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Hospitality Action

Autumn 2026 edition

Golden Friends Newsletter

Dear Golden Friends,

Looking back at my autumn 2025 message, I began by commenting on the unusually warm weather we were enjoying. It seems the weather has given us a sense of déjà vu this year, with more record-breaking temperatures. While many of us welcomed the sunshine and the chance to spend more time outdoors, the prolonged daytime heat and warm nights reminded us of the importance of taking things a little more gently and looking after ourselves.

As we bid farewell to another summer and welcome the mellow days of autumn, before we know it, the jumpers will be coming out of the wardrobe and we will be wondering where we left our hats and gloves! So, in this issue, we bring you helpful advice on staying safe and well as the temperatures begin to dip.

You'll notice there is an apple-inspired theme, beginning with apple facts alongside the story of the humble Bramley apple, topped off with a delicious apple pie recipe. There are also tips for preparing your garden for its seasonal slumber before it springs back to life again in a blaze of colour next year. We then finish off by introducing you to one of our flagship fundraising activities, Walk for Wellbeing, now in its seventh year!

A little something for everyone, we hope you'll agree. So why not pop the kettle on, settle into your favourite chair and enjoy this edition of your Golden Friends newsletter.

Until we meet again for the final edition of 2026, keep well.

Cathie

Mention in the Golden Friends Newsletter does not imply support or recommendation by Hospitality Action

Scheme Co-ordinator: Cathie Brennan
Address: 62 Britton Street, London EC1M 5UY
Email: GF@hospitalityaction.org.uk
For advice, support or to request a Grant Application form, Tel: 0800 801 0466
Email: grants@hospitalityaction.org.uk

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A message from CEO Mark Lewis

I'm delighted to share with you all the exciting news that we've been gifted an amazing opportunity for our Golden Friends!

Imagine if you had access to scores of magazines, newspapers and games at your fingertips.

Publications galore, covering gardening and sports, hobbies and entertainment, history and current affairs.

Even the Radio Times, for when you fancy a cuppa and a spot of telly.

And Wordle, wordsearch and sudoku, for when you want to give your grey matter some exercise.

Thanks to our good friends at Gold Key Media, all these pleasures are now just a few keystrokes away, on your phone, tablet or computer.

Gold Key Media provide newspapers, magazines and other print and digital media to hotels to make available to their guests.

They're also super-supporters of our work and take every opportunity to raise funds for us and spread the Hospitality Action gospel.

And now, Gold Key Media have kindly gifted our Golden Friends access to a host of publications and other goodies, meaning you can get stuck into your favourite read, totally free of charge!

Maybe you like to travel the world from the comfort of your armchair by leafing through the pages of National Geographic Traveller, Food and Travel or Coast.

Perhaps you enjoy keeping up with the latest news and politics, or maybe drooling over delicious recipes or breathtaking gardens may be your thing.

Whatever your interests, there are sure to be lots of options to enjoy.

Over on page 3, you'll be able to register your interest to receive the access code for our digital library.

Happy reading!



Also in this issue

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Golden Friends News

Wordsearch competition

A big thank you to everyone who entered our summer wordsearch competition – and an extra thank you to those eagle-eyed readers who spotted the mistake in the word list! Having made a note to self, I have remembered to do the wordsearch in this edition myself to ensure it is correct!

To see the list of winners, turn to page 8.

Winter wellness

As the days grow shorter and the weather begins to turn, it's time to start thinking about staying well throughout the colder months.

A few simple steps can make all the difference, such as keeping up with medical appointments, taking advantage of seasonal vaccinations, ensuring we enjoy at least one hot meal every day and sipping plenty of warm drinks to look after ourselves throughout autumn.

Free digit media offer

As CEO Mark Lewis has already mentioned on page 2, we are delighted to share with you all the news that Gold Key Media has kindly gifted Golden Friends access to a host of publications and other media goodies, totally free of charge!

If you are interested to know more and would like to register to receive free access, complete the reply slip below and return it to us marked **Golden Friends Media, Hospitality Action, 62 Britton Street, London, EC1M 5UY.**

☐ Please tick this box to indicate that you would like to receive further informaton and access code

Your full name
(BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone number(s) _____

Email address _____

Your signature _____ **Date** _____

Grants and grant giving

At Hospitality Action we continue to look for new ways of supporting our beneficiaries through the ongoing cost of living crisis as well as personal challenges ranging from bereavement to isolation, poor mental health and physical illness and injury, to name a few.

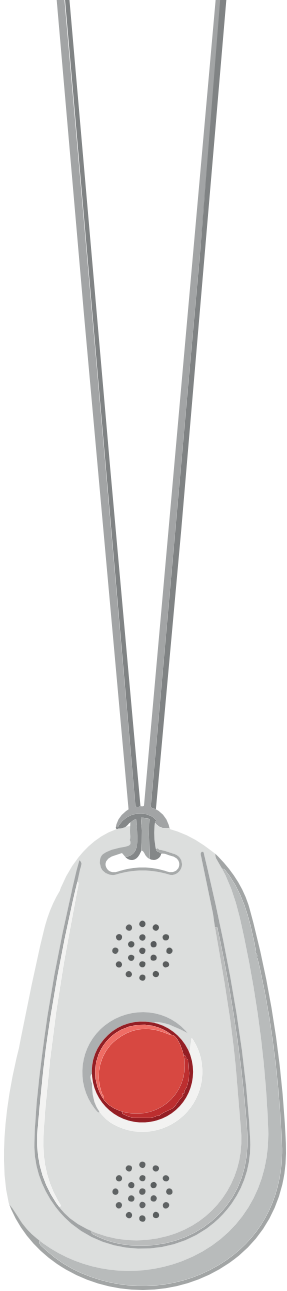
In recent years we have introduced a range of new resources to ensure we are continuing to react to trends and meet the changing needs of hospitality households. These partnerships and initiatives include:

Warmth & Wellbeing – Our annual grant is intended to help with fuel bills during the winter and enable social participation and combat isolation in the summer months. Please turn to the back page if you wish to apply this year.

