

# Annual Impact

# Report



**2023-24**

**Registered Number: 03942023**

**Charity Number: 1080545**

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# 01 Reference & administration information

**Year ending 31st March 2024**

## Trustees

Craig Guthrie, Chair  
Charlotte Granby (nee Wood), Vice Chair  
Caroline Smith (resigned 31st March 2024)  
Iain Balchin, Treasurer  
Brian O'Connell  
Robert Rankin (retired as Chair 27th September 2023)  
Michelle Worthing  
John Bateman (Appointed 27th September 2023)  
Darren Kangurs (Appointed 13th December 2023)  
Peter Evans (Resigned 27th September 2023)

## CEO/Company Secretary

Julia Neal

## Auditors

Ormerod Rutter  
Chartered Accountants,  
The Oakley,  
Kidderminster Road,  
Droitwich.  
WR9 9AY.

## Solicitors

Harrison Clark  
Rickerbys,  
5 Deansway,  
Worcester.  
WR1 2JG

## Charity Number

1080545

## Registered Number

03942023

## Address

Malvern Gate,  
Bromwich Road,  
Worcester.  
WR2 4BN

## Telephone

0800 008 6077

## Email

[referralhub@ageukhw.org.uk](mailto:referralhub@ageukhw.org.uk)

## Website

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

## Bankers

CAF Bank,  
West Mailing.  
ME19 4JQ

HSBC,  
6 Board Street,  
Worcester.  
WR1 3LH

RBS,  
Drummonds House (CR) Branch,  
1 Redheughs Avenue,  
Edinburgh.  
EH12 9JN

# 02 A letter from the Chair



**Craig  
Guthrie**

**I feel truly honoured to have been appointed as Chair of Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire. I recognise the importance of the role, and I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to my fellow Trustees for entrusting me with this responsibility.**

First and foremost, I want to acknowledge the incredible work that Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire has been doing in our communities for many years. The tireless efforts of our dedicated staff, volunteers, trustees and supporters have made a profound difference in the lives of older adults. It is my privilege to be part of an organisation that provides such vital services, support, and companionship to those who need it most.

The Board were extremely saddened to hear of the death, after a short illness, of our outgoing Chair, Rob. His dedication and leadership, particularly during the pandemic, enabled the ongoing support of many older people. His contributions set a high standard and reflected his commitment to the Charity and everything that it stands for.

Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire is at the forefront of promoting a society where older adults are valued, respected and can enjoy a high quality of life.



We will continue our efforts to combat loneliness and isolation, provide essential services, and advocate for the rights and well-being of older individuals in our communities.

However, none of this would be possible without the hard work, enthusiasm and commitment of our team who make our mission a reality, and I want to express my sincere thanks for all their ongoing contributions.

As I embark on this new journey, I am excited about the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead and know that with the support of our staff, volunteers and the communities in which we operate, we will continue to make a meaningful impact on the lives of older adults in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

# 03 A message from the CEO



**Julia  
Neal**

**I am very proud to present this year's Impact Report which I hope will provide a flavour of the incredible range of support and services we have provided for older people during the last twelve months.**

Our mission is to make a positive difference to the lives of older people across our two counties and we have managed to support more clients than ever before in pursuit of this.

We are now halfway through achieving our three-year strategy and have made good progress in ensuring that we deliver what is most needed and what makes most difference to older people, whilst ensuring that we have the systems and processes in place to do this sustainably and effectively.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Rob Rankin, our outgoing chair, for his dedication to the role over the last four years. Rob took over the role at a time that was particularly challenging for the charity and continued through the pandemic at a time when older people needed more support than ever.

On a personal note, Rob supported me in my first CEO role and was endlessly patient in doing so and I am very grateful for his wise words and kindness. I am very much looking forward to working with Craig Guthrie, our new Chair of Trustees, to ensure that the charity continues to evolve and remain fit for the future.

This year has been a particularly challenging one for Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire as we strive to reach out to more people who need our help, but do not necessarily come forward to ask for it. This includes those clients who leave hospital after an unplanned stay and return home, often alone and with no support and therefore particularly vulnerable.

I am very proud that we have been able to support more people in this situation than ever before to regain their confidence and return to independence and I know that this help makes a significant difference to them.



This work, whilst providing a lifeline for individuals, also plays a part in supporting a health and care system that is increasingly struggling to treat older people with the dignity and respect that they deserve.

That system however is incredibly stretched and the funding available for this type of work still short term and subject to ever changing priorities. We continue to work with partners to secure a more sustainable solution whilst we maintain a service that is vital for older people.

As more older people need our help, it costs us more than ever to do the work that we do. As an independent charity, attracting the funding to do this work becomes ever more challenging and time consuming.



We were grateful to receive

**£767,441**

funding as grants or contracts from the NHS and local councils.

We are, however, increasingly reliant on our fundraising activities to be able to work towards our mission and we have invested in the resource to be able to do this more effectively.

I am very proud that we have been there for thousands of older people and incredibly grateful to the volunteers, staff and funders who have enabled us to do this so successfully.

I am determined to ensure that the charity becomes more financially sustainable so that we can continue this vital work and achieve what we have set out to do over the coming years. Let's achieve our vision of making Herefordshire and Worcestershire a great place to grow older.





## 04 Who we are

**For nearly 40 years we have been working to transform what it means to live well across two of England's largest counties. We work with statutory and voluntary sector organisations to identify the changing needs of older people and our responses to those needs includes delivery of specialist, person-centred services, activities and campaigns.**

Based on an ethos of volunteering and engagement with local communities, we support people over fifty by providing opportunities to maximise their independence, health and wellbeing, or help them through a crisis period in their lives. Working with people across such an age span is incredibly challenging; we work with as many people under seventy years of age as we do over seventy.

Our services form a cohesive approach to helping older people by improving their emotional, social and financial wellbeing; we are committed to enabling individuals as they age to maximise their independence and to be able to live more fulfilling lives.

Listening to older people themselves, as well as working with other statutory and voluntary sector organisations helps us to understand the changing needs of our population and to

respond flexibly. From running a busy Information and Advice Line to providing support for people coming home from hospital and from providing a Dementia Wellbeing Service to supporting community groups such as Walking Football and Men in Sheds, our specialist and personalised provision makes a difference to those people who really need our support.

As our older population and particularly the number of people affected by dementia continues to grow, the impact of the cost-of-living crisis remains a significant issue and the impact of societal change increasingly threatens to marginalise those who are not digitally connected. We will continue to develop our support and services in order to achieve our vision of making Herefordshire and Worcestershire a great place to grow older.

# A summary of our services

## **We support older people to maintain their independence and provide help during times of crisis.**

Our one stop information and advice service provides older people, their relatives and carers with the information they need on a range of issues including benefits, adult social care and locally available services.

