

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

MARCH/APRIL Newsletter

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Shameful 'corridor-care crisis' in hospitals will lead to more deaths if government does not act faster

'We're only part way through the winter – this will get worse'



The National Pensioners Convention (to whom the Islington Pensioners Forum is affiliated) is calling for urgent government action over horrific revelations that patients – mainly older and vulnerable – are being treated and even dying in hospital corridors.

NPC, the UK's largest campaign group run for and by older people, has heard first-hand concerns from members about the crisis in NHS hospitals. But they are shocked by the scale and grim nature of evidence provided by frontline staff in a new report from the Royal College of Nursing (RCN).

NPC completely supports the RCN's demand for action and greater transparency over the scale of the disaster to 'focus minds' on tackling the crisis. They also feel the government's decision to delay social care reform until 2028 is a serious mistake that is adding to the crisis. The Health Secretary Wes Streeting is being urged to rapidly bring forward reform of the struggling Social Care sector to the end of this year, as it could play a key role in alleviating the issues facing the NHS.

Jan Shortt, General Secretary, NPC commented: "The findings of the RCN survey this winter are truly shocking and shame us all. Hospital staff are exhausted but still concerned to deliver the best service they can to those in need. But the conditions they face working in our hospitals are as intolerable as

those for the patients desperate for treatment. And remember, we're only part way through the winter – this will get worse and could lead to more deaths."

Jan added: "This situation has gone on for years and crisis has, by default, become the norm. Yet the resolution to dealing with the overload has been put off time and time again.

The NPC sends this message to Health Secretary Wes Streeting: you have the power to act. We politely request that you intervene now and set in motion a positive and sustainable strategy that enables the NHS and the care sector to work with and support each other to improve the delivery of services to older people and others in need."

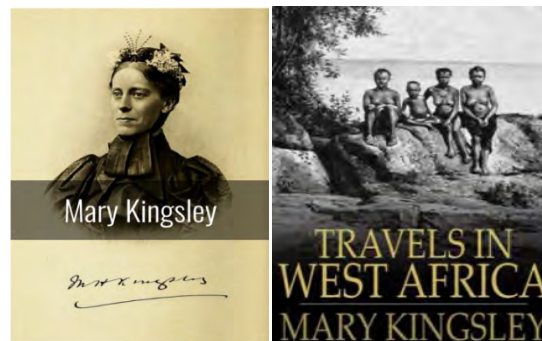
The evidence from RCN staff about being forced to treat seriously ill and vulnerable patients in corridors and even toilets because of a lack of hospital beds could be alleviated by greater support and investment in social care. Despite the hard work of care staff, the sector does not have the resources to provide the scale of home care the UK needs for our ageing population. If this was improved, it might help prevent some hospital admissions - it would also allow more older, vulnerable patients to be safely discharged home.

The government recognises the need for social care reform but has delayed an investigation by Baroness Louise Casey until 2028 – something the NPC and Sir Andrew Dilnot, whose 2011 report previously recommended reforms, agree should be rapidly brought forward until the end of 2025.

Jan Shortt said: “It is not the NHS or care sector that are failing – their dedication and compassion is not in question. It is the policy decisions and delays of successive governments that impose impossible working conditions on hospital staff and carers alike - coupled with year on year cuts despite this government and the previous administration promising more funding.

“Whatever money has been put into the sector is nothing like the amount taken out of it over the last decade or so, and therefore both services struggle to meet demands. This kind of regime does nothing to improve morale, staffing levels or, importantly, the understanding of the public who see their NHS in dire straits.

The NHS and social care are inextricably linked, and many older people are appalled that the Health Secretary’s decision to delay reform will see no improvement in the care sector for another four years. This is a serious mistake that is clearly denying people dignity and respect, particularly at the end of life”.



Why don't you wander up the hill to Highgate Village? It's perched atop one of London's highest points and keeps a suspicious eye on the goings on below. (You could also jump on a bus, the 210, 310, 263 or 143 all ascend the hill, and whip out your fabulous Freedom Pass.) Highgate has protected itself from being absorbed into the London sprawl with the glorious green spaces of Hampstead Heath, Waterlow Park, Highgate Woods, and Omved Gardens. Highgate or 'Hedge Gate' was the tollgate for all traffic going north out of London and south into London. It was part of the Bishop of London's hunting park and tolls were collected right up to the 19th Century! It is currently divvied up by three Boroughs yet the village is a cohesive and independent community. It is a time-honoured haven, chock-a-block with architectural gems, jolly pubs (too jolly expensive for this old skinflint!), cafes, blue and pink plaques and the odour of the ages! Yet it is also a thriving contemporary creative community; you could attend a play Upstairs at the Gatehouse or a circus in the Jackson's Lane Arts Centre. In fact when the weather is warmer I'm going to organise a walk around this wonderful time capsule of English history.

