

## Local collaborations bringing music into day centres

Two day centres have brought music into their centres in different ways.

- The Ladywell Day Centre in Lewisham, for older people living with dementia and adults living with profound learning disabilities and complex physical needs.
- The Devonshire Dementia Day Centre in Kingston-upon-Thames.

### What the research says about the impact of music

Research has found that participation in musical activities is beneficial for cognitive functioning and behaviour. The benefits for people living with dementia are both physiological and psychological.

- Listening to music, playing music, dancing and music and movement can improve cognition and depressive symptoms in older people with mild cognitive impairment or dementia [1]. Music therapy (for 6-16 weeks) has reduced depression in people living with dementia [2]. *(Physiological and cognitive impact)*
- Music helps to balance blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate, and hormone levels [3, 4]. *(Physiological impact)*
- Music helps to reduce mood fluctuations, depression, and behaviours such as agitation and aggression [5-7]. *(Behavioural and psychological impact)*
- Music improves communication skills, quality of life, wellbeing, memory, self-awareness, and environmental awareness (the ability to distinguish between the surroundings and moments of the day) and pain management.[3, 8, 9] It can enhance language skills, verbal and non-verbal expressions, social activity and communication, raising cognitive levels and self-awareness [5, 10]. *(Cognitive impact)*.
- Music also supports emotional wellbeing, engaging attention (reducing apathy) and improving self-esteem and communication, all of which improves behaviour that is caused by poor emotional wellbeing [11]. *(Psychological impact - emotional wellbeing)*
- Dance can benefit older people's health and wellbeing: physical, mental, and social wellbeing [12], physical function, mobility, and endurance [13]. Dance is very adaptable to different abilities [14]. It is popular across different backgrounds and cultures [15]. It does not require expensive equipment [15].

### Musical performances

A staff member of the Ladywell Dementia Day Centre contacted a community jazz band inviting the musicians to use day centre space, in the dementia area, for weekly practice. This meant that day centre attenders benefited from free live music.

## Case studies and inspiration: Outreach, involving and bringing in the community, and local partnership working

The BigHeart Band, a group of volunteers who sing in care homes, visits the Devonshire Dementia Care Home and Day Centre on a bimonthly basis, giving performances for residents and 'day guests'.

### **Music and movement**

Professional networking led to the Ladywell Day Centre providing space for music and movement sessions run by an arts organisation. Entelechy Arts' 'Ambient Jam' sessions are for people with profound learning and physical disabilities. They agreed with the day centre to hold the sessions there which enabled the people attending it (who live with dementia or profound learning disabilities and complex physical needs) to have free access to these therapeutic activities. This collaboration benefited the day centre, its clients, and the arts organisation.

### **Music therapy**

[Nordoff Robbins](#) is a music therapy charity that uses music to enrich the lives of people with life-limiting illnesses, disabilities or feelings of isolation. It heard about the Ladywell Day Centre and offered to provide music therapy for one day a week, for a year, free of charge.

The professional music therapist draws out people's abilities and successfully engages them in music. One older man with dementia became actively involved in drumming sessions and positively engaged with the moment; he was usually quiet and did not initiate conversation or other activities.

Working closely with the therapist in practice has enabled a transfer of skills. Staff now apply principles used in these sessions at other times which has led to increased positive engagement.

## **Bringing the community into day centres: local theatre group and secondary school performances as entertainment**

Merton and Morden Guild attenders benefit from live theatre and musical performances. This enables them to enjoy the arts and gives them conversation material to take home ('[fresh news](#)' [16]).

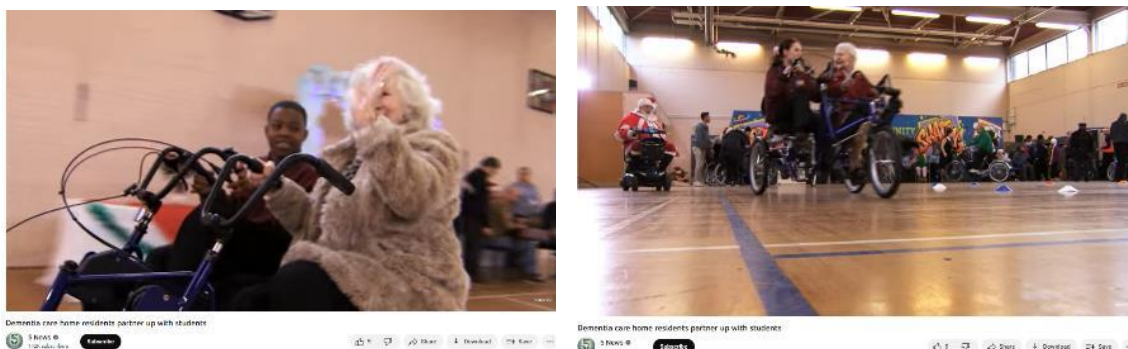
- A local street opera and theatre group, [Baseless Fabric](#), performs for attenders, and does dress rehearsals (e.g. Madame Butterfly)
- A local theatre, [The Colour House](#), brings performances to attenders (e.g. pantomimes)
- A local secondary school, [Wimbledon High School](#), visits to do dress rehearsals with an audience for their big shows.

