





## Welcome from the Chief Executive

In early 2020, the world started to see the impact of the emerging pandemic and in March, the UK went into its first lockdown with schools and businesses forced to close. Fast forward a year, including two more lockdowns, and we are still wondering how long it might be before some normality returns. You can read on page 12, how Age UK Devon adapted to new ways of working, ensuring continued support for older people. Most of our changes remain in place and may become our new norm.

Since our last issue, we have partnered with Memory Matters South West CIC to provide virtual group workshops for people living with dementia whilst it is difficult to meet face to face. We are now delivering virtual group workshops over a 14-week period to enable people to meet and enjoy a range of stimulating activities. You can read more about this on page 5.

I would like to thank our wonderful trustees and staff, who worked tirelessly through the pandemic and continue to support the organisation, so it can improve the lives of older people as restrictions ease. We all look forward to being able to welcome older people back to our services and activities, as soon as it is safe to do so.

  
Sophie Littlewood

## A Message from the Chair of Trustees

After a very difficult year for all of us, I hope we are now facing better times ahead. I am very pleased Age UK Devon has continued to provide advice and services throughout the pandemic. I would like to say a big thank you to the Chief Executive, all staff and volunteers for their fantastic work during this difficult time.

One thing we have all learned during this pandemic is the value of being digitally connected. I feel proud Age UK Devon has been able to help older people get online to stay in touch with loved ones. As we move into Spring and Summer, I hope you will continue to benefit from Age UK Devon's services and advice, both in person and online, and we can all get out and about again safely to enjoy some good weather in our beautiful county.

  
Liz Michaelson

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If you would like to receive a copy of our **engage** magazine when new editions are released please contact us on **0333 241 2340** or **info@ageukdevon.co.uk**.

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# Active in Later Life

## Active at Home

Throughout the past year many older people in Devon have been self-isolating and shielding to keep themselves and their loved ones safe. This has had a detrimental effect on their health and wellbeing. We quickly began looking for funding that would help us provide older people with resources to keep as fit and well as possible in their own homes.

Sport England established the Tackling Inequalities Fund after research showed certain groups of people were being disproportionately affected by the pandemic and it was significantly impacting their ability to be physically active. Thanks to this funding, the Active in Later Life team created an Active at Home bag, which contained a copy of our Seated Vitality at Home booklet and equipment needed to carry out the exercises at home.

The Seated Vitality at Home booklet takes you through a session of chair-based exercises from start to finish. Seated Vitality can be easily completed at home and adapted to suit your specific needs and requirements. Each session will positively boost your mental and physical wellbeing with regular sessions leading to improved mobility, balance, flexibility, fitness, and strength. All helping with the ease of completing everyday tasks.

Each Active at Home bag has been positively received and we have been sent some wonderful feedback from older people who have found them very useful. Brian told us how it will help him to keep up his fitness levels as he was missing his walks due to shielding. John, who is a carer for his wife, revealed they would practice the exercises together while playing their favourite songs.

Our Seated Vitality at Home booklet can be downloaded for free from our website at [www.ageuk.org.uk/devon/activities-and-events/seated-vitality-at-home/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/devon/activities-and-events/seated-vitality-at-home/) or if you would prefer to be sent a copy please contact us on **0333 241 2340** or [info@ageukdevon.co.uk](mailto:info@ageukdevon.co.uk).



## Virtual Cognitive Stimulated Therapy (vCST)

For those living with mild to moderate dementia, Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST) is proven to slow the progression of dementia and increase quality of life.

Age UK Devon in partnership with Memory Matters CIC, launched their first CST workshops in January. As we are currently unable to deliver these workshops face to face due to current Covid-19 guidelines, we are meeting virtually ensuring those living with dementia still have access to the therapy.