Emergency Pendant Alarms – As reported in the **summer edition of the newsletter**, we are offering funding to low-income households to provide emergency pendant alarms. The alarm can be used by any Golden Friends with health or mobility problems to offer a direct line to emergency services in the event of a medical crisis or fall. If you would like more information about this initiative, please complete and return the slip printed at the bottom of this feature and one of our team will contact you.

Benefits Advice – Entitlement to state and local authority benefits is a complex topic. Many people are unaware of their potential entitlement or feel intimidated by the application process. HA have two full-time welfare benefits advisors who can provide guidance on potential entitlement as well as practical advice and support. In 2025, we helped our beneficiaries access £537,000 of missing benefits. If you are struggling with your general living costs or experiencing an illness or injury that is affecting your mobility or care needs, please contact our lead welfare benefits advisor **Suad Hersi** on **020 8187 9056** or email **shersi@hospitalityaction.org.uk**

Debt Advice – We have partnered with PayPlan, an award-winning and well-respected debt advice charity, which provides free, confidential advice on all aspects of debt and budgeting. If you are struggling with debt or just finding it hard to stretch your budget to meet essential living costs, please contact our team for more information.



Housing Advice – We have partnered with Shelter, a housing and homelessness charity, to access Shelter Plus, a consultation service of housing law experts, funded by Hospitality Action. Support includes advice on legal rights and responsibilities and advocacy, where the advisor can communicate directly with landlords, mortgage lenders or courts on behalf of our beneficiaries. If you are experiencing any housing-related issues, please contact our team for more information.

Gambling support – We have partnered with GamCare, which provides advice and support to help people stop or control gambling habits. Our grants team have noticed a significant increase in people of all ages and demographics struggling with the impacts of gambling and pay-to-play games, which are a drain on tight household budgets. These games can be hard to give up and are designed to entice and trap people. If gambling or online games are putting a strain on your finances, mental health or relationships, our team can provide a non-judgmental listening ear and can offer a referral to GamCare for a confidential and respectful conversation with its experts.



If you feel you would benefit from support in one or more of these areas, contact our team on **020 3004 5500** (selecting option1) or email **grants@hospitalityaction.org.uk** for more information.



If you are interested in an emergency pendant alarm, please complete the reply slip below and return it to **Calvin Parsons, Grants Manager, Hospitality Action, 62 Britton Street, London EC1M 5UY**

☐ please tick the red box to indicate you are interested in knowing more about emergency pendant alarms.

Your full name
(BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

Your spouse/partner's name
(BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

Address _____
_____ **Postcode** _____

Telephone number(s) _____

Email address _____

Your signature _____ **Date** _____

A day in the life of... ...our Head of Grants

We talk to Hospitality Action's Calvin Parsons, to learn more about his working day and how they support the hospitality community.

Tell us about the start of your working day.

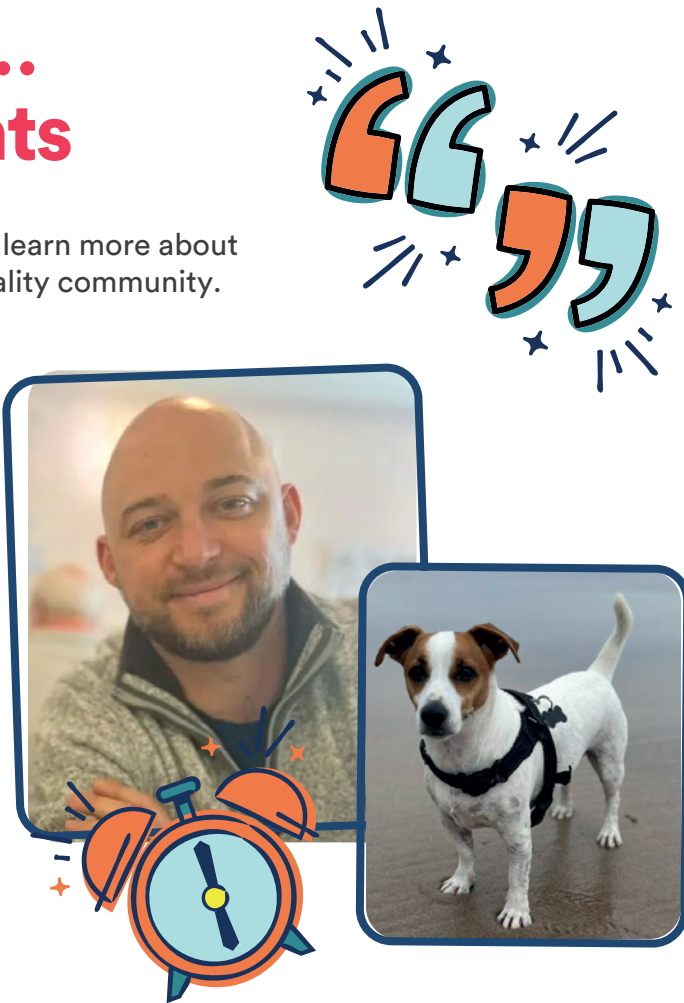
My day can vary depending on my working location, but it always starts with the alarm at 6am and a walk with my Jack Russell, Tod.

I live outside of London and it's a short walk from the edge of town to the glorious Oxfordshire countryside, so I start my day with a walk through the local fields and woodlands, with Tod trotting at my heels. I then head home for breakfast and either settle down to work in my home office or head to the train station for the commute to HA headquarters in London.

Once you are at your desk, are there any recurring tasks that you start the day with?

My working day always starts with checking my emails and voicemails to assess any priority cases or enquiries. We are a small team, but we receive hundreds of enquiries and applications every month, so prioritising our workload is essential.

