemic has improved digital access for many older people [6].

Day centre providers may have their own website, or pages on an organisational website. Day centre providers may choose to make information available on other websites hosting directories of services; these may cover whole areas, selected, boroughs, smaller areas, or may be themed by groups of people (e.g. carers, people living with dementia, minority ethnic groups). Often, the service provider will be responsible for providing information and for updating this from time to time. Keeping the information reliable and up to date can be challenging but it is important, and it is worth checking how this will be done. There may be an online form to submit this information.

Example: Social prescribing websites (directories of services and activities)

[Lewisham Wellbeing Map](#) and [Lambeth's MYcommunityDirectory](#) are part of these boroughs' social prescribing initiative.

[Social Prescribing London](#) was created in 2021 to support the Mayor of London's vision for every Londoner to have access to a social prescription. From the [signposting home page](#), there are searching options for '[activities & services](#)' or '[organisations](#)'. Although a searchable service category is 'day centres', few are listed.

Example: CarePlace London-wide service directory

[CarePlace](#) is commissioned by Commissioning Alliance (which supports LAs). It aims to be London's centralised source for care and community services, information and guidance. Service providers can advertise their services and include links to their own websites free of charge.

Social media is any online service or website that allows content to be created and shared, and connections and interactions made within virtual communities or networks.

These include X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and WhatsApp (which is a more restricted platform for messaging). Some of these are linked (e.g. Instagram and Facebook). Some allow static content, such as news, announcements, or photos. Some also allow "stories"; these are short videos or a series of images with text.

Social media is a cost-effective way to build relationships with multiple stakeholders. Using social media helps give a "personality" to a day centre and can help foster relationships. It can be used for awareness-raising, highlighting events or notable achievements. It is effective for telling stories and it helps generate positive word of mouth messages. It can be used to support and engage people in the community, such as for virtual support groups or lunch sessions.

Although many service users do not use social media, it is a key tool for marketing communications. It accepts text, links to other materials, and photos or videos can be uploaded. Users can 'follow' an account so that they are alerted when new material is posted.

Public-facing social media (e.g. X - formerly known as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok) is useful for providing general information, showcasing recent and upcoming events, and highlighting notable achievements. This raises awareness of a service for service users, their carers and the broader community. It enables funders and donors to have an idea of general

activity and progress, or to find out more before investing. Accounts on these platforms may be made publicly accessible for all; this is useful for public-facing marketing communications. Alternatively, an account can select its membership, with requests to join a group needing approval; this may be useful for communicating with existing networks of people, such as relatives of service users.

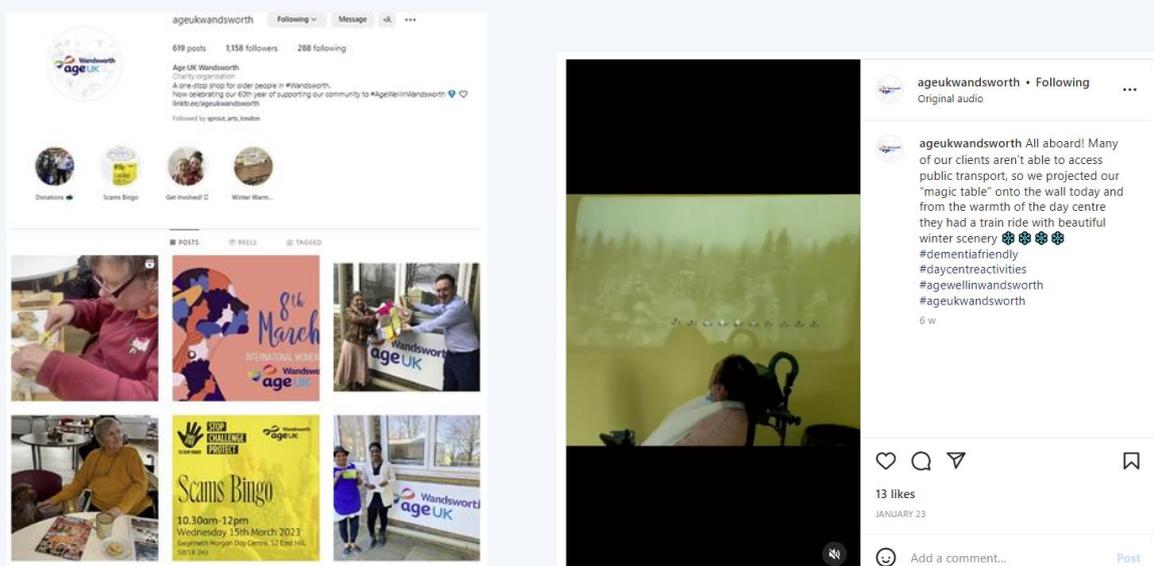
Restricted access social media (e.g. WhatsApp), whereby people need to receive an invitation to join a group, may be used for smaller and more defined groups. A group may be used for supporting and managing volunteers, or for keeping groups of people in contact virtually when meeting may be difficult, for example.

[Read about how Bring Me Sunshine uses social media.](#)

This case study example also covers challenges around using social media (e.g. boundaries, security, expertise, moderation procedures, data protection) and shares details of its own public-facing Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Example: Age UK Wandsworth's Instagram

[Age UK Wandsworth also makes good use of Instagram](#) to bring alive day centre experiences. Many of the photos and video clips showcased are of activities – manicures, dancing, fairground games, balloon tennis, static bikes and [use of a magic table to project moving scenery](#) (showcased in a video – below right).



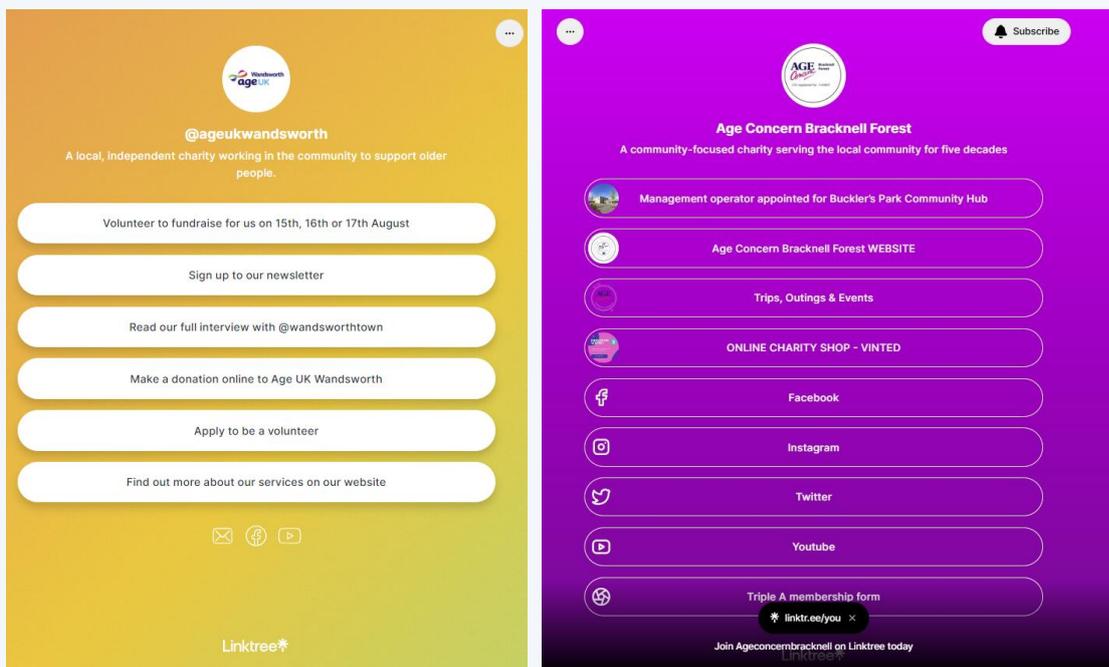
A presentation to the Day Centre Research Forum by Madeline Powell in June 2020 covered the following social media tips:

Boosting your Social Media Presence 	
Identify what the objectives of your social media strategy are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging and creating awareness in the local community? Boost donations? Volunteer recruitment? 	50% adults with disabilities have used social media in the last 4 months (ONS, 2019). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to penetrate service user networks. Helps to create a safe online forum for service users.
Speak with your volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why do they volunteer with you? Will help you establish how your day service is viewed externally. Is this how you want to be viewed? i.e. your “personality”? 	Remember <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You don’t need to be on every single social media platform. Instagram and Facebook are linked. You need to try to post at least once a day. Be creative with hashtags to further your reach.
Creating a personality on social media 	
Create a story narrative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post pictures/YouTube videos which portray a story of your service users. Engage parents of service users. How have your service users flourished since being at your day centre? Be as visual as you can. 	Post daily updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What have your service users done? Have you engaged in any activities which have benefited the local community? Any positive reviews you could post?
Spotlights on your volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps reaffirm internal marketing. Potential to act as part-time marketers. Makes volunteers feel valued. Contributes to the personality you are portraying on social media. 	Engage the local community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join or follow local community groups and post in them. Establish as a community asset. Helps to foster a sense of community ownership. Political support. Engage and follow local business: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential donors if you run an appeal.

