

1 June 2009

Age Concern Camden launch befriending project for older people with dementia

Age Concern Camden today launched the new Dementia Befriending Project at Camden Town Hall, with experts from the field discussing the ways in which the project will benefit older people with memory problems.

The Dementia Befriending Project will be an important addition to Age Concern Camden's services for people with dementia, by engaging with isolated older people in Camden, providing social support and community involvement. The project was developed after staff and volunteers on the Dementia Advocacy project identified that a befriending service could be of real benefit to older people with dementia.

Melanie Dixon, Dementia Befriending Co-ordinator, said 'Many people with dementia can become socially isolated, and find it difficult to keep up their hobbies and interests. Our volunteer befrienders are trained to work with people with dementia, and can assist people to remain active and engage with their community'.

Kaya Gibson, a volunteer on the project, said "I'm volunteering because people with dementia often get forgotten, so it's important to help them to engage with their community. My great aunt had dementia and I want to use the experience to befriend someone. The training I got on the Dementia Befriending Project really helped me to understand what dementia is and how best to help".

A befriender can provide regular contact with an individual in order to encourage them and support them in enjoying life more fully, through providing social support and company; help to keep up skills and hobbies, assistance in remaining active and involved in the community; and signposting to other services when needed.

Both the Dementia Befriending Service and the Dementia Advocacy Service are in need of volunteers for the projects. To find out more about the projects or volunteering for Age Concern Camden, please call 020 7837 3777.

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Notes for editors:

Age Concern Camden offers a range of services and projects to support, inform, advise and inspire older people in Camden. These include Advice and Support, 3 Resource Centres, Advocacy Service, 2 Charity Shops, Computer Training, Counselling Service, Direct Payments Support, Ethnic Community Services, Good Neighbours Scheme, Home Service, Opening Doors LGBT Project, Nail Care Service, Pensions Education Project, Shopping Service, Employment Advice Project, Talking Therapies, Dementia Advocacy and Dementia Befriending. We have a team of 150 volunteers who assist in carrying out these services.

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