



# Women & Theatre Production of *'Phyllis'*

The Rufus Centre, Steppingley Rd. Flitwick  
13th March 2019

# Phyllis

Phyllis tells the story of one woman and her family attempting to navigate the complex system of older people's care.

Developed from research with patients, family members and health & social care professionals, the play highlights the very real challenges that many experience.

As the population lives longer, the care of our older adults becomes a pressing issue for us all.

**Phyllis** is an impactful play that puts the voice of the older person centre stage and poses the vital question "How do we take care of our ageing population?"

The play enables the audience to learn about the differing opinions of each family member about what is best for Phyllis, and from Phyllis herself, and to gain a better understanding of how those involved attempt to manage a situation that they have little knowledge of, and struggle to understand.



*Image taken from Women & Theatre website*

# Post-performance discussion - audience and performers



Janice Connolly, who played Phillis, asks the audience to focus on good ideas to affect real change

*"I thought it was absolutely superb, I found it very powerful."*

Audience Member

A number of audience members felt that this would be a great play for younger audiences in schools and colleges to help them understand and prepare for these issues earlier.



Communication was a strong theme



*"Communication between professionals and families and the person receiving care needs to be two-way"*

a Health Professional

*"This is the second time I've seen this and it comes across just as powerful. It demonstrates what can happen when families are living far away."*

Audience Member

Lack of transport for those in rural areas in particular is a huge problem. Weekend and evening services have been cut drastically.

*"Why aren't governments using the demographic information to project and plan effectively to future proof their services?"*

Audience Member

*"Advance care planning is very useful and is introduced with those with life limiting illness, however more could be done at an earlier stage with just everyone."*

a Health Professional

*"We live in a risk averse society that may think they know what is best, but older, vulnerable people need a voice."*

Audience Member



## The audience gave their views on what would help them

Look at other models of care, innovate; Shared Lives - successful in learning disabilities, other country models such as The Netherlands. Named nurses - this used to be in place at the Luton and Dunstable and worked well.

*"A 'one stop shop' for information and advice - to prevent confusion and keep messages the same."*

Audience Member

*"More investment into activities that keep people well, happy and engaged - "A prevention not medical model."*

a Health Professional

*"Digital services that can speak to each other."*

Audience Member

*"One budget manager - that would make a difference."*

a Health Professional

People felt that professionals should recognise that they may need to repeat the message to people and their carers more than once and be prepared to do this with empathy.

Families and healthcare professionals - to talk about things earlier, don't wait for the crisis point before making choices and communicating what you want.

## Advice and information from audience members

**Power of Attorney** - trade union members and ex-forces may be able to get free support. Most solicitors offer 1/2hr free consultation. There are pro-forma documents that can be downloaded from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/make-a-lasting-power-of-attorney>.

**Transparency** - in Central Bedfordshire, some care homes have access to records open to family members, including care plans, daily activities etc. This enables them to be more informed.

**Finances** - there are organisations that can advise, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and Age UK. The thresholds for savings and assets do change and it is best to seek up to date information.

**Transport** - in St Albans the Council provide £60 of taxi vouchers annually to people over 75 years. Could this be replicated in Central Bedfordshire?

**healthwatch**  
Central Bedfordshire

[www.healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk](http://www.healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk)

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire  
Capability House Wrest Park  
Silsoe  
Beds MK45 4HR

tel: 0300 303 8554  
e: [info@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk)