Welcome to the third edition of **Westminster Plus**, the quarterly magazine for Westminster’s older residents

I’m pleased to announce some fantastic news in this edition of Westminster Plus. Following the success of the older people’s tea dance in December 2007, I can now reveal that a second free event for Westminster’s older residents, an Old Time Music Hall performance at the home of the English National Opera, London’s Coliseum, will take place on Thursday, 17th July.

If you are aged 65 or over and would like to attend, please telephone the Senior Passport hotline on 020 7641 1444 to book your ticket. There are 2300 tickets available for senior citizens and their carers. You are invited to dress up; ladies in hats and shawls and gentlemen in colourful waistcoats! More details are on page 10.

I would also like to welcome the Westminster Primary Care Trust (PCT) as our partner in providing Westminster Plus for older residents.

I look forward to seeing you at the Coliseum!

Councillor Christabel Flight
Westminster Older People’s Champion
Cabinet Support, 19th Floor, City Hall
64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP
email: cllrflight21@btinternet.com

I am delighted that the PCT has joined the council to produce Westminster Plus. The PCT is your local branch of the NHS. We plan and buy treatments that local people need from hospitals, GPs and dentists, as well as directly providing community health services.

To help us serve you better, we need to hear about your experiences. Please use the comments cards in our clinics, call our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0800 587 8818 or write to me at the address below. Alternatively, do take part in our annual ‘Ask Your Patients Week’ from 2nd to 8th June. Survey forms will be available at all the PCT’s clinics.

Sheila D’Souza
Non Executive Director and Older People’s Champion
Westminster PCT
15 Marylebone Road, NW1 5JD
Your questions

Westminster Plus has received lots of calls and letters about parking. We’ve gathered together the most frequently asked questions, and put them to Councillor Ian Adams.

What has the council been doing to improve parking in Westminster?

We have extended the hours of control for resident bays in Belgravia, Dorset Square, Church Street and Victoria, and made it easy for residents to renew their permits online, saving money and time. The cashless parking service is now Westminster wide making it easy to pay and top-up your parking using a mobile phone.

What parking facilities are available for disabled people?

We’ve created over 120 extra parking bays for disabled badge holders on the blue badge scheme. We also have a White Badge scheme for disabled people who live or have their main place of work in Westminster. You can apply for a white badge by visiting www.westminster.gov.uk/parking or call 020 7641 5124.

What are the council’s plans for carers’ parking?

We are beginning to consult with carer groups, to better understand their parking needs, and hope to develop some options to trial in the summer.

Where can I find out more about parking in Westminster?

The new Park Right booklet is a free and essential guide to parking in Westminster. It should be sent to your home in May. Please phone 020 7823 4567 if you don’t receive your copy.

If you have any feedback about Westminster Plus, and have questions you would like Cllr Adams to answer, please use the details below to contact us.

Cllr Ian Adams
Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services

Westminster Plus
17th Floor City Hall
Westminster City Council
64 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6QP
Email westminsterplus@westminster.gov.uk
or call Senior Passport on 020 7641 1444.
What is self directed care?

It is offering support to residents, which allows them maximum flexibility, choice and control over the care they receive. One of the ways we do this is through our Direct Payments programme.

Direct Payments means you can choose and ‘employ’ your own carer, but you won’t be alone in doing this. We will open a bank account where you will receive your allowance from the council, and then pay for the services you need to live independently.

What can Direct Payments be used for?

People use Direct Payments to pay for a range of services and support such as a personal carer, help to get out and about, and equipment to enable independent living.

Hugh Cole, Service Manager, North East Locality, Adults Services says that Direct Payments is about, “giving people the power to tailor their care to their needs, such as being able to hire a carer that speaks the same language.”

“One of the main concerns for people is fear of taking on too much responsibility, but with Direct Payments you receive support at every step,” Hugh Cole.

“Both Penderels Trust and Age Concern Westminster offer support and assistance...”
throughout to ensure you are comfortable with the processes.

One positive example of self directed care is Peggy Taub. Peggy has been using Direct Payments for over a year, and she is happy with how it all works.