I also have a 'drop-in' session for my team every morning, so they can bring their most urgent cases to me for discussion. We are fortunate to have a very supportive grants committee and collaborative decision-making is important to ensure we are fair and consistent in the support we provide.



Do you have much direct contact with the beneficiaries, or is this left to your team of caseworkers and advisors?

My team handle the majority of direct contact with our applicants, but I do have some capacity to handle some of our more complex, urgent or niche applications. I feel it is important to maintain some contact with our beneficiaries, so I can hear about some of the issues impacting the people we support, but also to understand the day-to-day pressures affecting my team. We deal with a lot of sensitive and at times distressing topics, such as bereavement, domestic abuse, severe mental health issues, suicidal thoughts and intentions, which can take a toll on our own wellbeing when we see good people struggling with such distressing life events.



How do you make sure the support on offer is impactful?

Our team have accrued a great deal of knowledge over our years of working in grant-making charities, and some have a background in the hospitality sector. We are a small team of eight: myself, four caseworkers (who process the grant applications), two welfare benefits advisors and one grants administrator. Collectively we have more than 80 years of experience working in grant-making and advice services, so we have a deep understanding of shifting societal needs and a considerable amount of experience and training in areas such as safeguarding, welfare benefits, housing issues and even aspects of legal and medical knowledge, all of which helps us to understand and address the core needs our beneficiaries. We also attend regular forums and training courses with other charities and external agencies to ensure our skills and knowledge base is up to date.



Do you have any message to anyone in need who is thinking about applying, but is nervous about asking for help?

We often hear from people who are reluctant to make contact due to pride, uncertainty or a perceived stigma from asking for charitable support. Our message to them is simple. The hospitality sector plays an essential part in all our lives. People make their best memories – of family gatherings, weddings or birthday parties – in hospitality venues, where a team of dedicated employees work tirelessly in the background to make these events special. Our Golden Friends have given a large part of their life and career to working in a sector that means so much to the fabric of our society. We are here to give a little back to them in thanks for their service.

I would add that many people face challenging life events that are beyond their control. We will all find ourselves in difficult situations at some stage in our lives and we won't always know who to turn to. Our team understands this and we are here to lend a hand and a compassionate listening ear to help people through. We work in this role because we care, and we've seen people from all walks of life going through all manner of trials and tribulations. We take a non-judgemental approach to our work and we are here to help.





Apple facts.

Origins and timeline

Apples grew in forests for millions of years before being cultivated and harvested. They originated in Central Asia in the Tian Shan mountains, the region of modern-day Kazakhstan, and their wild ancestor, *Malus sieversii*, still grows there today.

Around 2000 BCE, travellers started carrying apple seeds out of the Tian Shan mountains, moving the seeds east and west along early trade routes used by travellers to share goods, cultures and new ideas, which later became known as the Silk Road. The trading network ran on land and sea and stretched 4,000 miles to link China with Asia, the Middle East and Europe, from around 130 BCE to the 15th century.

As the Asian apple seeds travelled west over hundreds of years, they mixed with local wild crab apples and this natural cross-breeding created the sweet apples we eat today.

The Romans later used advanced farming methods such as grafting to select, grow and spread better apple types across the empire, and European settlers brought those trees and seeds to North America.

How apples spread

In the UK today there are more than 2,500 varieties of apples, reflecting a rich heritage of domestic fruit breeding. The varieties have wonderfully unusual names, such as Egremont Russet, Worcester Pearmain, Discovery, Cornish Aromatic, Laxton's Superb and Ashmead's Kernel. However, British supermarkets typically only stock a small handful of varieties, such as Gala and Braeburn. The Bramley apple, having been 'discovered' in the 19th century in Southwell, Nottinghamshire (see page 12), became the UK's classic cooking apple due to its high acid and low sugar levels and its soft, smooth texture when cooked. The Bramley also has a sharp taste that does not disappear when heated and contains natural pectin, which helps soft desserts set.

The climate in the UK, with its cool winters, relatively mild summers and plenty of rainfall, helps to produce apples full of flavour. However, late frosts and the unpredictability of the weather can create issues for apple growers.

Apple orchards are important habitats for wildlife. A single traditional orchard can support more than 1,400 different species of animals, plants and fungi, as old fruit trees, decaying wood and unmanaged grassland combine to create rich micro-habitats.

Competition Time!

Congratulations to our summer competition **FIRST PRIZE** winners, **Mrs Yi Wah Sin (Derbyshire)**, **Mrs F Spouse (Chelmsford)**, **Mrs R Rana (London)** and **Mr N Islam (Cardiff)**, who each receive M&S gift cards worth £30, and to our **SECOND PRIZE** winners, **Mrs K Mawby (Doncaster)**, **Mr J Malley (London)**, **Mr A Sweeting (Cwmbran)**, **Mr R Thompson (Skegness)**, **Mrs D Rogerson (Devon)**, **Ms C Summers (Plymouth)**, **Ms M Perrett (Colchester)**, **Mrs R Dapson (Hants)** and **Mrs M Walker (Merseyside)**, who each receive M&S gift cards worth £15.

Entries for our Apple wordsearch (below) must reach us by **FRIDAY 16th October**.