For some older people who want to stay living in their own homes for as long as possible, essential tasks can become challenging and maintaining independence more difficult to achieve. Our Home from Hospital Service is a safety net for those who have no one at home to support them, providing practical help such as cooking, cleaning & shopping or emotional support such as companionship to improve confidence and wellbeing while they recuperate, and is provided free of charge. Other services including handyman, gardening, housekeeping, IT support and footcare, enhance the quality of life for older people by providing safety, security and independence.



## **We support older people to maintain their independence and provide help during times of crisis.**

We provide a vast range of activities to promote healthy living and improve physical and emotional wellbeing. Our goal is to reduce social isolation and loneliness which can be detrimental to health; over half of older people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire live on their own. The services we provide are aimed at getting people out and about and taking part in sports, companionship and meaningful activities.

This helps promote routines of staying active, learning new skills and taking part in activities which promote forming friendships and peer support groups. Support with technology is particularly important to ensure that older people are not disadvantaged, given the increasing need for digital skills needed to negotiate everyday life.







## We train those who support older people.

We provide high quality, up to date training courses for a range of professionals, organisations, families and personal carers who are supporting older people.

Each course is developed and refined through the first-hand experiences of our trainers who work in these settings. Our training is a crucial part of how we achieve our mission because it supports and enables those working with older people to develop the high standards that we promote.

Our most popular courses include: First Aid and Basic Life Support, Moving and Handling and Medication Awareness. These are delivered mainly to front line staff providing personal care and support for older people in care settings or in their own homes.

## We support people living with dementia and their carers to lead more fulfilling lives.

Our services aim to provide better outcomes through a range of interventions including activities for people living with dementia, their carers and families.

This includes one-to-one support for those who have recently been diagnosed (including Young Onset Dementia), and evidence-based group activities that really make a difference. Our Dementia Cafés are an opportunity for much needed social support, particularly for carers and our Meeting Centres offer a structured day of activities which are hugely beneficial to people living with Dementia as well as providing respite for carers.

We also provide evidence based therapeutic interventions in the form of MCST courses. Our experienced and dedicated team are well respected and provide significant support to the wider community seeking to advocate for people living with dementia.



# 05 Our trustees

As our external environment continues to change and the challenges we face become more complex, the commitment of our trustees is now as important as ever. Our Board is an elected group who have overall responsibility for the management of Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire.

They work hard to ensure the best interests of our clients in management decisions. The trustee role is voluntary, a significant responsibility and a real public service and we are very grateful for their support without which we would not be able to run the Charity.

This year we were pleased to appoint a new Chair, Craig Guthrie, as Rob Rankin stepped down after being in the role for three years. We were delighted that Rob agreed to stay on the Board and this will provide vital continuity.



**Craig  
Guthrie**  
Chair

A retired senior police officer, having served over 30 years at various ranks, in a variety of uniform and detective roles. His last two years' service was spent on secondment to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC - now HMICFRS) with specific responsibility for each of the police forces in Wales.

Craig joined the Board of Trustees in May 2022. He was drawn to Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire, as he enjoys collaborating and working with others who share his values, work ethic and commitment to supporting others.

We were also delighted to appoint two new trustees who bring a wealth of experience in IT, business and governance to the Board.



**John  
Bateman**



**Darren  
Kangurs**

We were sad to say goodbye to two of our longstanding Trustees, Caroline Smith and Peter Evans.

Caroline joined us in 2020, and her experience and expertise in Human Resources has meant that she has been a great asset for the Senior Leadership Team.

Peter joined us in 2019, having previously been a Trustee and then Chair at Age UK Droitwich Spa, prior to its merger with Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire in 2018.

He was a representative on our board for four years and we are delighted that since stepping down he has continued to support us. Both as a volunteer at fundraising events and with our Bromsgrove Dementia Meeting Centre, where his hard work and assistance are very much appreciated.



I've enjoyed my time with Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire, it provided challenge but was very rewarding. The charity provides some excellent services and really does meet the needs of the people it supports. I would like to say best wishes for the future and that I hope you continue the great work.

- Caroline Smith.



# 06 Our services

This year our aim has been to continue developing the wide range of services we offer older people living in the two counties, whilst responding to the requests for new services such as the launch of three weekly Creative Arts sessions, a weekly Senior Gay Womens' Social Group, our Veteran's Telephone Befriending Service and a weekly free hot meal offer from our Drybridge House Centre in Hereford.

We strive to achieve the highest quality of service to our clients was recognized in the award of the Quality of Advice Standard which was achieved in one year by our Information and Advice Service and our self assessment in the Quality of Signposting Standard. Our teams have continued to develop quality assurance processes by reporting progress against key performance indicators, set by the organisation as well as external funders.

## Support for older people to maintain their independence.

Our one stop information and advice service provides older people, their relatives and carers with the information they need on a range of issues including benefits, adult social care and locally available services.

Our telephone help line responds to over 100 calls every week, many of whom received an immediate response to their query. Our Information and Advice team supported 1387 people with more specialist and personalised advice.



**389**

clients were supported to apply for benefits and were awarded a total of

**£1.4m**

of unclaimed benefits as a result of our intervention.

During the year our Information and Advice team welcomed two new staff members who joined us as Apprentice I&A Advisors studying an NVQ 3 in Advice and Guidance.

The apprenticeship role was developed as a response to the challenges of recruiting to these posts nationally and now provides us with career progression opportunities within the Charity.



It has made a tremendous difference as we can now pay a carer to come in and assist with dressing.

## This is why we do it:

Mr X, who cares for his wife, contacted for support with benefits and how to apply for Attendance Allowance.

Mrs X has a number of health issues severely affecting her mobility and they thought they would be eligible, but found the form complicated and daunting. Our advisor talked through the form question by question until they understood how to complete it.

As a result, Mr X was awarded the higher rate of Attendance Allowance which gave them £101.75 extra income per week (£5,291 over a year) as well as back pay of £800. This extra income meant that they were able to afford a carer to come in and help Mrs X with dressing in the morning, reducing the strain on Mr X.

Some of our clients want to stay living in their own homes for as long as possible, but find essential tasks becoming challenging and maintaining independence more difficult to achieve. Our Help at Home team delivered over 15,000 hours support to clients in their own homes, carrying out essential tasks such as light housework, shopping and collecting prescriptions.

Our Gardening service remained popular, continuing to provide a service through the winter months and delivering twice as many hours of support to clients than predicted at the start of the year. In these ways we supported more people to be sufficiently independent to remain in their own home.

As the winter months set in, our offer of a free Home Energy Check was much appreciated and taken up by 371 households. Each Home Energy Check provides our clients with information and advice on reducing their energy consumption and the benefits of installing energy saving measures such as low energy lightbulbs, draft excluders and timer switches.

We were grateful for additional funding received from Wychavon District Council this winter, enabling us to provide an enhanced check to residents, with the addition of key items to help keep people warm and nourished on a low budget; slow cookers, portable heaters, blankets and thermal socks.

Our Help at Home team delivered over

**15,000**

hours support to clients in their own homes.

**371**

households took up our offer of a free Home Energy Check.