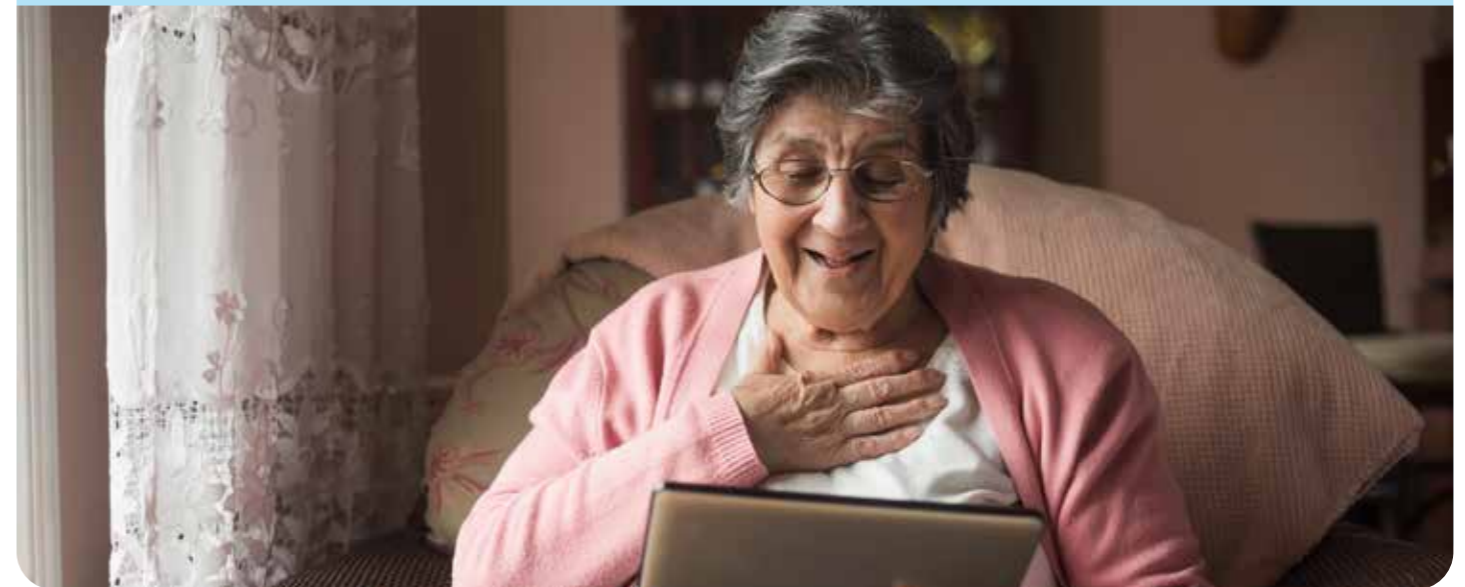
Each week the same small group will meet for an hour to take part in activities which promote thinking skills. The structure of each workshop is the same and provides the group with the opportunity to share views through topical conversations, warm up with word games and reminiscence through music, photography and quizzes. The workshops are always fun and light-hearted creating a positive experience for those taking part.

We understand, for many older people using technology can be daunting let alone a video conferencing software such as Zoom. Therefore all those receiving vCST are supported with this over the 14 week course.

***“ There are lots of smiles and laughs with moods certainly lifting as workshops progress. It is so heartening to share their stories and memories. We’ve had some lovely comments, telling us how much they enjoy the workshops.”***

***Trish Warren, vCST facilitator***

If you are living with mild to moderate dementia or know someone who is and are interested to find out about attending please contact **Trish Warren** on **0333 241 2340** or email [info@ageukdevon.co.uk](mailto:info@ageukdevon.co.uk).





# Advice and Wellbeing

## Census 2021



### What is the census?

The census is a survey that happens every 10 years and gives us a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales. It informs decisions about the things that matter to your community. All kinds of organisations, from local authorities to charities, use the information to help provide the services we all need, including transport, education and healthcare. Without the census, it would be much more difficult to do this.

### Do I have to take part?

If you live in England and Wales, you **must** fill in the census. By taking around 10 minutes per person to fill in the census questionnaire, you will help make sure your community gets the services needed now and in the future.

### When should I fill in my census questionnaire?

Census Day is **Sunday 21 March 2021** – but you can fill yours in as soon as you get your access code in the post. Your answers should be about the people who usually live in your household on this date – even if you're filling it in before then.

### Will the government use the information I share to identify me?

No. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) carries out the census in England and Wales. Only anonymous information from the census is published.

### Could information I share affect my benefits or immigration status?

No. The ONS is independent from government. This means officials dealing with payments or services you receive cannot see your census information.

### Why is the census asking me about my gender and sexual orientation?

This census asks voluntary questions about sexual orientation and gender identity for the first time. This is to give a more accurate information on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender populations. This will help organisations combat any inequalities these groups face and show where services are needed. We will only ask people aged 16 years and over these questions. If you do not feel comfortable identifying on the same form as the rest of your household, you can request an individual census questionnaire and answer separately.