If you make it to this village near the heart of London, stop at number 22 Southwood Lane, 'Avalon', you'll see the plaque commemorating 'Mary Kingsley - 1862- 1900 - Traveller and Ethnographer'. Mary was born in Islington but when she was one the family decided to escape the London hubbub and move out to Highgate for the fresh air of the country. She was born just four days after the shotgun wedding of her parents. Her father was a doctor and her mother a cockney publican's daughter. Mary Henrietta Kingsley, the great traveller and ethnographer, dropped her h's all her life! Up until the age of 29, Mary lived a very sheltered, Victorian existence caring for both her father and ailing mother. Unlike her brother she had no formal schooling but she was allowed access to her father's library, which was the perfect recipe for an inquisitive mind. Both her parents died in the same year and Mary decided she was off to explore the west coast of Africa, known then as 'the white man's grave'. People were absolutely astonished and she was strongly counselled against the trip. In fact the shipping agent refused to sell her a return ticket because he didn't believe she'd survive. Our heroine

was unstoppable, she had broken free from her family constraints and craved knowledge and adventure.

She was however not free from what she considered the 'proper way to dress and behave'. When it was suggested that full Victorian dress with its many layers of undergarments and a corset was probably not ideal for trekking through wild African terrain she said 'I'd rather perish on a public scaffold than wear trousers'. Her choice of attire was validated later when she fell fifteen feet into a spiked animal trap and emerged unscathed! She was minimalist in her packing, determined to get supplies by trading and adapting to the local diet. In fact she had a remarkable ability to transcend cultural barriers. She lived with a tribe called the Fang who were renowned as cannibals. Extraordinarily, she gained their trust, learned their language and documented their customs. One of her many startling experiences was finding a bag of body parts in a hut she was staying in! She journeyed with the tribe and waded through swamps up to her neck in mud. She stoically endured the harshest of conditions and carried her trusty umbrella at all times, once using it to prod a hippopotamus which had blocked her path. While paddling a canoe she was attacked by a crocodile - 'a pushing young creature' she called it. She whacked it on the snout with her paddle. She insisted all stops on the way were punctuated with a cup of tea. One night she had to fight off a leopard with a chair and a water jug.'The African Leopard is an audacious animal.' she wrote. 'Although it is ungrateful of me to say a word against him after the way he has let me off. Taken as a whole he is the most lovely creature I have ever seen. However it is not an unmixed joy to a person like myself of a nervous disposition.'

She scaled Mount Cameroon - Mongo ma Ndemi - which is over 13,000 feet high, taking a previously uncharted route. To get some perspective, Scotland's Ben Nevis is 4,400 feet. After three years she returned to England and her books became bestsellers. She was in great demand in scientific and literary societies as a guest speaker. She challenged accepted narratives about Africa and was critical of both Christian Missionaries and the accepted doctrine of Colonialism. She used her lectures to present a nuanced approach to African studies and challenge prevailing attitudes. Instead of trying to 'civilise' and exploit the Africans, Europeans should understand and respect their cultures. She scandalised Victorian attitudes by defending polygamy which she said made perfect economic and social sense when male mortality was high through wars and disease. It maintained the integrity of the tribe and provided support for women and children.

Not only did she advance ethnographic studies, her botanical and zoological research increased knowledge of the biodiversity of West Africa. She discovered three new fish species and eight species of insect. She returned to Africa and became a nurse in one of Kitchener's 'concentration' camps, tending Boer internees during the Second Boer War. The conditions were shocking and disease quickly spread. Up to 25,000 innocent Boer internees died as typhoid swept through these camps. When she realised, in 1900, she had contracted the disease, she asked to be allowed to die alone like an animal, away from people and without anyone witnessing her weakness. She wanted to be buried at sea as a return to nature. She was 37 years old. She'd had an incredible flowering in just nine years and I always think of that intelligent, courageous, stoical Victorian lady as I cycle down Southwood Lane. **Cornelius McAfee**

Let us Pop in to your Inbox



A new service for our readers - elsewhere in this newsletter we have published a list of Community centres so that you can identify your local services if you haven't already.

We are introducing a new email address to receive correspondence from you on subjects of your concern, where you might need signposting assistance and we will do our best to direct you to the appropriate service/support team and if we are unable to we will also let you know we have failed!!!
Letters@islingtonpensionersforum.org

We will also use this email address to send out activities run by 3rd party community centres such as social lunch clubs, free health classes for us elders, guided walks of the borough and free gardening activities.

These activities crop up too quickly to put in our newsletter so if you wish to receive these timely notifications whilst still receiving your physical copy just email us at this email address. Toot! Toot! Spring is on its way, Mr Toad is on the road and the sun will soon have its hat on!!