## **Introducing cycling for day centre clients. Adapted bikes, storage and intergenerational support all made possible through local collaborations.**

The Ladywell Day Centre's long-term partnership with Wheels for Wellbeing has led to the introduction of inclusive cycling and storage provision for these bikes. Adapted bicycles are used by day service clients who are living with dementia, in a large gymnasium within the day centre and in the neighbouring park, enabling access to nature.

Another partnership involves students of the Abbey Manor Pupil Referral Unit, who were already volunteering with Wheels for Wellbeing to repair these bikes. The dementia day centre's manager gave students information about dementia. A small number were then selected to support clients during bike-riding sessions, with supervision. This intergenerational work benefits both groups who were experiencing marginalisation within society: the older people with dementia, some of whom may not have had regular contact with young people, and students who benefit from feeling trusted and from enjoyable contact with older people during a fun activity.

This work was highlighted in a [news report by Channel 5 news \(see video\)](#) (which incorrectly states it is a care home rather than a day centre). The news report shows bicycles in use, interviews two young people, an older person and the day centre manager.



*Still images taken from the news report video.*

### **Considerations for day centres developing similar programmes:**

Older people without dementia or with less advanced dementia attending day centres may like to be involved with bicycle maintenance. This could give them a great opportunity to share their knowledge and reinforce their sense of purpose and self-esteem.

## Outreach to support and include older women members of a local Mosque

Merton and Morden Guild (M&MG), a voluntary sector activity day centre in the London Borough of Merton, made links with its local Mosque and invited its older women to a Platinum Jubilee afternoon tea with a view to opening up some local opportunities for them and enabling existing members to meet new people.

Although M&MG is fairly multi-cultural, there is very low uptake by Mosque members despite informal links already being in place. Some M&MG attenders had been on a tour of the Mosque and had also been invited to attend Eid celebrations a few years previously. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Mosque members gave M&MG donations for attenders (e.g. chocolates) who were unable to get out and about.

The invitation to the afternoon tea was initiated after chatting with a younger Mosque member during a tour, and then phone calls. The younger Mosque women wanted the older women to be less fearful of mixing in the local community and to meet people. They were worried that the older women did not have access to exercise classes, were keen for them to have better access to local facilities and were encouraging them to go beyond the Mosque environment.

M&MG visited the Mosque to speak with the older women to enable the women to meet some of the day centre staff in a familiar setting. During this visit they were invited to this special afternoon tea.

This initiative introduced the older women to M&MG, its facilities, and members, with a view to both sides learning about and getting to know each other and having fun together. The Mosque contact provided some guidance to ensure dietary requirements were met.

### What the research says about Mosques and their older members

Research by the Muslim Council of Britain and the University of Cambridge found that Mosques and their community centres tended to give low priority to engaging with and offering facilities to their older members.[17]

Two people interviewed for the study highlighted the role of Mosques in the health and care needs of older Muslims and Muslims at end of life.

- *“Our mosque is sometimes almost like a day centre. (...) Elderly people spend a lot of time in the mosque conversing with each other. There is a social environment here in different languages. Many come in the morning and leave in the evening.”* (Mosque director, East London).
- *“We have daily tajweed classes for the elderly, but we are not doing enough. Our focus is on the youth, but we must start something for the elderly – coffee mornings . . . this is a hidden problem, our elderly are invisible.”* (Mosque Iman, South of England).