### Can I help friends and family fill in the census?

If a friend, or family member, needs support, help them if you can. Always fill in your own census first. You can also ask for help for yourself, or for someone else.

### What if I cannot fill in my census questionnaire online?

Some people will find this challenging. There is a wide range of support services available. Call the **Census Team** on **01329 444972** or email them **census.customerservices@ons.gov.uk**.

If you'd prefer to speak to **Age UK Devon Information and Advice Advisors**, we're ready to answer your questions **0333 241 2340**.



**A gift in your will could be a lifeline, ensuring older people always have someone to turn to.**

From providing an older person with advice or a helping hand, your gift could make an enormous difference to someone who has nowhere else to turn.

#### To find out more

📞 **0333 241 2340**

✉ **info@ageukdevon.co.uk**

🖱 **www.ageuk.org.uk/devon/get-involved/leave-a-legacy**



# Enabling and Home Support

## Contemplating a Year of Changes

By the time you read this it will be nearly 12 months since Age UK Devon's Enabling and Home Support Service started to be affected by the arrival of what was to become a global pandemic.

As with so many other organisations, the first few months were a steep learning curve. Was it safe to continue the service? How could we obtain facemasks? Lockdown one was a worrying time for everybody and for a few weeks we closed our service until it was safe to restart again.

When we came back we were older and wiser, knew considerably more about assessing this new kind of risk and keeping both clients and staff as safe as possible. Facemasks and social distancing are now the norm. As the government response has adapted to the changing circumstance of the pandemic, so has elements of our service. As we went into lockdown three, we made the decision to no longer take our clients out socially or for escorted shopping. We also placed our decluttering support package on hold. Disappointingly, we have had to postpone the launch of our new handyperson service from this year to 2022.

The core of what we do though is unchanged. Through Monday to Friday, our Support Assistants are shopping for our clients, changing bedding, doing laundry, cleaning bathrooms and kitchens, making cups of tea or light lunches and providing companionship. Our clients and their families have continued to share their appreciation of the service with us which gives us the confidence that we are safely providing what is needed for them.

*"It is so reassuring to know that services like yours exist..."*

*"Thank you again for all your support – we are extremely grateful"*

*"Thank you for your kindness, it is much appreciated"*

*Comments from clients and their families*

If you would like further information on how we can help, including costs please call **0333 241 2340** and ask for **Sue or Tracey** or email [homesupport@ageukdevon.co.uk](mailto:homesupport@ageukdevon.co.uk).

We are currently operating our Enabling and Home Support Service in East Devon (including Exmouth) and Teignbridge.



# Our Services

We provide a wide variety of services and activities including:

- **Digital support**
- **Enabling and home support**
- **Foot care**
- **Help when family are on holiday**
- **Help with benefits**
- **Help with decluttering**
- **Home visits following a life change**
- **Information and advice**
- **Physical activities**
- **Social groups**
- **Will writing, will reviews and LPAs**

To find out more please contact us:

**0333 241 2340**

[ageukdevon@ageukdevon.co.uk](mailto:ageukdevon@ageukdevon.co.uk)

[ageukdevon.co.uk](http://ageukdevon.co.uk)





## How Age UK Devon responded to Covid-19

Like many other organisations we had to postpone services, activities, events and fundraising to safeguard our staff, volunteers and services users. We also had to adapt the way we operated to accommodate the on-going restrictions and secure the future of the charity. So, what changed?

- **We closed our office**

National guidance was, and still is, to work from home. At Age UK Devon, we made the decision to close our office and begin working from home in early March 2020. The transition was aided by our systems being cloud based allowing our staff to access everything they need from anywhere. We issued everyone with equipment needed from laptops to office chairs, so we could all work from home comfortably.

Although we are not working in our office together, we maintain morale through weekly online staff meetings and regularly communicate through telephone, email and WhatsApp.



- **Our governance went online**

All face-to-face committee and board meetings were replaced with online meetings. Whilst it is not the same as physically being together, holding online meetings has ensured our Trustees continue to oversee and keep up to date with the charity's work.