I T G V U F L J F L L M R B S Y U Q V
S T R U D E L Z F J A R E A A L G D J
G I A A B M N G N I L P M U D K N Q F
N P Q G J V H O T D K N J G T Y E R M
I T H D C H I P S C T W Q G C T I D J
D U V W N U K K A D O F H E R T O E E
D R P N S U R J N V U Z Z A T E W Z Y
U N C L N Q E C J M N S T E N B Q I Z
P O P N Y L R A F W L B R F Y N R L N
S V K E P I M S D P Y M H N K W E E M
E E W P S U F I E K L G T Z M O L M P
V R A P P H H J I Z G C A K E R B A C
E R F T V O B K D L X I K P F B B R K
S A U C E Z U D N C J U I C E D O A P
N I T A T E T R A T C Q N S J O C C E
H S I N A D T F C E S I V A Q B A F N
O D E I R D E P J S V N D E F Y Z S P
D N X P L O R I I I L O K E D U V L A
M B L O O K A K J E S Z K Y R B G X A

APPLEJACK
BAKED
BROWN BETTY
BUTTER
CAKE
CANDIED
CAMELIZED
CHIPS
CIDER
COBBLER
CRISP
DANISH
DRIED
DUMPLING
EVE'S PUDDING
FRITTER
JUICE
PIE
SAUCE
SODA
STRUDEL
TARTE TATIN
TURNOVER

Entries should be marked **GF competition** and returned to **Golden Friends, Hospitality Action, 62 Britton Street, London EC1M 5UY** by **FRIDAY 16 October**.

Your full name _____

Your address _____

Post Code _____

Your telephone number _____

Your email _____

Your autumn recipe

Bramley Apple Pie

Nothing hits the spot on an autumn day quite like a slice of warm, spiced Bramley apple pie. Warming spices and a scratch-made crust help to make this the perfect .



Ingredients:

To make your own dough

- 375g plain flour
- 100g cold butter, chopped
- 30g caster sugar, for dusting
- 3tbs ice cold water
- pinch of salt

Or:

- 1 x 375g pack ready-rolled shortcrust pastry

For the filling

- 4 medium Bramley apples, peeled, cored and chopped
- 100g caster sugar
- 50g raisins or sultanas
- 1tsp ground mixed spice
- zest and juice of one lemon

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Carbohydrates	Fibre	Protein	Sugar	Salt
1925kj/459kcal	18g	6g	67.8g	5g	4.2g	40g	0.7g

Prep time	30 minutes
Cooking time	35 minutes
Serves	6
Cooling time	10 minutes
Freezable	Yes (1-3 months)

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C, Gas Mark 4.

For homemade pastry

1. Add the salt to the flour. Either rub the cold butter into the flour with your fingertips in a bowl or pulse the flour and butter in the food processor, until it resembles fine breadcrumbs.
2. Add 2tbs of cold water and, either using a table knife or the food processor, mix until it forms a ball. Add another tablespoon of water if it is not coming together. Tip out onto a floured surface and knead very gently until smooth. Do not overwork. Wrap the pastry in cling film and put in the fridge for 10 minutes.
3. Remove the pastry from the fridge and roll out on a floured surface to a thickness of 0.5cm. Use a pie dish with a flat rim, about 1 cm wide. Place the dish upside-down onto the rolled-out pastry and cut around the outside, about 1 cm larger than the pie dish. From the pastry trimmings, cut ribbons about 1cm wide to be used to attach the pastry lid to the dish.



Filling and assembling your pie

1. Mix the peeled, cored and chopped apples with the lemon juice and zest, and tip into the pie dish. Dust over the sugar and spice, and add the raisins or sultanas, turning the filling to coat the apple pieces thoroughly with the other ingredients.
2. Wet the rim of the pie dish and carefully arrange the ribbons of pastry all the way round, pressing gently into place.
3. Wet the top of the pastry ribbons and carefully lay the pastry lid on top.
4. Trim off any overhanging pastry at the edges with a knife. Use a fork to make a seal by pressing gently all around the wetted edge.
5. Make a couple of small holes in the pastry top with a knife to let out steam.
6. Brush the top with a little water and sprinkle over the caster sugar.
7. Bake for 35 minutes until the pastry top is golden.

Once the pie is cooked to perfection, serve warm with a generous helping of vanilla ice-cream or delicious custard. Most importantly, enjoy!



The Bramley Apple

The Bramley apple has a 200-year history, beginning somewhere between 1809 and 1815, when a young girl named Mary Ann Brailsford took the pips from apples her mother was preparing and planted them in a flowerpot.

One of the pips was later transplanted from the flowerpot to the garden, where it thrived and grew into a tree that began to produce a unique apple, later to be known as the Bramley apple.

The story could have ended there if it had not been for Henry Merryweather Jr, born in 1839. His father, Henry, was a gardener in the service of Reverend John Drake Becher. In 1840, Henry Sr was taken to Norwood Hall in Southwell to tend the extensive gardens there.



Henry Jr joined his father at the tender age of 10 and began to gain extensive knowledge of horticulture, in particular the many varieties of fruit grown in the grounds and the walled kitchen garden.

In 1854, father and son decided to begin working for themselves and purchased two acres of land adjacent to Norwood Park, where they would concentrate on cultivating and selling fruit, mostly strawberries. Some time later, and by chance, Henry Jr noticed some impressive-looking apples being carried in a basket by the gardener of Southwell Minster. When he enquired where the apples were from, he was told they were from a tree that grew in the garden of Matthew Bramley at 75 Church Street.



Henry Jr immediately went to speak to Matthew to ask if he could take some grafts from the apple tree to propagate it. Mr Bramley was happy to oblige and said Henry could take as many grafts as he wished, but on the condition that he named the apples that these grafts produced after him.



Henry proved to be extremely successful in cultivating the grafts and was soon presenting his 'Bramley seedling' at the Royal Horticultural Society's Fruit Committee in December 1876, where it was highly commended. When the variety was later presented to the Committee of the Royal Jubilee Exhibition of Apples in Manchester in 1877, the apple received a first-class certificate.

From a culinary perspective, the Bramley's sour taste when raw is transformed into a sweet, light and fluffy purée when cooked. It is used in fruit pies, tarts and crumbles or as an apple sauce, as well as in fruit wines, chutneys and ciders.



