

We are a local independent charity supporting older people across Oxfordshire to live life to the full.

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Welcome from our CEO, Paul Ringer.



Summer is upon us, and while it can be wonderful enjoying the sunshine and hot weather, with temperatures rising year-on-year, it's more important than ever to make sure we enjoy the hot weather safely. On **p16** you'll find some great tips on how you can 'Beat the heat'.

2024 marks the 40th year of Volunteers' Week, taking place in June, and we're really pleased to be joining thousands of charities and voluntary organisations recognising the contribution volunteers make across the UK. You can read about some of our fantastic volunteers on p4.

It's also Carers Week this June, and we're supporting Carers UK's campaign to 'put carers on the map'. Have you considered whether you might be an unpaid carer? If another adult, child or both, relies on you for help to do everyday things, you could be an unpaid carer. You can learn more on **p6**, and find out about the support available from our sister organisation Carers Oxfordshire.

I hope you enjoy this issue and wish you sunny days ahead.

Very best wishes,

Paul





What's been happening?

Throughout April and May we took our 'Your Mind Matters' roadshow to various locations across Oxfordshire, to encourage people to think more about their mental health. It was wonderful to be out and about with several other organisations, sharing information and resources and sparking conversations with local people around mental health.





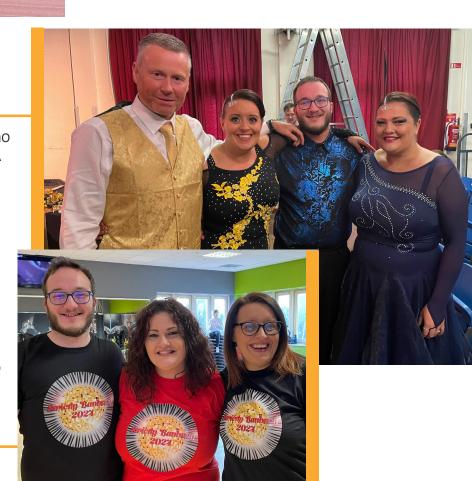
As part of Dementia Action Week, our dementia support service, Dementia Oxfordshire, welcomed people living with young onset dementia, their family and carers to test their pedalling power at Horspath Athletics and Sports Ground in Oxford. Experts from CyclAbility were on hand to keep everyone safe and steady as they rode around!

"It was a great morning and thoroughly enjoyable!"

You can see all of our dementia service's events at **www.dementiaoxfordshire.org.uk/events**.

A huge congratulations to everyone who took part in Strictly Banbury in March! A wonderful performance was put on by everyone involved, after a few months of hard training.

We want to thank Nicola and Craig who took part on behalf of Age UK Oxfordshire and raised a combined total of £2484, with Vicki and Dan taking part as their professional dance partners. This money will make such a big difference to local older people who face a struggle, whether through low income, poor health, or isolation and loneliness.



Volunteers from all walks of life

Our volunteers give their time and effort so that we can be here when we're needed most. They come from all walks of life and support us in all sorts of ways. We spoke to three of our volunteers about their volunteering experience:

Hatty - Bereavement Support and Admin Volunteer



"I trained as a Social Worker at Oxford Brookes. Part of my training was working with older adults and I loved it! Being diagnosed with ME/CFS during third year meant having to take



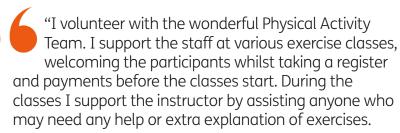
a sabbatical from university, meaning a long time at home, unwell. Eventually, I was able to finish my degree, graduating with a BSc in Health and Social Care Sciences.

Last year I attended an open event for new volunteers. After talking with the Age UK Oxfordshire team about the volunteering opportunities, I was really inspired and excited.

I started in the Bereavement Support Team, compiling information on grief support groups in Oxfordshire. It was really rewarding, and I talked to some extremely inspiring people. Now I volunteer for the Admin Team and have been looking at how the charity could advertise for new volunteers.

I'm not yet well enough to rejoin the workforce, but being able to contribute to the community through volunteering has been massively beneficial to my mental health and recovery, it gives me a huge sense of fulfilment and purpose. I'm so grateful to the charity, and feel as if they have helped me as much as I have them!"

Sheena – Physical Activity Volunteer



I have undertaken voluntary work since I was at school and have always seen it as an enjoyable way of being part of the local community and putting my skills to good use. Whilst volunteering at Age UK Oxfordshire I have had the pleasure of meeting many lovely people from all walks of life. I enjoy being in the company of participants whilst encouraging and assisting them to get the most from their exercise classes. The fantastic staff in the team are a pleasure to work with and I love being able to provide them with an extra pair of hands wherever needed. I thoroughly enjoy it."



Jogo – Befriender Volunteer



"It's sobering to realise that many elderly individuals face loneliness and lack support, despite having a wealth of life experience to share. Reflecting on this, I regret not spending more time listening to my own grandparents, and this perspective motivated me to explore volunteering opportunities with Age UK Oxfordshire.

I'm a Befriender Volunteer and it's such a rewarding experience. Each week, I visit a lady offering companionship and lending a hand with whatever she needs assistance with (more often than not it's IT related). She lives a five minute cycle from my workplace, which makes it really easy to squeeze into my work routine!

Volunteering lets me make a real difference in people's lives while also enriching my own.

In our fast-paced world, it's easy to get stuck in a 9-5 routine, focusing solely on the next paycheque or social event. But I often pause and ask myself, 'When I'm 80, what will I be prouder of?' The answer usually revolves around the sense of having led a life where I've been able to help and support others.

The joy I derive from volunteering comes from the connections I forge with others and the sense of purpose it provides. Each interaction reaffirms the power of human connection and the influence we can have on each other's lives. Ultimately, volunteering allows me to contribute to a community where compassion and support flourish, and that's incredibly fulfilling."

Interested in volunteering?

We're always looking for friendly and enthusiastic volunteers (18+) to join our team. Please visit look **online**, call **0345 450 1276** or email **volunteering@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk** to find out more about the roles available.



Whatever you choose to do, and however much time you have to give, you'll be making an incredible difference for older people at a time in their lives when they need help the most.

"I am so grateful for my volunteer. I would not have done anything without their support and would probably still be home doing nothing and seeing no one" - Someone who received support from one of our volunteers.

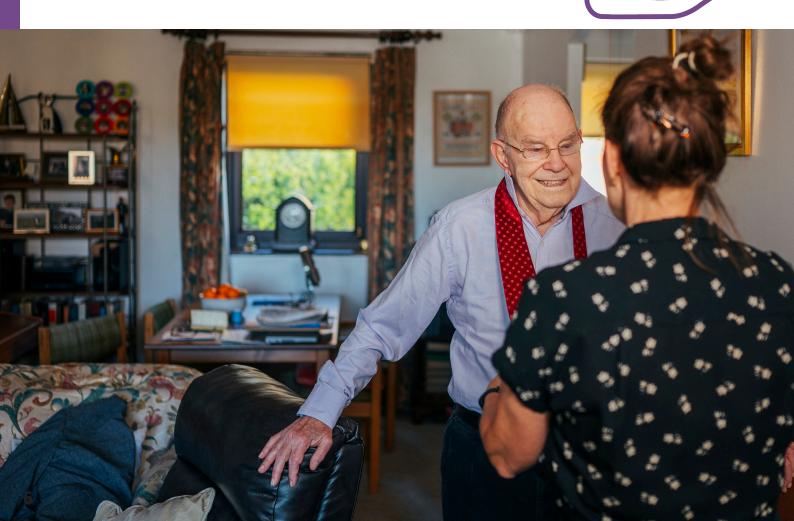
Could you be an unpaid carer?

You are an unpaid carer if you have someone who relies on you to stay safe and well. The person you care for can be any age, and you don't need to live with them. They could be a neighbour, friend, family, anyone.

A lot of unpaid carers struggle to realise that they are in fact caring for someone and that there is support available to them. Often this is because they're caring for a parent and 'that's just life' or that supporting someone in your village is 'just being neighbourly', but those reasons don't make caring any easier. So, whatever the reason for caring for someone, we want everyone to know that there is support available.

We talked to Carol* about her experience caring for her father and how she never realised that she was a carer.

"I was an unpaid carer for my dad, but I didn't know it. When it all started, it was a sudden change, he needed care and attention, and his personality changed a lot. He was a different person and it felt hard that I was doing things for him that I would do for a child. It felt very strange. Caring for him affected me mostly emotionally as I was feeling guilty that I hadn't supported him more when my mum died.





"I cared for him for a total of five years, and not once did I think I was a carer. I just didn't consider myself as a carer because he was my dad and he needed help. I didn't even know an unpaid carer was a thing.