- **Seated Vitality training went online**

Our Active in Later Life Manager, Trish Warren, has been sharing her expertise through our Seated Vitality training package which is aimed at individuals or organisations who would like to deliver chair-based exercises to older people. Normally this training is delivered face-to-face however to keep this training available, we have moved to providing online training courses via Zoom. Trish has also done a fantastic job of keeping the training material up to date with the latest government guidance and advice surrounding Covid-19.



Recent participants have already been putting their new skills to good use as they have been busy hosting their own virtual Seated Vitality sessions to older people who are currently shielding.

- **We distributed goodie bags, gift vouchers and Christmas Hampers**

We were fortunate to be supplied with a selection of food and hygiene products, which had been donated to Age UK for distribution to older people across the country. In addition, an anonymous donor kindly gave us £6,500 which was used to purchase Tesco gift cards. Using these essential supplies, our CEO Sophie Littlewood together with her family, created and distributed goodie bags to older people in need.

For many the Tesco gift cards helped ease financial worries, as at the time, many older people were struggling to access their money or were concerned about passing their bank card to the person who was shopping on their behalf.

At Christmas, our staff had the pleasure of travelling across Devon delivering luxury hampers to older people who were either going to be alone over Christmas, or on a low income, so unable to afford luxury items. This lovely gesture was made possible thanks to our partnership with SSAFA Devon who secured a donation to purchase the hampers.





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- **Active at Home bags were distributed**

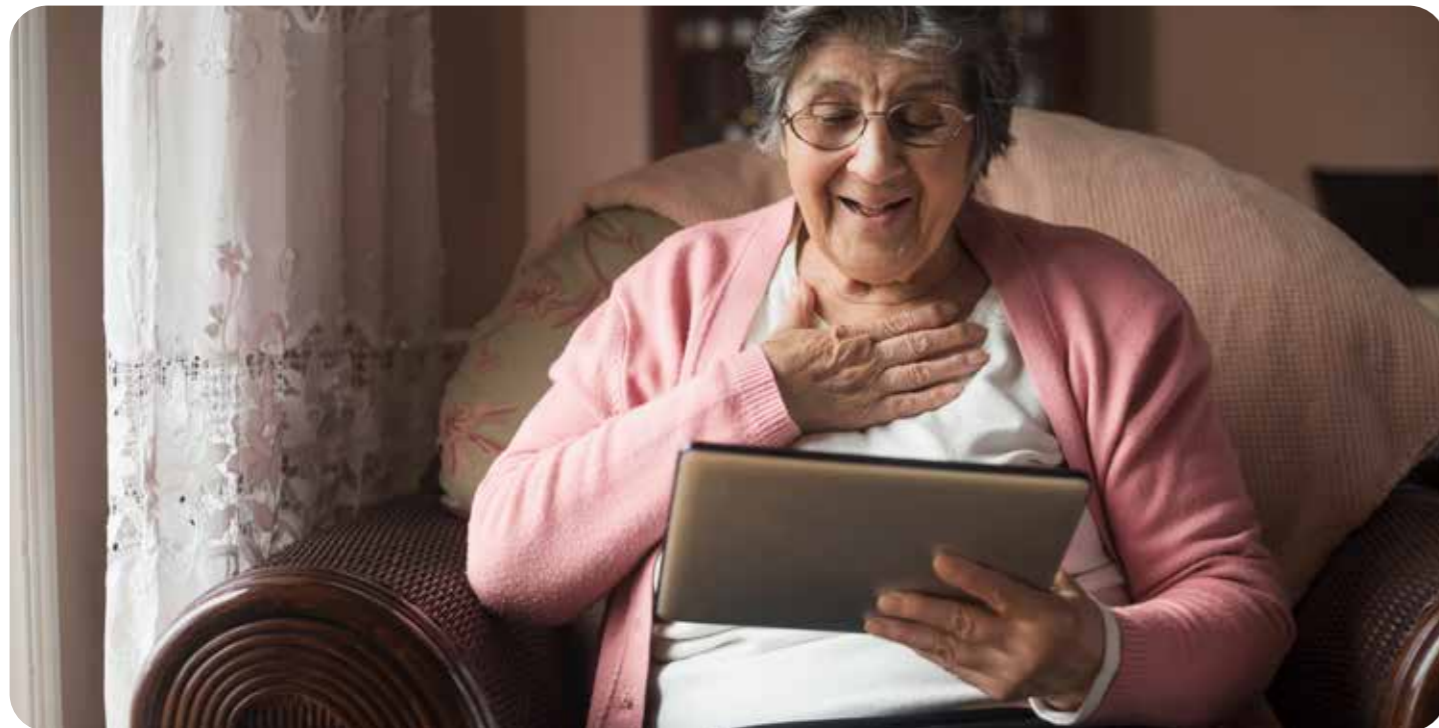
Thanks to funding from Sports England, our Active in later life team have produced and distributed Active at Home bags to older people across Devon. These were designed to encourage older people to remain active while shielding or self-isolating at home. Each bag contained our Seated Vitality at Home booklet, a thera band and stress ball to use when exercising at home, and some Age UK Devon literature. (see page 4 for more information)