Sadly, Mary Ann Brailsford passed away without ever knowing how influential her seedling would later become. The house where Mary lived went on to have a number of owners before it was purchased by Nottingham Trent University in 2018. The cottage is now affectionately known as 'The Bramley apple tree house' and it displays a blue plaque with a description of the history of the tree. It is heartening to know that, over the years, despite the tree being hit by lightning and infected by an invasive fungus, it survives to this day and is still producing fruit.

THE BRAMLEY APPLE TREE

was grown from a pip by a young lady, Mary Anne Brailsford between 1809 & 1815. It was thought it came from an apple grown on a tree at the bottom of her garden (now No. 75). One seedling produced very fine apples in 1837 when the new occupier was Mr. Matthew Bramley. A local gardener, Henry Merryweather, later obtained permission to take cuttings from the tree and it was duly registered as the Bramley Seedling.

Health and wellness

Preparing for the autumn chill

When we think of autumn, our thoughts turn to the beauty of autumnal colours, age-old traditions of harvest festivals and Halloween, crisp mornings with sweaters and scarves, comforting, hearty food and the pleasure of cosying up indoors as the autumnal chill makes its presence felt.

Seldom, perhaps, do our thoughts turn to the practicalities of preparing for the season to ensure we are warm and comfortable, so here we share some advice to help our readers create a check-list of some things to consider.

Getting older means we are more vulnerable to the effects of cold weather, especially those living with pre-existing health conditions. As autumn creeps in, keeping warm is important because as we age our skin becomes thinner and we lose some of the fat beneath the skin, which makes it harder for our bodies to retain heat. Our metabolic rate – the number of calories we need to help us function – decreases too, which can mean some older people are not able to create enough body heat to remain at a healthy temperature.

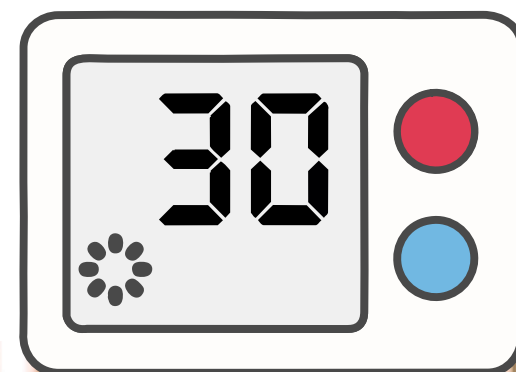
Ensuring heating is safe and efficient

Central heating

NHS guidance advises that rooms in regular use, such as bedrooms and living rooms, should maintain a heat of at least 18°C in colder months. While the start of autumn can be mild, now is a good time to think ahead to ensure your home is ready for when temperatures drop.

After months of not being used, it's important to check central heating systems are working efficiently when switched back on. You can check it by:

- Turning the thermostat to 30°C
- Turning the radiators up to 4 or 5 and leaving them on for 30 mins
- Check the boiler has come on and the radiators are warming up



If there is an issue, it is NEVER advisable to attempt to fix a faulty boiler yourself. Always seek support from a certified gas engineer. The official and only legal database of qualified gas engineers in the UK is the **Gas Safe Register**, so if you are in need of help, visit <https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk> to find a qualified Gas Safe heating engineer.



Electric heaters

The four main types of electric heaters – fan heaters, oil heaters, halogen heaters and convector heaters – are usually used to heat up small areas quickly. All electric heaters should be used with care and never be left unattended or running while you are asleep.

Electricians recommend:

- Never buy a second-hand electric heater as it may be faulty.
- Always place the electric heater on a flat surface, away from furniture or any combustible materials.
- Never place dry clothes on or near an electric heater.
- Never leave an electric heater on overnight.
- Regularly check the heater for scorch marks or areas where parts may have begun to melt due to heat. Discontinue using the heater at the first sign of damage.
- Always sit at least one metre away from a heater.
- Never attempt to repair a heater.



Electric blankets

Though electric blankets can be a great, cost-effective way to keep warm and cosy, it's important to use them with care.

Old and faulty electric blankets account for more than 5,000 fires a year and those over 65 are more likely to have an electric blanket that is over 10 years old. Electricians recommend replacing an electric blanket at least every 10 years.

Before using your electric blanket for the first time this year, take a few minutes to check it is safe. Your blanket should be replaced with a new one if:

- The fabric is worn or frayed.
- Scorch marks are visible on the fabric.
- Wires are visible through the fabric.
- There is damage to any part of the electrical cord.
- The control buttons make a buzzing sound when switched on and/or the blanket gives off a smell when turned on.
- The power connector is damaged or over-heats.



Top tips for safe use of an electric blanket

1. Unplug blankets before you get into bed, unless it has a thermostat control for safe all-night use.
2. Never use an electric blanket if you have an air flow pressure relief mattress or use emollient creams.
3. Never use a hot water bottle at the same time as an electric blanket.
4. NEVER purchase second-hand electric blankets.
5. Remember to check regularly for signs of wear and tear and replace your blanket at least every 10 years.
6. Always store electric blankets flat, rolled up or loosely folded to prevent damaging the internal wiring.
7. Arrange for a qualified electrician to safety test an electric blanket for you at least every three years.

Hot Water Bottles

As the colder months arrive, a hot water bottle can be a simple and comforting way to keep warm. However, it is important to use one safely. Hot water bottles can cause serious burns and scalds if they are too hot, damaged or left against the skin for too long, particularly as skin can become thinner and more sensitive with age and some people may have reduced sensation or circulation.

A few simple precautions can help you enjoy the warmth of a hot water bottle safely.



Do:

- ✓ Check your hot water bottle before every use for cracks, splits, leaks or signs of wear.
- ✓ Replace your hot water bottle regularly. It is recommended that they are replaced after two years, even if they appear to be in good condition.
- ✓ Use hot, but not boiling, water. Allow boiled water to cool for several minutes before filling the bottle.
- ✓ Fill the hot water bottle about two-thirds full and let out any excess air before securing the stopper.
- ✓ Always use a suitable cover or wrap the bottle in fabric to protect your skin.
- ✓ Keep the bottle against clothing or bedding rather than directly against bare skin.
- ✓ Check your skin regularly, particularly if the bottle is being used for an extended period.

