

Updates from the network



NEW

LAUNCH OF THE NEW GMOPN WEBSITE



We are so excited to announce the launch of our new GMOPN website!

Lots of hard work has gone into it and it has been developed with members of the Older People's Network to make sure that it is as accessible as possible and represents the older people's network in a way that demonstrates our commitment to being Age Proud and positive about Ageing. It's bright and colourful and features positive and diverse images of older people.

The website is a great place to find information about current projects the GMOPN are working on, upcoming events and a gallery of the Old Frame New Picture photographs plus so much more. There is also a section inviting new members to the Steering Group as we still need representatives from Wigan and Tameside to make up the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester. We would also like second representatives for Oldham, Salford, Bolton, Trafford and Stockport so if you'd like to find out more about representing your area and leading the work of the network contact us by phone on **0161 8349823** or email gmopn@macc.org.uk.

Thank you to the Steering Group members for providing pictures and writing profiles for us to feature on the website, they look fab! Visit our new website [here](#).



CORONAVIRUS UPDATE



As you will all know, we are currently in a national lockdown, meaning that you must not leave your home, except for where necessary - shopping for basic necessities, going to work or exercising with your household for example. For the full guidance, visit the government [website](#).

Don't forget that you can still exercise with a friend outside though so if you feel like braving the cold, a walk in your local park can be a good way of getting out and catching up.

As of 28th January, Greater Manchester had vaccinated over 300, 000 people with at least one single vaccine dose. All over 70s in Greater Manchester should have been offered their vaccination. Following feedback from the GM Older Peoples Network and others, there is now a requirement from NHS England for all areas to have services in place to make sure that people are able to be vaccinated in their own homes where they are unable to get to vaccination sites. We're already hearing some great examples from across Greater Manchester.

OLD FRAME NEW PICTURE CAMPAIGN

The Winning photograph

Last year we told you about our new campaign, Old Frame New Picture, which is designed to challenge the negative and stereotyped ways that older people are often represented in the media, as vulnerable or frail, something that has become even more prevalent during the pandemic. We launched a photography competition as part of the campaign on 1st October and invited amateur and professional photographers across Greater Manchester to submit their images under 6 categories to capture the diversity, positivity and contribution of people aged 50 and over. We received a wide range of images from amateur and professional photographers and now we can reveal the winners...



1. "A proud man", taken by professional photographer Darren Robinson of First Choice Homes Oldham. Tenant - Danny Coley
2. "Birthday girls' day out", by amateur photographer Lydia Fernandez - Arias, of Maureen Maunsell and Sheila Wallin enjoying themselves on a children's playground
3. "Pulse", by amateur photographer Sabrina Fuller of her partner Eddie Sherwood, a drummer who used to play with bands Simply Red and Inner Sense

The Old Frame New Picture Gallery features on the new GMOPN website. Click [here](#) to have a look at the amazing entries. We are challenging our partners to use these images to represent older people in more positive and diverse ways.

Campaigns:

Over the past two weeks digital billboards outside supermarkets across Greater Manchester have displayed the top 6 images from the competition increasing the visibility of older people in a positive way. Transport for Greater Manchester have also displayed the winning images on passenger information displays at key interchanges. Images for the exhibition will also feature on postcards which are currently in development – watch this space!

Here is one of the billboard displays, showing shortlisted photographer Sharon Jackson with her image of her mum. She said 'She would have been so proud, as I am!'.





WORKING GROUPS

Recently in our working groups we have been focusing on issues surrounding Covid and the pandemic. Priorities and matters of interest have changed slightly due to the current situation so we have been discussing these changes and concerns in all of the working groups.

Health and Social Care

In this working group we have been focusing on the vaccine and have had the opportunity to meet with the Head of Communications for the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care partnership to share concerns and make suggestions on how messages should be communicated to older people about the vaccine. We have also started to focus on the theme of older peoples mental health, both in the context of the pandemic and more widely. We also welcomed Helen Pratt from Dementia United who asked for input from the group about a leaflet about delirium to make sure that it was easy to understand, conveyed the most important messages and used suitable imagery. The date for the next Health and Social care meeting is **3rd March – 2-3:30**.

Housing

We have been discussing access to services for maintenance and adaptations across GM, such as Care and Repair who support with ensuring that people are able to maintain and adapt their homes as needed as they get older. We have had guest speakers such as Mark Hammond from the Manchester School of Architecture who introduced the RightPlace research project and asked for the group's support in testing a survey and providing feedback.

The survey, developed by Manchester Metropolitan University and the Centre for Ageing Better, is seeking to better understand the motivations around older people's housing choices and to address some of the myths, calling for policy-makers and developers to embrace the diverse aspirations of older people that go beyond simple ideas about downsizing.

