

News Matters

Spring 2025

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INSIDE:

**Easter fun and activities
across our services**

Welcome to News Matters

Hello everyone and welcome to the spring edition of News Matters.

Where have the weeks gone, I cannot believe it is May already and I have now been in post as your Managing Director for 5 weeks! After a fair number of weeks focused on contracts and documents, I am looking forward to getting out to see you all.

What a joy to see so many activities and achievements by customers and colleagues as I look through this edition. The Easter fairs and crafting looked amazing – crafts and painting are one of my absolute favourite things to do, so looking forward to tagging along next time although I do usually end up with more paint on myself than the paper.

I hope you all enjoyed some downtime over Easter, I spent Easter in Scotland which was beautiful. The fields were full of newborn lambs which was a sight to behold... just gorgeous!



Sarah Stock has been visiting you all to say goodbye and I know she would want me to thank you for all the kind and thoughtful ways in which you have shown your affection for her. I have a hard act to follow but will endeavour to hold us to the values that Sarah has created with you.

As we head towards summer, it is lovely to see the sunshine. Do take time to enjoy it, there is something about sunshine that just makes everything happier. And as I visit your locations, please do say Hi!

Z. Williamson

Zaliha Williamson, Managing Director

New Company Chair

We are delighted to announce that Tom Thornley was appointed Independence Matters Group Company Chair on 1st May 2025.

Tom initially joined the Board as non-executive director in September 2022 and takes over the role of Chair from Karen Hester, who sadly passed away earlier this year.

He has a mainly commercial, engineering and technology background and experience of working across a variety of sectors. He is currently Managing Director of Pauls Cycles, a UK specialist in online and instore bicycle and ebike retail.

Tom said: "I am absolutely delighted to be starting the role of Group Company Chair and am looking forward to working with you all to ensure we continue to thrive and keep providing the outstanding levels of care I see in the business. I appreciate I have got some big shoes to fill following on from the fantastic work our lovely Karen undertook - but I am determined to make her proud and continue supporting the Board and ensuring the delivery of the Group strategy."

Tom Thornley

Tom Thornley,
Group Company
Chair



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Special lunch marks Sarah's retirement

Sarah had an emotional send off on 27th March as she chaired her final senior leadership team meeting before handing over the reins to Zaliha on 1st April. The meeting was followed by a celebratory lunch prepared by Daisy's Café, with some amazing cakes courtesy of our colleagues at Home Support Matters.

It was attended by Directors and Board Members who came to say goodbye and recognise Sarah's achievement in forming Independence Matters CIC in 2013 and making it the success it is today.

Our new Company Chair, Tom Thornley led the group in thanking Sarah for her dedication and passion for our customers, family carers and colleagues. Sarah was very moved by the kind words she heard from Tom, Zaliha, Su and Rosie.

Sarah was also overwhelmed by the goodbye messages that had been made by customers in the Working Together Groups across our services. These included a collage in the shape of her name and references to Norwich City Football Club! Throughout the lunch, Dereham Hub customers dropped in to say their own emotional goodbyes which demonstrated just how much Sarah will be missed by us all.



Following a company-wide collection, Sarah was presented with a huge array of leaving gifts at her lunch.

The gifts had been carefully curated to include lots of her favourite things: vouchers for Jarrolds and the Assembly Rooms, Norwich Theatre tickets, Adnams Prosecco (in memory of our Chair, Karen), pampering items and lots of edible goodies.

Sarah was also presented with a photobook packed with memories from across the whole 11 years of Independence Matters. The photos included pics of customers from the Working Together Groups (WTG) who hand made their own goodbye messages for inclusion in the book. These were so lovely we've published them here for you all to enjoy ☺ .



Dereham WTG (below) with their goodbye banner for Sarah.





Great Yarmouth WTG
(above) and **Attleborough WTG**
(below) with their
goodbye messages for
Sarah



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Holt WTG customers worked their messages around the theme 'Sarah is...'