Linktree is a simple social media “landing page”. It allows users to create a personalised/customisable page of links they wish to share with their audience and descriptive text for these.

Its basic version is free of charge. A link to the page (the url) can be included in various places to guide visitors to other materials (e.g. in the descriptive text in Instagram or organisational details in Facebook). Visitors can “subscribe” to receive notifications of new content – such as publicity about upcoming events (e.g. open days).

Example: Age UK Wandsworth’s and Age Concern Bracknell Forest’s Linktree



Radio publicity and articles in free newspapers may reach people who are difficult to make contact with in-person, for example people who do not often leave their homes.

Example: Day centre advert on local radio

The Devonshire Dementia Day Centre built a relationship with a local radio station and recorded a short advert that is regularly played. It is very simple and states that there is a care home and a day centre that specialises in caring for people available for carers who need a break.

Leaflets have long-since been used to reach people visiting places such as libraries, GP surgeries, supermarkets, or public buildings.

They are useful for people who do not use technology. Leaflets can showcase highlights of a service and include individual testimonials and photos as well providing important details about times, location and a contact telephone number.

Some people feel that printed information is more trustworthy than verbal recommendations. A day centre attender we spoke with during the development of these resources said:

My sister already came to the club and was telling me all about it. (...) I think a leaflet would have been more helpful, and I might have come sooner. Because it's sort of like saying things on paper, and by word of mouth, they might say things that are not happening. And if you have a leaflet that you know exactly what's going on.

[See Devonshire Dementia Day Centre's printed leaflet](#)

Its front cover states clearly that the leaflet is about that day centre, shows a photograph of someone being helped to do an activity underneath which is the text 'every day is special, come and see why...'. Various of the available activities and what is available feature on a colourful border. The rest of the leaflet includes brief information about the day centre's facilities, contact information, 'what we do', 'our dementia model', 'our services', the daily programme, hours of operation, fees and 'why choose us?'

Leaflets summarising research about day centres may reassure older people and carers and encourage them to try a day centre.

[See the two-page information sheet developed for the Resources Hub: Day centres for older people: what do people say about them?](#)

It summarises some of the main messages coming from six recent UK research studies and illustrates these with quotes from some of the older people and family carers interviewed for these studies.

Newsletters keep your contacts informed and are a good way to reach new people and organisations.

Newsletters help keep people you are already in contact with (e.g. regular clients, their family members or volunteers) informed about the organisation, events, news and announcements.

Newsletters are also a good way to reach new people who may be interested in using the service or who would like to introduce a family member to it.

Local community organisations and funders may also be interested in keeping up to date via a newsletter. Some day centres produce monthly or quarterly newsletters.

Some newsletters are printed, while others are electronic (email or website-based). An advantage to making newsletters available on a website is that any interested person or organisation who has searched and found the service website can read about the service, important news and have contact details. It is a good idea to include an option on the website to “subscribe” or “sign up” to the newsletter, so that someone can choose to receive it by email when issued. Some older people may prefer to receive paper copies.

Example: [Devonshire Dementia Day Centre’s monthly newsletter](#)

This four-page newsletter covers news from the day centre and adjoining care home. Short summaries of events (sometimes just one sentence) and news are in a large font size. Plenty of photographs of people are accompanied by quotations about these. The newsletter is an excellent opportunity to advertise the service and its benefits by using testimonials. Extracts here are from November 2022 and January 2024.

EVERY DAY IS SPECIAL, COME AND SEE WHY

Why families choose us...

- Day Guests can enjoy a fun day out with music, exercise, hot lunch, reminiscing, activities & afternoon tea and experience moments of joy throughout the day
- Loved one comes back home calmer & settled
- Family carer has a well-deserved, guilt free day off
- We offer this exclusive service 5-7 days a week, from 9am to 5pm daily for a minimum of four hours; an 8am drop off can be arranged.

**Share the care with a brand new chapter.
FREE Helpline: 0208 949 0818.**

What one of our Day Guests said:

*Dear Devonshire Dementia Day Centre, I am writing to you as I would like you to know that since Mum has been attending your day centre, her mood and behaviour have improved greatly. She seems to be a lot happier and calmer when she returns home. Even her sense of humour seems to be returning and it is nice to see her smile again. If she is having a bad day at home, it does not last long and it's made both mine and my husband's role as carers a lot easier. It also gives us some respite time to recharge our batteries so we can continue with our carers' roles.
Thank you and kind regards Mrs. Christine McGoldryck*

WE'RE HERE TO SHARE THE CARE

To family carers: we appreciate how difficult things can get & our concerns are just as much about you as they are about the person living with dementia. It is imperative (long term) for at home family carers to build your team with the best interests of everyone's wellbeing. This is sometimes difficult to do. Start slow, come to our free singing group, get to know us, enjoy the relaxed joy and snacks and attend a day out at the Day Centre. From our compassionate care staff & carefully designed vintage-themed rooms to music therapy, afternoon tea & tranquil gardens, we hope to share the care in 2024 as we provide moments of magic & spark reminiscence. Our Day Centre offers a safe & secure environment that promotes independence & social interaction during dementia friendly and purposeful specialist activities. We provide pick up & drop off and are open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm. We are here to chat, explore, consider & suggest alternatives as we continue to share the care.

Call Smith or Donna on 0208 949 0818 to register your interest.

"It was a pleasure to see the new dementia care facility. Very well designed & thought out, which made the visitors very happy" – Kim Bailey.

Some electronic newsletters are Adobe Acrobat (pdfs) and some on e-libraries, such as [Scribd](#), as well as being downloadable as a pdf.

Example: [Staywell's monthly newsletter on Scribd](#)

Readers can scroll through the newsletter on Scribd or download a pdf. [Staywell's Scribd page](#) includes Annual Reports (impact reports) as well as its various different types of newsletters.



Tip:

Including links to online newsletters and social media sites in automatic email footers can broaden awareness of a service.

In-person events and in-person input.

In-person events may include having a stall at a local community summer fayre or holding an open day.

In-person input (to external bodies) may include attending a local social services or NHS staff meeting or community group to speak briefly about the service (i.e. being actively engaged with the local community and social care and NHS communities). It can also be a good way to recruit volunteers whilst raising awareness of the service.

A staff member of a provider we spoke to about the development of these resources felt that an open day is a secure way of helping the public to have a better understanding of what goes on in a service and who uses it. It also helps members of the public to feel it is a friendly space and a community asset. She felt this is necessary because *'most day centres that I've seen, they are friendly inside, but it is kind of a fortress, you know, with big walls around it.'*

Example: Annual open day on forecourt

Merton and Morden Guild, a voluntary activity day centre in the London Borough of Merton, organises an annual open day on the building's forecourt to raise awareness of its existence. The day, which is attended by the Mayor, includes demonstrations (tap dancing, music, exercise, line dancing), a buffet lunch and other fun activities. People – who may be passing by on their way to do shopping - stop and see what is happening.

The organiser told us: *"Not everybody has a forecourt. I do make it sound terribly grand. It's just a bit of tarmac out the front, but it's our bit of tarmac."*

Example: Annual International Day for Older Persons activities and partnership with supermarkets

Merton and Morden Guild, in partnership with the LA and the NHS is involved in celebrations for the International Day of Older Persons – usually known as 'Older People's Day' – which is on 1st October every year. Celebrations take place in the nearby Sainsbury's Savacentre Superstore. M&MG organises demonstrations by people who attend its exercise classes. Music is played. Other organisations are also involved (e.g. Age UK). The NHS provides blood pressure testing amongst other things.

Photos and videos can help people to visualise a service and build confidence and trust. It is often said that a picture is worth a thousand words.

Photos and videos will be useful for people considering starting to attend a day centre, their relatives and any professionals speaking to someone about starting to attend a day centre as an option.

Photos might be of people engaged in activities or chatting, of outings or of day centre rooms. A day centre manager we spoke with during the development of these resources said that photos are good “*to show people are engaged, and that it's not a big, scary, cold day centre*”.