"I met with doctors, nurses and GPs, and not once did someone tell me that I was an unpaid carer. I'd been working closely with a solicitor for a year on my dad's behalf and there was no mention of it. I only realised when I went for a job interview at an organisation that supported carers. I got upset in the interview once I had that realisation, so it wasn't great timing!

"If I'd known I was an unpaid carer I could have had someone who could give me some information and advice, someone to talk to; even someone to share my experiences with would have benefitted me a lot."

Our sister organisation, Carers Oxfordshire, want to make caring easier for you. So, if you think you, or someone you know, is an unpaid carer, please contact them.

Email **carersinfo@carersoxfordshire.org.uk** or call **01235 424 715** (CarersLine, 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday). More information is available on their **website**.

^{*} The identity of our storyteller has been anonymised

New look Oxfordshire health and support services - supporting you closer to home

If you've recently had a stay in hospital, you may have noticed some changes to the way you were discharged, helping to support you to return home more quickly.

That's because the local NHS and Oxfordshire County Council - who provide statutory adult social care services for the region - are working in new ways, providing more support at home and avoiding lengthy hospital stays.

It's all based on evidence that shows people have better health outcomes when they are supported away from hospital and in a home environment, with patients recovering more quickly and being more likely to regain their independence in the long term.

What is the new programme?

'Discharge to Assess' supports people to return home as soon as they are medically fit to do so. This includes the provision of immediate support at home to help with a person's continued recovery, rather than staying in a ward or short stay hub bed.

How does it work?

A new team has been created called the Transfer of Care Hub. This is made up of many different professionals involved in a person's care, who get together three times a day to make patient-centred decisions around their future health and care needs.

By working together alongside a patient and their family, plans are put in place at an earlier stage to support a smooth transition from hospital and back home, once they are medically fit for discharge.

This safe programme is based on national guidance, helping people to regain their independence more quickly. It includes the provision of immediate support at home, helping to ensure a safe return home as well as more relevant, home-based assessments to help plan for longer-term support if needed.

Other Services

Discharge to Assess is one of a number of programmes helping to provide greater support at home. These include:

- **Hospital at Home** providing clinical support (including tests which were traditionally only available in a hospital setting) in a person's home.
- **Urgent Community Response** a combination of services providing urgent care at home rather than going to A&E.







Share your experiences of leaving hospital

Have you, or an adult that you care for, stayed in hospital during the last 12 months? If so, Healthwatch Oxfordshire would like to hear from you!

The county's independent health and social care watchdog would like to hear about your experience of leaving hospital, and any care and support you got in the first few weeks afterwards.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire would particularly like to understand what worked well and what could be improved, so it can help shape the support people receive when they leave hospital.

You can share your views and experiences by completing their anonymous **survey**. For a paper copy of the survey, or if you would like it in another format or language, or would prefer to speak to someone, please call **01865 520 520** or email **hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk**.





Would some help at home make a difference to your life?

A regular and consistent visit from one of our friendly and reliable Home Support Workers has changed many people's lives and helped to reduce loneliness. We understand that sometimes a little help at home and some company can make an enormous difference to your quality of life and our aim is to provide a service to help with just that.

We provide flexible, tailored support, from as little as 1 hour per week, to help you stay independent at home. Our friendly, trained staff will come to your home and help with domestic tasks or things like shopping, getting out and about, or companionship. You choose what they do, and it can be different things each time. We do not provide help with personal care (such as washing, dressing or assisting with medications). To find out more, including charges, contact **0333 577 1044** or **homesupport@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk**.

Feeling out of sorts, worried or fed up?

Oxfordshire Talking Therapies is a free NHS service, aimed at supporting those experiencing anxiety and depression.

Whilst more people can experience excessive worrying or feeling down as they age, that doesn't mean it is normal or something you have to put up with. Oxfordshire Talking Therapies offer lots of types of treatment for these difficulties: from courses around stress, sleep and low mood to individual treatments too. Their clinicians are also trained in helping support long-term health difficulties, such as diabetes, which can really affect how you are feeling, too. Often treatments are short-term and very practical, helping you to manage these difficulties differently and feel better.

Call today on **01865 901 222** or self-refer via the **website** to arrange an initial call with a clinician to see how they could support you. If you prefer you can speak with your GP about them referring you.