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Well done Hannah!

Hannah Twaite, our dedicated Training and Development Lead, has successfully completed the Train the Trainer course for Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) training.

This is a remarkable achievement and one that will benefit our entire organisation. Hannah can now join Fiona in delivering high-quality PBS training to our field team, reinforcing our commitment to a person-centred approach. PBS focuses on enhancing quality of life and reducing behaviour of concern through positive, proactive strategies. Together, Hannah and Fiona will equip our team members with the knowledge and skills needed to provide the best possible support to our customers.

Hannah's passion for professional development and expertise will help to embed PBS principles into our daily practices and ensure we continue to uphold our values of respect, inclusion, and positive engagement.

Join us in congratulating Hannah on this accomplishment, we look forward to seeing the positive changes her training will bring across Home Support Matters.



Kathleen's century of memories

On 4th March we had the absolute pleasure of celebrating a truly remarkable milestone – Kathleen Clarke's 100th birthday!

Reaching a century is an incredible achievement, and Kathleen's special day was marked with love, joy, and plenty of well-wishes. To honour the occasion, Sally Palin (Quality Manager) and Angie Latham (Field Care Supervisor) visited her with a beautiful bouquet of flowers and a heartfelt card, sharing in the celebrations and reminiscing about cherished memories.

Kathleen's warmth, kindness, and wisdom have touched so many lives. As we celebrate her incredible journey, we wish Kathleen a very happy 100th birthday and many more joyful moments ahead! Here's to a century of memories and a truly inspiring lady! 🎉🌸🌟



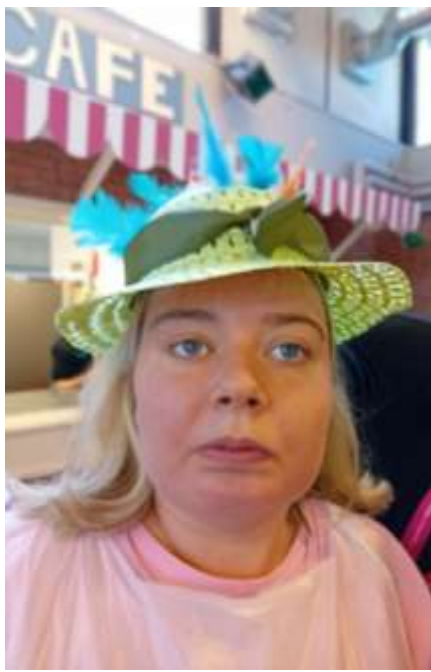
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Easter events across our services

Sprowston Community Hub

Sprowston held an Easter coffee morning on 17th April, with an array of fabulous cakes made by volunteer and former colleague, Dawn. The event raised a fantastic £160 for the amenities fund. A big well done to Carol on winning the Easter Bonnet competition, and to manager Chris for his efforts to pin the beak on the chicken 🐔.



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Dereham Community Hub

Dereham held an Easter fayre on 16th April raising £540 for the amenities fund, followed by an Easter egg hunt the next day. What fantastic weather to be out looking for eggs, let's hope none of the chocolate melted!



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Great Yarmouth Community Hub

held an Easter party on 17th April with lots of activities including a raffle, an Easter bonnet competition and a buffet followed by a disco.



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Church Green Lodge

There was a great turnout for the Easter party at Church Green Lodge on 18th April. As well as lots of food, there was an Easter egg hunt, crafts and a prize for the best hat, which was won (yet again!) by Harvey!



Our cover star Harvey has now won the best hat for four Easters in a row! He looks online for the decorations he wants, his mum orders them and they then decorate the hat together. He puts in a lot of thought and effort, and it shows! A well-deserved winner - well done!



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William Day Centre

Customers and colleagues at William Day Centre have been busy making cards and biscuits for Easter.