A short video can also be a good introduction to a day centre. Day centres may wish to make a brief video that explains what to expect. It might show groups of people, or one or two people talking about what it's like to go there. A manager might explain the benefits, or a social worker (for example) can explain why it's useful to be able to refer someone to a day centre and the difference attending can make to people's lives.

'What to expect when you come here' may cover transport arrangements, how long the day lasts, lunch and refreshments, some of the group activities that are organised, but that people can also do their own thing if they prefer, and who will be supporting them when they are there.

A slightly longer video may also cover other benefits such as safety, safeguarding, health monitoring, signposting and emotional support. Family carers will be interested in this, as will social prescribers, social workers, occupational therapists and others who work with older people and their family members. A professional, doing assessments and referrals, is likely to want to know if a service would meet their cognition, mobility and health needs, whether the location is convenient and what the transport time and arrangements are.

A video need not be “fancy” or “all-singing, all-dancing”. For example, a day centre attender/volunteer we spoke to during the development of these resources (in a joint interview with the day centre organiser) explained how happy she was to be back at the centre once it re-opened after its Covid-19 pandemic closure period and how important the centre was for her. The day centre organiser commented that it would have been good to film her saying these things.

It is a good idea to make sure that a video is accompanied by its transcript, if this is possible.

 The Centre for Ageing Better has a library of photos that are freely downloadable. See <https://ageing-better.org.uk/resources/age-positive-images-guide-and-terms-using-our-image-library>

Example: Photos used in a newsletter

Devonshire Dementia Day Centre's newsletters make good use of well-captioned photos that demonstrate purposeful activity, singing, coffee and dancing.

PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES

Encourage independence, confidence, and friendships.



Not just a care home but 'their home' – At the Devonshire, our Residents safely and appropriately do as they please with happiness and ease. From Kathleen insisting on helping with the washing up in the kitchen to Carolyn enjoying balloon therapy, moments of joy float around in all shapes and sizes.

LIFE AT THE DEVONSHIRE - SINGING, COFFEE & DANCING!



Back in full musical swing, we chimed away and did 'our thing' as Terry tangoed and Geoffrey waltzed, making a 'noteworthy' contribution.



Smiles all around as top tier Afternoon Tea was 'sandwiched' between music and good mood food. Once full - we swiftly reconvened to classics from our keyboard.

🔍 See a selection of photos in the case study example about [how Bring Me Sunshine uses social media](#)

Example: Informational video – Devonshire Dementia Day Centre

‘A look inside the Devonshire Dementia Day Centre’ is a 41 second (YouTube) video embedded into the day centre web page. The opening picture shows text “Join us for a fun day out at our Dementia Day centre”. Music backs photos and films of people at the day centre. It includes photos of the rooms, garden and greenhouse, older people and a staff member chatting in the tea room while enjoying afternoon tea, examples of activities (flower arranging, art, balloon/parachute game, with text “Meaningful activities”, someone using the shop/market stall with the text “Multi-sensory room”, hairdressing, “Specialised care”, people being supported to do gardening and walking in the garden (“Outdoor activities”). It finishes with contact details.

The video is on the [day centre web page](#) and also on Devonshire Dementia Care Home and Day Centre’s [You Tube channel](#).

Example: Informational video – Age Concern Bracknell Forest

[Age Concern Bracknell Forest shares information about its day centre in a 3 minute 55 second video](#). The organisation manager, Lead Care Supervisor and Assistant Care Supervisor and a Care Support Worker speak about their work and what happens at the centre. The video provides a tour of the facilities available. They invite people to visit the day centre and provide contact details.

Social workers, occupational therapists, social prescribers and other suggesting day centre attendance may wish to show a video like this to potential users and their family members.

Individual stories (case studies) can convey how and why people find the service valuable and enjoy it.

These stories are often called “case studies” (e.g. short overview of the person and the benefits they have experienced as a result of using the service).

Stories can be powerful when they are shared alongside other data about the day centre, for example in reports to funders.

One way to do this is to share letters written by relatives of day centre attenders. These can be shown as letters or "a review from an attender's relative".

Example: Letter from relative and video of attender's daughter

Devonshire Dementia Day Centre's website is dynamic, changing regularly. At one time, it featured a letter written by an attender's daughter and a two-minute video of another attender's daughter speaking about her mother's use of the centre. These appeared alongside each other **on the web page with information about the centre.**

A LETTER FROM A GUEST'S RELATIVE

Dear Devonshire Dementia Day Centre,

I am writing to you as I would like you to know that since Mum has been attending your day centre her mood and behaviour have improved greatly. She seems to be a lot happier and calmer when she returns home. Even her sense of humour seems to be returning and it is nice to see her smile again. If she is having a bad day at home it does not last long and it's made both mine and my husband's role as carers a lot easier. It also gives us some respite time to recharge our batteries so we can continue with our carer's role.

Thank you and kind regards
Mrs. Christine McGoldryck



Quotations, taken from a completed satisfaction survey for example, can also be used.

Example: A day centre attender's words used on the provider's website

Michael Whicher is a member of Raleigh House day centre.

'I felt very low spirited following the death of my wife as we were very close. It must happen to lots of people when they lose someone. I couldn't believe I could be so lonely. As soon as I walk through the door of Raleigh House I blossom and feel great. It makes a huge difference to my life and my health. The staff are fantastic.'

Example: Videos of a day centre attender, activities and a volunteer

A [day centre attender talks for 49 seconds](#) about the difference that going to Staywell's Raleigh House day centre in Kingston borough has made to his wellbeing.



[The Bradbury's programme of activities web page](#) opens with a video of an exercise class. A second video, which follows automatically, is an 'interview' with Stewart, who is the centre's volunteer photographer. He talks for almost 5 minutes, answering questions about himself and his association with the day centre.

A volunteer, [Hilary, talks about how she has benefited from volunteering](#) at The Bradbury (3 mins 15 seconds).

These, and other, videos are available on [Staywell's You Tube channel](#).

Individual stories can also be written up (as more "formal" case studies) using the Most Significant Change approach. This involves using a person's own words in a structured way to explain the most important change they have experienced as a result of using a service and why this change is important to them.

🔍 See some [examples of using the Most Significant Change approach to write individual stories as testimonials](#) and links to guidance on how to write these.

🔍 During the development of these resources, we spoke to Joan who shared how going to a day centre has changed her life. [See Joan's story](#) here.

4. Marketing communications content ideas

Appropriate information can provide the reassurance and information that builds trust and prompts people to make contact. Different audiences have different informational needs. So, what should marketing communications cover?

Knowing what happens at a day centre is important for all stakeholders.

We have heard from **older people** that the idea of going to a day centre for the first time can sometimes feel a bit daunting, even for people who are keen to start attending one, because it involves going into a new environment with a group of strangers.

Family members are more likely to consider a day centre as a realistic option and feel happier about a relative they support starting to attend if they have reasonably detailed information about it beforehand. This may be the case particularly when an older person may not be able to tell their family about their time at a day centre.

A **professional** assessing someone's support needs or suggesting suitable local services is likely to be interested in whether a service would meet that person's cognitive, mobility and health needs. They would also consider practical issues like the day centre's location and travelling time as well as arrangements for transport.

Perceptions and knowledge of services can vary. An occupational therapist participating in this research said *"a lot of people's objection is that they don't just want to go and be dumped in a room once a week with a load of other people who are in their eighties and nineties. We don't know any different from that, as OTs. It almost feels like there's not really much information out there at all about them."*

Knowing how people *feel* about their day centres is also important for all stakeholders.

See the [two-page information sheet *Day centres for older people: what do people say about them?*](#) that summarises some of the main messages coming from six recent UK research studies and illustrates these with quotes from some of the older people and family carers interviewed for these studies.

So, what might be covered in marketing communications?

So, what might be covered in marketing communications?

| The basics to cover in most formats are:

What is available at the day centre (e.g. activities, additional services such as footcare), the building's facilities and accessibility.

Important practicalities such as operational hours, lunch, transport, parking availability), which geographical areas are covered by the service and costs and payment arrangements.

Cost is key information for social workers; being able to find it saves them time. The absence of cost information may put older people and carers off taking the next step of contacting the centre.

Contact details for someone who can offer more information or discuss the service.

Explaining how service quality is monitored may be reassuring for older people, carers and professional referrers.

| Any particular selling points you are proud of or insights into the service will be useful or will attract people's interest.