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Grove that has made my mother's stay so happy. The attitude of staff is exemplary"

– DAUGHTER OF A CHAWLEY GROVE RESIDENT

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Tel: 01865 957 650 | Chawley Grove, Cumnor Hill, Oxfordshire OX2 9PJ enquiries@hamberleycarehomes.co.uk | www.hamberleycarehomes.co.uk

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Homeshare – the right solution at the right time

Cathy and her family set up a Homeshare arrangement with her mum, and it was Cathy's passion for the concept that led her to volunteer for our Homeshare service, Homeshare Oxfordshire.

We spoke to Cathy about why Homeshare was the right solution at the right time for her family...

"Years ago, I was in France and heard of this wonderful scheme where young people were living with older people and the partnership worked equally well for both parties.

Skip forward several years to my dad dying just before Covid, and mum finding herself on her own after 60 years together. My three siblings and I took it in turns to visit mum in London, but not all living close by, and with our own family commitments, it was a struggle to keep this up. Worried about her, we tried out some respite care in a residential home, but mum hated it.

We had to find a way for mum to remain in her home. The daytimes were covered by carer visits but she was still on her own at night and this was a concern.

"I kept thinking about the scheme in France and I found, amazingly, that there were several such schemes in the UK. Mum and my siblings were a bit hesitant at first but began to see how it could work for mum in her London home. After finding a local Homeshare service, we put a 'wish list' together, and even wrote 'can speak Italian', as mum used to live in Italy.

Interviews, references and DBS checks are all essential to the process. Very quickly we heard there was a suitable match and an introduction was arranged. When Elsa* came round I knew immediately that she was right for mum - she even spoke Italian!

Homeshare has taken so much pressure off us as a family. Knowing someone is there overnight and can pick up on the little things that mum needs is such an amazing relief.

Elsa and mum eat together at the weekend and during the week they enjoy a bit of time together in the evenings. Mum has never been an outgoing person so it may not have worked but Elsa is respectful, tidy and likes her own privacy and space.

One of us siblings is often heard shouting "thank goodness for Elsa". In fact, I've been so impressed that I've joined the Homeshare Oxfordshire team as a volunteer. Being run by Age UK Oxfordshire, it's managed with integrity and respect, and I've been really impressed with the matching process.



My first volunteering experience was going to a Homeshare Oxfordshire get-together, where Householders and Sharers enjoyed a relaxed lunch, and talked about their experiences of Homeshare. Since then, I've been interviewing Homesharers and helping to promote the service and get the message out to more people. On every dog walk I go on I tell everyone I bump into all about Homeshare!

I'd love to think that at some point, Homeshare will be seen as a very normal option for both young and old, to help steer us through different life phases."



*Name has been changed to protect identity

Our Homeshare service, Homeshare Oxfordshire, carefully matches older people who are looking for help or companionship at home, with another person who can lend a hand, and needs affordable accommodation.

Could Homeshare be a good option for you or someone you know? For more information visit our **website**, email

homeshare@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk, or call 01865 410 670.



Taking care of your feet

Our friendly, professional Foot Care Service is here to help you take good care of your feet so that you can stay comfortable, healthy and active.

Our trained staff will trim and file your nails and give you a gentle foot rub with cream to moisturise and prevent dryness or itching. All treatments take place in a private room, take around 20–30 minutes and cost £17 (plus a one-off fee of £15 for equipment on your first visit).

We have clinics in: Abingdon, Banbury, Bicester, Didcot, Greater Leys, Henley-on-Thames, Wallingford, Wantage and Witney.

We will be opening more clinics across the county soon so if there isn't a clinic in your area, please get in touch to register your interest.

To book or register an interest, please email **footcare@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk** or call **01865 717 615.**



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A personal service in an impersonal world

Beat the heat

Climate change is already causing warmer temperatures in the UK. In July 2022, temperatures exceeded 40°C for the first time on record. As well as leading to heat exhaustion and heatstroke, hot weather can increase the risk of heart attack, stroke and other diseases.

While the warm weather is often welcome after a long and cold winter, people aged over 65 are more prone to heat-related health problems, and so as we move into the warmer summer months it's really important to think about staying sun-safe.

Why are over 65s at greater risk?

As we get older:

- Our bodies don't adjust as well to sudden changes in temperature.
- We're more likely to have a chronic medical condition which can change our body's normal responses to heat.
- We're more likely to take prescription medicines that affect the body's ability to control its temperature or sweat.