Our home from hospital service supported

**1086**

clients to be safely discharged from hospital.

Our Home from Hospital Service is a safety net for those who have no one at home to support them, we provide practical help including cooking, cleaning and shopping or emotional support such as companionship to improve confidence and wellbeing while they recuperate, and is provided free of charge.

During the year our Home from Hospital Service supported 1086 clients to be safely discharged from hospital including those benefiting from the launch of our new service in Herefordshire. The team worked collaboratively with colleagues from Wye Valley Trust, as well as those within the voluntary and community sector to ensure that every patient had their immediate needs met regarding home safety and food.

They created a support plan to help the client address longer term aspirations such as accessing support to maintain their home, accessing the benefits they are entitled to and linking in with assets within their own community to promote wellbeing.

### **This is why we do it:**

Miss P was referred to our Home from Hospital following a stay in hospital to receive support for her mental health condition. Miss P lives alone in a remote village with limited services and none of her family live locally.

On the day of her discharge from hospital, our assistant visited Miss P to deliver a food shop to ensure she had the essentials she needed. She also helped ensure Miss P's house was safe, by re-arranging the furniture and set the heating timer for her.



They then sat and had a cup of tea together to discuss what would best help Miss P settle back home. Miss P was concerned about how she would manage shopping and errands as she had been advised not to drive.

She was also concerned about how she was going to afford to heat her home because of the rising cost of living. She also requested some longer term support with light housework and companionship.

Our Home from Hospital team were able to link Miss P with a volunteer who provided befriending as well as doing her shopping then helping her to set up a regular online shopping delivery. We also carried out a Home Energy Check which showed that her home was poorly insulated and so our Handy person fitted draught excluders along with energy saving lightbulbs. A referral was also made for Miss P to have HW Fire Service visit to carry out a Safe and Well check.

Once the four week Home from Hospital support was completed, Miss P requested longer term support from our Help at Home service for shopping and cleaning.

For those in need of help to maintain good foot health our Footcare and Podiatry team provided appointments via our clinic held at Malvern Gate, our clinic in Pershore Medical Centre and through home visits for those who are housebound.

Our Footcare and Podiatry team provided

**1172**  
appointments.

This year we have been able to enhance our footcare support through the employment of a Footcare Practitioner who complements our service by supporting those who need more than simple toenail cutting, but not the specialist support of a podiatrist.



## Combatting loneliness and providing opportunities for those who want to be physically and socially active.

Over half of older people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire live on their own and we provided a range of activities to promote healthy living and improve physical and emotional wellbeing. All of these activities aim to reduce social isolation and loneliness which is so detrimental to health.

They do this by encouraging older people to get out and about and take part in sports, companionship and meaningful activities which helps them develop routines of staying active, learning new skills and taking part in activities which promote the development of friendships and peer support groups.

Our Walking Football team has continued to provide a weekly opportunity for participants to meet socially and maintain their fitness. As well as the opportunity to maintain their fitness, the group have established a WhatsApp group to stay connected virtually, in between sessions.

They have also taken the exciting step of becoming an affiliated club with Worcestershire FA and can now play in tournaments as a team and played against the England World Cup Walking Football winners when they visited in March this year.

Our walking football members have grown from

**25 to 44**

members from April 23 to March 24.

Our Walking Basketball team welcomed new members with

**255**

Individual attendances in the year.

Two well-established walking groups have continued to meet weekly, one based in Lower Wick in Worcester and one in Ledbury at the Rugby Club. Ledbury has seen significant growth with the number of members tripling in the year to 31.





Our Companion Line telephone befriending service is supported by

**46 volunteers**

who provide over 90 hours of support each month.

**90 hours**

of support each month.

Our Companion Line receives no external funding but the demand is increasing dramatically and far outstrips what we can currently offer, which means that we have a waiting list which we are regularly forced to close to new referrals.

A revised offer (based on similar services elsewhere, which have proved to be successful), is being trialed providing weekly calls for a 12-week period. This will be followed by a period of support for clients to engage with existing community offers and we hope that this will prove to be suitable for some clients. We are also seeking grant funding to be able to expand the service and recruit more volunteers.

Given the increasing need for digital skills to negotiate everyday life, support with technology is particularly important to ensure that older people are not disadvantaged. We offer weekly volunteer-led Digital Inclusion drop-in sessions in Pershore, Worcester, Ross, Yarpole and Ledbury.



**This is why we do it:**



It's made a big difference because I can now do my banking online and order anything I want. I think it's done a lot of good and the social side is great. - most of us look forward to seeing one another.

- Kathy, Computer Café member.

We have supported

**1200**

people through our digital sessions.

Our clients typically ask for support to access online banking, hospital appointments, online shopping and ways that they can connect with family and friends.

In this way we are helping more older people become independent with everyday tasks and to stay connected.

## Empowering people living with dementia, and their carers, to lead more fulfilling lives.

Over 600 people in Worcestershire receive a dementia diagnosis each year. Our Dementia Wellbeing Team help people at this very difficult time to navigate the support and services available to them, aiming to improve outcomes for, people living with dementia, their carers and families.

Our one-to-one support for those who have recently been diagnosed includes those with Young Onset Dementia and on average we receive 80 new referrals each month.

We made

**12,622**

contacts during the year with

**1232**

clients in the project.

We support each client to create a personalised plan outlining their aspirations and the support they would like to receive to help meet these. We provide help on a range of topics including later life planning and social activities such as dementia cafés and activity groups as well as providing information and support to carers and loved ones.

Our Dementia Cafés are an opportunity for much needed social support, particularly for carers.

### This is why we do it:

Mrs I was referred to our Dementia Wellbeing Service by the Early Intervention Dementia Service. She had recently been diagnosed with aphasia dementia and struggles to find her words and make herself understood by others. Mrs I was invited to attend an assessment to start our Maintenance Cognitive Stimulation Therapy course.

During the assessment Mrs I took part in a mini mental state exam and scored 11 which is on the lower end of the scale for being able to actively take part in the sessions. This was explained to Mrs I but as she was keen to take part she was enrolled on the course.



Initially Mrs I was quiet in the group. She was happy to attend, but not to speak up due to her concerns over using the wrong word. As time went on, Miss I became much more vocal and others in the group were considerate of the need to allow a little more time for her to speak.

At the end of the 6 month course, Mrs I's confidence to speak freely within the group had grown considerably. Her final mini mental state exam showed that through regular cognitive stimulation her score had increased from 11 to 20. Mrs I was pleased with the outcome and has gone on to attend our regular activity sessions for people living with dementia.

We also provide evidence-based therapeutic interventions and during the year have expanded the number of Mental and Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (MCST) courses offered due to an increased demand.

Each MCST course is delivered over 26 weekly sessions enabling participants to form relationships with people living in similar situations. On joining, participants take part in two forms of assessments to monitor the cognitive impact of the course as well as their feelings around the quality of their life. Assessments are repeated towards the end of the course.