These may include free 'taster' days, coffee mornings for current members and others who are interested, extra services available (e.g. toenail cutting or hairdressing), links to newsletters and photos, videos or individual testimonials that add a human element or enable readers to gain further insight into the service, what the day centre offers and how people benefit from it.

Example: Taster days

A day centre provider we spoke to during the development of these resources said:

We offer taster days, but sometimes it can take quite a lot of persuading for someone to come along. And it is a big thing to do, to step across that threshold into quite a big space with complete strangers.

Example: Reiterating important information and low hourly cost in the referral form

Age Concern Bracknell Forest's professional referral form (halfway down the page) (Microsoft Forms) reiterates important information that could have been missed and uses the opportunity to emphasise the low hourly cost of the service and signpost to an informational video about the day centre.

The form includes the following text:

"Our centre opens at 9 am and closes at 4 pm, Monday - Friday. We charge a single flat fee of £45 per day, per person (less than £6.50 per hour). Our centre is fitted and furnished with our members (and dementia) in mind. We have immersive high street artwork throughout our corridors, a unique small cinema screening room, and a stylish dining room area. Our lounge is where we deliver exciting, stimulating activities designed to offer something for everyone. We champion friendship, fun and relationship building. We serve a two-course meal everyday. Plus unlimited refreshments and snacks across the day. FULLY DEMENTIA FRIENDLY. All our staff are experienced trained care professionals. Meet the team & see the centre in this video <https://youtu.be/8d9qBwKk4dk>.

No age restrictions, no postcode restrictions, can accommodate people out of borough.

We can provide emergency "one off" short term / emergency placements additionally."

Clarity and detail are helpful and will contribute to referrals or enquiries being appropriate.

Consider what social care or NHS professionals may wish to know. For example, is the exercise class run weekly an Extend exercise class led by a qualified person? Are some activities designed around a particular therapeutic programme (such as Cognitive Stimulation Therapy)? An occupational therapist would welcome knowing this information before making a referral. Mentioning specific activities designed to be dementia-friendly is helpful for professionals and reassuring for carers. Including a referral form for professionals to use will make the process easier for them. Cost information is key.

Day centres may like to extend an invitation to social workers or social prescribing link workers to visit. These people and others in social care and NHS roles, may value visiting the day centre as part of an induction when they are new in post.

Example: Cognitive Stimulation Therapy newly offered

When two of Staywell's Raleigh House staff were trained to provide Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST), a blog was published about this on the website, which featured a video introducing what CST is beneath it. Within the 'dementia support' web page, this was also advertised (with a link to the blog for readers to find out more). Including this information offered the opportunity to inform readers that provision of CST is recommended by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE), something that professional referrers may be interested in knowing.

Age Concern Bracknell Forest explains how to access its day centre on its webpage

Terms and conditions, a support plan and a referral form for professionals are provided.

SIGN UP PROCESS

STEP 1: Reach Out

Call: 01344 422048 to check what days /spaces we have available. We will then arrange a time & date to suit you to come and visit, meet the team, and show you around!

You can also email: info@ageconcernbracknell.org.uk.

Step 2: Once you've visited

Once you have come to see us and you are happy to join our community you must complete the 'Support Plan' and read in full our 'Terms and Conditions'. The support plan is an electronic form. We can post physical copies if preferred.

SUPPORT PLAN
Complete

TERMS AND CONDITIONS
Download

If you are a professional looking to make a referral to the Day Centre you can do that here:
[Professional Referral Form](#)

Example: Staywell's website's 'Make a referral' page

This [page is specifically for people making referrals](#). The referral form (in Word or pdf format) is downloadable and contact details are provided for any queries.

services that change lives
staywell

Search [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [YouTube](#)

[Contact Staywell](#) [Contact Kingston Community Furniture](#)

[Our services](#) [Support us](#) [Join our team](#) [News and stories](#) [About us](#)

Make a referral

Thank you for taking interest in referring someone you know to take up our services in the community.

To make a referral, please download and complete our referral form:

[FORM_GEN_09_Community_Services_Referral_Form.docx](#) (Word document for electronic completion)

[FORM_GEN_09_Community_Services_Referral_Form.pdf](#) (PDF)

If you have any queries about completing the referral form, please contact the Staywell Information Team

020 8942 8256 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

information.office@staywellservices.org.uk

Share this page

[Email](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#)

Latest

Submission Successful

Money worries this winter? Help is available.

Get help at home

The Bradbury - weekly programme of activities

Most read

Kingston Community Furniture

Providing further information can be helpful, too, whether about the day centre or other resources.

Example: Programme of activities

Staywell's website dedicates a page to its [weekly programme of activities](#) (activities, times, booking details and price) at The Bradbury.

Example: 'Resources' page

Devonshire Dementia Day Centre (and care home) website features a "[Resources](#)" page which includes contact details for sources of elderly care and family support, financial and legal advice, as well as government and regulatory bodies, local adult social care and some articles of potential interest.

| Websites need not be fancy and complicated.

Below are two very different but good examples of straightforward day centre web pages. (i.e. one single page)

Example: Age UK Wandsworth: one page

The web page about [Age UK Wandsworth's Gwynneth Morgan Day Centre](#) is simple and also explains the process of accessing the service, including the option of a free 'taster' day. It is accompanied by a [colourful pdf leaflet with photos](#).

Example: Age Concern Bracknell's website: all the information!

As well as including photos and text about what it offers, the [day centre page on Age Concern Bracknell Forest's website](#) states that its care team is trained and experienced, and also includes downloadable Terms and Conditions (with complete information about using the day centre – definitions, introduction, journey into their care, the service, trial periods/monitoring, illness/medication/meals, fees, closures, a Covid-19 disclaimer, cancellation policy, additional information, billing and invoicing information and a service agreement the T&Cs), a downloadable support plan to fill in (also available through a direct link on its Linktree page), a professional referral form, and it highlights information about current availability.

5. Things to consider or bear in mind, and further resources

Certain practicalities must be considered when planning marketing communications. These include expertise, need, cost and time.

Digital skills.

Providers will need to improve their skills to make adequate information about day centres available online. However, staff and volunteers do not necessarily have the skills or equipment to make video clips or create and update web pages.

Below is an example of a day centre that secured volunteer IT help. Volunteer support might also come from young people wanting to gain some work experience.

Example: Social media presence with the support of a volunteer

A voluntary sector day centre receives IT support from a volunteer once a week (2.5 hours). This has enabled the organisation, which was lacking in IT expertise, to have social media presence (X - formerly known as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) and an improved website. Staff provide materials (photos, text) for the volunteer to use. The volunteer loves computers and technology and was introduced to the organisation by their LA support worker, who accompanies them during volunteering time. The volunteer has been in this role for four years.

 **The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)** is a membership organisation for charities, voluntary organisations and community groups in England. A section of **NCVO's website is dedicated to providing help and guidance on digital technology.**

Within it, advice is given on **planning a website** – which also **discusses why a new website may not be necessary (before you start a new website project)**. Proper consideration should be given to the problems you are trying to solve and why before paying to create or redesign something. Cost-effectiveness comes from identifying problems that need solving (through user feedback). If you do decide you need to make changes to your website design and build, **start with this comparison of DIY website building tools.**

 **The Digital Inclusion Toolkit** is an independent and comprehensive source of digital inclusion (DI) advice and information for local councils. It provides very straightforwardly written [guidance on setting up a website and email for small business and organisations](#) and an [introduction to GDPR](#) (General Data Protection Regulation) and protecting people's personal data. It provides "how to" guides and case studies covering starting, delivering and evaluating digital inclusion projects.

It has a section about [free software \(including for working with photos and videos\)](#). [Resources and case study examples](#) are also available.

| Searchability.

Ensuring that your web pages appear when people search online is important. This is possible by including key words (e.g. older people, day centre, day care, club, elderly) behind what is visible. Doing this is called 'Search Engine Optimisation'. This is [explained simply in Wikipedia](#) and more about this can be found in this [free guide to online marketing](#). People feeling brave might like to read [more detailed information on the gov.uk pages](#).

| Permission

Permission should be sought to share materials that identify people or share personal stories (e.g. photos, individual stories, films, recordings). A template seeking such permissions that can be adapted for local use which can be downloaded in Word format from the Resources Hub website; it is based on NIHR ARC South London's release form.

[See editable photo/film/recording/story release form template](#)

This template based on NIHR ARC South London's release form can be edited as necessary. It can be downloaded from the Resources Hub website (A guide to marketing communications).