Top tips for staying safe in hot weather

General

- Listen to the news and check your local weather forecast so you know when hot weather is expected.
- Make sure you're drinking plenty of fluids at least 6–8 glasses of liquid a day. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink, and take a bottle of water with you when you're out and about.
- Wear loose, lightweight clothing.
- Stay away from very sugary or alcoholic drinks—these actually cause you to lose more body fluid.
- Know the symptoms of heat exhaustion/heatstroke and what to do if you or someone else has them.
- Public buildings such as places of worship, local libraries or supermarkets may be cooler than your home. If they are nearby, consider visiting one of these as a way of cooling down.

Out and about

- Don't spend too much time outside between 11am and 3pm, the hottest time of the day. Try and keep in the shade when you can.
- Look after your skin Use sunscreen of at least SPF 30. Apply it generously and top up regularly.
- Wear a hat to protect your head, face, ears and eyes.
- Choose sunglasses that have a CE mark and a UV400 label.

At home

- Avoid using the oven to cook if you can, as it will make you and your home hotter.
- Keep your home cool by closing windows and curtains in rooms that face the sun.
- Check on friends and neighbours and ask someone to do the same for you.

Know the signs

Heat exhaustion occurs when the body overheats and cannot cool down. It does not usually need emergency medical attention if you cool down within 30 minutes. If you do not take action to cool down, heat exhaustion can lead to heatstroke.

Common symptoms of heat exhaustion include tiredness, weakness, feeling faint, headache, muscle cramps, feeling or being sick, heavy sweating and intense thirst.

Heatstroke is where the body is no longer able to cool down and the body temperature becomes dangerously high.

Common symptoms of heatstroke include confusion, lack of coordination, fast heartbeat, fast breathing or shortness of breath, hot skin (that is not sweating) and seizures.

Heatstroke is a medical emergency. If you think someone has heatstroke you should dial 999 and then try to cool them down.

How to cool down

- Move to a cooler place such as a room with air conditioning or somewhere in the shade.
- Remove all unnecessary clothing like a jacket or socks.
- Drink cool water, a sports or rehydration drink, or eat cold and water rich foods like ice lollies.
- Apply cool water by spray or sponge to exposed skin. Using cold packs wrapped in a cloth and put under the armpits or on the neck can also help.

Creativity is catching with Janet and Margaret

We caught up with Janet, one of our Age UK Oxfordshire Creative Ambassadors, at her home in Banbury to find out more about her creative life and how she has managed to persuade her friend Margaret to try some creative activities!

Janet's creative passions include painting, embroidery, spinning yarn, pottery and participating in reminiscence activities at Banbury Museum.

Janet told us that she doesn't know how she would manage if she didn't have creativity in her life. It brings her together with others and it is the shared experience which makes it so enjoyable.

Over the years Janet has tried to persuade her friend Margaret to try a creative activity and managed to convince her to attend the Age UK Oxfordshire Platinum Jubilee Creative Celebration at the Mill Arts Centre.

"At first Margaret wasn't very keen on the idea of making bunting so we had some coffee and cake, Margaret was about to leave but I said 'You can't have a big piece of cake like that and go'. In the end Margaret did make a nice piece of bunting for her window and the rest is history!"

Margaret now attends pottery classes and other activities which she very much enjoys. Well done to Janet for sharing the joy of creativity and to Margaret for giving creativity a try!

Margaret and Janet enjoying a mosaic making workshop at the Mill Arts Centre recently.





Margaret (I) and Janet (r) at the Platinum Jubilee Creative Celebration at the Mill Arts Centre in 2022 – Janet persuades Margaret to have a go at making some bunting.



A pottery creation made by Margaret.



Bunting making in progress and Margaret is a convert to creativity!

Banbury Museum activities for older people

The 'Times Gone By' reminiscence group meet monthly at Banbury Museum to discuss different aspects of social and local history. The group is for people aged 55+ and costs £3 per session including refreshments. There is also a reminiscence group that meet at Kidlington. For more information, please contact Karey on **01295 236164** or email **karey.morley@banburymuseum.org**.

Our **Community Links Oxfordshire Team** can help you find creative opportunities in your area - call **01235 849 434** or email **community@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk**.



Pride Month: Celebrating sexual and gender diversity

Pride Month (June) is about acceptance, equality and raising awareness of issues affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, as well as those who identify in a different way.

Pride is about being proud of who you are, no matter who you love or how you identify.

Information & advice

Most of the issues, advice and policies relating to later life apply to everyone equally, but there are some things that affect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQI+) people differently. Age UK have produced an excellent guide that can help you understand your rights and make sure they're always respected. View Age UK's **LGBT guide** or call us on **0345 450 1276** to request a copy in the post.

