

Let's Change How We Age

Age UK Solihull 2023-24 Annual Review





Welcome to Age UK Solihull's Annual Review 2023-24

Our **vision** is of a world where older people flourish, and our **mission** is to help improve the lives of all older people in the borough of Solihull.

Together with our trustees, staff, volunteers, partners and supporters we help make later life better for thousands of older people in Solihull.

Directors and Trustees

S R Tomlinson (Chair)

L E Bourne (resigned 31 October 2023)

P Chauhan

D C Mattocks

P J Oakley (resigned 31 July 2024)

C Murray (resigned 29 May 2024)

R M Paulin

N C Robinson

A J Rolf

P Rose-Smith (appointed 27 March 2024)

R Watson (appointed 29 May 2024)

M Boyle (appointed 31 July 2024)

SMBC Rep

Cllr Andrew Burrow (to May 2024)

Cllr Dave Pinwell (from May 2024)

Company Secretary

A F Hastings

Registered Office

The Core, Central Library Building, Homer Road, Solihull, B91 3RG

Registered Charity Number

1055887

Senior Statutory Auditor

Mark McLean FCA

Statutory Auditors

Thomas & Young

Carleton House, 266-268 Stratford Road, Shirley, Solihull, B90 3AD

Our President

We have been honoured to have **Cllr Diana Holl-Allen** as our President for both of her terms as Mayor, first in 1986-87 and during her second term of office in 2023-24.



Chair's Statement

The ongoing cost-of-living crisis resulted in our older and more vulnerable clients being particularly badly hit in 2023-24. Choosing between food and heat is still a reality for many, with soaring prices for both food and energy. Locally, we have continued to help Solihull Council to distribute £127,555 from the Household Support Fund to households in the borough most in need.

Demand for our services continues to rise, with more people than ever on the waiting lists for befriending and the clubs, despite the launch of our newest club at the Land Rover Social Club in Sheldon. In particular, we saw strong demand for our Older People's Information and Advice Service, reaching over 1,789 people.

During this year, Age UK nationally recognised the effects of the cost-of-living crisis on older people and we were able to apply for a £40,000 grant to enable us to support the increased demand for services such as the lunch clubs, Home from Hospital Service and Linking People together service. In addition, Age UK nationally supported our Digital Champions Service, enabling our 21 volunteers for that service to provide 1,538 people sessions.

As Chair, I am constantly humbled by the dedication of our volunteers and many supporters, both individual and corporate, as well as our amazing Trustees and staff. Without them we would never reach the number of clients, numbering a truly amazing 15,175 in 2023-24, whose lives we touch in a meaningful way. There are so many inspiring stories of our work in this review, whether through our Community Advice Hubs in partnership with Solihull MBC, our specialist Information and Advice Service, Postural Stability Classes, Home Support Service, Digital Champions Project, Lunch Clubs, Social Prescribing, Winter Warmth Campaign and more.

This year saw us continue to partake in important research with the University of Birmingham titled 'When The money runs out – Capital depletion and the transition from self-funded care', which will influence policy in the UK in the future. This will be particularly relevant to those in the borough whose lives we maybe don't currently touch as much but who are still part of the wider community of older people in the borough.

2024 brought a nomination for a Kings Award for Voluntary Service for our volunteers, without whom we would not be able to touch as many peoples lives as we do. The nomination came from National Gas Metering who have supported us since the pandemic. As at the date of this report we have not heard whether our nomination has been successful but we were visited by two of the Deputy Lieutenants for the West Midlands, who recommended us forward for the National stage of the award. I would also like to thank all the staff at Age UK Solihull for the professionalism they show and their dedication to their roles. Thanks must go to the senior team who continue to go above and beyond for the concerns of older people in the borough. All our staff and volunteers have the concerns of older people at the forefront of everything they do.



Chief Executive Officer's Message

Following the ravages of the Covid 19 pandemic and the misery and worry of the cost-of-living crisis - community, wellbeing and connection have never been more important. Loneliness is a major social problem for all age groups but for older people it is often compounded by bereavement and other losses, and difficulties getting out and about because of disability, ill health or poor transport.



Our work in Solihull will continue to help older people by providing support, companionship, practical help and advice where it is needed. We are particularly pleased to have helped Solihull residents successfully claim £3,720,624 in benefits, a further increase on the record set last year of £3,149,360. Achieving this during a very challenging year for people with the cost-of-living crisis was particularly uplifting for our staff and volunteers.

We continue to work closely with statutory and voluntary sector colleagues in Solihull to achieve the best possible outcomes for our clients, and during the year we made 5,632 referrals to external organisations.

The charity achieved major success through the awarding of a three-year Charity Quality Standard Certificate following an external audit assessment in April 2024. The assessment was unable to identify a single non-compliance which is a testament to the hard work of Trustees, the staff team and our wonderful volunteers. The Standard is externally assessed by industry leaders SGS who undertake a rigorous review of our working practice through interviews, observation, and a review of our key documents and records. We will strive to uphold these high standards.

Thank you to the funders and supporters who believe in us and the work we do to make a difference to the lives of all the older and vulnerable people we serve in this wonderful borough. A special Thank You to our hard working staff and our amazing volunteers, including our dedicated Trustees.

Together we can continue to make Solihull a great place to grow old.

