



# MASE Monthly Newsletter



Proud Recipients of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

December 2022



*Trustees and All Volunteers at the MASE send everyone sincere good wishes for Christmas and the New Year.*



Another month has flown by and we are heading once again towards the end of the year. This is the month when although many of us will be celebrating in our own way, it is a time to also remember our dear friends who have lost a loved one during the year. Please try to remember the people who are on their own at this special time of year. and give them a call to wish them at Christmas. Stay safe everyone and keep well during the Festive Season. You will all be getting your new Calendars and magnetic dates at each of the MASE Groups. **Merry Christmas everyone!**

## Tips for keeping safe during the Festive Season

### Look-a-like websites

As more and more high street retailers announce closures, online sales are climbing as increasing numbers of consumers are deciding to buy on the internet instead. Unfortunately, criminals know about the amount of money spent online and build fake websites to catch unsuspecting consumers. Many websites are built to look identical to the most famous and well-known brands in order to trick people into spending money, only to receive no goods after sending payment.

### Fake Delivery Notices

Due to the fact that a huge number of confirmation emails are sent to customers in December, fake companies will send their own, claiming that a refund is due or payment failed and it needs to be processed again.

Unfortunately, many people are so panicked that presents for the family won't arrive, they'll process a payment again, unaware it's a scam.

### Tax refund claims

The Guardian recently reported that thousands of students were targeted by a tax refund scam but the problem is much wider than that. People all over the UK receive similar emails, apparently from HMRC, stating they are due a tax refund. The emails request bank details for the funds to be deposited, however, instead of putting money into accounts the scammers take it out.

### Using a Taxi - always try to use someone you are familiar with

A lot of people travel over Christmas and taxi drivers are well aware of how desperate people are to get to their hotels or back home from train stations and airports, placing huge fees on their meters before the car has even moved.

Some drivers may also take significantly longer routes if it's obvious that their passengers don't know the local area. Drivers who are looking to exploit visitors may ask 'Is this the first time you have been to this city?' as a way of finding out whether they can get away with taking a longer route.

### Renew your old Hot Water Bottles

If you are using hot water bottles for a bit of extra warmth, please make sure you check the date of manufacture. It should be marked on the bottle somewhere. It is advisable to change your hot water bottles if they are older than three years, as over time the rubber will perish and can burst, causing dreadful burns. Always better to err on the side of caution and replace your hot water bottles regularly. Other than that there are some lovely pads that are filled with grain or beans; follow the instructions carefully and pop them in the microwave for them to heat up. This heat lasts for longer and most important of all they are **SAFE**.

## Some Christmas Trivia - Did you know.....

- The Christmas Tree in Trafalgar Square is donated to the people of London every year by the people of Oslo, Norway in thanks for you're their assistance during the second World War
- Jingle Bells was the first song sung by astronauts Tom Stafford and Wally Schirra in space, on 16 Dec 1965



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

## Suggestions for Carers at Christmas



### Think about food and drink

Try to follow your loved one's normal likes and dislikes when it comes to food and drink. If they have a smaller appetite, keep their portions small, and talk them through what's on their plate if that would help them. Check with them during the meal to see if they are managing, and discreetly offer help, if needed.

If the person enjoys an alcoholic drink, they should be free to enjoy one, but bear in mind that some alcohol can interfere with some medication or can be disorientating for a person with dementia. Have a conversation with your pharmacist or other health professional about medication if you're unsure, or perhaps think about offering them alcohol-free varieties of beer and wine.

### Avoid overstimulation

The noise and hubbub of a busy family Christmas can be overwhelming for a person with dementia, so try to avoid overstimulating them with sights and sounds.

If you can, reduce unnecessary noise like Christmas crackers and loud music, and limit competing noises – for example, turn off the TV if people are talking.

Children can be a great distraction and source of enjoyment, but you may need to monitor the amount of time the person with dementia spends with young visitors and look out for signs that they're becoming tired or that noise levels are getting difficult for them to tolerate.

Keep activities short, with a pause every 30-40 minutes, and if you can, set aside a quiet room where they can have some downtime. You can make an unfamiliar room welcoming by bringing one of the person's sofa cushions from their home, spraying a familiar scent or playing music they love.

### Keep to routines

People with dementia often benefit from knowing what's going to happen next, so it can be helpful to try to uphold some of their normal routines, even if they're not at home for Christmas.

Do they have meals at a set time? Or a cup of tea in bed every morning? Do they watch a favourite TV programme at the same time every day? Try to support these routines where you can.

### Please don't overdo things

Keep in mind what is manageable for the person with dementia. Allow your loved one to have a nap at lunchtime if they need to, and if they're going back to their home at the end of the day, don't leave it too late – try to take them home in daylight so they can see they're back in their familiar environment, rather than waiting until it gets dark when they may be more confused or disorientated.

### Remember to give yourself a break

Christmas can be a stressful time – perhaps you have expectations of previous family Christmases to live up to; maybe relationships between relatives are strained; or you might be worried about how the change in routine will affect your loved one with dementia.

If you're entertaining or cooking a big meal, try not to put too much pressure on yourself to make everything perfect – enjoy the day for what it is, and accept any help offered by others.

If you're not visiting or having visitors, try to find time to do whatever brings you some peace – you could put on music you enjoy, or a film you love.

### FINALLY - Be kind to yourself

Christmas can be especially difficult if you're spending it alone – perhaps your loved one has moved into care, or you've been bereaved. Give yourself time to process your feelings, be kind to yourself, and spend your Christmas in whatever way you need to. Coping with loss and bereavement can take a long time, and even if you thought you were doing ok, you might experience a 'dip' around a family-oriented time like Christmas. This may mean you don't want to celebrate the holiday, or that you feel you need to be around friends or family. However, being with others can often be quite therapeutic and will help you get through the festive season..

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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