

WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER

We are an independent charity providing practical help so that people who need support can live safely and well in their homes and communities. (You might know us by our former name, 'Mobile Repair Service') We hope to bring some light into your day with our newsletter which has information, stories, and ideas to help you through these uncertain times.



This month we are... Reflecting on what 2020 meant for MRS

Despite the uncertainty and disruptions, MRS Independent Living is proud to have managed to continue to provide services and support for the people of Hackney and Islington during the most testing year. Many thanks to all our staff and volunteers who have been flexible and generous with their time.

"When feeling the pressures of social isolation and mask-wearing alienation, dropping into a Dudes meeting for some tea, smiles and conversation helps calm and ground me for going Once More into the Fray"

Feedback from Making Room service users and those supporting them continues to be highly positive

"Not just exercise, also nice to meet and chat"

"The world has changed and that has been difficult. Being able to meet with the Hackney Dudes over this time has helped us to get through things. We have been able to meet privately in local gardens, go on walks, and also meet on Zoom. Everyone is friendly and there is always laughter when we get together, which is precious"

"Especially the walks generated lots of comments where people were glad to meet peers fighting a similar battle and embrace a healthier life"

You're receiving this newsletter as you have used one of our services in the past. If you don't want to receive any future newsletters please contact us by email on newsletter@mrsindependentliving.org, phone 0330 380 1013 or text STOP followed by your name to 07780 311735.

New Guidelines from December 2nd (review: December 16th)

London has been placed in Tier 2 restrictions. This means :

- You must not socialise indoors with anyone you do not live with or who is not in your support bubble, whether at home or in a public place.
- You must not socialise in a group of more than 6 people outside
- **Weddings** can go ahead with restrictions of 15 people; **Funeral ceremonies** are limited to 30 people and 15 people can attend wakes/stonesettings.
- **Organised outdoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes can continue;** organised indoor sport and exercise classes is permitted if people can avoid mixing with those they do not live with.
- You should aim to **reduce the number of journeys you make.**
- You must continue to follow tier 2 rules when you travel to a tier 1 area. Avoid travel/overnight stays in tier 3 areas unless essential, e.g, to receive medical treatment. You can travel through a tier 3 area as a part of a longer journey. **For more details: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know>**

Christmas Bubble: Between 23rd and 27th December



Between 23 and 27 December: you can form an exclusive ‘Christmas bubble’ composed of people from no more than **three households**

- You can only be in **one** Christmas bubble
- You **cannot change** your Christmas bubble
- You **can travel** between tiers and UK nations for the purposes of meeting your Christmas bubble, travelling between 23rd and 27th December
- You can only meet your Christmas bubble **in private homes, your garden, places of worship, or public outdoor spaces**
- You can continue to meet people who are not in your Christmas bubble **outside your home according to the rules in the tier where you are staying**
- You cannot meet someone in a private dwelling who is not part of your household or Christmas bubble
- **You must not form a Christmas bubble if you have coronavirus symptoms or are self-isolating.**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family>

Return of Hackney Social Radio

Broadcasting weekly on **Wednesdays, 11am-12pm, via Resonance 104.4FM**
DJ Frank Kaos, aged 78, presents music and audience phone-ins, including stories from the community, features from local artists, and advice from experts with up-to-date information about where to access help or support.

Parks and Green Spaces in Hackney

Hackney Council are writing a **Parks and Green Spaces Strategy** that will guide how we develop and look after our 58 parks plus 237 housing green spaces in Hackney over the next ten years. Let them know your views on tel: **0208 3563500** or via **consultation@hackney.gov.uk**.

Or take their online survey:

<https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/parks-green-spaces/hackney-parks-and-green-spaces-strategy/consultation/subpage.2020-10-06.9913102329/>



Hackney in the 1980s



Hackney Museum is exhibiting images from The Rio Cinema's Tape/Slide – Hackney's ground-breaking community photography project. This photography exhibition explores and celebrates the resilience, solidarity and spirit of Hackney's communities in the 1980s, focusing on activism, creativity and community organising.