Don't:

- ✗ Don't use boiling water. It can damage the bottle and increase the risk of serious scalds.
- ✗ Don't use a bottle that is old, cracked, brittle, faded or damaged.
- ✗ Don't sit, lie or put your full body weight on the bottle, as this can cause it to split.
- ✗ Don't keep the bottle against the same area of skin for a long time. Prolonged exposure to heat can cause burns, even when the heat does not initially feel uncomfortable.
- ✗ Don't use a hot water bottle to treat suspected hypothermia. Someone who is very cold needs to be warmed gradually and should receive appropriate medical help.
- ✗ If you have reduced sensation or difficulty judging temperature, ask a healthcare professional whether using a hot water bottle is suitable for you.

Take extra care

If you have diabetes, poor circulation, reduced sensation, very fragile skin or difficulty moving or checking your skin, you may be at greater risk of burns. Speak to your GP, nurse or pharmacist if you are unsure whether a hot water bottle is safe for you.

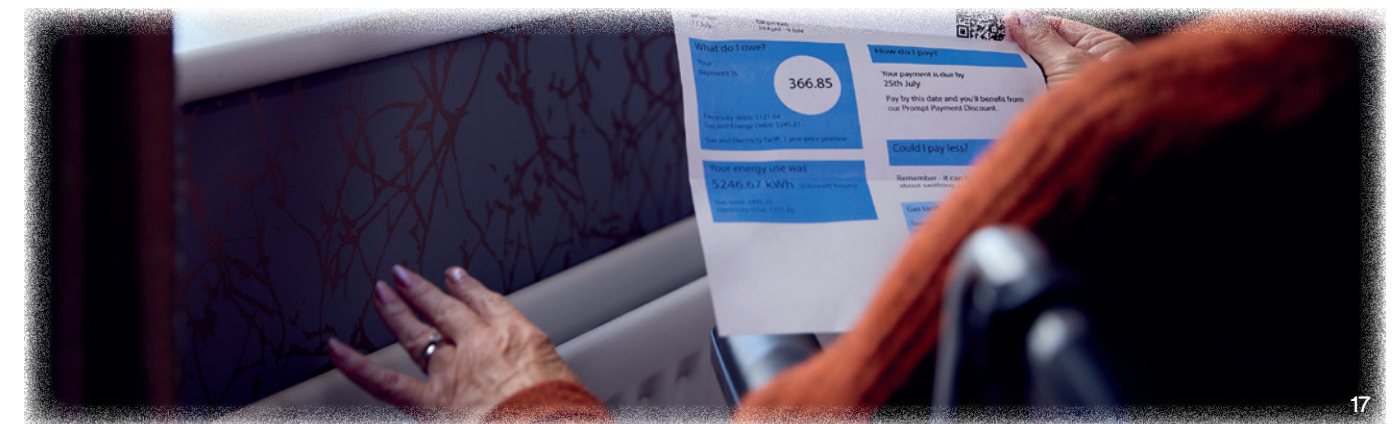
Help with heating costs

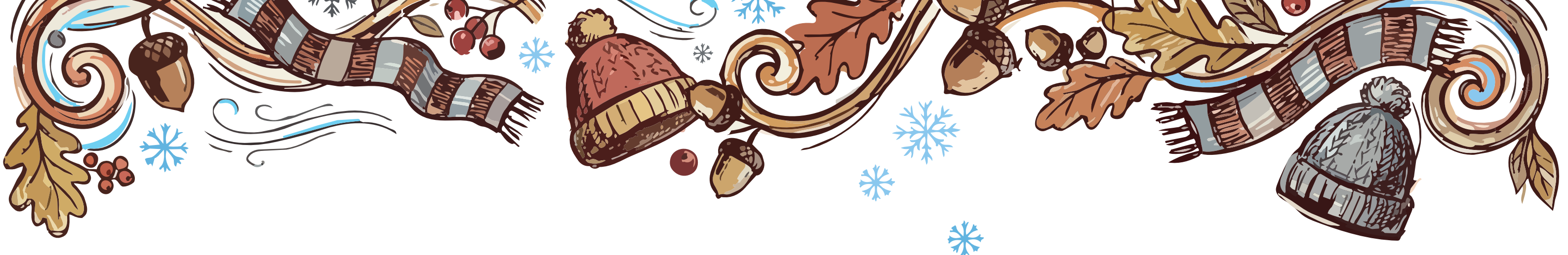
The cost of heating our homes remains high and some older people may avoid using their central heating even in extremely cold weather to save money.

The UK government offers schemes for the elderly to help with energy bills during colder months. This year there has been a major change to the Winter Fuel Payments – a tax-free payment of up to £300 made to all pensioners to help with winter energy bills. The government is now restricting this payment to those on benefits and Pension Credit.

If you are struggling to heat your home it may be worth checking to see if you are eligible for help with heating costs. Visit the official GOV.UK Winter Fuel Payment page at <https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment> or call the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on 0800 731 0160 for advice and support on assistance schemes, including Winter Fuel Payments, Warm Home Discounts and Cold Weather Payments.

You may also be eligible for a Warmth & Wellbeing Grant from Hospitality Action. Turn to page 24 for details





Check for potential fall risks

Older bones take longer to heal, and the recovery process can take its toll on both physical and mental wellbeing.

The most obvious potential fall risks during the autumn and winter comes from fallen leaves and wet or icy paths and pavements which pose a threat to everyone but especially older people who are more prone to bone fractures. For older people who may feel unsteady on their feet, wet or icy paths and pavements pose a serious risk. So, clear fallen leaves regularly, grit paths and look out for pathways covered in wet leaves and icy surfaces when heading outdoors.

