



## Letters from Lockdown

### "I INDOCTRINATED MYSELF TO A PLAN TO 'LIVE WITH MYSELF AND BY MYSELF'"

At Ageing Better in Camden we firmly believe in amplifying the voices of older people in our communities. Now, more than ever, we strive to support our members to raise their voices and share their experiences.

Far from being a great equalizer, the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed some of the deepest inequalities that have often remained hidden in our society. Our members have been writing a weekly newsletter for one another, to keep informed and connected in these challenging times. It has also brought us all closer together as we share our personal experiences of lockdown.

Here, Harriette shares her experiences.



OPAG member,  
Harriette

Hello this is Harriette!

I had not too long returned from my winter's sun break in The Gambia, when within two weeks a lockdown was in place, I rushed to the shops for groceries only to realise it was too late! as shops had run out of most essentials. There was a national scarcity of toilet rolls! What was it with toilet rolls?!! Mind-blowing!

Anyway, as weeks went by, I indoctrinated myself to a plan to 'live with myself and by myself' this is how it goes; no cleaners coming to help – do it yourself. No restaurants or cafés – cook it yourself. I have to say many thanks to Age UK Camden for their food parcels and to Food Cycle as well as many thanks to Zenobia, from OPAG for her phone calls these have been most welcoming.

As for 'Exercise' my family and physio therapist have been emphasising on this... and yes, I have the exercise sheets pinned up on the fridge and bathroom but in my head it's 'do what you can, when you can'.

The weeks pass by in loneliness. The radio stations spoke about nothing else but deaths and increase in the spread of the virus. It was a real treat when for the first time my daughter and grandson were able to see me, they were standing with masks on, and we met on the staircase that leads to my flat, then a couple of weeks later my daughter came by and took me out for a walk around the block. For me that was scary. I had gloves and mask on, when I returned, I left my shoes outside the door, my daughter could not come in. I then went to the bathroom to strip off my gloves and mask for disposal.

My hobbies are Sewing and Art, just recently as I had enough of my paintings lying around the place, I decided to frame some of them myself, and hang them up. Taking down what I had already on the walls by other artists. It was physically stressful but very gratifying.

Phone calls and WhatsApp messaging have been a good way for me to pass the time without feeling too lonely. Taxi cards' offer of 'fetch and carry' was extremely helpful when friends had offered cooked food. Fortunately, I can pre-record and watch films during the times when there was 'nothing on the box'.

The climax of this lockdown has been the bizarre and unfortunate death of George Floyd, this resulted in a number of demonstrations worldwide of 'Black Lives Matter' which will be recorded in history.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for reading this piece. My advice... keep the old bones moving and soon we'll be able to see the doctors once again!

Your sincerely,

Harriette, OPAG

**Published: July 2020**  
**Downloaded: April 2021**