In gaining permissions, it is important to remember the Mental Capacity Act principles around consent.^f Many older day centre attenders will have mental capacity to give consent for the use of their photos/film etc, but some may not. Some people's capacity fluctuates. Some people have capacity to make some decisions but not others. Complying with the MCA will mean discovering whether a person has capacity to give the necessary permission at the time it is being requested. If they do not, a proxy will need to be approached for permission (e.g. a family member).

Discovering a person's capacity to give permission can be relatively straightforward and can be done by someone at the day centre who would explain they would like the person's permission to use photos etc. They should explain what the photos might be used for, that they may be

used for some time, and that the person can withdraw their permission in the future. The individual 'assessing' the person's capacity to make this decision would then use the 4-stage test of capacity, during which further questions about understanding/decisions are asked. The person may be asked to explain their understanding of the situation:

- 1) can they understand what is being asked of them and any consequences?
- 2) can they weigh up this information?
- 3) can they make a decision about it?
- 4) can they communicate their decision?

Example: Diamond Club's forms for gaining consent for use of photos, film and recordings

For its Holiday at Home project, the Diamond Club developed three documents used alongside each other to gain consent. These can be downloaded from the Resources Hub website.

6. Examples of marketing communications and materials

This document has already included several examples of marketing communications. Further case study examples are also available:

- **Bring Me Sunshine** explains how the group uses social media, some challenges faced (e.g. boundaries, security, expertise, moderation procedures, data protection) and shares details of its own public-facing Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter) accounts.
- Two examples of printed leaflets: **Devonshire Dementia Day Centre** and **Staywell's Raleigh House**.
- Two-page information sheet about UK research: **Day centres for older people: what do people say about them?**
- **Using the Most Significant Change (MSC) approach** to write individual stories as testimonials, and **Joan's story**.
- **An editable template to gain permission to use photos, films, audio recordings or stories** that can be edited as necessary and a **local example of forms used**.

Use of social media by Bring Me Sunshine

Bring Me Sunshine (BMS) provides dementia-friendly activities and events for older people in the community. It aims to help combat isolation and loneliness and promote health and wellbeing to older people in Catford, Lewisham.

Although most of Bring Me Sunshine's service users are not on social media in any way, social media is a key tool for marketing to relatives/carers of service users and the broader community, and for internal management. BMS mainly uses various social media platforms to:

- inform about upcoming events (marketing communications)
- report on events with photos and videos (most popular especially using tagging and hashtags) and improve engagement (marketing communications)
- raise awareness of related issues and events - that would mainly appeal to those in touch with older people in the community (marketing communications)
- support and manage volunteers (internal management).

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/BringMeSunshineSE6> is openly accessible and aims to:

- keep volunteers updated and reminded about upcoming and past events
- keep the wider community informed about activities that are going on in their community (engaged and interested as a 'liked' page)
- enable referrals to the service through awareness raising and information provision.

Often local groups will share BMS content, especially if they are fun pictures and videos. People like to see happy real-life content of people enjoying themselves - especially the entertainment! When people meet the priest or one of the in-house entertainers and volunteers who sings and leads movement and music sessions in the community, they often comment on their latest notorious costume or performance. (e.g. the priest in his captain outfit or an entertainer volunteer who performed using personas during Covid visits.)

X (formerly known as Twitter) <https://twitter.com/lesleyaallenbt1>

BMS uses the organiser's personal account. This has worked well as she is a local community leader and has key followers who re-tweet content about BMS. Photos and videos of events are extremely popular (see below). However, the line between personal and work can sometimes be grey (see Challenges below).

WhatsApp (closed group, accessible by invitation only)

Group chats are a key tool for engaging the volunteer team and works better than emails which tend to get fewer responses because people receive too many. WhatsApp is instant and tends to get more instant attention. Status updates on WhatsApp are also useful.

There are 43 older service users ("we use the term elders") on the WhatsApp group which keeps them informed of updates. It is also a great way of connecting and sharing positivity. Occasional reminders of the group's purpose are needed, for example after out of scope messages are shared and discussions become political.

Social media challenges

As for any organisation dependent on volunteers, social media content can be patchy and sometimes inconsistent. It tends to be reactive rather than proactive.

To have one person who has social media experience and is dedicated to posting regular content is important.

Engagement is key to a wider exposure of content (through algorithms). This means that the more a post is "liked" or "commented on" or "shared", the greater that post's reach. Writing posts that are engaging is key, but time-consuming, and emphasises the need for someone who is dedicated and responsible for this social media content.

Organisations may wish to draft some social media related policies and procedures that look to the future. Matters for consideration will include boundaries and monitoring, security, the impact of successful social media and information governance.

Boundaries and overlap between work and the personal need to be carefully considered for future-proofing, to allow separation between parts of people's lives and to protect privacy.

While current organisers, staff or volunteers may be comfortable taking on a social media role from their personal accounts (e.g. X - formerly known as Twitter), others who come to the organisation in the future may not wish to continue with the same arrangement. Some staff or volunteers may choose not to be constantly accessible, and this is to be respected. An organisational account (X handle) that is accessible by named people will enable continuity at times of change or unavailability and will protect individual privacy.

As well as aiming to raise awareness and attract people to events, social media involves substantial interaction. Security and the impact of successful social media work need consideration.

Monitoring is important.

Organisations may wish to consider putting in place procedures for moderating (i.e. vetting) posts before these are posted online and make arrangements for someone to do this. Open groups or larger organisations, in particular, may experience trolling, cyber security breaches, negative or inappropriate posts, or inappropriate promotion of services that your organisation does not endorse, but these challenges can also happen in closed groups. BMS' had experience of inappropriate posts and addressed matters by providing a reminder of the purpose of the What's App group (sharing information relevant to activities and sharing hope and positivity), by contacting perpetrators separately to discuss how their post(s) could have been received by other group members, by not engaging in dialogue on certain posts or restricting comments.

Organisations will also need to be mindful of information governance regulations (GDPR) (**General Data Protection Regulations**). Exchange of 'personal information' may take place over, for example, an organisational What's App group, and organisations may wish to consider the implications of this from a GDPR perspective.

It is also important to remember that a person who is living with dementia and who does not have mental capacity to give consent to have their information shared must, by law, be respected.

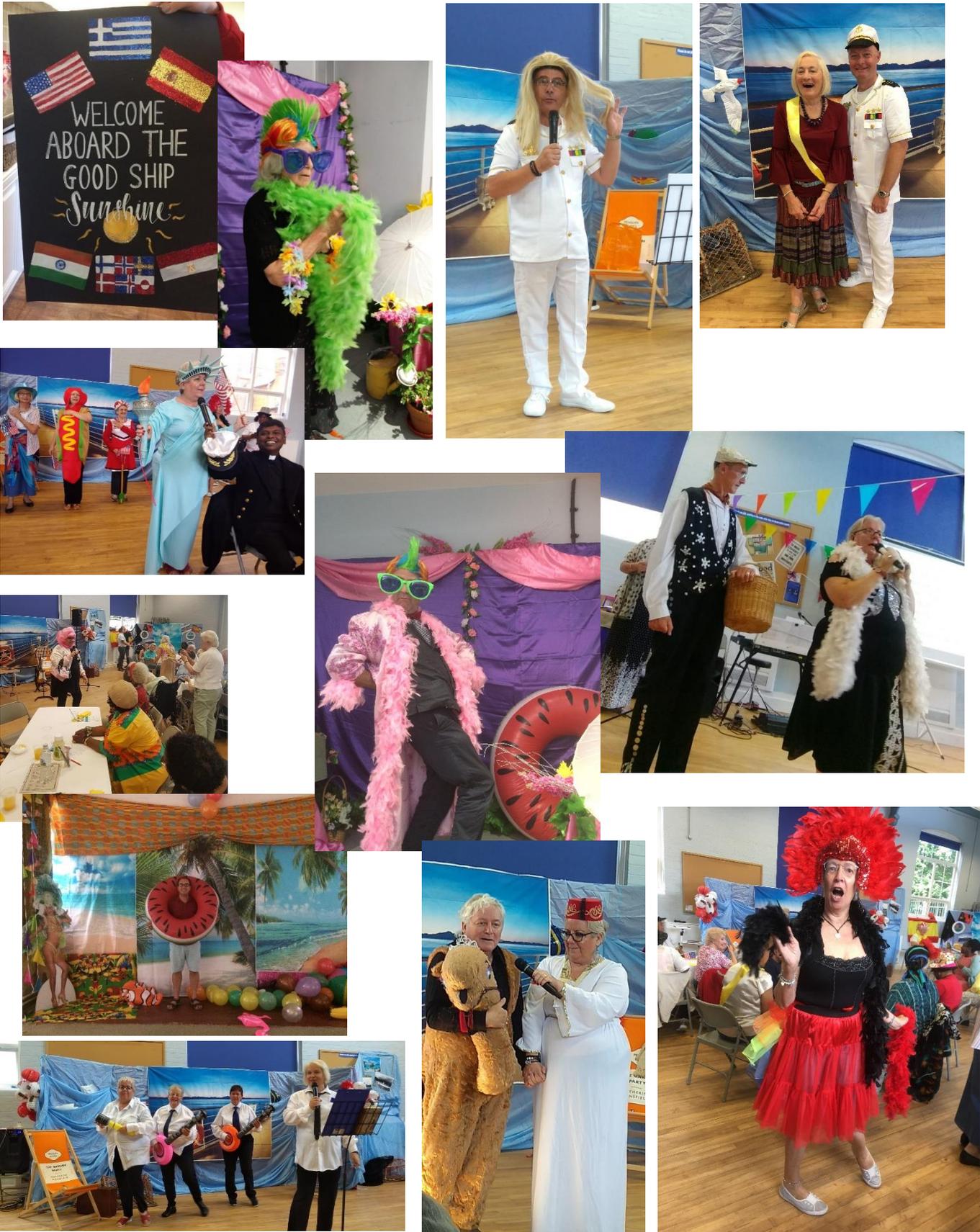
According to the **Mental Capacity Act 2005**, the following principles should apply concerning decisions around capacity:

