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LAMPAG OPEN MEETING
Monday 18 November 2024
12.00 pm to 2.30 pm
Room 16 Lambeth Town Hall
Loneliness

Speakers: Tayla-Estelle Davis and Paul Coles from Age UK Lambeth

Human beings are social creatures. From birth we make connections with our parents, relatives, friends and others which help us to thrive and survive. As we grow older, these bonds slowly diminish or are lost. Over the years we may lose contact for a variety of reasons like relocating, immigrating, ill health, loss of employment, retirement or bereavement.

Loneliness is a strong and unwelcome feeling of loss of companionship. It is about the loss of the number and quality of the relationships that we have become used to and which we would like to continue. Loneliness can be described as emotional where we have few meaningful relationships and social links. Loneliness not only affects our physical health. Sadly it can also impact negatively on our mental health. In fact, there is a strong link between mental wellbeing and loneliness. Research estimates that 60% of people experiencing chronic loneliness experience mental illness.

There is a difference between loneliness and **social isolation**. The number of adults aged 65 and over is growing and many are often socially isolated and regularly feel lonely. People who are marginalised, discriminated against and unable to articulate their concerns often feel isolated.

Covid, long periods in hospitals, restrictions on socialising and attending funerals of loved ones have all had their negative impact. Furthermore, the Cost of Living has curtailed visits to museums, art galleries, exhibitions, the theatre, the gym and the like leaving many older people cocooned in their homes. The cold weather is creeping up on us when more people will find themselves trapped in their homes.

Do you feel lonely some of or all of the time? What are your feelings? How do you cope with them? What do you think should be done to combat loneliness

on a personal, local and national level? How and by whom? What role do we have in the campaign to end loneliness?

Come and be part of the conversation. Loneliness is about our health, welfare and a positive retirement.

Tea, coffee, biscuits, raffle

Budget 2024 and older people

October has been a month of calls, demonstrations, hand-ins of petitions and lobbies of parliament by pensioners' organisations and the unions to urge Chancellor Rachel Reeves to reverse the devastating winter fuel payment £200-£300 cuts in her first budget (30 October). Disappointingly there was no mention in the chancellor's debut speech of the damaging impact of the axing of the winter fuel payments. However, there are some positive/ welcome points in the budget with regard to increasing eligibility for the allowance paid to full time carers, increasing the care allowance earnings threshold from £151 to £195 week, a £22 billion increase in the day to day health budget, a £23 billion increase in the NHS capital budget and £3.4 billion for warm homes, plans to upgrade buildings to help boost energy bills but she has **not** budgeted on her plan to cut the winter fuel payment.

What she did was to repeat the misleading suggestion that 12m pensioners will be compensated by up to £470 thanks to the state pension rise in April 2025. How can this be true when energy bills have gone up, only a quarter million people will get a £470 increase because the other 9 million are on the older pre state pension 2016. What is more, the new state pension will only kick in April 2025.

Jan Shortt, NPC General Secretary said' We had hoped that the government would include some kind of help to off-set the loss of the winter fuel payment even if this did not reverse the cuts. This is a serious issue but this is not the end we will not stop highlighting the disaster that awaits our oldest and most vulnerable if the government does not address the problem."

The Mayor of London Pension Credit Uptake Campaign

You are eligible for pension credit if you are on low income. Pension credit can also help with housing costs. Pension credit is separate from the state pension. Over 2 million older people live in poverty and thousands do not claim pension credit for various reasons.

In February 2023 the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan together with London boroughs mounted a campaign to ensure that older Londoners do not miss out on receiving all of the pension credit they are entitled to. The campaign has been successful and has unlocked over £17 million in unclaimed pension credit for older Londoners on low income. With the cost of living and fuel bills soaring, it is crucial that we not only tackle pensioner poverty but that people are made aware of and given the advice and support they need to access pension credit.

Committee Meeting TBA

