



ELDERS VOICE

ANNUAL REPORT

2021/2022



SUPPORTING OLDER
PEOPLE IN BRENT

CONTENTS

4

CHAIR'S REPORT

A year to re-think and re-charge

5

CEO'S REPORT

A year of thinking differently

8

FLOATING SUPPORT SERVICE

Pandemic year two: the emerging new world

11

HANDYPERSON SERVICE

Trustworthy, low cost, problem solvers

15

WELLBEING CENTRE

Day care in the new normal

20

FINANCE

Statement of financial activities

22

GET INVOLVED

Donate, fundraise, become a member

A LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

Staff & trustees impart advice to their younger selves

In a culture that obsesses over youth and prioritizes younger voices, the positives we gain from ageing such as wit and wisdom are often overlooked. However, the ability to look back over a life lived can reveal unique insights we are not privy to when nearer the start of our journeys. For this Annual Report we asked staff and trustees to write a letter to their younger selves; to

offer some reassuring words, no-nonsense advice or a glimpse of an exciting future. They did not disappoint, and spoke to their younger selves with an affection and kindness we rarely pay to ourselves in the present! You will find these letters scattered throughout the report. We hope you enjoy reading them. First up is Anna Southwood, Operations Manager.

Dear Me

You are 16 and worrying about your boobs which you think are too small and your hair which you think is too ginger and the reason you have never been kissed. Mum says 'more than a handful's a waste' and 'at least they won't be round your knees when you're older'. Your sister says 'the boys will be queuing up when you go to university'. Neither of these things are true. Gravity does not discriminate when it comes to size and most things will head south for the winter (with the exception of gums and hairlines which tend to head north). And the boys are not 'queuing up' when you go to university. The good news is you stop caring about your cup size and grow to love your hair. Mum says it is the colour of sunrises and sunsets. You also enjoy your fair share of snogs and have a couple of nice boyfriends too.

Try not to wage war on your body. Marvel at its miracles such as its ability to heal quickly. Like when you threw up at the bottom of the Eiffel Tower on the French exchange and everyone thought you were afraid of heights but really you had gastric flu. After a day and night praying to the porcelain god you were back fighting fit and riding the log flume at Disneyland Paris, which earned you the reputation of having an iron constitution.

Keep sliding down banisters and don't stop bursting into song!

Love Me (aged 38)

Marvel at its miracles...



CHAIR'S REPORT

A year to re-think and re-charge

I am delighted to report to you at the end of another financial year, a year that has been something of a roller-coaster with the restrictions of the pandemic, often still with us, although thankfully not all the time! It looks now as if we just have to be careful and live with it.

Gradually we have got back to some sort of normality - but on the plus side this year has made everyone at Elders Voice look with fresh eyes at the services we provide, review whether or not they are fit for purpose and ask ourselves if this is what our clients actually want and, more importantly, need. There have been some new services; we have already received a grant from the Paul & Nick Harvey Fund, and facilitated a workshop for our future Music for Dementia project which I greatly look forward to. And we have also revised and revitalised our traditional services in the Wellbeing Centre; with new activities in the Day Centre and Memory Hub.

Elders Voice has never been afraid of change and I think this re-think has made us re-charge our batteries and move forward into the future. None of this would have been possible without our funders plus the leadership of our CEO; Jon Cuming-Higgs, and the all-important commitment of each and every member of our splendid staff team supported by several volunteers. A

large vote of thanks is due to each and every one of them. I would also like to thank my fellow trustees, each one of whom in their own different and individual ways give of their time, advice, ideas and support for our charity. If you are reading this and feel you could help Elders Voice in any way, either as a volunteer, a Board member or a co-designer, with fundraising or by being involved with our work, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

The future is not without problems but I have every confidence that, even in these difficult and challenging times, Elders Voice will continue to grow. The work we do is, after all, important for the older members of our community and we will continue to strive to serve them.

Christopher Dunham
Chair of the Board of Trustees



CEO'S REPORT

A year of thinking differently

For me this year was the year we at Elders Voice started thinking differently. The staff teams were becoming more experienced with the language of co-production and co-design. Ideas and initiatives started bubbling through. We created an open environment where ideas were embraced and staff encouraged to think differently about what Elders Voice actually meant to local people.

This is the year that we looked at the traditional all day 'day care' model differently. We started our journey to embed new ways of providing older person's services, that reflected the aspirations of the older person in the 21st century. We know the biggest impact for older people is the onset of loneliness. More damaging than smoking, being lonely affects both mental and physical health. We want to be able to reach more people in different ways, in our Wellbeing Centre, out in the community, in people's homes and online. This means breaking up the days and staff working in a more agile and flexible way. It is early days but we are working towards being more open to the local community, and giving older people the opportunity to talk to us about the activities and services that suit them best.

This was the year our trustees thought differently about their roles and had us holding our first trustee away day, where we explored storytelling, the values of the organisation and how we best serve our membership.

We also encouraged staff to think differently, and together we looked at our

organisational values, and how our own personal values reflected on the values that Elders Voice should promote. One great idea that came from this was that we need to become a learning organisation. Now as we co-design new projects, the overarching question is always 'What can we learn from this?'

In the Wellbeing Centre we looked differently at the role of Dementia Cafés and asked the question 'What happens when the Dementia Cafés are closed?'. This helped us to identify and successfully tender for funding from The Utley Foundation, to deliver a Music for Dementia project. The project kicked off at the end of the year and we began our exploration with a series of co-design workshops. Our peer-designers looked at the different ways we could use music to help draw out a person's memories and give their family the opportunity to discover their cultural heritage. Our peer designers included people who had supported someone with dementia, staff from our Dementia Cafés and professionals such as Zerritha Brown, Brent 2020 Legacy Manager, who contributed some brilliant insights and connected us to other music contacts who helped shape the project. All this culminating in an inspiring day led by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, who took us on a journey around the world, with orchestra members improvising the sounds of different countries, modes of transport and atmospheric scenes.