Our experienced and dedicated team are well respected and provide significant support to the wider community seeking to advocate for people living with dementia. The local Dementia Partnership Board is chaired by our Service Manager and several local Dementia Action Alliance groups are supported by our Dementia Wellbeing Team.

Of the 6 cohorts delivered during the year

**77%**

of those who attended either improved or maintained their cognitive scores and

**47%**

reported an improved quality of life.



## Training those who support older people.

We provide high quality, up-to-date training courses for a range of professionals, organisations, families and personal carers who are supporting older people. Each course is developed and refined through the first-hand experiences of our trainers who work in these settings. Our training is a crucial part of how we achieve our mission by enabling those working with older people to develop the high standards that we promote.

Our most popular courses include: First Aid and Basic Life Support, Moving and Handling and Medication Awareness. These are delivered mainly to front line staff providing personal care and support for older people in care settings or in their own homes.

During the year

**1691**

individuals attended training sessions delivered by our Training Team.

This year our senior trainer has been approved to deliver Oliver McGowan Training in Herefordshire & Worcestershire. The Care Act 2022 introduced the statutory requirement for any professional working in a regulated service to undertake training about learning disability and autism.

Oliver McGowan's is the government's preferred training for health and social care staff and we are delighted to be delivering this training to partners across the system including the NHS and local council.

### This is why we do it:



It is good that this campaign has found a way to make NHS staff more aware and to try to prevent the mistakes that led to Oliver's death from lack of understanding. The Course leaders were excellent.

The course was very informative about learning disability and how to communicate effectively.



# Our service development plan for 24/25



## Digital efficiencies

Over the next twelve months we will be developing our Help at Home service by introducing digital solutions to create efficiencies which will release staff time to support more clients.



## Fixed pricing

Our Handy person service will be publishing a fixed price list for a range of tasks that are suitable for the team to deliver and will be focusing on basic installations that help to keep people safe, well and independent in their own homes. This will achieve further operational efficiencies and reduce the need for repeat visits, keeping our costs as low as possible.



## Extending Footcare

We will also extend our footcare offer further to meet the growing demand and will be exploring the opportunity of applying for Care and Quality Commission registration, which would enable us to provide additional services in clients' homes. The expansion of our Foot Care Practitioner Service will enable us to support more clients with less complex needs and keep costs at an affordable level.



## Out of hours support

In recognition that access to our telephone help line is restricted to weekday hours, a project to explore the potential for using an AI option including chatbots is planned as a solution for those who would prefer it as an initial response to their query. This is in response to the needs of those who are unable to contact us during the working day, such as carers or relatives who are at work.

Our commitment to delivering quality services will continue to develop with the standardisation of our impact measurement across all services through a review of our guided conversation and measurement scoring tools.

# Our services in summary:



# 15,529

is the Total number of  
people we supported



## 11,229

calls answered and vital  
support and information  
provided.



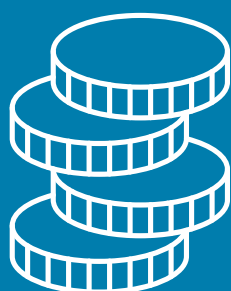
## 1086

people supported to live  
independently in their own  
home after a hospital stay or  
illness.



## 15,000

visits delivered to clients to  
help them to live  
independently in their own  
homes.



## £1.47m

secured for our clients  
to help with their  
financial worries.



## 389

home energy checks carried  
out to make best use of  
energy efficiencies.



## 3412

calls made to lonely and  
isolated people via our  
companion line.



## 1152

Referrals to our Dementia  
Well Being Service.



## 2560

sessions at our Dementia  
Meeting Centres.



## £13,682

was invested in the  
development of our people.



## 208

people gave their time to  
volunteer for the charity.



## 1172

Footcare and podiatry  
appointments.



# Our client feedback

**We collect feedback from our clients in a number of ways including leaving 'tell us what you think' cards following a home visit. We use this information to help us make improvements to our services so that they are based on what our clients need the most.**

We have been very grateful to receive more compliments and emails of thanks than ever before which have been very much appreciated by our staff. We also carry out an annual survey by contacting a random sample of clients who have benefitted from our services over the preceding year. We contact clients by telephone, letter and email to try and get as much feedback as we can.

There were two main areas of feedback in last year's survey; firstly clients reported that it is difficult to find out information about our services and secondly that for some clients it had taken us more than two days to contact them to resolve a query.

In response to this feedback, we have carried out a staffing review of our telephone help line to ensure that there is sufficient resources and expertise available to respond to enquiries

and ideally to resolve the issue during the client's initial call to us. We have now implemented a triage Hub system which means that members of staff from each specialist area are available to answer calls on a rota basis.

Our new Triage Hub not only ensures that we can respond to queries quickly and efficiently, but has also improved working relationships and communication between the different services.

We have also made improvements to our telephone system which means that we can look at the data and see that **over 96% of calls are being answered immediately**, reducing the number of clients who are not getting through or are waiting for us to get back to them to resolve their issue.

# 07 Our people

**We would like to thank all our staff for their hard work and commitment which has supported our achievements over the last 12 months.**

Here is a list of people in post between 1st April 23 and 31 March 24.

Sandra Adams - Help at Home Assistant  
Hilary Adams - Help at Home Assistant  
Marianne Agolia - Project and Quality Officer  
Molly Allsopp - Premises and IT Coordinator  
Emma Almond - Finance Apprentice  
Michelle Balfry - Help at Home Assistant  
Pamela Ballone - Fundraising Lead  
Yasmin Banbury - Pugh - Referral Hub Advisor  
Anthony Barraclough - Handyperson and Warm Homes Advisor  
Michael Beak - Gardener  
Mandy Benn - Welcome and Information Officer  
Rachel Blount - Home Support Team Leader  
Jodie Bond - Gardener  
Helen Bough - Help at Home Assistant  
Emily Bowsher - Information and Advice Advisor  
Kaye Bradley - Help at Home Assistant  
Melanie Bryan - Meeting Centre Assistant  
Jane Bryant - Help at Home Assistant  
Heather Bullock - Help at Home Team Leader  
Kelly Burgess - Dementia Meeting Centre Assistant  
Janet Burtenshaw - Help at Home Assistant  
Lucy Caden-Robinson - Communications and Marketing Manager  
Shelley Chandler - Help at Home Assistant  
Catherine Clarke - Help at Home Assistant  
Caroline Close - Help at Home Assistant  
Amy Colburn - Meeting Centre Assistant  
Jennifer Cox - Home Support Co-ordinator  
Linda Crean - Help at Home Assistant  
Georgia Crowe - Communications and Marketing Intern