1. A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that he lacks capacity.
2. A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practicable steps to help him to do so have been taken without success.
3. A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision merely because he makes an unwise decision.
4. An act done, or decision made, under this Act for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be done, or made, in his best interests.
5. Before the act is done, or the decision is made, regard must be had to whether the purpose for which it is needed can be as effectively achieved in a way that is less restrictive of the person's rights and freedom of action.

Contact details: <https://bringmesunshinese6.co.uk/>

See next page for examples photos used on social media.

Photos used on social media by Bring Me Sunshine



Devonshire Dementia Day Centre printed leaflet

This leaflet is printed on heavy paper and is A4 folded into three.



The Library photo, credited to Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton

Our Facilities

- Devonshire Lyons Tea room experience
- Beautiful sensory dementia-friendly garden
- Hair dressing salon and Barber's shop
- Shop and local market reminiscence experience



Application

Thank you for considering us. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions. We look forward to meeting you and your loved one. Together we can make their dementia easier to bare! Please call us to arrange an assessment.

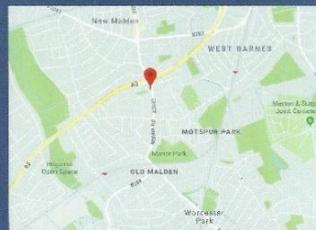
How to Contact Us

Smithson Sasi
Director
Devonshire Dementia Day Centre
215A Malden Road
New Malden KT3 6AG

Email
info@devonshiredementiadaycentre.com

More Info
www.devonshiredementiadaycentre.com

Telephone
0208 949 6464



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DEVONSHIRE DEMENTIA DAY CENTRE

Every day is special,
come and see why...

FUN • SINGING AND DANCING • ARTS AND CRAFTS

What We Do

We are a unique dementia specialist day centre providing care for day guests. Our dementia model is designed to meet the needs of people living with dementia in the community. With our day support, we are hoping people with dementia can continue to live in their own homes or with their families for as long as is possible. We realise families cannot always provide this support and also need a well deserved break, without feeling guilty.



Hours of Operation

We are open 365 days a year including bank holidays from 9am to 5pm (Drop-off at 8am can be arranged).

Our Dementia Model

We see the person living with dementia as being unable to process information as he or she once used to. The person is not able to store factual information, only feelings. These feelings can be triggered and cause anxiety, frustration, agitation and unpredictable behaviours. We try to calm the agitation and feelings and turn the anxiety into well-being. Our unique approach, thoughtful interventions and therapies are interwoven into the day's programme to increase comfort and create magical moments of joy.

Daily Programme

We offer a range of activities and entertainment, as well as interventions to promote well being:

- Thoughtful games and activities
- Aromatherapy and massage
- Exercise for all levels
- Music and memory
- Fabulous sing-alongs
- Hobbies
- Supervised cooking and garden activities
- Arts and crafts
- Movies
- Visiting school choirs, musicians and entertainers
- Travelling theatre groups
- Memory activities
- Various reminiscing therapies

Fees

- Minimum stay 4 hours including hot meal, call to discuss the price.
- Full day cost from £90.00
- Contract price for block bookings
- Each confirmed booking requires pre-payment or credit card detail on file.



Our Services

- Breakfast, snacks and a nutritious hot meal
- Health monitoring
- Supervision and/or administration of medication
- Hairdressing, chiropody and beauty treatments
- Transport
- Assistance with shower and personal care
- Personal laundry
- A take away snack for the evening



Why Choose Us?

- We offer a safe, relaxed and friendly environment
- Our caring and professional staff are thoughtful and make the day special
- Our interventions have been researched world wide. They have been developed over thirty years and are effective
- We work in close collaboration with the University of West London
- We provide a unique care model

Staywell's Raleigh House printed leaflet

This leaflet folds into an A5 booklet.

How to contact us

If you would like to join, to look around, try a taster day or to find out more, please get in touch.

Phone: 020 8942 8256
Email: hello@staywellservices.org.uk
Web: staywellservices.org.uk

Raleigh House,
14 Nelson Road
New Malden
KT3 5EA

Opening times

Monday to Friday 9.30am to 3.30pm.



Who we are

- An independent local charity
- Over 75 years' experience
- Award-winning and innovative
- Working in partnership
- Supported by volunteers

Support us

We love to hear from volunteers who can bring their talents and enthusiasm to enhance our members' experiences.



Rooms at Raleigh House can be hired for meetings and events. Contact us for more information.

services that change lives
staywell

Raleigh House



Supporting wellbeing

Supporting independence

Supporting carers

Staywell is the working name for Age Concern Kingston upon Thames
Registered charity no. 299988 Company no. 2272550

Care and support for older people

Welcome to Raleigh House

Would you, or someone you care for, benefit from joining our friendly day centre community?

Raleigh House offers a welcoming, safe environment in which to spend the day, meet people and engage in a variety of activities of your choice.

- Spend time in our bright, spacious facilities with all your access needs catered for.
- Meet new people and be looked after by our trained and friendly staff.
- Enjoy a cooked, two-course lunch and refreshments as well as occasional treats.
- Make use of our facilities, entertainment and activities including a pool table, arts and crafts, live music, games area, nail bar, computer suite, sheltered courtyard and quiet terrace.
- Get around easily, whether or not you have access needs, with our fully accessible step-free facilities, specially trained personal care assistants and accessible transport options.

'The best thing is the company. I've made friends and the whole team working here are lovely.'



Support and respite

Our staff are trained to assist people living with dementia and we can provide respite for carers and families.

Find out more

Call or email us to arrange a viewing or taster day, or to become a regular member.

'I moved to be near my family when my husband died and here I've met a great group of friends.'



Link up to our other services

At Raleigh House our members' needs come first. If we can link you up to our other services, supporting you to live as independently as possible, please speak to one of our friendly team.

We can offer help with:

- Hairdressing
- Podiatry
- Accessible shower facilities
- Specialist information and advice
- Handyperson
- Help at home services, including meal preparation, cleaning, shopping and companionship

020 8942 8256

Two-page information sheet about UK research: *Day centres for older people: what do people say about them?*

(downloadable in pdf format)



Day centres for older people: what do people say about them?

May 2024

There have been six recent UK research studies about day centres. In the studies, older people and family carers were asked about their experience of day centres and we have used their quotes here to talk about the main messages from the studies.

Going to a day centre helps maintain quality of life. Many people can find it helpful and enjoyable, and it helps to provide structure to their week.

Many people who go to day centres have long-term conditions and many are unable to go out without support. Some will also have experienced loss (e.g. bereavement, retirement, declining health) and may have very little social contact. People often start going to their day centre for social contact. It gives them something to do, to get out of the house, it adds structure to their week and improves their mental or physical health.

Any initial reluctance to use a day centre can often turn to enjoyment and enthusiasm.

I didn't want to come (laughing)...I said what down there, it's for old people and I'm not old. So, anyway, when I did come down, I enjoyed it". (Ruth)

I'm nearly 92 but I don't feel 92 and I thought what are you on about you're an old woman yourself (laughter). And after I gave myself a talking to, I sort of warmed to it, and I like coming now. (Joan)

I didn't like it to begin with, I have to say, but I got to like it very much. (Megan)

Going to a day centre can improve a person's quality of life, reducing loneliness and improving their feelings of self-worth. For many people day centres offer companionship and something different to do, in the outside world. Importantly, they also offer practical support, information about other help available and, often, a great deal of fun.