Thinking differently and embracing learning had members of the Floating Support team training in Drawing & Talking Therapy.

Exploring new methods to help them connect with their clients. Whilst on the subject of Floating Support, the team (along with the Handyman team) achieved the highest service quality mark from Brent. A surprise visit after one of the lockdowns, but as always the team's exemplary records management and service quality were easily evidenced. So well done Mercel, Louise and the team. A separate congratulations is due to the Handyman team; Louise, Livio & Ray, for successfully tendering to deliver their excellent and highly regarded service for at least another three years, as part of Brent's housing services for older adults.

The global pandemic year two

The year got off to a tricky start. As the pandemic entered its second year, narratives shifted, guidance and leadership from the government became blurred and inconsistent. Were we at step 4? What was plan B? Were we still clapping the NHS? By April 2021 the vaccine was being offered to anyone over 60, and across the country new conversations were starting; had you been Pfizer'd or AstraZeneca'd or even Moderna'd? Of course the media, in its delight at muddying waters, were breaking all sorts of percentages about effectiveness, side effects and more. Then the difficult questions on compulsory vaccinations started, with posturing politicians and the like all having their say. Leaving

organisations like Elders Voice to navigate haphazard rules and ambiguous advice, whilst trying to keep staff and service users safe. The constant throughout this was as always the staff, doggedly working for the best outcomes for their clients. Against all the blurriness, the clarity of their dedication and perseverance shone through. An enormous thank you to Aiyesha, Anita, Anna, Bridget, Christine, Emilia, Grace, Graziella, Livio, Louise, Lynn, Mercel, Nevina, Ostino, Raymond, Tracie and Valerie for being so fantastic. A final thanks is owed to community organiser Giles Deards for including us once again in the Love Local charity auction and Blenheim Palace Triathlon. And to Mike McCrohan, Nathalie Raffray, Holly Chant and William Mata for representing Elders Voice at the triathlon, and raising over £1,800 for older people's services in Brent. We are immensely grateful.

Jon Cuming-Higgs
CEO



A LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

Nada Savitch, Trustee

Dear Younger Me - four things I want to tell you...

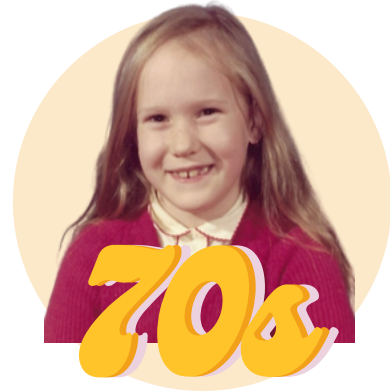
1. Don't take anything you read at face value. Make use of that early training as scientist and librarian. The world will change in your life. The internet will revolutionise access to information. Look for the evidence, find the source of the information, question everything.

2. Be careful when you're flirting with some interesting person you've just met. If you laugh at their jokes make sure you really find them funny. Before you know it, 20 years will pass and you might be listening to the same jokes (and if you're lucky still laughing).

3. Keep faith in Fulham. When you chose to support Fulham FC in the 1970s, you did so for good reasons. You saw the racism on the terraces of other clubs and sought out a friendlier place dressed in black and white. Keep the faith in the 1990s when your beloved team are 91st in the football league. Good things come to those who wait.

4. Don't be so eager to retire early. Don't be jealous when your friends start talking of their retirement as soon as they turn 50. Don't look back at all the times in your 20s when you said stopping work at 55 was your 'ambition'. Don't think it's a failure that you can't afford to not work. Just be honest with yourself - you love 'work'. Why else are you a trustee at Elders Voice for nothing but the love of contributing to a great organisation?

Nada



FLOATING SUPPORT SERVICE

Pandemic year two: the emerging new world

Having worked with statutory bodies to simplify their processes during the first year of the pandemic, the Floating Support team were now facing the uncertainty of how processes would return to pre-lockdown requirements; how medical assessments that had been put on hold would restart, and how different agencies were managing their staff back into offices.

For our clients, things were getting more complex. The introduction of Universal Credit has created multiple problems that a large number of older people find difficult to navigate. Even if they can navigate the unfriendly benefit portal, the problems don't stop there. There is a lack of consistency in many agencies as staff work remotely. One DWP case worker may accept that the claimant has submitted the correct forms, only for another case worker to decide they need additional documentation. Yet these two case workers could be miles apart and have no contact with each other. The amount of identification required to take various claims forward is becoming onerous. The delays between submitting an application to receiving an outcome are increasing, and can often put people in jeopardy, unable to buy food or pay rent.

There have been incorrect assumptions that the pandemic brought an increasing number of older people online. This is not the case. What is more likely is that those older people who were using the internet before the pandemic, increased their use during the pandemic. Elders Voice has not seen an increase in people who had no access to the

internet prior to the pandemic, now using the internet. Agencies though are increasingly relying on online processes by default. However, if you are not using digital devices regularly then this substantially increases the reluctance to use online applications. If we don't understand the basic functionality of a device, we cannot be expected to seamlessly start using apps or online portals.

For the Floating Support team this means that their work is changing. Interactions with statutory agencies no longer involve accompanying a client to visit an office but rather spending more time online. This doesn't reduce the workload because completing one online application can take hours, and if the client does not have the required documentation it can take weeks. Where once a problem could be solved efficiently by phoning a case worker in a local office; today that phone call could be answered in any number of call centres around the British Isles. In some cases a client will spend their *entire* allocated time with a project worker just listening to on-hold music. They have no option but to be present for the call, in order to give their permission verbally for the project worker to act on their behalf.

If one is not up to speed, digital by default can be frustrating, time consuming and stressful. The skill of the Floating Support team therefore is not just about navigating the client through various statutory agencies, but also maintaining that all-important human contact in an increasingly digital world.