Lorna Davies - Podiatrist  
Donna Davies - Meeting Centre Assistant  
Jeanette Davies - Volunteer Development Manager  
Tanya Davies - Dementia Care Home 121 Assistant  
Sharon Davies - Help at Home Assistant  
Louisa Denyer - Podiatrist  
Wendy Diamond - Information and Advice Advisor  
Sharon Durnan - HR Manager  
Trudy Easton - Help at Home Assistant  
Carley Edge - Social Inclusion and Wellbeing Activities Coordinator  
Isabel Ellis - Dementia Activities Co-ordinator  
Jayne Flaxman - Help at Home Assistant  
Rachael Ford - Home Support Service Manager  
Cheryl Foster - Help at Home Assistant  
Lesley Fraser-Young - Associate Trainer  
Victoria Frith - Home from Hospital Coordinator  
Vanessa Gannon - Help at Home Assistant  
Karen Gardiner - Help at Home Assistant  
Jill Gibbons - Help at Home Assistant  
Joanne Goddard - Meeting Centre Assistant  
Linda Goodman - Information and Advice Advisor  
Pamela Graham - Information and Advice Advisor  
Gemma Gray - Help at Home Assistant  
Philip Griffiths - Help at Home Assistant  
Anna Gwinnett - Information and Advice Advisor  
Julie Hale - Meeting Centre Assistant  
Helen Hall - Herefordshire Home Support Manager  
Colin Hanley - Lead Trainer  
Denise Harland - Dementia Triage  
Danielle Harrison - Admin at Home Coordinator



Anne Hawley - Help at Home Assistant  
Chloe Heath - Hereford Help at Home Assistant  
Jude Henderson - Director of Service Improvement  
Julie Hill Meeting - Centre Assistant  
David Hooper - Activities Assistant  
Amanda Hughes - Help at Home Assistant  
Charmaine Ince - Meeting Centre Assistant  
Etsuko Inufusa - Help at Home Assistant  
Teresa Isles - Finance and Payroll Assistant  
Louise Jenkins - Dementia Meeting Centre Team Leader  
Naomi Jepson - Foot Health Practitioner  
Sarah Johnson-Davies - Herefordshire Meeting Centre Team Leader  
Laura Jones - Help at Home Assistant  
Christine Jones - Help at Home Assistant  
Nicola Joyner - Help at Home Assistant  
Juliette Kay - Volunteer Manager  
Audrey Keenan - Project Manager  
Helen Kelly - Quality and Governance Lead  
Charlotte Kerr - Head of People  
Steven Kerrigan - Information and Advice - Veterans Advisor  
Amanda Kitteringham - Hereford Meeting Centre Assistant  
Hayley Knight - Help at Home Assistant  
Denise Knight - Help at Home Assistant  
Julia Krapivina - Trainee Information and Advice Advisor  
Georgia Langston - Herefordshire Help at Home and Gardening Team Leader  
Nicola Lannie - Help at Home Service Manager  
Debra Last - Meeting Centre Assistant  
Jane Louch - Help at Home Assistant  
Julie Ludlam - Help at Home Assistant  
Julie Mansell - Associate Trainer  
Victoria Marsden - Help at Home Assistant  
Anne McNaughton - Learning & Development Officer  
Christine Meredith - Meeting Centre Cook  
Sharon Minchin - Help at Home Assistant  
Yvonne Mitchell - Trainee Information and Advice Advisor  
Catherine Mole - Meeting Centre Assistant

Paula Monk - Help at Home Assistant  
Anne Montgomery - Dementia Meeting Centre Team Leader  
Bethan Murgatroyd - Help at Home Assistant  
Sonya Murray - Information, Advice and Training Service Manager  
Susan Murray - Help at Home Team Leader  
Julia Neal - Chief Executive Officer  
Peter Nelder - Handyman and Warm Homes Advisor  
Abigail Newman - Executive Assistant  
Ruth Nicholls - Meeting Centre Assistant  
David Noke - Handyman and Warm Homes Advisor  
Wanda Norton - Help at Home Assistant  
Sian O'Brien - Independence at Home Coordinator  
Bidemi Oluwole - Finance and Payroll Intern  
Jennifer Onslow-Free - Gardener  
Christopher Ovenden - Help at Home Assistant  
Christine Owens - Help at Home Assistant  
Pushpa Parmar - Help at Home Assistant  
Claire Patterson - Help at Home Assistant  
Amanda Payne - Help at Home Assistant  
Russell Payne - Gardener  
Corinne Peart - Help at Home Assistant  
Jodie Peek-Greening - Fundraising Coordinator  
Elaine Perrie - Help at Home Assistant  
Keith Price - Information and Advice Advisor  
Ann Price - Director of Information and Finance  
Susan Pritchard - Associate Trainer  
Lawna Randall - Hereford Help at Home Assistant  
Abigail Rayner - Fundraising Apprentice  
Kelly Reeves - Dementia Services Manager  
Lucia Reynolds - Training Administrator  
Samantha Roberts - Referral Hub Advisor



I love working for the charity and feel that they provide a vital link for older people.

Lucia Reynolds - Training Administrator  
 Samantha Roberts - Referral Hub Advisor  
 Maddison Roberts - People and Organisational Development Apprentice  
 Elizabeth Roberts - Help at Home Assistant  
 Helen Robertshaw - Independence at Home Coordinator  
 Samantha Saunders - Help at Home Assistant  
 Caroline Savage - Social Inclusion and Wellbeing Service Manager  
 Simon Scarratt - Meeting Centre Assistant  
 Henrietta Scott - Home from Hospital Coordinator  
 Johanna Shearman - Finance and Information Manager  
 Jared Shinnie - IT Development Manager  
 Laura Simnett - Befriending Team Leader  
 Priscilla Simon - Help at Home Assistant  
 Lisa Smith - Referral Hub Advisor  
 Catherine Smith - Help at Home Assistant  
 Edward Smith - Gardener  
 Joanne Smith - Help at Home Assistant  
 Benjamin Snookes - Help at Home Assistant  
 Angela Solloway - Help at Home Assistant  
 Lisa Southern - Help at Home Assistant  
 Carly Spence - Home From Hospital Service Manager  
 Harriet Sproule - Help at Home Assistant  
 Cassie Stokes - Help at Home Assistant  
 Margaret Stoneham - People and Organisational Development Coordinator



### Our staff say:

- ✓ They are proud to work in the charity and have a personal sense of achievement from their work.
- ✓ The Senior Leadership Team demonstrate the Charity's values and the majority of staff consider decision making by the Senior Leadership Team is consistent.
- ✓ Staff feel appreciated, feel motivated to do a good job and almost entirely feel their wellbeing is acknowledged and prioritised.