Our 'Silver Pride' groups

Our inclusive groups offer the opportunity to connect with others to gain friendship and support. We run two groups in Didcot and Banbury. To find out more, email **community@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk** or call **01235 849 434**.

"It helps to talk with the group and I enjoy it." - Silver Pride group participant

Discover our groups across Oxfordshire

Bereavement Support

Open to people aged 60+ who have lost a loved one. Abingdon, Banbury, Bicester, Carterton, Didcot, Grove, Kidlington, Oxford, Wheatley, Witney.

community@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk 01235 849 434

Book Clubs

TeaBooks are sociable book groups for those 60+, helping people to share a love of books and reading, and to make new friends.

Abingdon, Bicester, Carterton, Headington, Kidlington, Marston, Oxford, Summertown, Thame, Wantage, Witney.

teabooks@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk 0345 450 1276

Carers Support

We know the importance of peer support, and that there is real benefit in connecting with people who know what you're going through. We run and support a variety of groups through our sister organisation Carers Oxfordshire, in locations across Oxfordshire.

carersinfo@carersoxfordshire.org.uk 01235 424 715

Dementia Support

We run and support a number of groups across the county which provide information, support and connection to those living with dementia, and their carers.

Various locations across Oxfordshire through our dementia support service, Dementia Oxfordshire. info@dementiaoxfordshire.org.uk 01865 410 210

Digital Support

Whether you need help with your phone, computer or tablet, we can support you to develop your skills and safely get involved with the online world.
Bampton, Banbury, Benson, Bicester, Burford, Chipping Norton, Didcot, Kidlington, Oxford, Sonning Common.

community@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk 01235 849 434

Exercise Classes

Tailored exercise classes for older adults, including Strength and Balance, seated exercise, and Big, Bold and Balance for people living with Parkinson's. Abingdon, Bampton, Banbury, Bicester, Botley, Cumnor, Cutteslowe, Didcot, Enstone, Eynsham, Henley, Milton under Wychwood, Sonning Common, Witney and online via Zoom.

active@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk 01235 849 403

To find out more information about the below activites, please contact us.

community@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk 01235 849 434

Aviation Group

A social group for all, whether you're an aviation expert or just have a general interest. Carterton.

Chatterbox and Social Get-togethers

Social mornings and afternoons offering a warm welcome, with refreshments and a chat. Chipping Norton, Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington, Oxford, Wallingford, Witney, Woodcote.

Film Clubs

A social film club for people 50+. Banbury, Carterton, Horspath, Steventon, Deddington, Oxford, Sibford, Sonning Common.

Information & Advice Drop-ins

Abingdon, Banbury, Barton, Bicester, Didcot, Horspath, Kingston Bagpuize, Oxford, Sonning Common, Thame, Upper Heyford, Wantage, Wheatley, Woodstock, Witney.

LGBTQ+ Groups

Social groups for older people in our LGBTQ+ community. Banbury, Didcot.

Lunch Clubs

A chance to meet and eat in friendly company. Bicester, Kidlington, Thame.

Walk & Talk

A leisurely stroll and a chance to make new friends. Brize Norton, Didcot, Wallingford.

Looking for carers to look after your loved one?

Don't look any further: our dedicated and well-trained team is here to help you with all your care needs.

The support we provide is personalised, responding to the unique needs of each individual. Those we support are treated with dignity and respect.

We are a CQC registered provider who have the experience, knowledge and expertise in assisting those who require day-to-day care and support.

Call 01865 317797 or 07860 709421 or email caresupport@cornerstonestaffing.co.uk

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How you can help

Donate

At Age UK Oxfordshire we rely on donations to ensure that we can continue to support people in Oxfordshire to live life to the full. You can make a one-off or monthly donation online via our **Just Giving page**. Alternatively, you can call us on **0345 450 1276**.

Every donation makes a difference. Thank you.

Volunteer

If you have an hour or two to spare or a skill to share, why not consider joining our team of volunteers? Many of our services rely on volunteers in order to reach as many people as we can. By joining our team you can really help to make a difference. You can find out more on the **volunteering page on our website.**







We provide a wide variety of services for older people including:

Information and advice
Dementia support
Carer support
Physical activity classes
Telephone befriending
Digital support
Home support
Homeshare
Bereavement support groups
Foot care
Scams prevention advice
Hospital discharge support
Social activities and clubs
LGBTQ+ groups
Book groups

Call us on 0345 450 1276 or visit www.ageuk.org.uk/ oxfordshire for more information

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