“Direct Payments allows me to interview my carers and choose the right one for me. My carers are now more like friends,” Peggy Taub.

**Coming Soon**

Westminster City Council, in partnership with Royal Bank of Scotland, is investigating the possibility of using a pre-loaded payment card to make Direct Payments even easier to use. This will reduce the need for forms, and will give both the users and the council easy access to monitor and manage accounts.

This will be a dedicated account and is used as a VISA credit card. You will no longer be required to send through statements to the council, as the bank will automatically give the council access to the records. This will be piloted later in 2008. For further information you can contact Age Concern Westminster or Penderels Trust.
Walking has long been overlooked as an exercise activity to help you lose weight and keep fit. Cardiovascular activity is one of the cheapest and easiest ways to improve your overall health. There are many organised walks happening all around Westminster ranging from health walks and power walks to interest walks. The Hub, in partnership with Westminster PCT, runs a free health walk every Wednesday in Regent’s Park.

Westminster resident Antony Lindford, who has been participating in the walking group for 18 months says, “I joined after my heart operation and the walking is benefiting me enormously.” His friend Daniel O’Leary agrees, explaining that regularly walking with the group has many benefits, “it’s very enjoyable, it’s free and it’s good exercise. That’s why we keep coming back.”

According to Westminster PCT’s Physical Activity Co-ordinator Ruth Quigley, walking regularly can not only help protect against disease, improve your circulation and lower blood pressure, it can also make you feel happier.

Did you know that walking a mile in 20 minutes uses the same amount of energy as running that mile in half the time?

“It is recommended that adults do at least 30 minutes of moderate activity – that is activity that makes your heart beat faster - every day. The easiest way to stay active is by doing something you enjoy,” Ruth Quigley.
Rachel Lyons has been participating in the walk for the past two years.

“I haven’t missed a session – it doesn’t matter what the weather is like. It’s 45 minutes of pure joy,” Rachel Lyons.

To find out more about the Regent’s Park health walk or other organised walks in Westminster visit: http://www.westminster-pct.nhs.uk/healthy/index.htm or call 020 7479 8846.

Are you a smoker, or have smoked in the past and feel short of breath when you walk?

It may be a symptom of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) - an umbrella term for a number of respiratory conditions including chronic bronchitis and emphysema. If you have COPD you may feel short of breath, have a cough, produce regular phlegm, and have frequent winter chest infections. The most common cause of COPD is smoking.

“Anyone who thinks they may have symptoms of COPD should go to their GP and ask for a breathing test. The sooner you seek advice the better,” Matthew Hodson, Westminster PCT’s Clinical Nurse Specialist for COPD.
Westminster parks, gardens and open spaces are especially designed to provide residents with the opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors while living in the city.

Westminster City Council Park Services manages and maintains 56 different green spaces, from Queens Park Gardens and St. Johns Wood Church Grounds in the north, to Victoria Embankment Gardens and Pimlico Gardens in the south.

Westminster residents Gerald Pottersman and William Fitzgerald enjoy visiting the parks.

“Little Venice Rembrandt Gardens is one of Westminster’s most wonderful parks. We sit in our deck chairs and watch the barges go by. The park gives us the time to relieve the stress of the day, and we enjoy taking photos of our surroundings,” Gerald and William.
Last year, seven Westminster parks and gardens received Green Flag Awards. The Green Flag Award Scheme is run by The Civic Trust and measures the quality of public parks and green spaces.

The winning parks and gardens were judged on whether the spaces were welcoming to residents and visitors, were safe and secure, clean and well maintained, environmentally sustainable and whether they encouraged local community involvement.

According to John Tweddle, Principal Parks & Open Spaces Manager for the council, the accolade is a “strong testament to the hard work of the department. We are very proud to provide the residents of Westminster with wonderful open, green spaces where people can enjoy their free time outdoors.”

The recipients of the Green Flag Awards in 2007 were; Victoria Embankment Gardens, Paddington Recreation, St. John’s Wood Church Grounds, Queens Park Gardens, Rembrandt Gardens, Mount Street Gardens, St. Anne’s Churchyard and East Finchley Cemetery.