Dylan Swann - Communications and Marketing Apprentice  
 Megan Symmonds - Services Apprentice  
 Mark Tandy Dementia - Wellbeing Service Support Advisor  
 Joanne Tatham - Dementia Wellbeing Service Support Advisor  
 Angela Taylor - Help at Home Team Leader  
 Harriet Thomas - Help at Home Assistant  
 Katherine Thorp - Help at Home Assistant  
 Victoria Tramontana - Dementia Activity Co-ordinator  
 Sarah Turner - Information and Advice Manager  
 Gillian Tweney - Help at Home Assistant  
 Gillian Tythacott - Herefordshire Service Manager  
 Stojan Vasiljevic - Gardener  
 Susan Vyse - Help at Home Supervisor  
 Kay Wall - Welcome and Information Officer  
 Phillippa Waterman - Associate Trainer  
 Helen Whatmore - Dementia Wellbeing Team Leader  
 Stephen White - Gardener  
 Emma White - Help at Home Assistant  
 Sarah Whitmore - Help at Home Assistant  
 Abby Wicks - Help at Home Assistant  
 Shirley Williams - Help at Home Assistant  
 Samuel Wilson - Communications and Marketing  
 Pamela Wood - Associate Trainer  
 Rosemary Wood-Jones - Help at Home Assistant  
 Samina Zabir - Help at Home Assistant

# Our volunteers

We have an amazing team of 208 registered volunteers who support us throughout our organisation making it possible for us to deliver our wide range of services. This support is vital to the charity and the older people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The ethos of volunteering has a positive impact on wellbeing and helps us to build a stronger and more resilient community.

A huge thank you to all our volunteers who have helped us to do what we do. Without them we simply could not have been there when it mattered. We are incredibly lucky to benefit from so much support, they make a huge difference in vital roles such as befriending, fundraising and supporting people to be more independent and safe when they leave hospital.

## What our volunteers say about their time supporting Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire:



Volunteering makes me feel good. I enjoy it and feel better for it. It's a pleasure to lend a little help to others and its a simple process.

I haven't felt this happy and enjoying helping and being part of a team in a very long time.

It makes me feel good that I have helped someone and brightened their day even if it's just for a chat.

Age UK H&W are a good organisation to be involved with. It can be very satisfying and it is appreciated.

It's rewarding. There are benefits for myself as well as the client. I thought it was just going to be one sided for the clients benefit, but it's not.

This is the most rewarding thing I've ever done.

# 08 Our supporters and funders

Working collaboratively is key to being able to achieve our mission of making a difference to older people across our two counties and we work collaboratively with a range of partners to ensure that older people can access the help that they need. Together, we deliver services and make and accept referrals for support.

This year we have worked hard to develop strong and healthy partnerships and maintained strong working relationships with all the organisations we collaborated with, sharing knowledge and expertise to support older people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

We have an important leadership role within the local voluntary sector and in order to advocate effectively for the needs of older

people we play an active role in various boards, forums and committees we attend.

These include the Integrated Care Partnership Board, the Worcestershire Executive Committee and Clinical Practitioners Forum, Herefordshire Community Partnership, Worcestershire VCS Alliance and the Worcestershire Safeguarding Board.

## What some of our partners have said about us:



Working in partnership with Age UK H&W has enabled us to effectively utilise our UK Shared Prosperity Fund by building on existing programmes and services to help us deliver on key targets around domestic energy efficiency.

- Matthew Barker, Wychavon District Council.



Good introduction to the course, staff understood what was expected of them. Staff were fully engaged throughout the session. The length of training time was perfect. The Trainer kept the sessions on track and made the staff feel at ease when asking questions; ongoing interactive conversations.

- Training Manager, Stanfield Nursing Home.

# Cadent

Your Gas Network



Age UK H&W outreach programme helps us to reach individuals within their own communities by providing support to those dealing with additional challenges including illness, bereavement or loneliness.

They enable them to stay safe and warm in their own homes by ensuring they have access to the benefits they are entitled to. It has been a pleasure working with the team during the last year and we look forward to continuing the relationship.

-Mary O'Shaughnessy, Safeguarding Specialist.



**NIHR** | National Institute for Health and Care Research



The NIHR Research Ready Communities programme has been supported in the West Midlands by Age UK H&W, and this has enabled the Clinical Research Network West Midlands to continue making inroads with the local voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise sector (VCFSE). Developing relationships with the VCFSE is challenging for research organisations.

Age UK H&W provides the platform and, importantly, the support for community research programmes to flourish. Partnering with Age UK H&W has provided the opportunity for us to listen to views and thoughts around research opportunities and also around research hesitancy directly from local people. This in turn helps us plan interventions which are responding to the needs of local people rather than what we as research organisations think is best.

-Dr Mohammed Shahik, Patient & Public involvement.

## What some of our partners have said about us:

Our services are largely funded through a range of charitable grants, service contracts and donations from the public. We continue to be grateful for this support and would like to say a big thank you to all those who have funded us during the last year and enabled us to make a difference to the lives of older people.

These include:

### Grants:



### Service Contracts:



## Donations:

We would like to thank all those who have left us a gift in their will, raised money on our behalf or donated to our charity as a one-off, on a monthly basis or in memory of a loved one.

During the year we received a legacy for £100 and donations totalling £19,806.61. We used this money to support our Hardship Fund which meant that more people could access our support and services.

Our Hardship fund was made available to clients who would otherwise be unable to access our Help at Home and Podiatry services due to the cost. A 50% reduction was offered to those in specific circumstances and often used as a bridge during the benefit application process.

Our Hardship fund was also used to implement a range of new services from our Drybridge House Centre designed to combat social isolation and loneliness and provide a warm space and food during the colder months.

Weekly crafting sessions are now being delivered along with a weekly hot meal service which can be accessed by clients free of charge.



# 09 Our fundraising activity

This year we have focused on our community fundraising activity and now have a core team of dedicated volunteers and a fundraising manager who have hosted several unique events.

Our events included an entertaining Clairvoyant night at the Ravenmeadow Golf Club, a lively Ceilidh dance event, and an engaging wine tasting session held at Bottles Wine Shop.

Our most successful event was our ABBA Tribute night that was a testament to the power of community and music in supporting our cause.

Our ABBA tribute night was attended by

**650**

people and raised an impressive total of over:

**£8500**

Income and event attendance this year saw significant growth, thanks to a combination of strategies including paid promotion to increase ticket sales, holding raffles during events, and improved messaging, which not only increased our immediate revenue, but also helped to secure commitment to more regular donations.

We also launched a regular donation scheme through Just Giving which can be accessed via our website and on our email signatures. This means that we can send personal messages of thanks to each donor.

Over the past year, we held three local bucket collections at Asda, Worcester, Morrisons, Malvern and Sainsburys St Johns, with our fundraising volunteers, who regularly support with collections, leaflet drops and community events. We are very grateful to all those who have generously supported and donated, either with the gift of their time or through their kind donations to Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire.



We were pleased to work with Gifted Philanthropy, who have helped us develop an income generation strategy which will help us prioritise our resources next year.

This work has laid a good foundation on which to build and we are grateful to the many local stakeholders who gave up their time to input into this work and help us understand the environment in which we are operating.



# 10 Our communication and campaigns

Age UK Herefordshire and Worcestershire work hard to amplify the voices of older people, ensuring that their concerns and needs are heard.