They were joined by Sarah on 16th April for her final visit to the hub where she spent the morning baking biscuits and took part in a Beetle Drive in the afternoon.

She enjoyed chatting to everyone throughout the day, and it is sad to know she is leaving but we all wished her a Happy Retirement and presented her with some flowers.



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TAPS visit site of former USAAF base

Our **TAPS bloggers** have been learning about WW2 with a visit to the former Rackheath Airfield site near Norwich.

During the war, it was home to the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) 467th Bombardment Group, known as the Rackheath Aggies, who flew B-24 Liberator heavy bombers from the airfield between March 1944 and July 1945. The B-24 was nicknamed Witchcraft and is famous for completing the most missions of any Second Air Division.

There is now an industrial estate where the airfield used to be, but you can still find evidence of its USAAF days. We visited Newman Woods, where the Officers' mess used to be located. It's now looked after by a team of volunteers called the Rackheath Pathfinders who have done an amazing job exposing the old footings, putting up information boards, and making it a haven for wildlife.



We all enjoyed a lovely walk listening to the birds and learning about the remaining structures. The whole place has a lovely sense of peace and tranquillity. Shirley laid a poppy cross in the remembrance garden and, judging by the number of robins we saw, the spirits of those brave men are still around (take a closer look at the photo right!).

We also visited the industrial estate memorial, where Jo-Ann laid another poppy cross, and saw the refurbished control tower, which has been converted into offices. We finished up at the B-24 cafe for lunch, which is close to the control tower and has lovely food and a lot of memorabilia.

Mark bought a t-shirt with the Rackheath badge 'Liberatus' meaning for freedom, and has asked to learn more about the planes, especially Witchcraft.

Another reminder of the past can be seen in the roads on Rackheath Industrial estate which are named after the planes and personnel connected to the airfield: Witchcraft Way, Albert J Shower Road, and Ramirez Road. The main road through the site, Wendover Road, was named after the training base in Utah which trained the bomber crews.



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Fitness fun gets the day off to a healthy start!

Colleagues and customers at **Attleborough Community Hub** started a daily 'movement matters' exercise class at the start of the year. The sessions take place just after 9am every morning and are a great way to support people to take more exercise. The classes are fully inclusive with everyone invited to take part, whatever their level of mobility or fitness.

The sessions are led by Mel, who began them as a way of encouraging customers and colleagues to get moving in the mornings and motivated for the day ahead. She brings a lot of fun and energy to the room and the classes continue to be a great success.



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“It makes me fit
and healthy and
it makes me
smile”
Jenna

“I like doing
the squats”
Luke



“I like working
with the others
and it make me
feel happy”
Freddy

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Celebrating Dignity Action Day

At Home Support Matters, we believe in fostering a culture of respect, kindness, and dignity for all.

Our **Dignity Champion Awards**, held in February to link with Dignity Action Day, provide an opportunity to celebrate and recognise the colleagues who have gone above and beyond to embody these values.

We are delighted to announce that **Kerry Smith** has been named our **2025 Dignity Champion** for their outstanding dedication to promoting dignity and respect in our community.

Kerry's commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment has truly made a difference, inspiring those around them to follow suit.

Congratulations also go to our incredible runners-up, **Russ Robinson** and **Michaela Moyse**, who have demonstrated remarkable efforts in fostering dignity and respect in their roles. Their contributions have not gone unnoticed, and we are grateful for their unwavering dedication.

Winner Kerry is pictured above (centre), with Michaela (left) and Russ (right).



Sharon skills up!

Great news! After completing training in December 2024, NI Manager Sharon has passed her fork truck driving test, providing more flexibility for loading and unloading tasks in the factory.

In a small team, you need as many skills spread across as many people as possible, but when your staff team have disabilities, this is a little more challenging due to various restrictions, so everyone gets involved where they can.

Sharon said “ It’s scary lifting really heavy things right above your head, but hopefully I will get used to it with some practice.”