## **Partnership working with the National Citizen Service leading to transformation of an unused locker room in a day centre into a sensory room, fundraising for this and storytelling workshops.**

**A new sensory room was decorated in partnership with the National Citizen Service.**

Central Hill Day Services, a local authority run day centre for people with moderate to advanced dementia in Lambeth, partnered with [The National Citizen Service](#), a voluntary personal and social development programme for 15–17-year-olds in England and Northern Ireland, funded largely by money from the UK Government. This resulted in the transformation of an unused locker room into a sensory room, fundraising for this and storytelling workshops. This formed part of the young people's social action (volunteering and campaigning) programme.

### **Why we got involved with NCS and what it involved**

The aim was to offer young people an opportunity to showcase their skills and abilities whilst bringing something positive to the people who use our service: a partnership. The partnership was first formed 2014. Visits took place between mid-July and mid-August 2018.

The place becomes animated when young people are around which gives off a positive vibe, and only adds to a client having a good day. Each group of young people working with us gets a short informative insight into Dementia and the effects it can have on people living with it and their families and friends.

There were six visits to the day centre by NCS young people. The first two visits involved life storytelling workshops with clients to get to know our clients and they them. The young people then went away to design and put together their ideas for the agreed Sensory Room and for a final Fun Day which they presented and were agreed in visits 3 and 4. They informed us they had started to fund raise to cover the costs of the paint and decorations. For Visit 5, the young people brought paint, decorations, sensory items. They decorated the locker room – which had been painted white in preparation. Visit 6 was for the 'fun day' which they organised and where the sensory room was shown off. The group decided to surprise us with an original song and rapping. Everyone was thrilled to watch and take part.

### **Resources needed**

- Fundraising was undertaken to cover costs. NCS young people organised a GoFundMe page, stating that leftover funds would be donated to the day centre. £54.33 was raised in total.
- Staffing: The manager x 3 hours. 1 Senior x 2 hours
- Space for young people to gather to have a break.
- Refreshments for young people

## **Case studies and inspiration: Outreach, involving and bringing in the community, and local partnership working**

- Expertise in sensory spaces: The day centre manager had worked in and created sensory spaces previously. Her background is in supporting disabled people, particularly those with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

### **Outcomes**

Feedback from NCS: 'Once again, thank you for your commitment towards helping the young people in your community to interact with those they wouldn't normally, and allowing them to develop the many skills they have gained on the programme.'

The room is a lovely space. Value-wise, it is an asset for Central Hill. The decoration was beautifully done and it remains a safe space for people who find they need some quiet time. It can be adapted to hold confidential meetings with carers and social workers, and it provides a pleasant, secluded place for clients to receive minor medical procedures, such as injections, by the visiting district nurse.

The room is used by staff if they need a quiet moment. Staff also use it for meetings with clients' family as it is less formal than an office. Our clients enjoy using the room for conversations (mood lights and aroma only, not sound).

One to one support is offered to people who may need time alone: here we use the projector/fibre optic/music/sounds/smells/touch, such as hand massage and foot spas depending on their preferences and communication preferences.

### **The process**

NCS are professional and organised. They make each project with them seamless. They are great communicators and hold your hand every step of the way. They give relevant information which supports us and the process of partnership working. We make ourselves available. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic all partnership worked stopped however we will willingly restart this partnership.

### **What are multisensory environments, who could benefit from them and what is the research evidence for them?**

Multisensory Stimulation (MSS) involves using equipment (e.g. tactile objects, lights, music and smells) to stimulate the five primary senses but without placing intellectual demands on individuals. Research has found that Multisensory Stimulation significantly improves functional performance in people living with moderate-to-severe dementia. It promotes wellbeing, reduces some agitated behaviours and improves mood, functional behaviour and social interaction.[18]

Guidelines produced by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, which suggest that multi-sensory training should be provided to staff supporting people with moderate to severe dementia and communication difficulties. These are evidence-based recommendations developed by independent committees, including professionals and lay members, and

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consulted on by stakeholders. See [NG97: Dementia: assessment, management and support for people living with dementia and their carers NICE guideline](#).

[Information about understanding sensory loss in dementia care, including a 15 minute introductory video](#), can be found on the Social Care Institute for Excellence's website. The website also offers a free '[Dementia awareness e-learning course](#)'

A sensory room in a day centre could be a community resource for, for example, care homes, local schools, youth groups, disability support groups, pre-school children, and people with dementia living in the community.

### Photos of the locker and reminiscence room



Left: The locker room before the transformation

Right: Completed paintwork with the young people who decorated



The new sensory room - ready to use, complete with soft lighting, fibre optic machine and bubble tube. Older adults prefer these upright supportive chairs. The room is too small to accommodate beds/hoists, but there are recliners.