We have focused particularly on ensuring that we have effective representation and involvement in strategic discussions and decision making as a partner in the NHS Integrated Care System, as well as at county and more local level, including the development of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and planning in areas which particularly affect older people including dementia, frailty, end of life, housing and safeguarding.

We used various communication channels to raise awareness of the needs of older people. The challenges we highlighted included the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and its impact on the prevalence of loneliness and isolation.

The Charity also focused on digital exclusion and how it can affect the every-day lives of older people, reducing their independence if they are unable to use online banking, make hospital appointments or access a parking app.

We used campaigns, blog posts on social media platforms to highlight these issues, as well as having the opportunity to speak on local and national TV and radio.



We also welcomed the Under Secretary of State for Pensions to our Worcester office to discuss and give feedback some of the key issues impacting older people particularly in relation to access to information and completing benefits applications.

Our following across all social media channels increased by 11% from 2023-24.

Activity on our social media channels, which include Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and X has developed well this year and we have been increasingly successful in improving our reach.

On average

## 23,896

people every month see the information we provide. This is an increase in (unfunded) reach of

## 366%

on the previous year.

Engagement increased by

**126%**

meaning that an average of

**1208**

people per month are actively engaging with our content.

Although our online presence is important, word of mouth remains a powerful tool for the charity with at least 1,963 beneficiaries learning about our services this way.

We continue to work with a range of local community groups and healthcare providers to ensure that as many people as possible know about the services available to them. Our collaboration with the local press has also been beneficial, as it helps us share valuable knowledge and positive stories about our organisation.

Crucially, engagement, which was our key target for improvement also saw a vast improvement.

This increase was achieved by changing our approach to feature more stories about our clients and how they have benefitted from our support, as well as by adapting our messages to suit the different audiences viewing each channel.

Our aim for next year is to improve how we communicate with potential donors to support our fundraising aspirations.

We will also continue to improve our communication channels for potential referrers to ensure that we reach those who are less likely to come forward and yet need our help the most. We will also use valued client feedback to improve our website experience, particularly for carers.



## Events attended:

We attended a variety of events throughout the year in order to raise awareness of the services we provide, recruit new volunteers and develop valuable networks with other organisations. Events provide us with the opportunity to be more visible as an integral part of the communities we serve. We are very grateful to our staff and volunteers who supported us by attending the following events:

- The Big Help Out – Crown Gate, Worcester
- St Peter's Show
- Worcester Show
- Worcester Pride
- Dementia Action Week, The Valley, Evesham
- Worcester Balloon Festival
- VOW Volunteer Expo

Supporting local partner initiatives and providing expertise to meetings and forums is an important part of what we do and we were pleased to provide input to:

- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Partnership Assembly
- Worcestershire Executive Committee
- Worcestershire Falls Network
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Frailty Forum
- Worcestershire VCSE Alliance
- Herefordshire Community Partnership
- Worcester City District Collaborative,
- Wychavon District Collaborative
- Malvern hills District Collaborative
- Wyre Forest District Collaborative
- Redditch District Collaborative
- Bromsgrove District Collaborative
- H&W Dementia Programme Board
- Worcestershire Dementia Partnership
- Herefordshire Dementia Partnership
- Worcestershire County Homelessness Group
- Healthy Worcester
- Suicide Prevention Partnership



- Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB Reflection of Winter Event
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB Home for Lunch Task and Finish Group
- Bromsgrove and Redditch Ageing Well Sub Group
- Herefordshire Armed Forces Covenant Group
- Worcestershire Armed Forces Covenant Group
- Herefordshire Community Action Group Meeting
- Herefordshire Community Partnership
- Worcestershire Loneliness Partnership
- Worcestershire Safeguarding Board
- Worcestershire Safeguarding Assurance Panel

# 11 Trustees report

## Our purpose:

Our Charity's purpose (as set out in the object contained in the company's Memorandum of Association), is:

*To promote the relief of elderly people in any manner which now or hereafter may be deemed by law to be charitable, in and around the counties of Herefordshire & Worcestershire.*

## Objectives and principles:

The charitable objects for which the organisation is established and to which it is specifically restricted are:

*To promote the relief of elderly people in any manner which now is or hereafter may be deemed by law to be charitable, within the counties of Herefordshire & Worcestershire.*

## Our values:

*We are friendly.*

*We work together.*

*We make a difference.*

*We are always learning.*

*We are flexible.*



## **Our strategic objectives set out how we will achieve our objects and principles by:**

### **01 Promoting a positive attitude to ageing, leveraging the needs of older people, developing awareness of and building support for our work.**

We do this by:

- Treating all adults fairly and with respect, promoting their different needs and opportunities to influence.
- Building on our brand and develop our support, increasing the diversity of our income streams.
- Increasing awareness of opportunities available to older people and communicate the impact of our work.
- Extending our reach to ensure that those whose need is greatest have access to our information and services.

### **02 Ensuring the highest standards of support and services which promote independence, tackle inequalities and address the needs of all older people.**

We do this by:

- Providing information and support to older people, through cohesive and trusted service provision of a consistently high standard.
- Developing new areas of activity to reflect best evidence and the needs of older people and to support growth.
- Supporting those working with older adults to develop high standards.
- Developing and support partnerships to extend opportunities for service delivery.

### **03 Remaining robust and adaptable as a sustainable organisation to deliver our Strategy and Business Plan.**

We do this by:

- Developing effective systems and financial controls which support our work effectively and support our long-term growth.
- Ensuring our governance and data collection, collation and reporting is fit for purpose.
- Developing an infrastructure (including premises), reflecting the organisation's needs and supporting reduction in our carbon emissions.
- Ensuring ICT resources and platforms enable staff and volunteers to work effectively, demonstrating activity and impact.

### **04 Developing and grow our people, ensuring that the charity is a great place to work and volunteer.**

We do this by:

- Providing fair and transparent recruitment, development and employment practices.
- Supporting the health and well-being of our people.
- Providing a culture of learning and development.
- Communicating effectively, recognising the commitment of our people.

The Trustees have given due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when planning the strategy and activities of the Charity.

Our Business Plan sets out how we will achieve our objectives. The following is an overview of activities undertaken during 2023 to achieve our objectives, focusing on priorities as set out in last year's report.



**We grew alternative income from grants and events.**

Following recognition of the ongoing financial risk to the charity from our reliance on contract and grant income, it was disappointing that a recruitment campaign to attract a suitable candidate for a senior Income Generation role was unsuccessful.

However, we have focused on further developing our community fundraising activity and now have a core team of dedicated volunteers and a fundraising manager who have hosted several unique events, including an entertaining Clairvoyant night at the Ravenmeadow Golf Club, a lively Ceilidh dance event, a successful wine tasting session at Bottles Wine Shop in Worcester and a very well attended Abba tribute night at Malvern Theatre.



**We scoped opportunities for retail income and invested in resources to support development.**

It was disappointing that the challenging recruitment environment has meant that we did not have the capacity to progress other areas of income generation work (including developing a legacy strategy, donor development & management, and retail), as we failed to recruit an income generation lead.

We were pleased to have worked with Gifted Philanthropy, who have helped us develop an income generation strategy and to prioritise our efforts. This work has laid a good foundation on which to build and we are grateful to the many local stakeholders who gave up their time to input into this work and help us understand the environment in which we are operating.





## **We developed new services based on client feedback including Senior Gay Womens' Group and Art Club.**

This year we continued to deliver a range of services for older people living in the two counties whilst responding to requests for new ones. As a result of funding awarded by Cadent Network, we were delighted to be able to expand our support for those at risk of, or living with social isolation and loneliness.

In June, we launched three new weekly creative arts social groups delivered with local artists who utilised a range of different materials and themes. From our Drybridge House Centre in Hereford we launched 'The Crafty Cuppa' and now provide a weekly hot meal for those who often eat alone as well as a weekly walking group.



## **We continued the migration of our server-based data to the cloud.**

All files were relocated to the cloud, enabling access by staff through Microsoft 365 accounts. This allows staff to have full access to files wherever they are located and working, based on the relevant permissions that apply to the documents.

Full use of the Microsoft hosted suite of programmes is now possible using industry compliant multi factor authentication processes which is centrally implemented to protect our systems.



## **We further developed our quality assurance processes for service delivery.**

During the year a review of our data capture methods on our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system has been undertaken. As a team, our Service Managers worked through each area of the system making recommendations for improvements in relation to ease of use, ensuring our data capture was compliant and that we were gathering and reporting the data in the most efficient way. This work was supported by our IT Manager.

Through this work, the Service team are now able to produce accurate data on the outcomes of the services they provide which are monitored quarterly through our Service Improvement Group.

During the year the Service Team have been externally assessed against and met the criteria the Quality of Advice standard which ensures that our Information and Advice service is properly administered, and clients are provided with advice following the correct procedure.

Our team have also self-assessed and met the criteria for the Quality of Signposting standard.



## **We developed our use of Teams and Sharepoint.**

Sharepoint has given all staff remote access to the documents and shared files, which will allow for greater collaboration with specific teams and wider within the charity.

The permissions matrix within Teams and Sharepoint provides assurance that staff only have access to the files and folders that would be appropriate, thereby ensuring our data is only accessible by authorised members of the team.



## **We have reviewed our financial policies.**

We have updated the Managing Finances Policy outlining the rules and principles of the charity's accounting and financial practice. This policy supports the introduction of the new financial system as the charity moves from Sage to Xero on 1st April 2024.

Underpinning this policy are the numerous operating procedures used specifically by the Finance Team to maintain the financial practices for the many tasks undertaken.



## **We developed our retention strategies including rewards and benefit.**

Retention strategies include an improved working environment and professional development through to staff recognition and well-being resources.

Our annual staff survey provides invaluable feedback on what is important to our staff and provides the charity with essential data and compares year-to-year results, helping to monitor progress and develop opportunities to support staff.



## **We improved our financial forecasting.**

We have developed our use of data based on historical financial trends and patterns, as well as the use of a live funding tracker. The weekly reviews enable the forecasts to be updated and refined based on new data and changing circumstances.

We have also developed our use of scenario planning to assess potential outcomes and support immediate decision making and longer-term planning.



## **We improved staff and volunteer experience of recruitment.**

We have undertaken a full review of the recruitment and onboarding process. This work has been essential in creating positive and effective communications with prospective candidates from their initial contact.

Work is continuing to enhance our onboarding and induction period to improve employee engagement which in turn will reduce turnover.



## **We implemented a new HR system.**

Every member of staff and all volunteers now have access to their electronic personnel file. The system informs our payroll administration for efficient processing of data including holiday booking, absence management and library of key documents. The Director of Resources, information and Finance has worked closely with the contractor to fully embed all aspects of the system internally which resulted in an invitation to be a member of User Development Team.



# 12 Governance

Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire is registered with the Charity Commission as Charity Registration Number 1080545 and is a company limited by guarantee with Companies House registration number 03942023.



The Charity is managed by the Board of Trustees which meets quarterly. The Articles provide for up to ten members, plus Honorary Officers. Honorary Officers are elected annually for a three year term. Trustees are also elected for three years, with eligibility for re-election for a further two periods.

Trustees have access to, and were offered, opportunities for training and development such as managing finances, legal requirements for running a charity, best practice on charity governance, GDPR, Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity.

The Trustees delegate the day to day running of The Charity to the CEO who is supported by the Senior Leadership Team. Four subcommittees support and report into the Board:

## 1 Finance Information and Risk Subcommittee (FIRSC)

The FIRSC has responsibility for monitoring the financial performance and security of the charity, reporting to the Board of Trustees and making recommendations on financial, budgetary and strategic matters. FIRSC met quarterly and received detailed finance information including Management Accounts, Cash Flow and Reforecast to provide assurance.

## 2 Engagement Subcommittee (ESC)

The ESC has responsibility for promoting the value of older adults and extending our reach to ensure that those with greatest need have access to information and services. ESC met quarterly and discussed research projects, as well as reviewing the Fundraising Plan and Communications and Marketing Plan.



### 3 Standards and Services Subcommittee (SSSC)

The SSSC provides high level scrutiny, giving constructive advice and making decision that have a strategic impact on our standards and services. They support the development of partnerships to extend opportunities for service delivery.

SSSC met quarterly to consider and develop service delivery, compliance, quality improvement and to provide assurance and make recommendations to the Board for consideration.



Two new task and finish groups were set up to review aspects of our governance requiring a particular focus:

### 6 Collaborative Working Group (CWG)

Aims to promote effective co-operation and collaboration between local Brand Partners, working towards the common goal of improving the lives of older people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

The group will oversee matters relating to collaborative working including proactive promotion of joint initiatives, resource sharing, and communication strategies to ensure seamless collaboration.

### 4 People Subcommittee (PSC)

The PSC ensure the values of The Charity are embedded and monitor our culture. They review legislation, and monitor its impact on the workforce . PSC met quarterly and received staffing updates, reviewed the staff survey and people policies.

### 5 Board Meeting

The full Board of Trustees Meeting is held quarterly to review reports and recommendations from the subcommittees. The Board's agenda focuses on strategic issues and the Board held one Away Day focusing on the Charity's plans for growth. The Board also reviewed the risk analysis of the Charity's activities.

Subcommittees review their risks and FIRSC makes an initial overview and reports to the Board of Trustees. The trustees particularly focus on risks relating to the Charity's strategic direction.

### 7 Board Effectiveness Group (BEG)

Aims to provide a robust review of the Board's efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring that it has the structure, processes, people and performance to meet its statutory obligations and can act with integrity and effectively promote a culture which reflects the Charity's values.

Areas of focus include Board process, outcomes and behaviours including how the Board interacts with the Senior Leadership Team and stakeholders, and whether respective roles are clear.



[ageukhw.org.uk](http://ageukhw.org.uk)