I just enjoy it there. Because I am alone. I am on my own. Sometimes I feel sad. I feel better when I go to the centre I have a little bit of talking, conversation and some socialising. (...)

I enjoy it very much. To tell you the truth, before Monday I had been waiting for Monday to come. (...) I feel happy and it helps my depression. (Miguel)

Oh, the companionship, definitely everyone is just lovely. (Val)

I'm coming out now, meeting people, and it's wonderful to be able to come [to Site 5]. It's like joining the world again, you know? (Site 5 member, S05OP02 aged 74)

I was in a bad place as far as loneliness is concerned... but it was an experience to sit with people and socialise with people. People who were friendly and we had a laugh. (Cedar, client).



NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration
South London



The welcoming, safe and supportive atmosphere and the opportunity to build genuine relationships are important.

Well, it is the fact that everybody says, hello and you are welcomed; when you arrive, you see familiar faces even if you don't talk to everybody. (Ruth)

I find the whole atmosphere here is very comforting, you sense it as you walk through the door. (Anne)

If they're doing well-er than you, they seem to come and help you. They don't have to. But they did come and help. (William)

Most people have good experiences. Older people's overall feelings about their day centres:

All I can say is that anyone who doesn't go there is missing out on something. (Kathleen)

It changes your life. (Wilma)

Oh, I love going. Oh yes. Yes. (Kenneth).

Yes, it's good value for money. (Miguel)

People running the service are supportive.

They care, and they understand why I am here ... (Mariana)

They come around asking "Are you alright? What's the matter?"(Thomasina).

Everything is done for you, you know. It's great to think now you can be looked after like this, you know. (SAM).

I don't know what I'd do without them. (Site 3, S03OP01 aged 73)

Day centres provide reassurance and a break for family carers.

Having a regular extended break is beneficial for carers' mental and physical health and helps them to sustain their caring role. Knowing their family member is enjoying themselves enables them to have a relaxing break.

"That amount of time [husband] is at [Site 4] is my little core of being normal [...] I know he's safe and he's enjoying himself"(Site 4 Carer, S04C02)

She gets a lunch and she gets a social engagement. It gets her out of her flat and (...) that's money well spent (...) it is good value for her, because it does all those things about keeping her mentally and socially active. (Family carer Evelyn)

I can sit in my living room on my own. It's one thing I really like doing (...) It relaxes me. Otherwise I'm just highly stressed. I'm like, you know when you're highly strung, you're ready to burn (...) Just to be alone in my own house is just the best feeling. (Family carer Linda)

It gives him a break from me and it gives me a break from him. Then when he comes home I'm saying, have you had a good day? It gives you something else to talk about to each other. (SCF)

Download this document from the Day Centre Resources Hub <https://arc-sl.nihr.ac.uk/day-centre-resources-hub>.

Research quoted here: Bennett et al (2023), Hagan & Manktelow (2021), Lunt (2018); Lunt et al (2021); Noone (2023); Orellana et al (2020), Orellana et al (2021) Rokstad et al (2019). Names are not participants' real names.

Disclaimer and approvals. This project is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Applied Research Collaboration South London (NIHR ARC South London) at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. Researchers are also part of the Policy Research Unit in Health and Social Care Workforce, which is core funded by the NIHR Policy Research Programme (Ref. PR-PRU-1217-21002). The views expressed here are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care. Ethical approval: King's College London LRS/DP-21/22-27013.

Using the Most Significant Change (MSC) approach to write individual stories as testimonials

The 'Most Significant Change' technique involves a person (e.g. day centre attender, volunteer) reporting, in their own words, the most significant change that has happened to them as a result of something (e.g. attending or volunteering at the day centre). The 'story' covers the most significant change they have experienced, what happened/where/what or who was involved/when, why it is significant for them/what difference it has made to the person's life, and why this difference it has made for the person is so important.

Detailed guidance and examples can be found in [The 'Most Significant Change' \(MSC\) Technique. A Guide to Its Use](#) (2005) by Rick Davies and Jess Dart

Examples appear in [Magic Moments in adult service provision \(numbers 1,6, 7, 20, 33 and 40 are about day services\)](#) developed by Swansea University and Swansea Council in 2016.

Below are two detailed examples of stories. Permission has been given for these to be used to training and development purposes.

Knit one, purl one, see my confidence grow

Background to my story

I am an older person who attend a 'knit and natter' group in a local library in South Pembrokeshire every Tuesday



What changes have happened

- My confidence has increased
- I walk to the library instead of taking the car
- I really look forward to the weekly sessions, the chatter, tea and biscuits
- I love to share patterns, ideas and skills
- My knitting has improved
- I am helping others by knitting '[chip shop baby](#)' sweaters and hats

Which of these changes are most significant to me?

Regaining my confidence and courage. It took a lot of courage for me to join the group. I felt I may be seen as stupid if I couldn't knit what the group were all knitting. I hadn't knitted for 15 years as my children and grandchildren didn't need anything knitted. I was nervous – could I fit in?

What it was like before

I have always relied on my husband's company since we retired. I think I was getting to feel that I couldn't do things on my own anymore. I was apprehensive about going out on my own. I didn't think people would have anything to say to me.

What it is like now

The 'knit and natter' sessions allow me time for myself. They have increased my confidence and I love knitting once more. I have something to look forward to! I am also looking out for ideas to share with the group. I also share what I have been doing with my family. Last weekend, when my son called, we were watching a TV programme on Africa and as he moved closer to the TV, I asked him why? He said "I am looking for the 'chip shop baby' jumper you knitted" We all laughed!

What happened to make the changes come about

The volunteer who leads the knitting sessions allows us to be ourselves and the sessions are very much about enjoying our time together. She suggests things for us to knit, so we can choose what to do. I have found my long-lost knitting skills and now really look forward to our Tuesday morning get-togethers over a cup of tea and a biscuit.

I have also shared my concerns about my recent bout of pneumonia. Before, I was worried that the doctor had said that my lungs had been affected by the condition, but my fellow knitters have reassured me. I am not so worried now.

My wife - big difference

Background:

Arthur and his family are involved in the work of ACE Ely Caerau, an asset-based community development organisation based in Cardiff. They co-ordinate a range of projects, one of which is a community shop. Arthur's wife became involved in the shop.



What changed

"My life has completely changed. For 25 years I've been by myself even though I was in a partnership. My wife wouldn't go out. I was like a carer. I cooked and did the shopping, now she is able to come with me."

What it was like before

"We used to go out at 2.00 in the morning, down to the Knap or to Porthcawl. She would run along the beach and into the sea. She would then get out, get dried and dressed and we would go home. If there was nobody around, then she was fine. We would go shopping at 2.00 in the morning, as soon as it started filling up she was gone. We went to Tesco one day at 1.00 in the morning, she sent me off for something, when I came back she had left the trolley and had gone. She had the money and everything. I had to get the assistant to help look for her, but she wasn't there. I headed home and found her there with my two daughters. I then had to go back to the shop and pay for the shopping. She couldn't even answer the door."

What caused the change

"My daughter had the idea of the community shop and took mum along to see the room. It was a really small room. She needed someone to run it. Mum took to the idea straight away, she was in her element because it was like being in a cupboard. She wanted pictures up on the wall. One day a lady came in and asked to buy the pictures but she said "You can't, that's my window". She now runs the shop 4 days a week."

What it was like after

"For me the most significant change was my wife, big difference, it's been hard. I'm from a big family, my niece got married but she couldn't come. My family were asking why. Fantastic, unbelievable, she is a different person. They run a knitting club now, they run the Retreat group on a Thursday, she goes out with the women, gets on a mini bus and goes, goes out for meals. It's unbelievable, I've got time for my garden and my dogs. I don't worry now. I still cook and shop but she can come with me now and we can go during the day, she isn't stuck in the house anymore. We get on like a house on fire. She is phenomenal."

Why this is the most significant change:

"I got my relationship with my wife back."

Joan's story (written using the Most Significant Change approach)

Background to my story

I am an older person who attends Merton and Morden Guild (a day centre providing activities and other services), in the London Borough of Merton, about three times a week, taking part in social activities and exercise classes. I also help out a lot now since a colleague died, from simple things like making tea to helping organise activities such as our apparently famous outings to the pub!

What it was like before?