The survey will be used to provide better information for local and national government, housing associations and property developers to highlight opportunities to improve the housing offer for older people who want to move, and to inform programmes supporting those who don't move to 'age in place' within vibrant neighbourhoods. The more people who complete the survey the better so we would be grateful if you could spare the time to participate. The survey can be completed online and should take no more than 20 minutes to complete. It is open to anyone in England aged 55 and over and is entirely anonymous. If you are interested in participating, click on the [link](#). The date for the next meeting is **17th March – 2-3:30**.

Transport

In this working group the main focus has been people's concerns with using transport during the pandemic: the cleanliness and safety of using buses, trams and trains, and discussing people's fears. We have enjoyed welcoming speakers Sally Robinson and James Baldwin from TFGM – Sally led a consultation on bus reform where it was interesting to hear GMCA's vision for buses, and we discussed queries around GM rail and travel passes for older people. Transport for Greater Manchester have confirmed that any older people whose travel pass was up for renewal and who needs to travel for a legally permitted reason will still be able to use their pass, without renewing until 31st March 2021.

The move is intended to minimise unnecessary trips on public transport and to TFGM Travelshops of PayPoint stores during lockdown to help protect those most at risk from coronavirus. The date for the next Transport meeting is **11th March – 11-12:30**.



PICK UP A NEW BOOK

It's a bit cold and miserable outside and the TV can be a little repetitive at the minute so it's easy to get bored. Why not pick up a new book to occupy yourself instead?

Manchester Author John Ling has contacted us to share details of his books. 'Alice the Healer' is a biography in poems of an older lady who suffered with rheumatism and Meniere's disease but still managed to lead a meaningful and powerful life. In this biography he brings Alice to life with bold phrasing and word play and gives the unknowing a poetic, empathetic and honest glimpse into the world of a struggling, yet feisty, woman in her final years.

Mrs Loud and Mrs Quiet is a book of short stories, many based on John's experience as a mediator. It is a well written book of warm short stories with an honest and realistic view into the world of neighbour disputes on estates. John says you'll laugh and you'll cry!

If you want to have a look at John's website, click [here](#).

News and Participation Opportunities

'ALONE' PROJECT UPDATE

In the last newsletter we shared the opportunity for people to be involved in a project called 'Alone', led by Vilija Skubute. She was interested in collecting photographs from people who live alone: their day-to-day lives, activities, what they eat for example. She has now successfully gathered photographs and created an online gallery! There are images of people's book collections, food and pets, with commentary to accompany the images as you walk round the virtual gallery. Click [here](#) to virtually take a tour of the online gallery. She is still seeking more contributions to develop this project so if you would like to get involved contact Vilija Skabute on **07443774319** or email vilija@vilija-skubute.com.



LET'S GET TAMESIDE FIT!

Fit over Fifty is a not for profit community interest company based in Tameside and they provide services to older people, including assisted shopping, a companion service, exercise classes and a chaperone service. Their aim is to provide activities for the over 50s to help improve their health and well-being and overcome isolation.

Before lockdown, they held chair based exercise classes as a way of getting active and meeting new people in a social setting. The exercises are chair based and help with balance, strength, co-ordination and flexibility. Now they are offering a handy toolkit of exercise material that you can buy online. These include a 'Use it or Lose it' exercise book, a resistance band, a CD, a small soft ball and an exercise kit.

Click [here](#) to have a look.

Let's get Tameside fit

Chair based exercise is:
Mentally stimulating and gives a sense of achievement and a feeling of well being

- Reduces risk of falls
- Improves flexibility
- Increases range of movement
- Reduces stiffness

32 easy to follow exercises illustrated in our booklet 'Use it or lose it' with clear instructions for flexibility, balance, strength and co-ordination.

The easy to follow booklet can be used by residents on their own or in a group led by your staff.

Resistance band, soft hand ball and a music cd which includes 12 tracks specially chosen to keep a steady rhythm, uplifting and singalong.

Each exercise set comes in an individual bag so each resident can have their own personal band and ball and thereby ensuring cleanliness and hygiene.

Order online at:
Fitoverfifty.org
Phone 07548 057715



News and Participation Opportunities

JOIN A DANCE CLASS

Manchester Museum has partnered with Dance Practitioner and Culture Champion Hazel Roy and they're offering a series of fun, uplifting and inclusive online dance lessons as part of the museum's Age Friendly offer. For more information and how to book, please follow the [link](#).



"Let's Dance" programme takes place on Thursdays, 11am-12pm and there are 25 spaces available per session. The next available dates are:

- Thursday 11th February
- Thursday 18th February
- Thursday 25th February
- Thursday 4th March

To book a place, please [email](#) or text 07818 578 474.



LEARN MUSIC WITH BAND ON THE WALL

Band on the Wall have introduced an interactive resource for music learning and participation. Their new World of Music project is an exciting programme offering participation in an interactive weekly choir, learning an instrument from scratch in World of Music Beginners, picking up tunes by top musicians from around the world in World of Music Tunes and exploring music traditions of different cultures in Peoples & Places. If you're interested, take a look at their [website](#).