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## Partnership with NHS adult mental health service to transform a storage room into a reminiscence room for day centre clients

### Background

- Central Hill Day Service is for older adults living with moderate to severe dementia. It is an in-house service run by Lambeth Council.
- We wanted a place where people could sit among furniture and household items and ornaments from past times. We wanted to give people visible links to their younger years to evoke memories and conversation and to give reassurance through familiarity.
- It is a quiet room dressed up like a family living/dining room. The walls have been wallpapered to complete the illusion. The quietness of the room appears to aid anxiety, taking the usual day centre noises away, and is somewhere staff can concentrate on the individual if they are having an episode of anxiety or upset.
- Senior management agreed to offer enough funding to pay South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation (SLAM) for labour and to buy materials such as wallpaper, decorating items and hardware, for the job of transforming the storage space into a living space. All the collectables came out of Central Hill's budget. These were bought at local second-hand shops and on eBay.

### Aims

The day centre's target service users had recently changed from older people to older people with moderate to severe dementia. The storage room was being used inefficiently and had potential to be a further, peaceful room that service users could enjoy as part of their day to provide them with a better day centre experience or to unwind and relax.

### What was done

The day centre worked with [South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation](#) on a project to transform a storage room at the day centre into a reminiscence room. As part of their recovery, users of SLAM adult mental health services were employed, (i.e. paid) through SLAM, to work at Central Hill to put up wallpaper, a picture rail, treat damp above windows, paint above the windows and picture rails and fix ceiling kites to the walls to create a false ceiling.

We had to clear the storage area by placing needed items around the centre and having unwanted items taken away. There was also a huge amount of archiving to do before we got the space empty.

As the room was being prepared to be decorated, the day centre manager asked her facilities officer (with a fleet van) to take her round all the local second-hand shops. They chose wallpaper and bought all the items needed to put it up. A false fireplace was fitted with fairy

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lights for effect. The manager was constantly thinking of how the pieces she bought fit together to create a living room of enough interesting detail for people. There was an unused piano in the room which became part of the living room. It was tuned and is ready for any piano players to 'have a tinkle'. People enjoy the live piano playing.

The work took place between November 2019 to December 2019 varying in days each week and people working on the day.

### Resources needed

- **Staffing:** SLAM workers from Re-Cover, a man with a van, manager (project planner).
- **Training:** People came from SLAM with their own work experience and knowledge. They were stretched as the project was unusual and presented a few posers such as how to wallpaper a brick wall and create the *illusion* of a room.
- **Space:** When two centres became one, two sets of furniture and office items were stored at Central Hill. The only place to put it all, was an unused room at the rear of the building. A lot of work went into clearing the space in a timely manner for the creation of the reminiscence room.
- **Decoration costs** (involving mental health service users): Labour £1,000 (SLAM costs). Decoration materials £200. (Total £1,200).
- **Manager:** I was able to use my time within working hours and I did do some purchases outside of my working hours online from sites, such as eBay. I saw this room as part of the development of our service and we had full support from line managers to get the result we did.
- **Transport.** Our Facilities Officer, who is supervised by me, and who has a fleet van drove us both around several second-hand shops. This was not too time consuming as we found quite a few shops in our local area.
- **Payment card.** I am the only Lambeth card holder in our service to purchase such items. Other staff would have had to paying out and claim back expenses.
- **Staff availability.** As a face-to-face service, I and the Facilities Officer were the only ones who were not offering direct support which freed us up to do the above.
- **Vision.** Overall, it was my vision and ability to mentally tie all the elements in and the support of the Facilities Officer which brought the room together. The team saw all the things we bought as just random items piled up in a chaotic looking room until the room was dressed. It wasn't until they saw the results that they finally understood the vision.
- **Out of hours time:** Both the Facilities officer and I worked late to dress the room for the reveal to the staff and more importantly the clients who use our service the next day.

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- **Reminiscence room furniture and paraphernalia costs:** £350, the biggest purchase was a working 1940s radio (see video – link below).
- **Funding:** Lambeth Council paid for this. A Purchase Order was created to pay SLAM for their labour. Workers were paid in accordance with their financial limitations such as benefits through SLAM.