Keep moving

Cold, damp weather can cause arthritis flare ups and make joint pain worse. Low temperatures can also thicken the natural shock-absorbing layer in the joints, which can contribute to stiffness.

Making an extra effort to stay active throughout autumn will not only help to keep you warm but also keep your joints comfortable and reduce the risk falls and other accidents. Even gentle chair-based exercises support mobility and balance.



Boost your immune system

Good nutrition becomes more important throughout autumn and into winter as a balanced nutritious diet boosts the immune system, provides energy and helps to keep us warm. Foods like oranges, kale, spinach, broccoli and brussels sprouts are rich in vitamin C, which is essential to help us maintain a healthy immune system.

The NHS Eastwell Guide advises older people should eat at least one hot meal a day from a varied diet that includes proteins, white meat, and fish and ensure they have regular hot drinks throughout the day.

Integral to healthy skin and bones is ensuring we get enough vitamin D. However, during the darker, colder months when there is little or no sunshine, it is difficult to get enough vitamin D. Eating more oily fish, liver and foods fortified with vitamin D can help boost vitamin D levels.

Ensure prescriptions do not run low

If you take regular medication, setting up a repeat prescription to arrange for your medication to be provided directly by your local pharmacy, rather than having get a repeat prescription from your GP could prove useful. Some pharmacies also offer a home delivery service to people who find it difficult to get out and about so you might find it helpful to enquire if this service is available at your local pharmacy.

Winter vaccines

Our immune systems become a little less effective as we age, and therefore it can take longer to recover from seasonal respiratory infections. Contagious illnesses such as colds and flu are more common during the autumn and winter months and are more debilitating for older adults.

Prevention is always better than the cure, so those aged 65 and over should follow NHS advice and make an appointment with a GP or local pharmacy to get a free flu vaccine. Flu can be really unpleasant, so it's a good idea to get the jab even if you are generally fit and healthy. In many areas of the country, it is now possible to get the seasonal flu jab at some of the larger supermarkets.



Gardening - quiet preparation for spring

One of the special pleasures of autumn gardening is knowing that the effort we make today will bring rewards later. A handful of planted bulbs, a protected shrub or a carefully prepared patch of soil all contribute to a garden's future beauty in spring.

Gardening in autumn should be about enjoying the rhythm of the seasons when temperatures are cooler, when being outside is more comfortable.

As summer fades and the bright flowers make way for golden leaves, the garden takes on a new beauty. Autumn offers us an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors at a gentler pace, to connect with nature and prepare the garden for the months ahead.

In addition to providing fresh air and sunlight, gentle gardening activities encourage a range of movements that help us to maintain flexibility, and caring for plants, nurturing new growth and noticing seasonal changes can help bring a sense of calm.

Clearing away spent plants, collecting seeds and planting bulbs for spring allow us to feel connected to the future while appreciating the garden in the present.

A few seasonal tasks

Plant spring bulbs

Autumn is the ideal time to plant daffodils, tulips, crocuses and hyacinths. Tuck bulbs into the soil before winter and enjoy a dazzling, colourful display in spring.

Long-handled tools and gardening from a comfortable kneeling position help make planting more comfortable. Those who find kneeling difficult might find it easier to plant spring bulbs in containers at a convenient height.



Create a bulb lasagne

Spring bulbs are generally better planted between late September and early November. Layering bulbs with different flowering times in tubs and containers helps to create a succession of flowers throughout spring and into summer.

A 'bulb lasagne' is simply a matter of planting different layers of spring flowering bulbs in the same container, with the largest bulbs at the bottom and the smallest at the top. Start by adding a generous layer of compost to your container, then place the largest bulbs, such as daffodils, tulips and alliums at the bottom. Cover these with more compost before adding a second layer of medium-sized bulbs, such as narcissus and hyacinths. Finally, add a layer of smaller bulbs, such as snowdrops, dwarf daffodils/dwarf iris and crocuses, before coving with a final layer of compost. Once planted, your container needs little attention – just sit back and look forward to a succession of colourful shoots and flowers emerging from late winter into early spring.



Tidy borders

Remove diseased leaves and clear paths to prevent slippery surfaces, but consider leaving some seed heads and stems standing, as these provide food and shelter for birds and insects during colder months.

Gather fallen leaves

Fallen leaves can be turned into valuable leaf mould, which improves soil and provides a natural mulch. Collect leaves into a wire enclosure or compost bag and allow them to break down over time.

If raking is tiring, rake in short sessions and try using lightweight tools to make the task easier.

Care for tender plants

Before the winter months arrive, move delicate container plants into a sheltered spot, insulate vulnerable pots with bubble wrap and protect young plants from frost with fleece or other coverings to guard them and their roots from frost damage.

Prepare the soil

Add compost or well-rotted manure to empty beds to allow the nutrients to gradually work into the soil over the winter. Doing this will create better growing conditions next year.

Clean garden tools

Looking after gardening tools before they are stored for the winter will help make next year's work easier and safer. Clean soil off tools and dry them thoroughly before storing them away. Check handles and blades to ensure these are in good condition.

Gardening shouldn't be arduous or exhausting, so remember to do it in a way that suits your abilities and energy levels. Take regular breaks, avoid lifting heavy loads and choose tools designed to reduce strain – such as a rake with a sturdy plastic head instead of the heavy metal variety. Raised beds or container planting can help to bring plants closer and minimise strain on the back, knees and wrists.

There is still plenty to discover in the garden before the winter months roll in, so wrap up warmly, take your time and enjoy spending time in your garden this autumn.



walk for wellbeing.

Let's walk the walk and make a positive difference together

in support of

**Hospitality
Action**

powered by

mum.
talent taken care of



Fundraising and our Supporters

We are so grateful to the many individuals and organisations who champion our cause with such passion and devotion.