I did feel depressed and there seemed to be no purpose to my everyday life.

What it is like now

I am a lot more active and like keeping myself busy, I am happier now than before joining the Guild.

What changes have happened?

It has helped me quite a lot. It makes me get up and get out and exercise whereas, before, I wasn't. You know, just like if you're not going anywhere, you don't bother getting up and you don't bother washing or dressing, but because you know you're going out, you have to make an effort.

I have formed a small friendship group which does things outside of Merton and Morden Guild activities, such as trips to markets.

Which of these changes is most significant to me?

Getting out, making new friends.

Why was this change significant for you?

I have more social life and something to look forward to.

What happened to make these changes come about?

My sister told me about The Guild as her husband had been collected by them for NHS Falls Prevention Classes in the past. It took me a couple of months before I eventually got here. It was one of the best things I did was to walk through that door. It's just atmosphere down there. The welcome made a big difference to me. It was very smiley. "We're going to do this. Would you like tea or coffee?" It just sort of makes you feel at home, so to speak. And there's always somebody there to help. Is absolutely brilliant. Everybody's so happy. Well, everything really good about the Guild. Everybody's so helpful that run the Guild. They're so kind.

Photo, film, audio recording or story release form (template)

(TEMPLATE downloadable in Word format)

*Instructions for users of this suggested template [delete before use]:
Please add your organisation details and amend the purposes the
photos/film/recording/story will be used for where prompted.
See also notes at the end about capacity.*

The **[ORGANISATION NAME]** would like to **[EXPLAIN REASON FOR WANTING TO USE PHOTOS, FILMS, AUDIO RECORDINGS OR INDIVIDUAL STORIES** – for example: promote stories about the impact of day centres from the perspective of service users and carers; or promote a better understanding of our day centre service].

I (add full name here) _____ hereby give permission to be photographed/filmed/interviewed/recorded/provide my story to the **[ORGANISATION NAME]** to be used for the following purpose(s):

- Internal and external communications, publications and online.
-
- I consent to use of material captured involving me/my research story in media outlets and **[ORGANISATION NAME]**'s promotional material and publications, and for general use, where appropriate.
 - I am aware that the materials will be held indefinitely, that resources may be in circulation for a number of years and that I retain the right to withdraw my consent for use of materials at any time.
 - I understand that, if I withdraw my consent for their use, all appropriate steps will be taken to remove the materials, but that it may not be possible to stop their use completely as they will already be in circulation.
 - I consent to my photo being used.

Signature:

Date:

Email:

Tel:

(Must be signed by parent/guardian if individual is under 18 years of age)

Consent collected:

by: [PRINT NAME]

of the [ORGANISATION NAME].

Notes for users of this template [delete before use].

In gaining permissions, it is important to remember the [Mental Capacity Act principles around consent \(see below this note\)](#). Many older day centre attenders will have mental capacity to give consent for the use of their photos/film etc, but some may not. Some people's capacity fluctuates. Some people have capacity to make some decisions but not others. Complying with the MCA will mean discovering whether a person has capacity to give the necessary permission at the time it is being requested. If they do not, a proxy will need to be approached for permission (e.g. a family member). Discovering a person's capacity to give permission can be relatively straightforward and can be done by someone at the day centre who would explain they would like the person's permission to use photos etc. They should explain what the photos might be used for, that they may be used for some time, and that the person can withdraw their permission in the future. The individual 'assessing' the person's capacity to make this decision would then use the 4-stage test of capacity, during which further questions about understanding/decisions are asked. The person may be asked to explain their understanding of the situation:

- 1) can they understand what is being asked of them and any consequences?*
- 2) can they weigh up this information?*
- 3) can they make a decision about it?*
- 4) can they communicate their decision?*

***Mental Capacity Act 2005** principles concerning decisions around capacity: (1) A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that he lacks capacity. (2) A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practicable steps to help him to do so have been taken without success. (3) A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision merely because he makes an unwise decision. (4) An act done, or decision made, under this Act for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be done, or made, in his best interests. (5) Before the act is done, or the decision is made, regard must be had to whether the purpose for which it is needed can be as effectively achieved in a way that is less restrictive of the person's rights and freedom of action.*

Local example: Diamond Club's forms for gaining consent for use of photos, film and recordings

Holiday at Home Photographic and Film Consent

- Holiday at Home relies on donations and small grants to fund its activities, by purchasing refreshments, equipment and venue.
- Films, photographs, and voice recordings may be used to promote or report on Holiday at Home sessions to our funders or local media
- Images and/or voice recordings may be used in leaflets, posters, reports, and internet publications
- You will not be identified by name in any use of your image/voice recording
- Permission for your image to be used may be withdrawn at any time by contacting Lesley Allen, Chair, Holiday at Home organiser in person or by e mail [email address], although images that have already been made public cannot be withdrawn.

Holiday at Home Statement: Your Personal Information

- On your first visit, we ask you to complete a registration form with name, address, contact numbers and the name and contact of a family member/friend. You may also choose to let us know if you have any specific needs.
- This information may be helpful for us to respond to any enquiries from you, give you information about activities or if you need extra support. If we are required to share your information with emergency services or safeguarding office, we will inform you and gain your consent if possible. Your information will never be given to any other third party without your explicit consent.
- Information is kept in a locked box or password/PIN protected device accessible only to the organisers, who have DBS clearance and have attended Safeguarding awareness training.
- You are free to withdraw consent for us to hold your information at any time by contacting Lesley Allen, Chair, Holiday at Home organiser in person or by e mail [email address]

Registration form

<p>Name:</p> <p>Address:</p>	<p>Contact e mail/telephone (if you are happy for us to contact you):</p>
<p>How would you describe your ethnic background?</p>	<p>How old are you? (Please tick) 60-69 70 -79 80-89 90 or older</p>
<p>Name/contact for carer/friend/family member:</p>	
<p>Do you have any particular needs? e.g care needs, dietary requirements:</p>	
<p>Do you have any symptoms of COVID-19? (If you do, you will not be able to attend today's activity)</p>	
<p>I agree to my personal information being kept by Holiday at Home organisers in a locked box or on password or PIN protected devices for: the duration of the events/ for a period of one year, to inform about other events of interest.</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Date:</p>	
<p>If photographs are taken, I agree to my image being used in reports and publicity about the Holiday at Home scheme. I understand I may withdraw my consent at any time, although it will not be possible to remove images already circulated.</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Date:</p>	

Holiday at Home/Bring Me Sunshine Event Date:

Name (please print)	Please sign if you agree to your photograph being used in our publicity/newsletter locally	Time in	Time out

7. Endnotes

- ^a **Social enterprises** are hybrid organisations with dual social and business objectives. They apply business strategies to meet social outcomes – and with the income earned from these strategies being used to further social impact rather than to maximise profit for shareholders.
- ^b **Social prescribing** is being promoted widely by NHS England. Social prescribing link workers connect people with local groups and support services (i.e. non-medical support) to meet their wellbeing needs (e.g. social isolation, depression). Information about services available locally is key. Often people working in this profession previously worked in health or social care.
- ^c The **Overview & Scrutiny** function is part of a Councillor’s role as an elected representative. Overview & Scrutiny Committees help ensure that local public services are delivered effectively, efficiently and in the best interests of local people. They hold the Executive to account by reviewing and challenging decisions taken by the council, investigating services or policy areas and making evidence-based recommendations to improve services. Meetings are open to the public.
- ^d **Healthwatch** is an independent statutory body that was established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf. Local Healthwatch are funded by and accountable to LAs. They gather people’s views of local health and social care services, share these with people involved in the commissioning and scrutiny of services, report on and recommend how services could be improved, promote and support local people’s involvement in service monitoring, commissioning and provision, provide information and advice, share information with and make recommendations to Healthwatch England. Healthwatch England guides and supports local Healthwatch organisations, escalates concerns and advises the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, NHS England and English LAs of inadequate services.
<https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/>
- ^e **King’s Improvement Science (KIS)** is a research programme which aims to improve the quality of health and social care for people across south London and beyond.
<https://kingsimprovementscience.org/resources/>
- ^f **Mental Capacity Act 2005 principles** concerning decisions around capacity: (1) A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that he lacks capacity. (2) A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision unless all practicable steps to help him to do so have been taken without success. (3) A person is not to be treated as unable to make a decision merely because he makes an unwise decision. (4) An act done, or decision made, under this Act for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be done, or made, in his best interests. (5) Before the act is done, or the decision is made, regard must be had to whether the purpose for which it is needed can be as effectively achieved in a way that is less restrictive of the person’s rights and freedom of action.

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