



# The **MASE** Monthly Newsletter

## April 2016

Winners of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service



### April Showers

With Easter now behind us, and longer days and lighter nights ahead of us, we are all looking forward to some sunshine and brighter days, when everyone appears to be so much happier.

April is a special time of year, the first full month of spring, when the flowers start coming up, in particular the daisies. Whatever you decide to do in April, make it a good day, and regardless of where you are and who you're with, remember the **April Showers**, which although can be a nuisance, also help the May flowers to come through.

April's birth flower is the daisy and sweet pea. The birthstone for April is the diamond which symbolizes innocence.



### Gardening and Dementia



Currently, 850,000 people in Britain are thought to suffer from dementia – a severe and life-changing condition which affects their ability to cope with everyday activities and relationships. Dementia poses a huge challenge to Carers, with many people encountering long delays in getting an accurate diagnosis and many face difficulties accessing support.

Learning from what we do, capturing evidence, sharing ideas and finding better ways to help change lives through gardening, is a good way for both Carers and their cared for to spend time together, whilst at the same time enjoying the fresh air, and more importantly the sunshine.

Gardening is a meaningful activity, helping individuals to be active, capable and useful. The productive nature of gardening, be it planting beautiful flowers, or just simply keeping the garden tidy, offers the opportunity to feel a sense of accomplishment and success, something that is important to help maximise the benefits of meaningful activity for people with dementia.



Such benefits include enhanced mental state (including reduced depression), reduced behavioural problems and improved quality of life. Gardening facilitates health & well-being through belonging, a term defined as the interpersonal connection of people to each other as they engage in occupation. This sense of belonging may help to combat the feelings of abandonment and isolation identified as central to the experience of people with dementia.

It is suggested that structured gardening may have a positive impact on the well-being, cognition and mood of people with dementia. Of particular interest is the relationship between the well-being of participants and their cognition, as results from suggest that wellbeing can be maintained despite the presence of a cognitive deterioration.

So why not try and spend some quality time in your gardens over the coming months. Make the most of the fresh air, plant up your pots, and then sit back with a cup of tea and take in all the beautiful colours in your flower beds and just **RELAX!!**



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Alzheimer's Society Dementia Helpline 0300 222 1122 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and Saturday and Sunday 10am - 4pm.

## Adaptive Clothing - A huge help to Carers

Being able to dress yourself goes a long way to helping older people maintain their valuable independence and self-esteem. Yet poor eyesight, joint stiffness, and conditions such as arthritis, Parkinson's Disease and dementia, can mean that older people may struggle with buttons and zips. This is where adaptive clothing can help.

The need for help with such intimate and personal daily activities, such as bathing and dressing can often undermine someone's dignity, whether the care is provided by a close relative or by a stranger. Helping a person to stay in control will help to avoid feelings of frustration and helplessness. One way of achieving this is to invest in specially adapted clothing, which can make dressing easier for both the individual and their Carer/s.

### What is adaptive clothing?

Adaptive clothing is designed to make dressing and undressing easier for people who have some difficulty managing closures, such as buttons and zippers. Some clothing is designed specifically to help carers dress people with severe disabilities, or who use wheelchairs, or are bed-bound. Other adaptive clothing is simply designed for ease of use.

Garments are typically made of comfortable, sometimes stretchy, materials and feature elasticated waists and flat seams to reduce friction. Adaptive clothing is usually designed to look just like normal clothing, but with easier access to press studs and Velcro fastenings. Some clothing is extra roomy, so that incontinence pads can be easily changed, and other garments may have a longer rise in the back for those sitting in wheelchairs.

### Types of adaptive clothing

**Front opening clothing:** Designed with extra wide armholes and bigger buttons, popper fasteners, or even magnetic closures, adaptive front opening blouses, dresses and shirts make getting in and out of your clothes just that little bit easier.

**Therapeutic socks:** People with diabetes, arthritis or painful toes and feet can benefit from extra stretchy, soft and comfortable therapeutic socks.

**Towelling shower robes:** Designed to slip over the head easily after a bath or shower, these robes help to maintain dignity, as there is no chance of them slipping down like a normal bath towel.

**Incontinence swimwear:** With waterproof linings and adjustable waist and leg openings, specially designed ladies and men's swimwear allows active older people the chance to continue swimming and to feel secure.

**Open back clothing:** Generally useful for people who are dressed by carers, open back clothing such as blouses, shirts, and nightwear, allows the garment to be put on frontwards, so there is no need to lift arms or twist while dressing. These items are therefore of particular use to people who have limited mobility, or who have conditions such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, or who have had a stroke. Because the fastenings of open back clothing are tricky to manage, these garments can help reduce any inappropriate undressing which sometimes occurs in people with vascular dementia.

**Side zip clothing:** Clothes with side zip openings, such as trousers, skirts and tracksuits, can help older people who may have limited mobility and strength due to arthritis, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, as well as those who have incontinence. These clothes usually have long zips (with easy to grip tags) on both sides, so there is a much bigger space for stiff legs when dressing and undressing and there's no need to bend or be handled as much when dressing and undressing. Incontinence aids can also be easily changed.

**Where to buy adaptive clothing :** Online retailers of adaptive clothing, such as [www.adaptawear.com](http://www.adaptawear.com) and [www.designedtocare.co.uk](http://www.designedtocare.co.uk), help customers to get VAT relief by asking questions at the checkout.

If you have a computer please take a look at our website which covers all MASE activities: [www.themasegroup.com](http://www.themasegroup.com)

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