Coming Soon at IPF

The BFI has once a month free seniors film 1st Monday of the month.

Film club would start again in April

A range of Healthy Living Activities

Chair base exercise

Lets Dance (no dance experience needed)

Make your own bag (no sewing involved)

Singing (no experience needed)

Art and Craft (with relaxing with music)

Knitting

Please contact Lydia if you are interested in any of these activities 07804 693461

Islington Stand up for IPF



As we took to the streets yet again to oppose fascism and the far right on Sunday 1 February 2025, there was a little apprehension from the organisers of the national demonstration. They were not so much worried about opposing the racists on the streets but more unsure of what the police response to the protest would be on the day. Two weekends earlier, the police had brutally targeted the pro-Palestinian march, preventing it from starting out near the BBC, with the excuse that it would disturb our Jewish friends at prayer nearby; as a result, 77 people had been arrested - with MP's Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell cautioned and released.

The organisers of the 1 February demo, Stand Up to Racism and others, were assured by the police that there would be no recurrence of such action against this demonstration against the far-right, and they were true to their word. The day before, as flyers were handed out at Finsbury Park Station publicising the upcoming demonstration, there was a police presence, but no hostility shown towards the activists.

The demonstration started off with defiant and inspiring speeches from activists such as David Rosenberg of the Jewish Socialist group and trade unionists including former National Education Secretary Kevin Courtney, who warned of the far right "seeking to divide us" and that they were on the streets supporting Tommy Robinson, who "is in jail for telling lies about a school child and for refusing to stop telling those lies."

Given the very chilly weather conditions as well as justifiable apprehension about police action, the turnout was impressive. There was, indeed, an atmosphere of celebrating one another, opposing the far right yet again, with music and drumming in attendance. I proudly joined the Islington Stand UP to Racism group at the front of the demonstration.

With fascists being emboldened worldwide by far-right American support, notably that emanating from the White House with pardons for criminal behaviour, we must be prepared to show our united opposition to racism. Maybe next time you will join the protest.

Luke Daniels.
Assistant Chair

Scams: How to Spot and Avoid Them

Scams in the UK have been on the rise in recent years, affecting thousands of individuals and businesses. Fraudsters use increasingly sophisticated tactics to deceive their victims, often causing significant

financial and emotional distress. This article explores the most common scams in the UK, how to recognise them, and the best ways to protect yourself.



In 2023, criminals stole £1.17 billion through unauthorised and authorised fraud in the UK, according to UK Finance's Annual Fraud Report 2024.

£11.4 billion in 2024, reflecting a significant increase from previous years. These figures highlight the escalating financial impact of scams on individuals and the broader economy.

However, a report by the Global Anti-Scam Alliance indicates that total scam losses in the UK surged to

Common Scams in the UK

1. Phishing Scams

Phishing scams involve fraudulent emails, text messages, or phone calls that trick individuals into revealing personal information such as passwords, banking details, and credit card numbers. These scams often appear to come from legitimate sources, such as banks, HMRC, or online retailers.

2. Investment Scams

Scammers pose as financial advisors or investment firms, promising high returns with little risk. These fraudulent schemes often involve cryptocurrency, stocks, or property investments. Victims are persuaded to transfer large sums of money, only to realise later that the investment opportunity never existed.

3. Romance Scams

Romance scams occur on dating websites and social media platforms, where fraudsters build emotional relationships with victims before requesting money. They often claim to be in distress, needing financial assistance for emergencies, travel, or medical expenses.

4. Courier and Delivery Scams

Fake delivery notifications via text or email have become common, with messages claiming a package is due for delivery but requires a small payment. These scams trick victims into providing their card details, which are then used for fraudulent

transactions.

5. HMRC Tax Scams

Scammers impersonate HMRC, claiming that the victim owes unpaid taxes or is entitled to a tax refund. They often use threatening language, demanding immediate payment to avoid legal consequences. These scams are usually carried out via phone calls, emails, or text messages.

6. Pension and Insurance Scams

Fraudsters offer pension reviews or insurance deals that sound too good to be true. They may persuade individuals to transfer their pension funds to fraudulent schemes, leading to severe financial losses.

How to Protect Yourself from Scams

Verify the Source: Always check the legitimacy of emails, phone calls, and messages before providing any personal information. Contact organisations directly using official contact details.

Be Cautious with Unsolicited Requests: If someone contacts you unexpectedly asking for money or sensitive information, be sceptical.

Use Strong Passwords and Security Measures: Enable two-factor authentication on accounts and regularly update passwords.

Check for Red Flags: Poor spelling, urgent demands, and unusual payment requests (such as gift cards or cryptocurrency) are common scam indicators.

