

AGE WATCH ANNUAL REVIEW 2014/2015

1. Our Aim

To help people understand how they can slow the process of ageing – to enjoy more years of good health.

2. Why this matters

Modern medicine is keeping people alive longer – but often in poor health.

GLOBAL BURDEN OF DISEASE STUDY 2010

‘Preventative illnesses are overwhelming the NHS; illnesses caused by obesity, smoking, alcohol and lack of exercise.’

ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON PRIMARY CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH 2013

‘The future health of millions of children, the sustainability of the NHS, and the economic prosperity of Britain all now depend on a radical upgrade in prevention and public health.’

NHS FIVE YEAR FORWARD VIEW OCTOBER 2014

3. What we do to promote health

- Provide health information
- Undertake health related research
- Work in partnership with other organisations committed to improving health and well being

4. Who we are

A public health charity, launched in 2011.

Our core belief is that prevention is better than cure.

5. Getting things right

We have Information Standard accreditation. This is NHS England’s quality mark for organisations whose health information is clear, accurate, balanced, evidence based and up to date.



Our User Group Advisory Panel reviews each article ahead of publication. This helps ensure the information we provide is understandable and covers points people are likely to be interested in.

6. Health Information provided

We have added or reviewed and updated 35 health information articles over the last year.

This helped www.agewatch.org.uk achieve 328,548 hits from April 2014 to March 2015. That’s 21% higher than the previous twelve months.

You can also follow our selection of health news [@age_watch](https://twitter.com/age_watch) Twitter

7. Health Behaviour Change

Knowing what is good for our health isn’t enough. We need to act on what we know.

That’s why we are researching what prompts people to make healthy choices, in partnership with researchers from Kingston University.

Here is a selection of reasons people have given us for making changes in their lives:

“Family illness was a wake up call.”

“I couldn’t fit into my clothes.”

“You know when you walk up the stairs and you’re out of breath – I didn’t want that.”

“I don’t want to be dependent.”

“To take part in a 10K run for charity.”

“Seeing people who haven’t looked after themselves.”

“Waking up and feeling crap.”

“I was going on holiday with a load of skinny girls.”

“To avoid diabetes.”

“Don’t want to be running after my boy and he’s, ‘Why are you sweaty and having a heart attack, Dad.’”

“As I get older health is more important. I need to look after myself.”

“New Year’s Resolution.”

“My wife is younger than me. I want to keep her.”

“Wanting to live long and healthy and be happy.”

“It’s common sense.”

8. Research Council Project

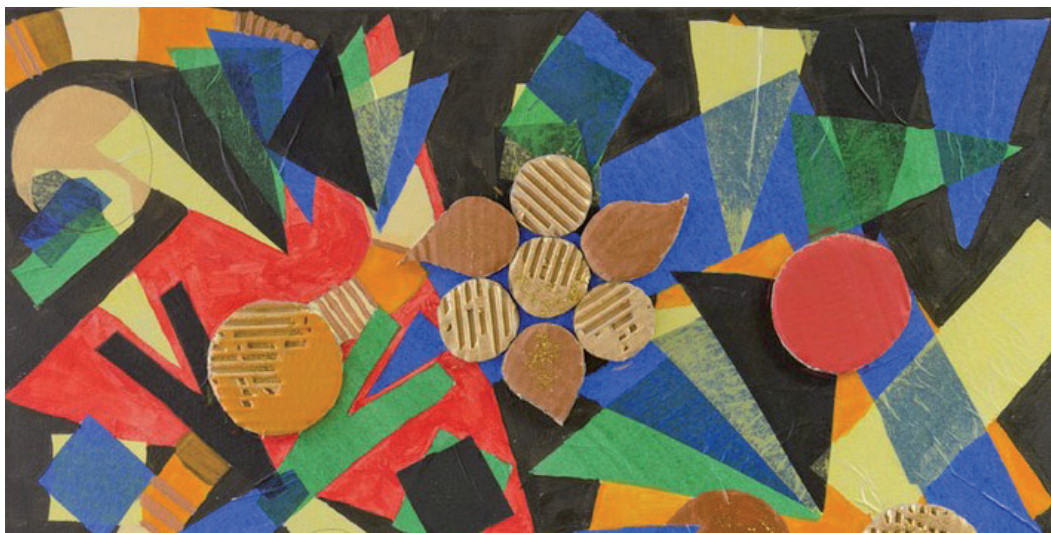
We are a partner in a Research Council project, where we are leading on Knowledge Transfer.

The project explores the potential of art to help people with dementia. There is currently no cure for dementia, so initiatives to maintain quality of life are particularly important.

As part of our contribution we've developed the project website – www.dementiaandimagination.org.uk

This 3 year research project started in summer 2014 with:

- Care homes in the North East
- NHS assessment units in Derbyshire
- People with dementia living in the community in North Wales.



SAMPLE ART WORK FROM THE PROJECT

9. Dementia Action Alliance

As a national member of the Dementia Action Alliance we continue to:

- Signpost our web users to a range of services to support aspects of daily living for people with dementia and their carers.
- Provide information on developments in dementia research—including evidence that physical and mental activity can delay the onset of symptoms.
- Help break down negative stereotypes - by developing an online gallery of art work by people with dementia on www.dementiaandimagination.org.uk

10 Health Economics Research

We know that food high in sugar, salt, transfat and refined carbohydrates is bad for our health – and pushes up NHS and welfare costs.

But the companies who produce and sell this kind of food also provide jobs and tax revenue.

So what is the net effect for the UK?

That's what we've started to research, working in partnership with Dare to Think and Pro Bono Economics.

One initial finding is that the financial benefits to the government from the food industry may not be as great as anticipated. This is because:

- A number of food companies have found ways to limit their corporation tax payments in the UK. Tax avoidance isn't illegal and could be viewed as one means of containing costs.

- However, these companies often pay low wages, which limits the income tax and National Insurance their employees pay.
- And employees on low wages are usually eligible for means tested State Benefits.
- So employees at some food related companies are probably receiving more in State Benefits than the companies are paying in corporation tax.

Could the government unwittingly be subsidising the production and sale of unhealthy food?

This is one of the questions we are exploring.

11. Welcome

Welcome to the following new members of the Age Watch team:

Karen Rollins (Associate Editor)

Natnaree Kaewhin (Diet & Nutrition Adviser)

Laura Symes (Research Officer)

Christiane Hahn (Research Officer).

Welcome too to Neil Askew, Justin Beresford, Lyn Cotton, Simon Fox, Sanjay Joshi, Martina Prosperetti and Bazil Sansom who have been helping with our health economics research.



VOLUNTEERS AT THE AGE WATCH PARTY

Thank you to Desmond McKnight, Sue Merrifield and Nadine Richards who leave us after making a valuable contribution to our Advisory Panel and to Diet & Nutrition articles respectively.

12. The Next Steps

Over the year ahead we aim to:

- Continue to develop and promote www.agewatch.org.uk – as a source of evidence based health information.
- Publish the findings from our research into health behaviour change.
- Publish the findings from our health economics project – including the implications for individuals, the government, businesses and the NHS.

Age Watch is a not for profit limited company – number 7661420. It is recognised as a charity by HMRC.