### Impact / outcomes

- We have not yet formally gathered feedback as the room is still very new. However, every family member, social worker etc who visits the room instantly starts identifying and pointing at things they remember from their childhood which sparks conversation.
- Clients attending Central Hill and their families benefit when the space is used for reviews and meetings. It is a pleasant place for a meeting. We offer potential new referrals and their family/carer to join us for lunch in this room.
- It was a cheap space to construct. Labour and gathering items took time.
- Satisfaction for those working on the transformation as demonstrated by an email from the SLAM contact:

Dear Andy,  
Please find attached the invoice for decorating your reminiscent room. Thank you for giving the team an inspiring project we all enjoyed it, and the chaps look forward to coming to have a look. A very happy Christmas to you all at the centre BW Jane, SLAM

- **Future plans:** We are seriously considering using this space for people on the estate in which the day centre is located. We want to start either a breakfast club or a luncheon club for older adults on the estate who may have become isolated and need some social interaction and can have hot fresh food when they visit.

### The process

The process was straightforward once the idea took form. Only clearing the space was laborious. Working in harmony with SLAM workers was important. Communicating clearly what exactly what was being asked of them and making sure they understood meant they could be left to get on with the work with minimum oversight.

### Tips for others considering something similar:

- Make the space functional as well as interesting not just a room to visit to look at, like a museum. Furniture and items are to be *used*. Having a functional, useful room is more likely to result in service users feeling like they are a valuable part of the group, not just 'service users' or 'patients'.

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- Purchase items from across the decades not just from one era (i.e. not all from the 1950s). People with dementia are at various stages of their regressive memory and will identify with different years. Also, their ages may range from 60 to over 100 meaning these years are likely to cover several decades,
- Carry the theme through the whole room/s.
- Go to local second-hand shops rather than vintage fairs where things are too costly to buy. Look on eBay for items being sold privately; we got some lovely items this way.
- This type of initiative is a great way to put partnership working in to practice, and helps people to learn about other groups of people. Try to link with services, such as SLAM, to do work for you. It is mutually beneficial. I bumped into one of the workers recently (2023) and he said he *'loved the work. It was challenging and he still thinks about it - how they overcame the challenges and the final result'*.

### Reflections:

- It might have been a good idea to have the people who would use the service choose wallpaper and furniture as their views may not be the same as a manager's and facilities officer's. However, this would have been very difficult logistically.
- Service users and family members might have items or furniture they would like to contribute to the room. These could be personally relevant to individuals (but not precious) or to an era. Involving service users and family members would be a good opportunity to attempt to co-produce something that they will all use.
- Buying furniture and other items and thinking how to make a room attractive and relevant for service users is time consuming and labour intensive. Not all services will have the time/workforce to be able to do this.

### Relevance to policy and/or social care or NHS initiatives:

- Improved quality of life and wellbeing for people who need care and support and carers
- Reduced social isolation and loneliness (future plans)

### Sustainability

- **Future funding plans/ideas:** As mentioned we want to open this space to older people on the estate who may feel lonely, isolated. As well as being a lovely space to visit they can possibly create friendships. They can have a hot meal and we can look out for any safeguarding issues we observe/hear and alert our front door service.
- **All the items are removable** so when we eventually move, money has not been wasted.
- At some point, consideration will need to be given to how the room and resources in it will need to be **changed to cater for future members** as generational needs change.

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**Photos of the storage room and reminiscence room (before and after)**



*The storage room (before)*



*The reminiscence room (after)*



**Video of the reminiscence room (VLC media file - double click to open):**



20191207\_194130.m  
p4

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## A local partnership led to use of a day centre kitchen for training adults with learning disabilities

Ignition embarked on a partnership with Lewisham Council and Lewisham Mencap that aimed to help learning disabled residents of the borough into paid work. They are a local social enterprise that employs and trains local people with learning disabilities and pays the London Living Wage)

Ignition Ice is one of Ignition's business initiatives.<sup>i</sup> Ignition creates training opportunities, secures qualifications required for employment, and creates enterprises such as Ignition Ice which will create jobs and make great products. Ignition Ice uses Ladywell Day Centre's kitchen as a base to train people with learning disabilities to work. Ice cream in a range of gourmet flavours was launched in summer 2022.<sup>ii iii iv</sup>

Employment is one of the three things contributing to health and happy lives for people with learning disabilities (alongside wellbeing and independence). Only 7.7% of service users with a learning disability who receive long term support are in paid employment (ASCOF 2019/20). Nationally, 94% of people with learning disabilities are unemployed.