Westminster City Council Park Services are continually looking at new ways we can improve our parks, gardens and open spaces.

Recently, after receiving your feedback requesting more park benches, we have installed 15 new benches throughout Westminster’s parks, gardens and open spaces. Alternatively, residents and community groups can sponsor a park bench through the donated benches scheme. To find out more, please phone Bob Campion on 020 7641 5270.

We would like to encourage readers of Westminster Plus to continue to provide us with feedback on our services.

Please write to us at the below address:

Westminster City Council
Parks and Leisure Division
10th Floor, City Hall
64 Victoria Street, London
SW1E 6QP
The Lord Mayor of Westminster takes pleasure in inviting you to an old time event at the Coliseum, St Martin’s Lane WC2.

Thursday 17th July 2008, 2:00pm - 4:00pm
Phone the Senior Passport line on 020 7641 1444 to book your ticket. Tickets are free but space is limited, so please contact us to secure your place.

Westminster City Council is organising this event for residents aged 65+ living in Westminster, and for carers.

www.westminster.gov.uk/seniorpassport
Whether you’re walking around Westminster, tapping your toes at the Coliseum or road testing Westminster’s park benches you have to make sure your feet are in top shape.

Mark Brogan, Head of Podiatry at Westminster PCT, outlines his top tips for healthy feet:

• wash your feet daily
• dry your feet thoroughly after washing them especially between the toes
• gently remove hard skin and callouses with a pumice stone or foot scrub regularly
• always trim your toenails straight across
• don’t squash your feet into badly fitting shoes
• if you have diabetes, blood flow problems can lead to nerve damage or ulcers in the feet. Visit a podiatrist regularly.

For those over 60, foot care becomes even more important. Mark says, “if you have any foot problems go to see a professional for a foot assessment. Never put up with foot pain as if it is normal.”

Ensure that the chiropodist or podiatrist you see (podiatry is the modern term for the profession) is registered with the Health Professionals Council as this means they have had the necessary regulated training.

Anyone registered with a Westminster GP can register with the PCT’s Podiatry service. For further information phone the service on 020 7316 6808 or email podiatryenquiries@westminster-pct.nhs.uk

We would welcome your feedback about this service.

Please phone the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 0800 587 8818.

Age Concern Westminster
Toe nail cutting service (pilot scheme)
Who is this for?
• Over 50s
• Westminster residents
• Those who have a problem cutting their own nails but do not need a qualified podiatrist

Where and when is it available?
For three months from May 2008 at:
• Ada Court, Maida Vale, W9
  Mondays 9.30am – 12pm, 1.30pm – 4pm
• Bessborough Street Clinic, SW1
  Tuesdays 9.30am – 12pm, 1.30pm – 4pm

The cost is £10 per visit including assessment, care and instruments.

For an appointment please call 020 7723 9023.
Programmes like this do a good job of raising awareness about scams. Although not prevalent in Westminster, it is wise to be aware of the measures you can take to avoid them.

Practical ways to protect yourself:
- display the free door sticker from the council, to remind yourself what to say to cold callers
- consider strangers without appointments as suspicious
- use a door chain
- always check a caller’s identification and then call the company using a number from a phone book
- contact your utility companies to set up passwords
- never be pressurised or persuaded to accept work on your home or to purchase from a stranger
- do not ring premium rate (090) phone numbers or be pressurised into paying money in advance
- never give your bank account details or personal information to a stranger.

For your free door sticker, or to report a scam, call Trading Standards at Westminster City Council on 020 7641 1111.
SCAM: FAKE LOTTERIES OR PRIZE DRAWS

Typical format: Phone or letter

Spot it: ‘Congratulations! You have won our prize draw – a holiday in Spain or £100,000. Just pay a small administration fee and we’ll send you the prize.’

What’s the catch? Many of these lotteries and prize draws don’t exist and your money will go into someone else’s pocket.

Solve it: You shouldn’t have to pay anything to receive winnings or a prize. Don’t dial a number unless you know how much it will cost.