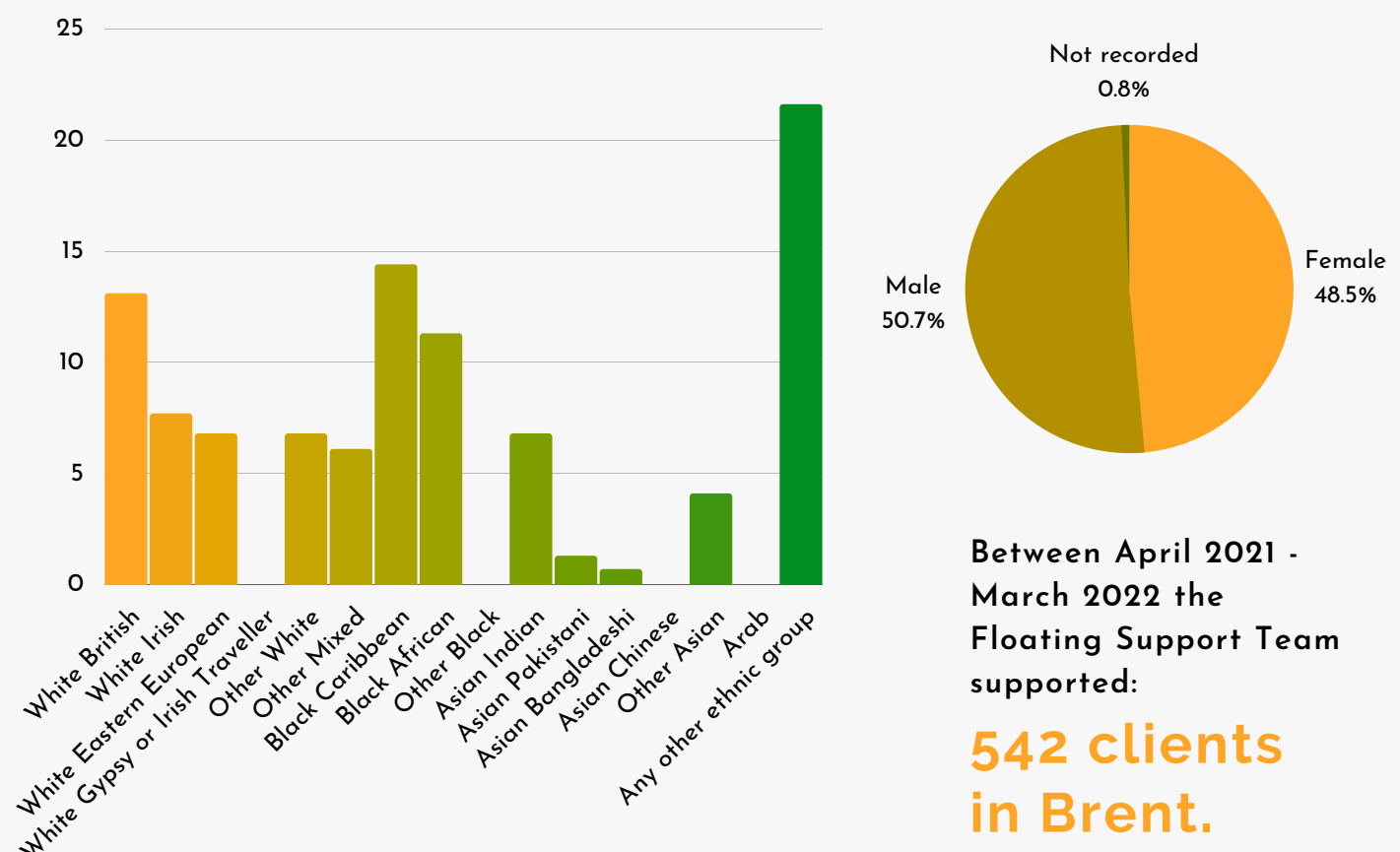
FLOATING SUPPORT CASE STUDY

The right to make decisions and have choices

Peter is a 60 year old man who was made redundant, after 15 years of working with one company as a financial officer. Peter lives alone in a second floor flat with no lift access. He wishes to remain independent but newly diagnosed health issues is making this difficult. We were approached by Adult Social Care to help Peter with his sudden drop in income. Although now retired, Peter cannot claim his state pension for another seven years. Peter was eligible for Universal Credit and we also suggested applications could be made for a Personal Independent Payment, a Housing Benefit, Council Tax support, a Blue Badge and a Taxi Card. Despite his experience in the finance sector, Peter found the application process

frustrating. We encouraged Peter to ask his family for help, and his sister agreed to support him. Over a number of appointments at Peter's home, all the relevant claims were made. Peter and his project worker successfully appealed the DWP's initial decision not to award the disability benefit. With a little chasing all other benefits were awarded. Peter is now aware of the services available to him. An increase in income has provided Peter with a more comfortable lifestyle, and the ability to have choices and make decisions about his health and wellbeing. We remain in touch with Peter who is now considering a move to sheltered accommodation. If he chooses to do so then we will support him to make that happen.

Floating Support equality figures



Between April 2021 - March 2022 the Floating Support Team supported:

542 clients in Brent.

A LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

Christine Cousins, Senior Care Worker

I have seen a part of you I never knew existed.

Dear Christine (52 years)

How are you? I mean really! HOW ARE YOU?! I know you don't ask yourself that question very often and you really should.

No running for that bus and worrying about the world and how it's changed so many lives. I would say I wish you had carried on with your driving lessons as it really would have broadened your horizons. It was funny though when your driving instructor slammed the door and said you really should have passed. I think he was more upset than you! I do hope that whatever comes along promise yourself you will try not to stress too much and always follow your heart. I know if you had the chance you would have done things differently, as you were always shy and very quiet. I must say though, I have seen a part of you I never knew existed and I like it! Keep well and smile - it's good therapy.

Love from Me (61 years)



HANDYPERSON SERVICE

Trustworthy, low cost, problem solvers

Your experience in helping and solving problems for the older person is key.