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<sup>i</sup> Another is Ignition Brewery.

<sup>ii</sup> See announcement on Lewisham LA's website [Using ice cream to help residents with learning disabilities into work](#)

<sup>iii</sup> See [Proposal for a Co-productive Approach to the Modernisation of Adult Learning Disability Day Opportunities](#), Lewisham Mayor and Cabinet meeting, 8 December 2021

<sup>iv</sup> See News from Crystal Palace article [Ignition brewery securing employment opportunities for residents with disabilities \(including a 2022 lift-off for an ice cream enterprise\)](#), 22 December 2021

## Introducing technology in a day centre (iPads and static cycling)

After a self-assessment, Central Hill Day Service in Lambeth, improved its offer for service users who live with dementia by introducing technology such as iPads and static cycling with virtual scenery.

### iPads

Service users are individually taught how to find music they remember and wish to listen to. Some choose to sing along or dance to the music. The iPads are linked to a speaker by Bluetooth. Using 'Google Earth', people can revisit places they have lived. This starts discussion and rekindles memories. The next step will be to use Facetime or Skype to enable carers to become involved.

### Static cycling with virtual scenery and sound (<https://motitech.co/>)

Using a specially adapted static exercise bike and a monitor, people can 'virtually' cycle along the streets they remember, beautiful scenery or favourite holiday destinations whilst keeping fit.

Using special software in combination with an adapted bike allows people to pedal – with feet or hands – through destinations such as the Peak District or the South Downs in the UK, Niagara Falls in Canada, or even through the town in which they were raised. They can do this while listening to their favourite songs or immersed in ambient sound.

Motiview software (which originates in Norway and requires a license) is used with these **Motitech bikes**. Motitech ensures there is a video of the license holder's local area, made in cooperation with the user site.

Central Hill's service users have taken part in a global competition, and events such as **Road Worlds for Seniors**, which takes place in autumn each year.

Service users enjoy the bikes so much that they now sign up to compete against each other. Cumulative mileage for all service users is recorded. In the first two months of having the bikes, service users had cycled around 800 miles collectively.

Motitech static bikes were sourced from the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ASASS) and Sport England.

## Use of day centre building by local health and social care professionals

A large local authority (LA) operated Dementia Day Centre in south London was being underused because of its mandatory closure to clients during the earlier part of the Covid pandemic. The LA closed its offices and introduced hybrid, or flexible, working. During this period, various LA employed social care staff started to use the day centre building. Opening up the use of the building has introduced health and social care professionals and borough residents to the existence of the day centre.

Some staff started to collect their PPE supplies from the building (and continue to do so) which heightened awareness of the day centre among these professionals.

The enablement service was relocated from the hospital to the day centre. Later, the 'discharge to assess' social workers<sup>v</sup> were also relocated there as they needed to be connected with the enablement team. These teams are based in the main office and main dining hall. The day centre's training room is used by LA occupational therapists (OTs), who are part of the enablement team, to run moving and handling training sessions.

The Falls Clinic, run by the falls OTs, now takes place at the day centre. This started during the pandemic when falls OTs delivered all their virtual training sessions from the day centre. Since the building has re-opened, the team has started to bring older people in to do their exercise programmes in the sports hall.

Social workers on the LA's single-point-of-access gateway use the day centre as a base to interview people from the local area and other parts of Lewisham. This is both for safety and accessibility reasons. There are both good public transport links and car parking.

A continuing, but acknowledged, challenge extended use of the centre is the building's poor wi-fi connection. Managers hope that the building's broadening usage would lead to approval of an improved internet connection which would, in turn, enable creativity around use of technology with day centre clients.

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<sup>v</sup> See [Quick guide: discharge to assess: transforming urgent and emergency care services in England](#), Department of Health, Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and NHS England NHS England Publications Gateway Reference 05871



## **Annual International Day for Older Persons activities and partnership with supermarkets**

Merton and Morden Guild, in partnership with the local authority and the NHS is involved in celebrations for the International Day of Older Persons – usually known as ‘Older People’s Day’ – which is on 1st October every year. Celebrations take place in the nearby Sainsbury’s Savacentre Superstore. M&MG organises demonstrations by people who attend its exercise classes. Music is played. Other organisations are also involved (e.g. Age UK). The NHS provides blood pressure testing amongst other things.

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**Case studies and inspiration: Outreach, involving and bringing in the community,  
and local partnership working**

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