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SCAM: FOREIGN MONEY OFFERS

Typical format: Fax or letter

Spot it: ‘Dear Friend, I wish to approach you with a request that would be of immense benefit to both of us.’ The scammers will ask for your help to get money out of a foreign country.

What’s the catch? The scammers will ask for your bank details and empty your account.

Solve it: Never give your bank or credit card details to someone you don’t know. Be sceptical – how did these strangers get your contact details?

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SCAM: ROGUE DOORSTEP SELLERS

Typical format: Someone turning up uninvited on your doorstep

Spot it: ‘I’m doing a survey, can I come in?’ or ‘I’ve noticed you’ve got a few loose tiles on your roof and I can replace them now for £10.’

What’s the catch? The doorstep caller could be trying to enter your home under false pretences or the ‘quick job’ could turn into a long and expensive process.

Solve it: Be wary. If someone has turned up unexpectedly, don’t let them into your house. Always request and check a caller’s identification before speaking to them. If a doorstep seller refuses to leave, dial 999 and ask for the police.
Club60, which meets at the **All Souls Clubhouse, Cleveland Street, W1**, opens its doors five days a week to Westminster’s older residents aged 60 and over.

Acting Club60 Coordinator, Karen Honeysett explains why the club is so important. “If it wasn’t for the centre, some people would spend the day at home alone. However, here they are able to meet other people, participate in social activities and receive a fresh, healthy meal every day.”

The centre, partly funded by Westminster City Council, is open Monday to Friday, 10am–4pm. The club provides keep fit classes, arts and crafts, film viewings, shopping trips and days out. However, the highlight of the day is a hot meal which is available to both club members and non members for a small charge. Every Wednesday a special three-course meal is served which is very popular with visitors.

Karen is looking forward to the summer so the group can visit more places. “Our members really enjoy days out. Last year we went to Cambridge, Kew Gardens and St Albans, and we hope to make more trips this summer once the weather warms up a bit!”

Members speak very highly of their experience at Club60. Kathleen Wenn comes to the club every day for her lunch. “It’s first class every time. The food is lovely and I go away very happy,” Kathleen.

Stanley Hooper has been coming to Club 60 for around six months. He says, “I enjoy coming here. I get to meet lots of different people and I’d miss it if I couldn’t come.”

For more information on Club60 please phone Karen Honeysett, Acting Coordinator, on 020 7255 9756.

For details of other groups and social activities available in Westminster call Senior Passport on 020 7641 1444.
Want to find out what’s happening around Westminster? Senior Passport holds a bank of online information about organisations, clubs and classes for Westminster’s older residents.

Search on the website www.westminster.gov.uk/weldis or phone 020 7641 1444. We’ve picked out two of the listings which appeared when we searched for ‘clubs for older people’ on the online database.

**St. Saviours Thursday Club**
St Saviours Thursday Club, St. Georges Square, Lupus Street, Pimlico, London, SW1V 3QW
Tel: 020 7821 1973

Meets every Thursday 2pm – 4pm. Tea, bingo, talks and other activities are provided. Outings are also arranged. New members welcome. Membership by application.

**Positive Age Centre**
Positive Age Centre, Dalgarno Way London, W10 5JN
Tel: 020 8960 4853

Open Monday – Thursday for over 50s, with a daily programme of classes, including singing, art, mosaics, philosophy, world theatre, art history, Tai Chi, line dancing and walking. Cost is £1.50 a class.

Tea and coffee provided.

**Carers Week**
Carers Week will run from the 9th to 15th of June, and is organised by 10 charities who support the UK’s six million carers. There are lots of exciting events running during Carers Week, which you can find out about by phoning 0845 241 2582 or visiting www.carersweek.org

**Westminster Senior Citizens Forum**
The Reception Room, Westminster Council House, 37-113 Marylebone Road, NW1 5PT

Public meetings on: Wednesday 2nd July, Wednesday 17th September, Wednesday 12th November 2pm - 4pm

For further information please phone Isobel Hunter on 0207 636 4175
Senior Passport

020 7641 1444

Call us for information on everything from parking and recycling to leisure classes and libraries. We can put you in touch with the right people to get the services you want.

Your one number for council information and advice