- **Community Activities went online**

During this difficult year, video calling has been a lifeline for many to stay in touch with friends and family. However for many older people using technology in this way can be daunting. Consequently, our IT volunteers began providing remote support, over the telephone, guiding older people through how to use video calling apps such as Zoom, WhatsApp and Facetime. (see page 19 for more information)

One of our first activities to restart following the first national lockdown was our Outdoor Activity Club based at Stover Country Park. Following national guidelines and Covid secure measures the group met weekly enjoying a variety of different activities. However new restrictions were brought in and the group was once again forced to stop. After a short break the club began meeting virtually and so far have enjoyed having a cuppa and chat, quizzes, yoga and seated exercises from the comfort of their own homes.

At the beginning of 2021, we excitedly launched a new service - Cognitive Stimulation Therapy for people living with dementia. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions these sessions have started online. (see page 5 for more information)



- **We distributed vital information**

As the first lockdown was announced our Information and Advice team saw an increase in phone calls from worried and often distressed older people. For our advisors, no problem was too small or too big and they strived to find solutions for every client. Many people were worried about getting groceries during lockdown, when supermarkets were inundated with requests for deliveries. For some older people, lack of internet access made this issue even worse. Our advisors researched availability of local providers, farm shops and catering suppliers, who stepped up to help feed individual households. We quickly created a directory of support, so we could signpost to the most appropriate organisation.

- **Benefit Support continued over the telephone**

Our Information and Advice team have worked tirelessly to provide telephone support to older people regarding benefit entitlement. Normally, when an entitlement is identified a volunteer would be assigned to visit and help complete any benefit forms required for the claim. However, all home visits have been suspended and our Information and Advice Advisors have been completing the forms over the phone with clients. This will continue until we are able to resume visiting older people in their homes.



Through everything we do at Age UK Devon, our core aim is to always support older people to love later life. This year has been no different and this focus has been at the heart of every change and decision we have made. It is what motivates our staff, an amazing team, who adapted at a moments notice and who strive to do everything they can to support the older people of Devon.

Looking to the future, we are looking forward to when it is safe to be face to face with our staff, clients and volunteers again, to when we can restart our community activities and launch our new handypersons service.

We are ready to embrace our new normal and continue to be here for older people across Devon.



# Fundraising

## The Big Knit 2021



### What is the Big Knit?

The Big Knit, run by Age UK in partnership with Innocent Drinks, encourages the creation of little knitted hats, which adorn smoothie bottles. Each little hat raises **25p** and Age UK Devon's previous campaign **raised £5192.50** to support older people in Devon through the cold winter months.

This year, we are asking all knitters and crocheters across Devon to help us again by dusting off your needles or hooks to meet our target of **creating 20,000 hats**. All monies raised from the Big Knit will help provide practical and emotional support to older people across Devon.

### How to get involved?

Getting involved is very simple! Knit or crochet as many Big Knit hats as possible and send them to us by **1 October 2021**.

Anyone can join in, with a variety of patterns available for all abilities on our website at [www.ageuk.org.uk/devon/activities-and-events/big-knit-2020](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/devon/activities-and-events/big-knit-2020).

If you are unable to access the online patterns please contact us on **0333 241 2340** to arrange for copies to be sent to you.

### Where to send your hats?

When your little hats are ready, please send them to us at:

**Age UK Devon, 1 Manaton Court, Matford Business Park, Exeter, EX2 8PF.**

(Due to lockdown our office is currently closed, therefore if you are able please hold onto your hats until we reopen. If this will be a problem please contact us.)

When sending your hats, please **include your contact details** as we would love to be able to send you a personal thank you for all your hard work.