Our handypersons have to think differently every day. Apart from the skills they have in carpentry, plumbing and locksmithing, it is their problem solving that helps them stand out from the crowd. It could be quite easy to solve a problem by throwing money at it. That could save time but the people we help often find it difficult to make ends meet. An expensive bill for replacing a door, or buying a new lock or sink is not going to help the person to afford food that week. So the handypersons solve problems, keep costs low and ensure things are fixed and only replaced when all else fails. This approach is also good for the environment. They make sure their initial assessment is thorough and robust. They know exactly what they need and avoid waste. They think creatively and treat every job as if it was in their own home.

The two men that came were lovely. Their work was perfect and they cleaned up too! Your service is great and really useful. The handrail has made a great difference.

This year there was a new problem that needed solving. Was it related to the pandemic or Brexit? Suddenly the handypersons found that sourcing the materials they needed was becoming troublesome. They treat every new job differently, so are unable to have vast stockpiles of goods and materials. But what happens when the suppliers own stockpile of products begins to dwindle? The handypersons are often doing multiple jobs in one house and need supplies from various sources. How then do they continue to support local tradespeople, without delaying the jobs that urgently need doing, to keep

their clients safe? Rather like James Garner as Hendley 'The Scrounger' in *The Great Escape*, the team became adept at sourcing bits and bobs without breaking the bank. The great work continued.

Bedroom door is done perfectly. Was very dangerous before. I can now flush my toilet. Garage door is done well. My life is improved. First time I had excellent people. I am suffering from anxiety but when they did the work I was relaxed.

This is a service that works because of the trust that the team build. In a time of rising costs and limited resources, and the pressures older people were feeling from the extended lockdowns imposed upon them, it became more important to spend time with people. For the team it is about using their time wisely but never rushing the client, and giving them space so they can make the right decisions about the work they need doing. It is about building a strong relationship; sometimes coming in to sort out problems caused by a rogue trader, and first ensuring the client is comfortable with having the handyperson in their home.

It helped to have trustworthy people coming into our home. Both were friendly and helpful.

Aside from the usual great work in people's homes, the handypersons started to get a significant increase for one particular job. The garden rail. As the pandemic continued many children living apart from their parents were concerned that their parents were not getting enough fresh air. Having spent their childhoods being badgered by their parents to go out and get some fresh air, they were now turning the tables. However, as children, the excuse to stay in was probably the

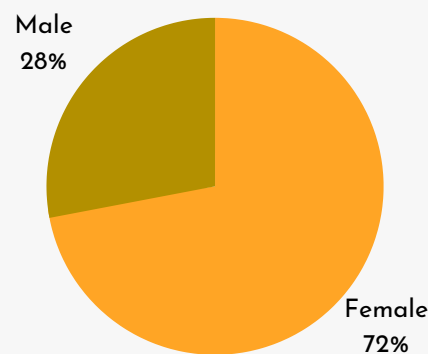
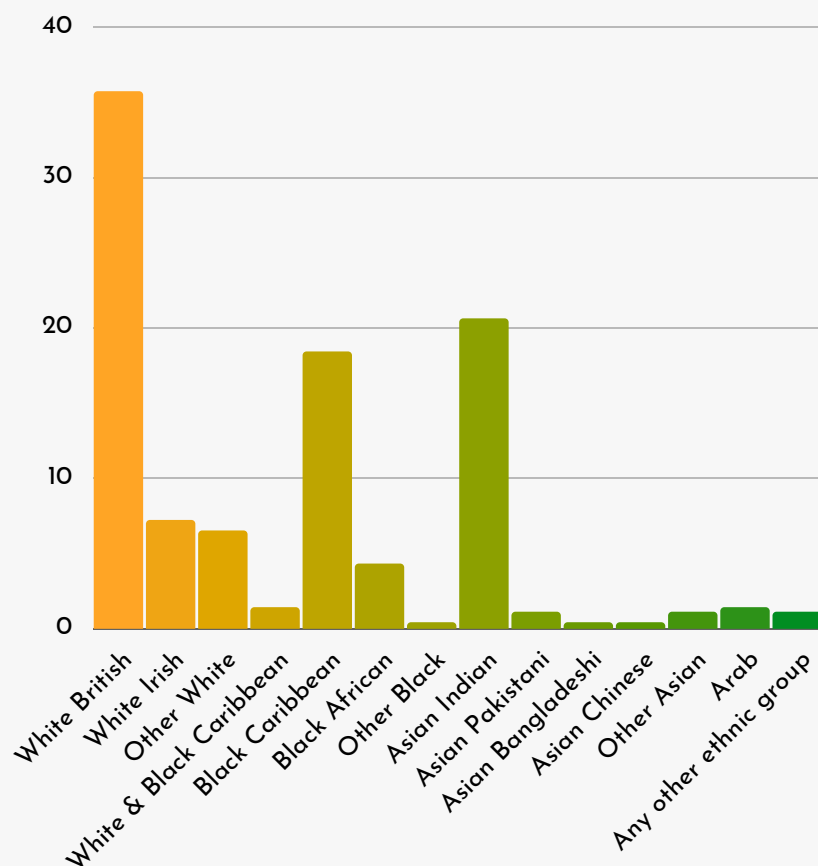
the attraction of the television. An older person though may find a once welcoming outside space dangerous and full of hazards.

The support from the Elders Voice handymen has been invaluable. It has improved my mum's mobility. Great service and cost effective.

But a garden is part of a home and we have heard about services only working inside, not seeing the garden as a place that needs adaptations. This we feel is ridiculous. If blessed with garden there is opportunity for exercise, green therapy, the chance to watch

the wild birds and even do some gardening, which can only bring pleasure. For us the challenge is to make as much of the space safe without breaking the bank. To make the space safe but still recognise it as a garden. Often gardens are on different levels and there might not be a solid base or wall to fix a rail to, so again thinking differently is key. The adaptations should encourage exploration, not tie someone down to a corner or patio. We should not have to pave paradise to put up a single rail. Our apologies to Joni Mitchell.