A lunchtime reward!

The team at Norfolk Industries enjoyed a yummy fish and chip lunch courtesy of their wellbeing budget. The treat was planned as a welcome reward at the conclusion of a training session on HACCP, which everyone agreed was a bit of a dry topic!



Recycling matters

As a business we try our best to recycle everything we can, and pallets are no exception. We tend to acquire more white pallets through our purchases than we despatch out to our commercial customers, and over time these build up in the factory. Here are our stacks of pallets ready to go out for recycling to a local business.



Fundraising in the spring sunshine

19 customers from **Attleborough Community Hub** enjoyed the lovely spring weather whilst taking part in a sponsored walk around Gaymers Field to raise money for the Hub's amenities fund.

An incredible £1000 has been raised so far, and special thanks go to Suzanne who raised £321 of this. Wow!

A big shout out goes to everyone who took part in this brilliant achievement. Customers will discuss at next People's Forum what they would like to spend the money on as well as agreeing what the next fundraising project will be.



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An amazing
£1000
 raised by
 customers!



A big send off for Shelby

Attleborough Hub customers gathered to say goodbye to colleague Shelby, who started her maternity leave on 21st February. We all wish Shelby the very best as she looks forward to her new baby's arrival.

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Warding off the winter blues

The winter months can seem cold and uninspiring for many, but customers at **Crossroads Community Hub** have been supported to keep busy and active with lots of crafting projects and seasonal activities.



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The creative craftwork delivered some great results using left over materials and even created a new home for the Hub's feathered friends. The World Book Day tree (above right) was a great way to prompt lots of book related chat and memories.



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Valentine's Day was an opportunity for some romantic crafting. Making cards and decorative hearts to take home was a lovely way for customers to express their feelings to their families. They also did some Valentine's baking – but are unable to share the results, they were so yummy they immediately got eaten! ♥



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Home Support Matters Action Heroes!



Move over Marvel – there's a new league of superheroes in town and they wear tunics instead of capes!

Home Support Matters has jumped on the AI generated doll trend and is making their care workers the stars. After all, they're real-life heroes every single day, so why not bring them to life as care worker action figures?

Colleagues are invited to join in the fun! Whether you see yourself as the Compassionate Champion, the Medication Maestro, or the Tea & Toast Titan, why not give it a go and create your very own mini-me.

Like to create your own?

- Use your favourite AI generator (eg ChatGPT)
- Input your photo and information to create your care worker alter ego
- Share your action figure on the [HSM Facebook page](#)



Be my Valentine ?

We asked who you were sharing Valentine's Day with and Recruitment Officer Jessica sent us this pic of her adorable pooch, saying: "My partner is long distance, so I'm lucky enough to spend Valentine's Day with my best friend, Bentley". ❤️

Crafting Valentine's Day gifts for loved ones



William Day Centre
customers
Keith and
Stuart made
these lovely
Valentine
cards and
heart shaped
wreaths for
their wives.



Shoebbox charity appeal

A group from **Dereham Community Hub** have been filling shoeboxes to donate to charity. Customer Shirley from the Thursday cooking group suggested the idea and together with Roger, Alice, and Kim, created letters asking for donations of toys, toiletries, children's colouring books and other goodies to put into the boxes.

They had a great response to the appeal and filled 22 boxes. After discussion, the group decided to donate them to Dawn's New Horizon, a charity in Norwich which supports male and female victims of domestic violence.

The shoeboxes were delivered to the charity who were very happy to receive them and gave the group a lovely welcome. Great work Shirley 🥰

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Course helps to keep our customers safe

Congratulations to customers at **Attleborough Community Hub** who have completed a safeguarding course delivered by Karen Patterson of KP Training for Norfolk County Council.

The course was arranged by customer Emma with support from colleague Lena. It discussed the 10 different types of abuse and how to identify them, as well as advice on scams and how to stay safe online. Everyone who attended said they really enjoyed it and they all learnt new things to help keep them safe.