We will gather all the tiny hats we receive together, safely looking after them until we are ready to send them to Innocent Drinks. They will then be placed on smoothie bottles at the beginning of 2022.

We will provide regular updates on our progress on our website, Facebook and Twitter pages (**@AgeUKDevon**) and in future issues of **engage**.

If you are knitting or crocheting for us we would love to hear from you to keep up to date with how your doing and provide any support we can. Contact us on **0333 241 2340**, [info@ageukdevon.co.uk](mailto:info@ageukdevon.co.uk) or send us a message through social media.





# Focus on Volunteers

## Volunteer Opportunity - Trustee

As we grow older we all face new challenges but that doesn't stop us from wanting a fulfilling, independent life. At Age UK Devon, we are passionate that everyone should have the opportunity to be able to make the most of later life, whatever their circumstances, wants and needs. We offer specialised independent advice and quality services to help older people love later life.

If you want to help us make a difference, you may be the Trustee we are looking for. We are looking for new Trustees who are passionate about improving the lives of older people to join our dynamic Board. Being a Trustee can be very rewarding and enjoyable, offering an opportunity to serve the community whilst learning new skills.

The Trustees' role is to focus on the strategic direction of Age UK Devon and to ensure effectiveness and accountability. Day-to-day operational decisions are delegated to the Chief Executive and the staff team.

The recruitment process involves potential Trustees completing an application form, having an interview with the Chief Executive and Chair, and attending a board meeting to observe proceedings. Appointments are made subject to us receiving two satisfactory references and a Disclosure and Barring Service check at enhanced level.

Trustees need a broad outlook and to be able to commit to up to four meetings a year. There are additional committee meetings for elected trustees.

For an informal chat about this role, please contact Sophie Littlewood, Chief Executive on **0333 241 2340** or email **info@ageukdevon.co.uk**.

***"It is useful to have trustees who have different expertise and backgrounds from each other. We all contribute different things, which might be a particular knowledge or expertise or, just as important, the time and commitment to be involved."***

**Liz Michaelson**  
**Chair of Trustees, Age UK Devon**

## Supporting Older People to Get Digitally Connected

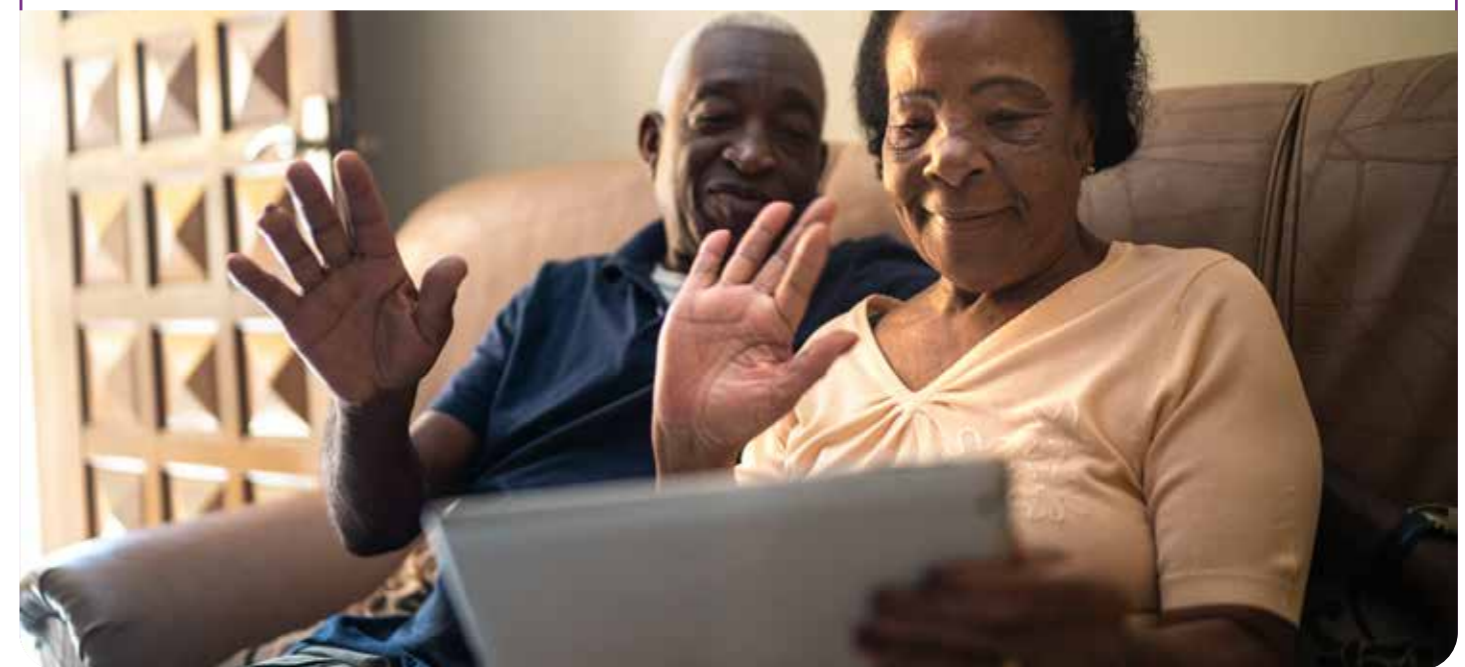
Age UK Devon understands for some older people using technology can be daunting and it can be difficult to know where to start. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic technology has been a lifeline for many to stay in touch with friends and family, particularly whilst having to shield.