Handyperson equality figures



Between April 2021 - March 2022 the Handyperson Team completed:

777 jobs in 277 homes.

A LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

Livio Coccia, Handyman & IT



Dear Livio

I'm writing this from your future. It's going to be an exciting and happy day for Dad, but sad and worrying for Mum and the girls.

It's the 4th October 1980, but first we must go back a bit to a day when Dad had wandered into Selfridges, just looking around and seeing all the nice things that were impossibly expensive. His favourite department was always the men's suits. Dad was always smart and nothing like me in your future. So whilst browsing Dad comes across some really great Italian suit material. Something he thinks isn't expensive and he could take to Italy to get a suit made whilst visiting Mum's family.

Watching from the corner of his eye, the sales manager walks over to him to ask if he can help. Dad asks the sales manager how much the cloth costs per yard whilst noticing his name tag. He couldn't believe what he was seeing; the name Coccia! What are the odds of one Coccia helping another Coccia, it must be thousands or even a million to one chance.

They start to talk, to work out the relationship between them, and it turns out they're first cousins. Going back to when they were very young boys, just after the first world war, their families split apart during the great depression. Dad was so happy to meet another member of his family, another Coccia. He had always lived with the belief that he was the sole survivor; there was never a mention about his own father and his mother and sister were sadly both killed by a WW2 bomb which had landed on their home. His brothers had quickly gathered anything of value and left Italy to live in Venezuela, never to be seen or heard of again. They assumed Dad had been killed in combat as a soldier during the war.

After the war ends, Dad comes back to his village, to a pile of rubble where his family home once stood. No mother, brothers or sisters to greet him, and with only a suitcase in hand, it was time to make a new life.

Getting back to Dad's first encounter with his long lost cousin at Selfridges; without any hesitation he invites his cousin and his cousin's family to visit on Saturday 4th October 1980. Dad's excited that his long lost relatives will get to meet his family for the first time. I knew this because I was the one helping Dad make our home spick and span, and Mum was doing tasty things in the kitchen. It was like the Royals were coming, then suddenly the doorbell rings...

We all got to meet Dad's relatives and you could see and feel the atmosphere was pure joy for Dad, and for us, his family. They shared history together and conversations he probably thought he would never have;

stories and memories of being small boys in Italy long ago. But something was very wrong, something that would change everything.

'Shall we go outside to the backyard?' Dad asked, 'We'll bring some chairs and sit outside for a bit'. Everyone agreed and each person carried their own chair, looking for a sunny spot. It was a great October day but after a short while Dad said 'Let's go back indoors'. I noticed as Dad sat in his armchair that he seemed to be a lot quieter and a little distant, his concentration was lost and he kept getting up and walking over to the mirror in the lounge, then sitting back down again. Something wasn't right.

He knew that he was never alone, that he had all his family around him.

As I sat in my usual spot, on the giant cushion on the floor, my Dad, or should I say 'your Dad' was directly in front of me, and as I watched him I kept asking in my mind 'Is Dad ok? He doesn't look right. Dad! DAD!' Mum had turned to face Dad to ask him something, then suddenly noticed and cried 'Carlo! Carlo! Carlo my dear!'. He was having

a massive heart attack. The ambulance was called. All the happiness and joy that had arrived early that very day, had now suddenly left our home, and as we waited for help, ever so gently our father's time was leaving us. Leaving us with the knowledge that he knew that he was never alone, that he had all his family around him.

There will be tough times along the way Livio, but you'll get through them and you will live your life in the best way you know how. You've had Dad and Mum to guide you. Enjoy your years ahead, and remember to treat the future as an adventure.

Take care now and be good.

Best wishes

Livio



WELLBEING CENTRE

Day care in the new normal

As the pandemic rumbled on into its second year, the Wellbeing Team continued to support older people in Brent through online activities, telephone calls, care packages and letters. By the summer of 2021, the roadmap out of lockdown had been announced with 21st June being the date on which all legal limits on social contact could be lifted. The Wellbeing Team were eager to reopen the Centre but before doing so, wanted to explore what the new normal for day care services would look like, and how they could minimise the risk of infection. In order to do this, we ran a prototyping session with members of the Floating Support team who volunteered their time and insights. We identified different areas of the Day Centre we wanted to test, such as how we would greet clients and store their belongings whilst maintaining social distancing. The benefit of involving a range of individuals in the prototyping of a service is the many potential outcomes they envisage. Such as what if multiple clients arrive at the Day Centre at once? We give them separate arrival times. What if there is traffic and clients don't arrive within their allocated time slots? We create a waiting area at the front of the building. But what if it's raining or a client can't stand for too long? Can we provide seating and shelter from the elements? The prototyping workshop continued on in much the same vein and by the end of session, any concerns had been allayed.

This period of prototyping and planning felt like the morning after a long and unpredictable storm. The team felt hopeful, the atmosphere was calmer and brighter and

there was some clearing up to do. Unlike a storm however, we were dealing with people and not garden furniture. Older people in the community would need time to rebuild their confidence, and we would need to offer emotional and practical support for them to feel safe in the outside world again. So, before we declared the Day Centre officially reopen, we ran a test session with a small group of clients, all of whom are living with dementia. It took some time for the clients to adjust and feel comfortable with the team but it wasn't long before they sensed a familiarity and we were chatting, laughing and enjoying each other's company once again. The clients were undeterred by the two-metre distancing and face masks which was a relief to the team. As for the team, they felt emotional but in a good way; it was a taste of normality and a reminder of why we do the work we do. We were also pleased to welcome back our Zumba Gold class, which had moved online during the pandemic. The participants' commitment to supporting each other over their WhatsApp group during the pandemic has been nothing short of inspiring. They have a unique bond and are just as supportive of new comers.