Ambassador Sean Wheeler and Craig Prentice, Hospitality Action patron and founder of hospitality recruitment company mum, are the backbone of the charity's flagship Walk for Wellbeing initiative.

Walk for Wellbeing is about uniting the hospitality industry through one simple yet powerful act: walking side by side in support of one another. Since its launch in 2020, Walk for Wellbeing has raised more than £500,000, firmly establishing itself as one of our flagship fundraising events.

In 2020, Craig and Sean joined a video call with Mark Lewis and other members of Hospitality Action's London Fundraising Board to hear how the charity was supporting people across the UK who were facing incredibly challenging circumstances.

Despite so much uncertainty at that time, Craig says he will never forget the overwhelming sense of hospitality spirit shown by Mark and the team at Hospitality Action, who were determined to help as many people as possible during what he described as a disconnected and isolating time.

While the charity focused on providing essential practical, emotional and financial support, Craig felt there was an opportunity to create something positive to help hospitality people reconnect. He was keen to promote the importance of physical and mental health, movement and meaningful conversation, and in turn give back to the charity. Together Craig and Sean developed Walk for Wellbeing.

Craig and Sean caught up with Giuliana Vittiglio, head of fundraising and marketing for Hospitality Action and president of HR in Hospitality, to ask him about his experience of Walk for Wellbeing.



Sean Wheeler (SW): How did you get involved in Walk for Wellbeing?

Giuliana Vittiglio (GV): When Craig contacted me in 2020 during the pandemic to talk me through his vision for Walk for Wellbeing, I knew there would be a lot of hospitality people going through a very tough time, mentally, emotionally and financially. I felt raising awareness of this as well as raising much-needed funds to help Hospitality Action was a no-brainer, and here we are, seven years later!

Craig Prentice (CP): What have been your most memorable moments from the last seven years?

GV: There are so many, along with a tremendous feeling of togetherness, achievement and purpose. Walk for Wellbeing is so much more than just a walk, it's an accessible, purposeful initiative created to bring people together and achieve great things.

SW: In your role as president of HR in Hospitality (HRiH) how have you supported the event?

GV: Walk for Wellbeing and Hospitality Action have been the nominated charity of HRiH since the start. It is a great partnership as all three are about looking after and supporting hospitality people. HRiH uses its annual awards to raise awareness of both great causes to the 350-plus HR and operations professionals who attend the event and raise funds on the night from ticket sales, a raffle and auction, which contribute a significant amount each year. Getting behind Walk for Wellbeing is a great

way to bring teams together for a common purpose to support fellow hospitality people when they most need it.

SW: How can people get involved in the Walk for Wellbeing this year?

GV: Walk for Wellbeing is so much more than a walk – it's about looking after your own health, raising awareness of the need for support in hospitality and raising funds to help our peers when they need it most.

This year, you can take part in Walk for Wellbeing from Saturday 10 October (World Mental Health Day) until Sunday 25 October. You can 'Walk It Your Way' across 14 UK locations, including Edinburgh, Manchester, London and Cornwall, or anywhere that is suitable – your garden, while out walking the dog or a gentle stroll with family or friends, over any distance. There are also 10km or 20km hosted walks to join. To find out much more about Walk for Wellbeing 2026 and to view all locations of hosted walks, visit: www.walkforwellbeing.org

Profound thanks to Craig and Sean for their tireless support and commitment.



Hospitality Action's Warmth & Wellbeing Grant

Applications for our new annual Warmth & Wellbeing grant are now open until **31 March 2027**.

This £500 grant will be paid in two £250 instalments: one to help with winter fuel costs and another for social participation in the warmer summer months.

To apply, simply complete and return the cut-off slip below along with a recent full month's copy of bank statements for **all bank accounts you hold**.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are currently in receipt of a regular bi-monthly grant from Hospitality Action, we have written to you separately to explain your eligibility.

To qualify for a Warmth & Wellbeing grant you must:

- Live in your own home (owned or rented – not a nursing/residential care home).
- Have no non-dependent members of your family living with you (other than your spouse/partner).
- Receive an income-related benefit, such as Pension Credit, Universal Credit or Housing Benefit, OR have a total weekly income of no more than £238 per week for a single person or £363.25 per week for a couple.*
- Have limited savings (below £5,000 if you are single and below £8,000 if you are a couple).

*Disability-related benefits, such as Attendance Allowance or Personal Independence Payments, are disregarded for Hospitality Action's Warmth & Wellbeing grant assessment.

If you meet all the above criteria and would like to apply for the grant, please complete and return the cut-off slip below and send with a recent, full month's bank statement(s) showing all your income and savings.

We will contact you once your application has been assessed. If you qualify for a Warmth & Wellbeing grant, you will be notified of the payment dates in writing and the award will be paid into your bank account.

Please note, if you do not provide a recent statement for your bank account(s) when you apply this will delay your application.

The Warmth & Wellbeing Grant is kindly sponsored by the Worshipful Company of Innholders.



Please tick each of the statements below to confirm your eligibility and complete your name, address and contact details. Send this slip, together with a recent full month's bank statements to:

Hospitality Action Grants Team, 62 Britton Street, London EC1M 5UY

- ☐ I/we live in our own home (owned or rented – not a nursing/residential care home).
- ☐ I/we have no non-dependent members of our family living with me/us (other than our spouse/partner).
- ☐ I/we receive an income-related benefit, such as Pension Credit, Universal Credit or Housing Benefit, OR have a total weekly income of no more than £238 per week for a single person or £363.25 per week for a couple.
- ☐ I/we have savings below £5,000 (single)/below £8,000 (couple).
- ☐ I/we have enclosed a full month's bank statement for all accounts I/we hold.

Full Name _____ Signature _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Telephone number _____ Email address: _____