Our IT volunteers can provide support to older people, over the telephone, by taking them through how to use video calling apps such as Zoom, WhatsApp and Facetime. These telephone calls will be tailored to the older person's needs and our volunteers will teach how to use the app of their choice. All our IT volunteers have backgrounds in IT and have undergone a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Check. When government guidance allows, we will return to our IT Support at Home Service, where our volunteers will provide one-to-one support in older people's homes.

Trish Warren, Active in Later Life Manager said, "Our volunteers are dedicated in helping older people get online. We would like to reach out to older people to help make this happen and to brighten their days. Sharing precious moments with a friend or family member makes such a huge difference, especially to those living alone and having to shield".

The telephone support is provided free-of-charge, but donations to Age UK Devon will be gratefully received.

If you, or a friend or family member, would like some support to connect with others please call Age UK Devon on **0333 241 2340** or email us at **info@ageukdevon.co.uk**.





# Other News



## Devon Libraries

### At home and in the community, we're here for you

There's a world of ideas, imagination, information and knowledge available from your local library, not just in the building itself, but brought right into your home as well.

### Free library membership

You can join Devon Libraries today for FREE and start ordering books straight away. You can use your membership card at any library in Devon, as well as online.

Once you're a member you can:

**BORROW** up to 24 books, 4 CDs (music and audio books), 4 DVDs and 4 language courses, all together

**DOWNLOAD:** 5 eBooks or eAudiobooks, unlimited eMagazines which you can then keep and access to thousands of eNewspapers

**ONLINE:** Browse our catalogue, order (for a small fee) and renew books

**IN THE LIBRARY:** Go online with up to two hours' computer and internet access a day, and take part in events, clubs and learning activities.



### Good Neighbours library membership scheme

If you can't get to the library, and have a friend, carer or family member who can help, they can become an official Good Neighbour.

They can join the scheme at your local library. There are no fines or audiobook hire charges on Good Neighbour tickets and items are issued for six weeks.

### Home Library Service

Our Home Library Service delivers books to people unable to get to the library because of ill health, mobility problems or caring responsibilities. If that's you, then a dedicated volunteer will choose books for you and deliver them to your home, free of charge. This includes large print and audiobooks.

And if you've got time on your hands and want to help out people in your community, why not become a volunteer with the Home Library Service?

To receive the Home Library service or find out about becoming a volunteer:

- ask at your local library (library buildings are closed during lockdown so please check via phone or email at this time)
- call your local library
- send an email to [home.library@librariesunlimited.org.uk](mailto:home.library@librariesunlimited.org.uk)

### Mobile Libraries

Our four Devon Mobile Libraries visit rural communities every four weeks. They are based in Exmouth, Ivybridge, Tiverton and Torrington, and you can find out where they stop at [www.devonlibraries.org.uk](http://www.devonlibraries.org.uk)

During lockdown our mobile libraries will not be on the road, but the mobile library team will be providing a targeted response to isolated individuals within rural communities. Contact your nearest base library to check the current arrangements.