Now the Centre was reopened, staff were needed back onsite and so the team began to wind down our Lend an Ear service and make their final calls. Lend an Ear was originally set-up at the start of the pandemic as an emergency helpline; providing older people with information & advice and signposting them to mutual aid groups for support with shopping. It quickly became apparent older people in Brent were feeling isolated and could benefit from regular

contact over the phone. So Lend an Ear was established and the team made weekly calls to around forty clients over a sixteen month period. Closing the service was a bittersweet moment for the team, who were grateful to be resuming face-to-face contact but would miss the meandering conversations and meaningful connections that are able to flourish under one-to-one support. We hoped our Lend an Ear clients would now join us onsite but for those who were unable, we referred them to Re-engage; a charity that provides social connections and telephone call companions.

Post-pandemic, the Wellbeing Centre is a much smaller operation. The temporary suspension of day care services, along with budget cuts and lack of funding meant a reduction in staff numbers. We also made the difficult decision to close our Dementia Cafés in Kingsbury and Kensal Green. We lost several clients during the pandemic, and others whose health deteriorated rapidly after a long period in isolation, are now unable to return. But every cloud has a silver lining. The closure of the Dementia Cafés motivated us to think about how else we could support people living with dementia and we were fortunate to secure a grant from the Paul & Nick Harvey Fund. This funding will enable us to deliver a Music for

Dementia project and we have already hosted our first co-design workshop with a diverse group of peer-designers. Smaller client groups have enabled us to take day trips away from the Centre; including walks along the canal, lunches in cafés and exhibitions at the Brent Museum. Remote working and social distancing taught us day care does not need to be bound to one location; that online activities, home visits and outdoor pursuits can be just as effective. We existed in a limbo state that felt uncomfortable but also afforded us the time to establish ourselves as an organisation that promotes the use of co-design. It is now imperative to us that older people in Brent are able to contribute to the development of the services they themselves will use, and to share their experiences and stories. We are immensely grateful to our volunteers; Viveen & Antoinette, to our sessional workers; Marina & Katie, and to our Lend an Ear operatives; Nada, Siobhan, Christopher, Rebecca, Jade, Angeline & Mary, for their unwavering support as we steadied our ship.

We are delighted to be working closely with older people again and look forward to developing our services with the insights we have gained. We think it's safe to say; the clean-up operation for this unruly storm has well and truly begun.

A LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

Lynn Burling, Wellbeing Manager

It's a bit hard you know, writing a letter to one's nine year old self. I'm finding this task a little on the difficult side. I keep trying to find excuses to put it off like 'the dog ate my homework'. You know the silly excuses we used for why we didn't complete our homework. Anyway here it goes. Feel the fear and do it anyway. Oh I wish I could have read that self-help book when I was nine years old. Believe me, it would have been very helpful. I was a happy little thing back then. Playing out with friends, riding our bikes, making camps, dressing-up, pretending to be fairy godmothers, and going on our yearly holidays as a family. My mum and gran constantly warning me not to get lost. 'Stay here!' 'Don't go too far!' 'Stay where I can see you!' I used to wonder to myself 'If I am going to get lost, why did we come here?!'. I would really like to explain to my nine year old self that this love and concern from my mum and nan will help me to get through the not so good times in my life.

At school I was becoming increasingly self-aware. I was very different to the rest of my peers but also just like them in so many other ways. I just couldn't seem to do it. However hard I tried. Why was it so hard for me to learn to read and write? Why was I so different? For the friends in my class, learning to read and write seemed like a walk in the park. I just didn't understand it. Not one little bit. If I knew then what I know now. I could have explained to my nine year old self you are in fact dyslexic and have a condition called dyspraxia too. I'm sorry Lynn. I only wish I could have explained this to you back then. And please don't worry, you're not stupid, ignore your teachers. You catch-up with the other kids in your class and

excel further than you imagined. You make your mum shed a tear of joy when celebrating at your graduation. One day you will be teaching at a university in London, exploring with students. Differences should be celebrated! People shouldn't be made to feel stupid as I was at school. This led to feelings of low self-esteem which I have carried throughout my life.

Oh, and whilst I'm having a conversation with my nine year old self, could you please let that teacher know I haven't to date been in trouble with the police. The only time I made it to the Old Bailey was when I was called up for jury service.

Ignore your teachers.



The team met us with such warmth.

Elders Voice has been a lifesaver for us. My dad was diagnosed with vascular dementia during the pandemic and the isolation was detrimental for him. The Elders Voice team met us with such warmth and comfort and provided us with a source of reassurance and brilliant activities - even for someone who is not a native English speaker. Elders Voice has really transformed his routine and provided us with much ease as a family. Going in three times a week has made a huge difference and he always looks forward to it! I appreciate Lynn and the lovely team beyond words.

We get some much needed respite.

Elders Voice are amazing and they provide a lifeline for us. Dad has a wonderful time with his friends, engaging in a variety of activities whilst we get some much needed respite. Thank you Elders Voice.

She makes me feel special.

Bridget has helped me by calling me and giving me her time. She talks to me, she gives me encouragement. She always says to call her if I get down and things. Bridget is understanding, she sounds like she really cares. She makes me feel special. She tells me "don't give up just yet, see if you can hang on in there".

I truly love my Zumba family!

The Zumba group are now part of my family. We not only dance together but we share gardening tips, we eat together, we have our own WhatsApp group, we share holiday photos and celebrate each other's birthdays. I truly love my Zumba family!

A LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

Christopher Dunham, Chair of the Board

Well - this is strange! A letter to you at age 11 from yourself at 84! But I wanted to give you some helpful advice and also hope for the future. Of course, you are perfectly at liberty to take it or leave it.

At this moment life is changing for you, going to a new school having been successful in your 11 plus exam, and in two years you will move on to a boarding school on a well deserved scholarship. Although it will all seem strange and somewhat daunting, believe me you will come to enjoy it, meet very interesting people and love doing all the drama available. Then there is two years National Service which although not great at the time, you will look back on as 'an experience'. Don't worry that you then fail your audition for RADA because you are successful at the British Old Vic School - a great place attached to one of the most beautiful and successful repertory theatres in the country. It will be a very happy two years for you and immediately on finishing you start your theatrical career.