News and Participation Opportunities

GM CREATIVE CARE KIT

A pack of creative activity sheets has been assembled to give older adults a fun way to spend their time. They are easy to download and print, and includes activities such as:

- Writing a time capsule to help boost positivity in lockdown
- How to do a time lapse drawing
- Botanical colouring
- A brain workout
- Creative challenges
- Weaving

...And many more!

To learn a new skill or to get creative, click [here](#).



LATEST AFA BRIEFING

New briefing: What works in tackling social isolation of older people in Bangladeshi Communities

A new briefing from Ambition for Ageing shares transferable learning from their Community Navigators project delivered by British Red Cross, that worked with small, tight-knit ethnic minority communities – Bangladeshi communities – in Greater Manchester.

Older people in these communities are at higher risk of social isolation and some community members are at particularly high risk due to intersecting barriers from multiple factors.

The briefing shares recommendations around how you can work effectively with these communities to reduce social isolation. Read it [here](#).

INDEPENDENT AGE

A Joint Letter on Unfair Costs to Safely Access Food

Independent Age has released a joint letter from 23 charities regarding the third national lockdown and the unfair costs to safely access food that people especially vulnerable to COVID-19 are facing. In the letter, the charities are asking the seven participating supermarkets in the priority delivery slots scheme, and those who provide priority delivery slots through local councils, to suspend delivery charges for priority delivery slots, and take steps to reduce minimum spends.

The letter continues to say that in this third national lockdown, many of the people the charities represent are once again shielding or staying at home for their safety - meaning they rely on online deliveries. The charities believe it is unfair to ask these customers to stay at home to protect the NHS, and yet also have to take a financial hit just to access food. Click [here](#) to read the letter and add your support to the campaign [here](#).

Home Truths: Experiences of people in later life during COVID-19

This is the latest report from Independent Age. Since the start of the pandemic they have run three surveys to find out more about the views and experiences of people in later life – the latest of these received over 5000 responses. They wanted to better understand what's happening in people's everyday lives to ensure that their policy and campaigning work truly reflects the experiences of those in later life.

In the report, they set out their findings and offer policy recommendations to ensure that all older people get the support they need during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have also worked with their campaigners to create a new video about life during the pandemic and the different experiences they faced. You can read the report and watch the video [here](#).

PENSION CREDIT UPTAKE

Nearly 43,000 households in Greater Manchester are not claiming pension credit that they are eligible for, that's an average value of £34 a week per household. There are various reasons why eligible people are not claiming it - perceived ineligibility being the most common reason. Other reasons include thinking home ownership bars people from claiming pension credits, and the stigma of claiming benefits. Pension credit entitlement includes:

1. **Guaranteed Credit**

this tops up incomes to a guaranteed minimum level, which is currently £173.75 per week for single people and £265.20 for couples. There is no savings limit, but when savings surpass £10,000, entitlement reduces.

2. **Savings Credit**

this is available to those who retired before April 2016 and have a private or occupational pension and can be up to £13.97 for single people or £15.62 for a couple.

Even those entitled to a small amount then receive many additional benefits that can really make a difference. These include:

- Free TV license for over-75s - £157.50/ year
- Free NHS dental treatment
- Help towards buying glasses - £39 to £215 dependent on prescription
- Transport costs to hospital
- Warm home discount (£140/ year) + cold weather payment (£24/ week)
- Free home insulation and boiler grants
- Housing benefit support help towards council tax
- Can also be an extra carer's addition and a severe disability addition
- Some companies offer reductions for those on Pension Credits, such as BT and United Utilities

To find out more information about pension credit and to see if you're eligible visit this [website](#). If you want some support finding out if you are eligible and making an application you can call GM Citizens Advice on **08001448848**.

PICCADILLY GARDENS CONSULTATION

A long-awaited public consultation has opened to help shape future design proposals for the much-criticised public square and surrounding areas. The eight-week consultation covers an area centred around Piccadilly Gardens but also including Piccadilly, Mosley Street, the Parker Street bus interchange area and Market Street in the city centre. Manchester City Council had initially hoped the consultation would launch before the end of last year.

In pre-Covid times, more than 150,000 people per day passed through Piccadilly Gardens but the area has been neglected in recent times and become a hotspot for crime, drug abuse and antisocial behaviour. The council has been working with landscape architect LDA for more than 12 months to look at the different functions the area serves and how it might be improved. The council is now inviting people to share their thoughts and aspirations for the area as it seeks to meet its goals including "designing out" crime and other issues, and bringing in more of the elements that people want from a city centre public space.

The [survey](#) is now open and runs until Sunday 21 March - add your contribution and make sure that the design is age-friendly.