Everyone agreed Karen was an awesome trainer who engaged brilliantly with everyone and provided the information in an accessible way.

The Hub plans to run this as a two-day course next year, and for Karen to support Emma to co-present the course with her. How awesome is that!



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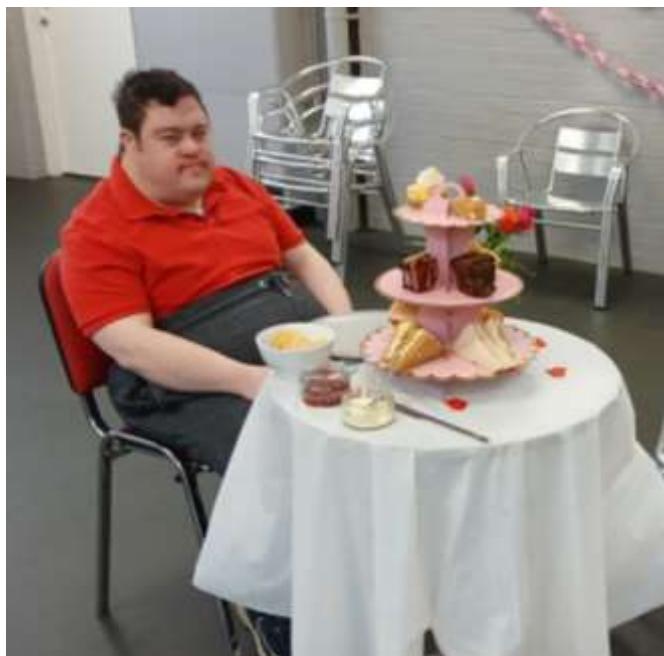
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A special treat for Valentine's day



Attleborough Community Hub held an afternoon tea to celebrate Valentine's Day. Customers enjoyed being waited on by colleagues Shelly and Laura, who also baked the delicious cakes and scones and made the sandwiches and sausage rolls.



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Signalong skills for all at Hub

Based on British sign language, Signalong can support people with communication difficulties and is a popular choice among our customers. Earlier this year, our Signalong trainer Belinda, visited **Dereham Community Hub** to introduce a group of customers to the system.

After developing some initial skills with Belinda, the group continued to practise Signalong after the sessions ended and have been learning how to sign colours, names, and food items. The group has become so popular it has had to be split into two!

As a fun and interactive way to test their skills, the group has been asked to sign for items, objects, coloured items, toy animals etc, pulled from a bag - so a complete surprise and some quick thinking required!



Above: Jacob is signing 'cake'



Above: Leah signing 'to eat'



Above: Kim is signing 'blue'



We're keeping Attleborough tidy!

Customers at Attleborough Community Hub have restarted their litter picking group and are making the town and its play areas tidy again.

The Hub is grateful for all the support they receive from local people at their shows and fetes and see this as a great way of giving back to the community. Great work everyone 😊



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Bake Sale Fundraiser

We concluded our 2025 Dignity Action Day activities with a bake sale to raise funds for the Dignity Council, an organisation committed to upholding dignity and respect across communities.

Thanks to the generosity of our colleagues, their friends, family, and our local community, we raised an impressive £140.50 for this worthy cause. £96.50 came from the bake sale and £44 in HSM pledges for our colleague dignity award nominations.

A huge thank you to everyone who participated - whether by nominating a colleague, attending the event, or indulging in some delicious treats at the bake sale. Your support helps us continue to champion dignity in all aspects of our work and community.

Let's keep the spirit of dignity alive and celebrate the amazing individuals who make our environment a better place for all!



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Apprenticeship success

In addition to celebrating our Dignity Champions, we congratulated **Heidi Fowler (above)** and **Paul Eaton (below)** on the successful completion of their apprenticeships. Their hard work and dedication have paid off and they have now received their certificates.