Your life will have its ups and downs - we all do - but the good times will be very good indeed. You will keep reasonably busy as an actor in regional theatres, some TV and with work in London's West End before you turn to directing, and eventually run a theatre of your own for 24 years. And good news - you marry a very special person, an actress - you are still together after over 60 years. You have a happily married son (a barrister), who with his lovely wife have presented you with two grandchildren; a boy and a girl, both growing up fast. They will give you immense joy - even though they obviously

think you are an old fogey! I think you will appreciate that probably you have lived through the best of times.

Before I close, I feel I must apologize for the state of this world we are leaving behind - global warming, world poverty which seems to be increasing, and so many parts of the world lacking the ability to live harmoniously with their neighbours. I hope you will see the planet come to its senses and get together to sort these problems - and soon! And finally, two things I haven't done and would encourage you to do; one - learn to play a musical instrument - it is a great joy to have that ability, and I so regret not pursuing my piano lessons. And secondly, travel as much as you can. I have done quite a bit but there are so many parts of the world I have not visited and I really am sad about that - we can learn so much from others; both good things and things to avoid. A final piece of advice - don't look back and don't be afraid of the future. I love you very much and do hope you enjoy your journey through life and live it to the full. I think I have!

From old me to young you xx



FINANCE

Statement of financial activities for the year ended March 2022

The Statement of Financial Activities provides a summary of incoming resources & expenditure, and the charity's financial position at 31st March 2022. Copies of the Annual Accounts, which include the Independent Examiner's Report & Trustees' Annual Report, are available on request and are published on the Charity Commission website. We take this opportunity to thank Anthony Epton and Arjun Bhatt at Goldwins Chartered Accountants.

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31 Mar '22 total funds £	31 Mar '21 total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS				
Donations				
Donations and Gift Aid	4,568	0	4,568	19,689
Other Income Generating Activities				
Hall Hire & Office Rental	30,510	0	30,510	7,071
Service Provisions	4,399	0	4,399	6,165
Private Day Care	7,372	0	7,372	125
Other income generating activities	1,273	0	1,273	18,653
Investment Outcome				
Deposit account interest	1,416	0	1,416	1,300
Charitable Activities				
Grants & Contracts	437,064	36,730	473,794	561,750
Total incoming resources	486,602	36,730	523,332	614,753
EXPENDITURE				
Charitable Activities				
Direct Costs	475,497	24,474	499,971	565,716
Fundraising Costs	27,036	0	27,036	27,036
Total resources expended	502,533	24,474	527,007	592,752
NET INCOMING (OUTGOING) RESOURCES				
Net movement in funds	-15,931	12,256	-3,675	22,001
Total funds brought forward	199,737	8,919	208,656	186,655
Total funds carried forward	183,806	21,175	204,981	208,656

A LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

Mary Sackville-West and Viveen Scott, Trustees

Dear Me,

Have faith in yourself. Don't do yourself down. Stop comparing yourself to other people and worrying about how cool, smart or pretty you are. Don't worry so much about fitting in - just remember there's no one quite like you so celebrate your uniqueness. Take risks, it's not so terrible if you get things wrong. You can always learn and grow from your mistakes. Make sure you learn another language and let Dad teach you to drive. It will save you a fortune and make you a much better driver.

Mary (62)

Let Dad teach you to drive. It will save you a fortune.



A smile goes a long way.



Dear Viveen

I was speaking to your mother and she told me that you are going to celebrate your nineteenth birthday before you go off to Africa for your gap year. I know how excited you are but I would like to give you some advice. Not everyone that laughs and takes to you is your friend; choose your friends carefully. Do not carry anything for anyone no matter how small, and if you want to take it let the person open it so you know what is in it. Too many people get into trouble with the law carrying something for others. Do not accept drinks from strangers and never leave your drinks unattended. Always tell someone where you are going and who you are with and what time you are expecting to return.

Always carry some form of ID on you and your phone charged or a charger if possible. Remember a smile and a kind word goes a long way. Have a safe trip and take care.

Viveen

GET INVOLVED

Donate, fundraise, become a member

DONATE

Elders Voice is a small but vital charity supporting a community in need and we really appreciate every donation. Last year Elders Voice supported over 900 older people living in Brent. Donate today and help us improve the lives of even more. Your donation could help fund the extension of our Zumba Gold & Yoga classes, reminiscence sessions for people with dementia, IT classes to promote digital inclusion and so much more. Visit our People's Fundraising charity wall, where you can learn more about the work we do, choose which campaign you'd like to support, make a one off donation or set up a regular direct debit, sponsor a member of our triathlon team or become a member of Elders Voice: <https://bit.ly/3r3fIUO>

KENSAL TRI 2023

This year we were fortunate to have five wonderful individuals represent us at the Blenheim Palace Triathlon, who raised a fantastic £1,727 for older people's services in Brent. Next year we'd love to double the number of team members! The next triathlon takes place on Saturday 3rd June 2023 and is open to all ages and abilities. If you are interested in taking on the whole challenge yourself (that's a cycle, swim and run) or just one of the legs as part of a team, then please visit: www.kensaltri.com where you can find out more about the event and hear from past members of the Kensal Tri Team; a fabulous group of residents who trained together, swapped tips, cheered each other on and raised a whopping amount of money for Brent based charities this year.