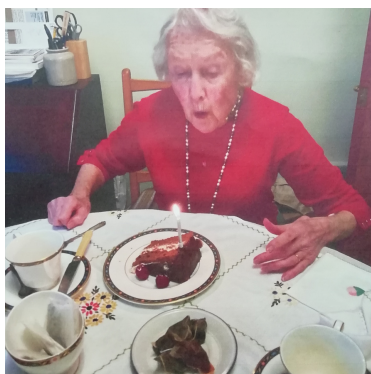
For information on this and other current exhibitions phone 020 8356 2509 or go to: <https://hackney-museum.hackney.gov.uk/exhibitions/>

Carols at Christmas

Live from the candlelit chapel of King's College, Cambridge. Hear Christmas carols and hymns sung by the world-famous chapel choir. **Christmas Eve, 3pm, BBC Radio 4.**



Belated Birthday wishes to.....



Joan whose birthday was in November. Joan says " On my 92nd birthday my daughter travelled up from Sussex to spend time with me. She brought a big box and unbeknown to me set out the items you see in the photo onto my table. It was a lovely surprise and I thoroughly enjoyed my day."

.....And to Rose who also celebrated her 92nd birthday in November. She has been keeping busy during lockdown knitting these colourful dolls. When she's not knitting, Rose is upto date with the latest technology that her son installed for her so she can keep in contact with him.



Improve your digital skills

Hackney Council wants to help you get online so you can improve your skills on a phone or tablet, videocall friends and family or watch events online.

- Ring the helpline for over 50s Hackney residents. Available Tuesdays 10am to 3pm, **phone 020 3383 0111.**
- Or go to **www.hackney.gov.uk/digital-skills** for how-to videos or see how to request a one to one digital buddy.

AbilityNet's ITCanHelp volunteers also provide free IT support to older people and people with disabilities of any age.

- Call their helpline on **0800 048 7642** (freephone and minicom) during UK office hours or **[email enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk](mailto:email_enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk)**

MRS Independent Living Services:

Side By Side Service

During this turbulent year, the Side By Side service are pleased to have been able to continue to stand together with people having difficulties maintaining an income, claiming benefits and appealing against decisions which have not fully taken account of their situations. It has been a particularly hard year for those in temporary accommodation. The **MRS Community Advice Project**, in partnership with Hackney Co-operative Developments and funded by The Bridge Charity, continues to assist older people and people with disabilities who are not using advice agencies and other organisations. A new **breakfast club** has started on Gillette Square in Dalston. This venture has been run for three months by a group of dedicated volunteers who also encourage people often overlooked by society to ask for help where needed. As people get to know of our service they are referring friends and family to us. It is great to know that people find working side by side with us so beneficial.



Emergency Numbers

- **The City & Hackney Mental Health Crisis Line:** Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week if you are struggling with your mental health.
Tel: 0800 073 0006
- **Refuge Domestic Abuse Helpline:** For confidential free advice day or night if you are a woman experiencing physical, social, sexual or financial abuse.
Tel: 0808 2000 247; <https://www.refuge.org.uk/>
- **Mankind:** For confidential free advice for men experiencing domestic abuse or violence. **Tel: 01823 334244; <https://www.mankind.org.uk/>**
- **NHS111:** Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for medical help or advice. **Telephone 111; in a life threatening situation always call 999.**

Your Health

Vitamin D Update

A number of studies have indicated that poor Vitamin D levels are associated with a higher risk of death from the coronavirus. Those on the clinically extremely vulnerable list will be sent a letter offering them the chance to opt in for a supply to their homes. If you do not receive a letter, speak to your Gp or health professional. The free deliveries will start in January 2021, providing four months' worth of vitamin D. For more information:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/get-vitamin-d-supplements/>



Now for some good news.....Covid 19 Vaccine

- Globally, vaccines have eradicated many diseases such as Polio and Smallpox and prevented millions from contracting potentially life threatening illnesses such as Tuberculosis and Hepatitis B.
- The UK has become the first country in the world to approve the **Pfizer/BioNTech coronavirus vaccine**, offering upto 95% protection against Covid 19 illness, having been tested on around 40,000 individuals. Mass vaccinations have now started; you will get contacted when it is your turn to be vaccinated.
- Getting vaccinated is one of many steps you can take to protect yourself and others. Masks and social distancing help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others. Vaccines work with your immune system so your body is ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. **Please talk to your Gp if you have concerns.** <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/>

And finally.... Wishing you all a peaceful and healthy Christmas and New Year !

This newsletter was brought to you by **MRS Independent Living**.
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