Valentine's Day at Rosewood

Customers at Rosewood had a lovely time celebrating with colleagues and family members at their Valentine's day party.

The event was made extra special by local vocalist Karla Beare who sang songs from across the decades and encouraged customers to join in. Customer Frank attended with his wife and had a great time dancing with Karla.



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PAMMS audit achieves a ‘Good’ rating

We are delighted to share the fantastic news that Home Support Matters has achieved a ‘Good’ rating in our recent PAMMS (Provider Assessment and Market Management Solutions) audit.

This achievement is a testament to the dedication, hard work, and unwavering commitment of our incredible colleagues who continuously strive to provide outstanding services.

The PAMMS audit is a rigorous assessment that evaluates the quality, safety, and effectiveness of our services. Securing a ‘Good’ rating reflects our strong performance in key areas, including leadership, person-centred care, and overall service delivery. This success is a direct result of the passion and professionalism demonstrated by our team every day.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to every colleague who contributed to this fantastic outcome. Your dedication, teamwork, and commitment to excellence have played a crucial role in ensuring we provide high-quality support to those who rely on our services. Whether on the frontline or behind the scenes, each one of you has made a difference.

This achievement is not just a reflection of where we are today but also a foundation for even greater success in the future. We will continue to build on this momentum, striving for excellence in everything we do.

Once again, thank you for your incredible efforts and unwavering support. Let’s take pride in this accomplishment and continue working together to maintain and enhance the high standards that define our service.



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Wellbeing Wednesdays!

Having a whole day dedicated to wellbeing is benefiting both colleagues and customers at **Dereham Community Hub**.

The day starts with a 30-minute exercise class, which varies from Zumba chair exercises to fully choreographed dances. This is followed by an hour's yoga instruction delivered by instructor Nessa.

Everyone is getting really good with the yoga poses and getting stronger at balancing. Customers have also learnt the Sanskrit words 'namaste' and 'shantey' and their meanings.

It's then time for a tea break and a general health discussion. After lunch there are separate men's and women's health discussion groups. The day ends with a pamper session where customers can have their nails painted, hand and foot massages, and foot spas.



I love the feeling of bubbles on my feet in the foot spa.

Paige

I love getting my hands massaged and my nails painted, it makes me feel very happy.

Arrabella

I have learnt lots of poses and I am getting better at yoga every week.

Stephen S

I love the yoga class and doing the stretches together, I feel it is very good for my mind and body.

Jim

Exploring food from other places

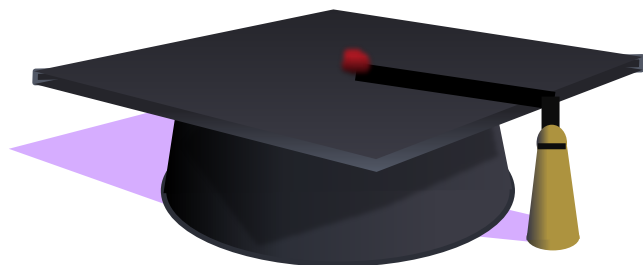
On the first Tuesday of each month **Attleborough Hub** customers select a country and learn about its culture, including the cuisine. The best part of the learning experience is then choosing a dish for everyone to prepare, cook and eat!

They recently selected Thailand made Thai sweet potato curry. Yum! Customers have named this activity 'Around The World in 80 Days' although several years is probably more realistic! ☺



Diploma success

Huge congratulations to Caitlin Gray from PAS South who has successfully passed her Level 3 Lead Adult Care Worker Diploma. Well done Caitlin!



Did you see?

Actor Rose Ayling-Ellis highlighted the value of learning sign language in the BBC's *Old Hands, New Tricks*.

If you missed this inspirational and moving story about teaching sign language to a retirement community, you can catch up on BBC iPlayer.

[View Old Hands, New Tricks on iPlayer](#)

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