BRENT LOTTERY

Sign up to the Brent Community Lottery and be in with a chance of winning £25,000! Tickets cost just £1 and each ticket has a 1 in 50 chance of winning. Choose Elders Voice as the charity you wish to support and we will receive 50% of the ticket sales. A further 10% will be donated to other causes in Brent. Players are not only in with a chance of winning cash prizes but other incentives like shopping vouchers and fruit & veg boxes. The lottery takes places every week and numbers are drawn on a Saturday evening. Match just two numbers and you win three extra tickets for the next draw. So far our supporters have raised £130 for older people's services in Brent. Sign up today and help us raise even more! Find out more here: <https://bit.ly/3nJ70DG>

MEMBERSHIP

Become a member of Elders Voice and help support older people in Brent! The money we raise from the membership scheme goes towards funding older people's services in the borough. For just £10 annually you will receive; a copy of our quarterly newsletter, invites to our events, a discount on our activities and the right to vote at our AGM. As a member of Elders Voice you will also have the opportunity to become a peer designer and help shape our campaigns and services, and contribute your own stories to our newsletter and media platforms. You can be involved as much or as little as you like; we appreciate all our members and strive to ensure any changes to governance are implemented by a balanced representation of stakeholders: <https://bit.ly/3HMp6wh>

A LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

Jon Cuming-Higgs, CEO

Butterfly wings, in which tiny changes progress into enormous ones. What would the impact be writing a letter to one's younger self? How far back would you go?

To my younger self last week: 'Stop procrastinating and finish your letter to yourself'. To my younger self on the 1st of July 2020: 'Well you started your new job at Elders Voice, don't sweat it, everyone is lovely, you'll have a ball'. To my younger self on my wedding day in 2015: 'You'll need an umbrella, and tell Alison not to park her car in that space otherwise it will get towed'.

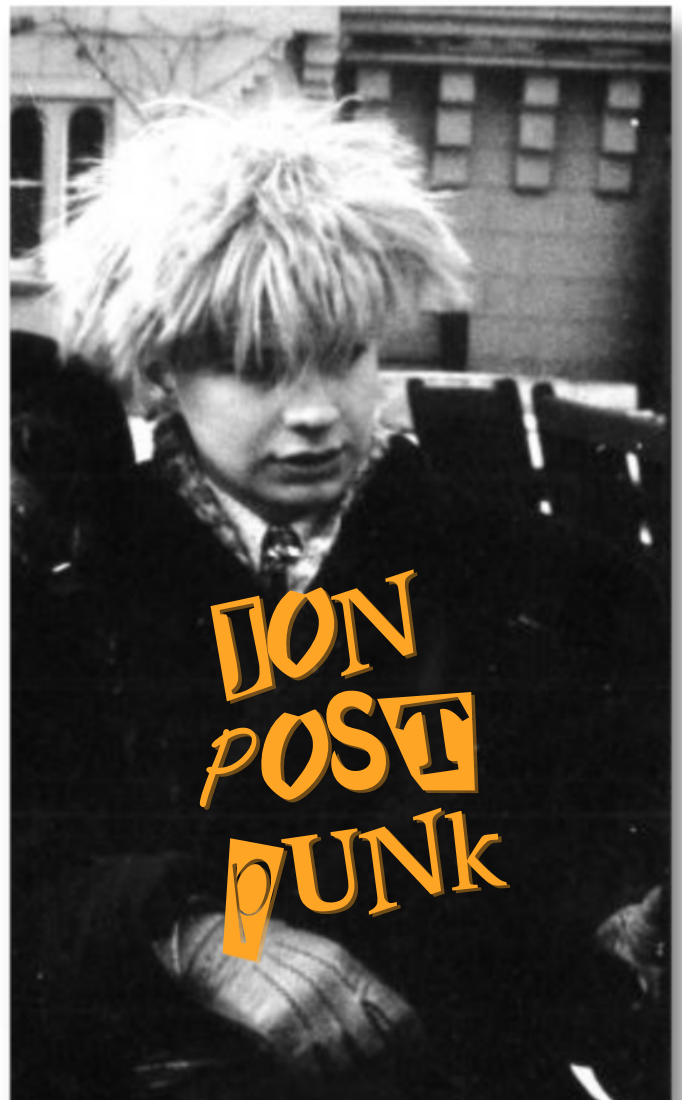
Little bits of advice that possibly won't make much impact, but what about further back? To my younger self in 1981: 'That tattoo is really going to look stupid'. To my younger self on the 12th December 1980: 'buy Apple'.

Slightly bigger impacts now, but at what cost? If I hadn't got a rubbish tattoo, 15 years later I wouldn't have got a great one to cover it up, wouldn't have decided I could now show my back to the world, and visit a local swimming pool, start swimming again and end up competing in competitions across England, training as a lifeguard and qualifying as a coach. Which subsequently motivates myself to move up the career ladder. And if I had bought Apple, I would be substantially richer, would not need to work, so would never have met Heidi my lovely wife etc. etc. It's all a bit confusing.

OK so what about to my teenage self: 'You'll never be a great guitar player, but keep plugging away trying to be a rock star,

because in 2022 you'll invent a way to write letters to your younger self and will be minted'. Which then sends me on a destructive path of hedonism, failure and dysfunctionality, only to be really disappointed in 2022, because I'm not at Elders Voice writing letters to my younger self.

So I'm not sure I want to write a letter to my younger self, it could all go drastically wrong. Perhaps one to my younger self 60 minutes ago: 'Don't overthink things'.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all those who make our work possible

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Kensal Tri

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Mike McCrohan

Nathalie Raffray

Royal Philharmomic Orchestra

Jo Marsh

Anahi Ravagnani

Tim Steiner

Helen Storey

Rupert Whitehead

Track Academy

Grace Veys

Utley Foundation

Elizabeth Cody

Peyton Miles

A LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

Anonymous

To my beautiful self

What I would tell you with a big smile is...I would say live, laugh and give God the highest praise whenever you can and don't apologise for doing so! Once that is in your spirit man (you know what I mean) stay connected and listen to that sweet voice. Trust it, it will always keep you on the right path.

Take a big breath.

Try not to be too hard on yourself no matter what. Just know all that you are going through is worth it! And yes you will make mistakes. Get up, take a minute, reflect and keep an eye on the people who are really there for you. Make a note of them because you may miss it. There will not be a lot of them but they are there, so keep an eye on them. People won't get you but it's fine, just keep telling yourself that the battle is not yours and it has already been won.

If I say any more I will spoil the surprises. Have fun l candy.

**The
battle
is not
yours
and it is
already
won.**



