



MASE Monthly Newsletter



Proud Recipients of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

April 2021



Do April showers bring May flowers? The short answer is yes! As winter draws to a close, the days begin to warm up and become longer.

The precipitation that falls comes as rain instead of snow or ice. Thank goodness! April rains do start the seasonal process of renewal and growth. It washes nutrients deeper into the soil. There are more hours of sun and this triggers the genetic code within the plants and animals. This period of new growth and regrowth begins.

So Carers let's stay positive and hope that after the Spring there will be hope for a better Summer for us all. So many of you have gone through difficult times, and we applaud the way you have dealt with the Lockdown.

We are hoping to bring you some good news in our June Newsletter and there is a chance that there is light at the end of the tunnel, and that we will be able to re-open some of our groups again. We cannot wait to see you all again and for us to be able to restart our lives with laughter and friendship.

Food for thought : Carers are you entitled to a Refund on Your Council Tax Bills?



There are two ways of qualifying for a 25% reduction in Council Tax. Those people who are living with a partner who has a diagnosis of a dementia, can apply for a reduction because the other person is classified as being 'severely mentally impaired' for council tax purposes. Anyone living on their own is also entitled to make an application for a 25% reduction. This is called a 'single person discount'.

The full Council Tax Bill assumes that there are two adults living in a dwelling. Many Carers forget about their Council Tax Bills and continue paying if their partner has passed away. If only **ONE** adult lives in a dwelling, which is their main home, the Council Tax Bill will be reduced by 25% .

Council tax is the cornerstone of every month's utility bill review, and often the bane of many people's existence. But after a partner dies, or if you go into hospital for a short time before you die, you will be eligible for a council tax reduction. If you go into residential care – just to try it out, or for respite care from an illness or fall – you are liable for a reduction in council tax for up to 13 weeks. [Go to the Council Tax Reduction page on GOV.uk to start the process.](#)

If over time a house becomes unoccupied, due to a death or an owner moving into residential care, then the property will be exempt from council tax until someone new moves in. The property still remains exempt from council tax after the probate process kicks off. If the home remains empty and it has not been sold, it may be exempt from council tax for a further six months, or until someone new moves in.



Care Services Directory 2021

The new edition of this Directory is now out and can be viewed and downloaded via the link below;

<https://www.carechoices.co.uk/publication/stoke-on-trent-care-services-directory/>

This is an excellent Directory and is designed to help you with information to support your care needs, including:

- Support to remain independent
- Specialist care services including home care
- Finding residential care
- Paying for Care

It also contains lots of good information on a variety of subjects which you will find very interesting. As soon as the MASE Groups restart there will be hard copies of the Directories available for you.

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

Interesting facts on eating and drinking for a person with dementia



Think back to the last time you got fish and chips from the chip shop. What can you remember about it? Do you remember the smell of the fryer, the heat radiating from the wrapped food; or perhaps the texture of a hot, freshly fried chip in your mouth? Do you remember the smell of vinegar in your nose or how it stung your eyes? How we think about food is wrapped up in sensory information.

Our vision, smell, taste, touch and hearing all play an important role in the eating and drinking experience.

Unfortunately, many of our senses become less sensitive as we age. Take eyesight as an example. While many people are used to wearing glasses or contact lenses to compensate for being long or short-sighted, it is easy to forget that there are other changes that occur to our eyes as we age. This is further complicated if the older person has a disease which causes dementia, as structural changes in the brain can impact how well an individual can understand what their eyes are 'telling' them.

If a person with dementia has changes in the areas of their brain that help them make sense of what they see, they may find it difficult to recognise what is in front of them as food or drink. If they don't recognise the food in front of them, they may have to be prompted to realise that they are hungry and that it is time to eat. People with dementia may also find it difficult to tell if a plate or bowl has food in it if the food and the dishware do not strongly contrast against one another. This might mean that they eat only a small proportion of the food available to them, despite still feeling hungry. These are just two examples of how visual and cognitive changes can make it difficult for someone with dementia to eat or drink enough on day-to-day basis.

Contrasting the colour of the plate with the colour of the food being served can also support better nutrition and hydration. This is often to do with contrast, as it can be more difficult to make out the boundaries of mashed potatoes on a white plate than it would be to see the same pile of mashed potatoes against a red plate (for example). Remember, however, that the colour of the dishware is less important than is its ability to contrast with the person's most commonly eaten foods.

This principle can also be applied to drinks. It can be difficult to see water in a clear glass because of the transparency, but diluting juice or water with added sugar-free cordial often makes it easier for the person to see. Likewise having teacups and coffee cups that provide good contrast to the liquid usually served in them can be helpful for increasing visual awareness and recognition and ultimately increasing their consumption of vitally important liquids throughout the day.

Not everyone struggles to get enough to eat over the course of the day, some people may eat more as a result of changes to their short term memory. In addition, some people with more advanced dementia may not recognise when they are full and continue to eat. Though this is relatively uncommon, if you suspect that the person is overeating due to memory impairment, look at the visual 'clues' that are present in the environment which may prompt the individual to over-eat. For example, some people might open the fridge to find it stocked with several days' worth of meals, which may prompt them to eat again, even though they have just eaten.

Help in stopping unwanted direct mail

If someone you know has died, this organisation can help reduce the amount of direct mail being sent to them - by stopping painful daily reminders. Registering with this free service, the names and addresses of the deceased are removed from mailing lists, stopping most direct mail within as little as six weeks. www.thebereavementregister.org.uk

Senior moments!



If you have a computer please take a look at our website which covers all MASE activities: www.themasegroup.com

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