Report Suspicious Activity: If you suspect a scam, report it to Action Fraud, the UK's national fraud reporting centre. <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>

Report to Your Bank: If you worry your banking details might be at risk, reach out to your bank right away. They can secure your account and provide additional protective guidance. Remember to search for their

official contact details independently of any contact details that may be in an unsolicited email.

Scammers are constantly evolving their tactics, making it essential to stay informed and vigilant. By recognising common scams and adopting proactive security measures, you can significantly reduce the risk of falling victim to fraud. Stay cautious, trust your instincts, and always verify before taking action.



Some community centres in the borough

Here's a list of staffed community centres that have a large range of activities like singing, dancing, knitting, chair-based yoga, cage-fighting (no not really)!!! Further contact details for many of these can be found through the council's website: www.islington.gov.uk

Community Centre	Postcode	Website
Andover	N7 7RY	55 Corker Walk 0207 272 3493
Brickworks	N4 4BY	https://hanleycrouch.org.uk/
Highbury Roundhouse	N5 1XB	https://www.highbury-roundhouse.org.uk/
Hilldrop	N7 0JE	https://www.hilldrop.org.uk/
Hornsey Lane	N19 3YJ	https://www.hleca.org.uk/
Jean Stokes	N1 0DX	Coatbridge House, Carnoustie Drive. Jeanstokescommunitycentre@islington.gov.uk
Mildmay	N16 8NA	https://www.mildmaycommunitycentre.org/
Vibast	EC1V NH	167 Old Street. 0207 527 4605
Whittington Park	N19 4RS	https://www.whittingtonpca.org.uk/
Caxton House	N19 3RQ	https://caxtonhouse.org/
Elizabeth House	N5 1ED	https://elizabeth-house.org.uk/
Holloway Neighbourhood Group Old Fire Station	N7 6QT	https://www.hng.org.uk/
The Arc	N1 7DF	https://www.thearccentre.org/
Peel Institute	EC1R 0HU	https://thepeel.org.uk/
Ringcross Community Centre	N7 8RH	https://piliontrust.info/
St. Lukes Community Centre	EC1V 8AJ	https://www.slpt.org.uk/#!event-list

Mental Health Speaker for our April Forum

When people have a physical health emergency they know they can go to A&E. When people have a mental health emergency, they can go voluntarily to a Mental Health A&E, but - if they have been sectioned for their safety or the safety of others under section 136 of the Mental Health

Act - they have no choice but to be taken by the police to the Health place of Safety. In Islington, this is at Highgate West. The Head Nurse for Islington's Health place of Safety has been invited to speak at our April Forum meeting, to lift the lid on what happens there

Future Forum speakers for 2025

20 March ~ Climate Crisis/Green News: Caroline Russell/Benali Hamdichi (Green Party Councillors, Islington) and Anna Hyde (Islington Climate Centre)

17 April ~ Islington Health Place of Safety: Denisha Palmer (Highgate West [mental health hospital])

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

Officers:

Bob Collins: Chair
Luke Daniels: Vice Chair
Elaine Durack: Secretary
Frances Bradley: Asst. Secretary
Mike Sanderson: Treasurer
David Milner: Members List

Committee Members:

Dot Gibson
Annette Thomas
Margaret Diffey
Alan McDonald
Irma Gomez
Philip Richards
Cornelius McAfee

Delegates for NPC London Region

Luke Daniels
Frances Bradley

Jan Pollock
Pam Zinkin
Irma Gomez

Staff:

Lydia Batchelor: Outings/events organiser

Committee Meetings on the first Monday of the month at 10.30am at the IPF hall

Forum Meetings on the third Thursday on the month at 10.30 am in the Town Hall

Loos for Islington - Cornelius McAfee

The good news is Loos for Islington has collected 2000 signatures and the subject of public loos in the London Borough of Islington is to be debated in a full Council Meeting on

the 27th of February. If you would like to hear about our campaign and the progress we have made try the Google Notebook LM audio overview.

<https://notebooklm.google.com/notebook/0b7dbb22-6ea9-4a2b-8eae-89acaae03826/audio>

**ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM
MEMBERSHIP FORM
PENSIONERS CAMPAIGNING FOR PENSIONERS
JOIN US TODAY!**

All you have to join is to fill out the form and pay a small yearly fee and you are a member! We will send you our regular newsletter keeping you up to date with issues that affect you and give you the opportunity to join us at all the social events we organise - day trips to interesting places, our fund-raising events, and film club.

Membership is just £10 per year. We don't wish to exclude anyone, so for those who may find it difficult to afford the membership fee, just contact us. Of course, if you can afford more – please do – as this helps us fund the newsletter and events.!

Come along to Islington Town Hall on the 3rd Thursday of every month between 10.30 am and 12.30 pm to and hear our speakers and give your opinions!

www.islingtonpensionersforum.org

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It would be great if you could pay your membership fee by Direct Debit or Standing Order – this will be a yearly payment only!

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