Each mobile library carries books, audiobooks and information. You can choose from what's there, or reserve what you like online, by telephone or email to your nearest base library, or at the mobile library itself, for a small charge. You can also reserve items such as DVDs and music CDs and we'll bring them from our physical libraries to your next mobile stop.

### Digital library

A world of eBooks, audiobooks, eMagazines, eNewspapers and reference subscriptions has always been available online. But since the pandemic we're also putting regular events online including reading groups, online quizzes, virtual author talks, and staff book recommendations.

***"Volunteer David visits me every week in my residential home and delivers two books covering a wide range of authors. We spend time discussing the books and chat about my week. I would recommend this wonderful service to anybody who loves reading but is unable to visit their library."***  
**Poppy, aged 97, Sidmouth**



Email us: [info@librariesunlimited.org.uk](mailto:info@librariesunlimited.org.uk)

Call us: **0345 155 1001**

[www.librariesunlimited.org.uk](http://www.librariesunlimited.org.uk)

Libraries Unlimited is a registered charity (1170092) responsible for running Devon Libraries and Torbay Libraries.



# Our Services

Age UK Devon has many services and activities across Devon, and we support many more independent activities. Call us on **0333 241 2340** to see how we can help you.

## Digital Support

Group sessions, and/or one to one support (including home visits) for older people wanting to learn more about computers, iPads and getting online.

## Physical Activities

Gentle exercise to music classes, fitness with friends, walking basketball, walking football, guided walks and much more.

## Lunch Clubs

Two-course meals and company at local restaurants and bistros.

## Social Groups

Opportunities for older people to meet and make new friends, have a chat, share hobbies and enjoy social activities.

## Training

Bespoke training packages available for care homes, domiciliary care agencies, community groups and individuals.

## Enabling and Home Support Service

One to one support with cleaning and housework, shopping (escorted and non-escorted), companionship, planning and preparation of light meals, support with attending appointments, organising household paperwork, and time off for carers.

## Benefit Home Visiting Service

Face to face support to assist with completing complex benefit forms.

## Better Later Lives

Support for older people who may have experienced a significant life changing event.

## Foot Care

A home visiting service to improve older people's foot health operating in parts of East Devon.

## Information and Advice

Our core areas include: money and benefits, social care, housing and signposting to local resources.

## Support for Victims of Crime

Advice and support to older people who find themselves victims of a crime.

## Will Clinics

Will writing and Will reviews, at our Newton Abbot and Ottery St Mary clinic, delivered by McClure Solicitors.

## Decluttering Package

Short term support to help clear out things at home that are no longer needed or used.

## Holiday Support Package

Support at home whilst family members are away on holiday.

# Focus On...

## Our Training

Our active in later life training packages have been designed to enable course participants to support their community and to encourage older people to be more active and lead more fulfilling lives. This may be through volunteering to deliver exercise classes, being a buddy to an older person, or setting up and running care home activities.

We offer the following training packages:

**Building Better Buddies** - provides volunteers with the skills, knowledge and expertise to become a Buddy, working one-to-one with older people to encourage and support them to live more fulfilling and active lives

**Come to Tea** - for care home staff and volunteers to develop different ways of delivering activity sessions for their residents, be it small parties in a resident's room, or a trip to the local cafe or park.

**Life & Soul** - for sheltered housing residents who want to volunteer to organise and deliver small-scale activities that encourage other residents to engage in stimulating and meaningful activity.

**Seated Vitality** - for individuals who want to deliver chair-based exercise sessions for groups of older people who have compromised mobility.

Our training can be delivered to health and social care organisations, volunteers and individuals. Each participant will receive a training manual and a certificate of completion. Participants of Seated Vitality will also receive an Age UK Devon stress ball.

Our trainer, Trish Warren, Active in Later Life Manager is a qualified Fitness Instructor, ASA swimming coach, qualified Chair Based Exercise Instructor and accredited Trainer (Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector) and has worked for Age UK Devon since 2008.

Please contact **Trish Warren** on **0333 241 2340** for an informal chat about your training requirements, so we can provide you with a quote for a training package that meets your needs.







*we need your*  
**woolpower**

Knit or crochet a little hat. We'll pop it on one of our smoothie bottles, and give 25p to Age UK for every behatted drink sold.



send your hats to:

Age UK Devon  
1 Manaton Court,  
Exeter,  
EX2 8PF



Age UK is a registered charity (1128267)