Anne F Hastings
Chief Executive Officer

Employees as at 31st March 2024

Management



Charity Shop and eBay



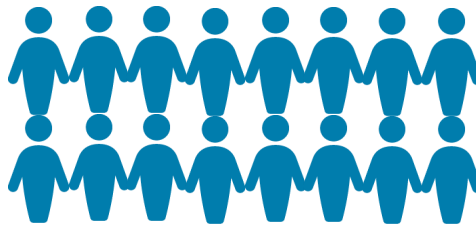
Business Support/Community Advice Hub



Winter Warmth



Community Advice Hub - including Benefits and Debt



Direct Payments



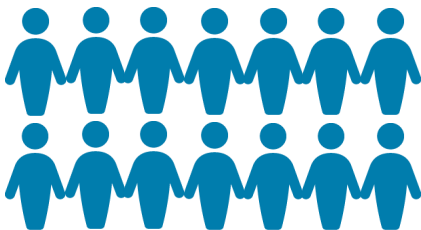
Older Peoples I&A and Housing Support



Social Prescribing and Care Coordinator



Home Support Service & Home From Hospital Service



Postural Stability Instruction and Linking People Together including clubs



Finance



Admin



Fundraising



Volunteering



Enabling People

**to get involved in shaping their world
so that it better meets their needs**



2023-24 was another **record year** for our **Benefits Service**, as advisers helped Solihull residents of all ages successfully claim over **£3.7m** in benefits, including over **£736,000** in **Attendance Allowance** for older people.

Highlights

2023-24 saw the fifth year of our contract to provide **Community Advice Hubs** in Solihull, demonstrating the Local Authority's continued commitment to the borough's prevention and early intervention services, responding to local and national priorities, as part of its Community Wellbeing Service.

The number of clients accessing the **Community Advice Hubs** during 2023-24 were similar to the year before and on a par with the pre-pandemic levels seen in 2019-20.

The **Welcome Desk**, by its very nature, welcomed **2,250** people to the Community Advice Hub based at The Core, and played a big role in gathering customer service feedback.

The **South Solihull Hub** dealt with **3,850** people and generated **14,260** contacts, which in itself demonstrates the increasing complexity of the support provided.

The **North Solihull Community Advice Hub** supported **2,331** people and generated **9,647** contacts.



The **All-Age Benefits Services** successfully claimed **£3,720,624** for Solihull residents in 2023-24, a further increase on the record set last year of **£3,149,360**. To achieve this during another very challenging year of the cost-of-living crisis was particularly uplifting for our hard working staff and volunteers. Of this, **£736,000** in Attendance Allowance was claimed for older people through our **Volunteer-led Attendance Allowance Claim service**. This is **£195,000** more than last year's excellent result.



Our sub-contract with **Solihull Mind** (now called **OASIS**) for **Mental Health Casework** saw **308** people access Outreach & Housing support, an increase of **65** people seen in 2022-23. Their benefits work also showed a significant increase from **194** people last year to **307** during the year 2023-24. The largest increase was in the number of people accessing debt help and advice, with **239** people receiving support, more than double the number last year.

Our sub-contract with **DRC** (Disability Resource Centre) to deliver **Disability Casework** also saw a big increase in activity from **238** clients last year to **566** in 2023-24.

Direct Payments are payments made directly to individuals who request to receive one to meet some or all of their eligible care and support needs. The **Direct Payments Information and Advice Service** was accessed by **73** (66 in 2022-23) new clients and helped **378** (324 in 2022-23) people to manage their personal care budgets and find the right kind of support to meet their care needs.



The **Solihull Winter Warmth Campaign** has been delivered by Age UK Solihull on behalf of Solihull Council since 2008. The project aims to keep people warm, safe and well during the winter months, with practical help and advice. This year the project recorded **941** clients and **4,046** contacts.



The cost-of-living crisis continued to have a major impact on residents of Solihull, particularly older people, those living with disabilities and families with young children. In the year 2023-24 **Age UK Solihull** and the **Community Advice Hubs** distributed grants of **£127,555** to individuals and households in need. This was mainly from the Household Support Fund but also **Baron Davenport's grants** and grants from various **Charitable Trusts**.

Promoting positive attitudes to ageing

by recognising the valuable contribution that older people make to society



We work in **partnership** with statutory and voluntary sector colleagues in Solihull to achieve the very best outcomes for our client group.

Highlights

Safeguarding Adults



Age UK Solihull is committed to the concept of it being better to take action **before harm occurs** and therefore actively promotes **mandatory safeguarding training** for all of its employees and volunteers. We know that our staff and volunteers are the **eyes and ears** of the Charity in the community and are well placed to recognise when individuals may be **at risk of harm**. As a **trusted brand**, we are in a good position to **engage with people** in conversations about how best to **respond** to their safeguarding situation in order to **improve their quality of life**, their **well-being** and their **safety**. We are regular attendees at the **Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board** and recognise the role that we have in being both **active participants** and **critical friends**. We believe that safeguarding works well in Solihull because partners **work together** so well and **involve our local communities** in raising awareness and finding solutions.

Partnership Working

Age UK Solihull continues to work in partnership with **statutory and voluntary sector colleagues** in Solihull to achieve the **very best outcomes** for our client group. This has been especially important throughout the **Covid pandemic** and continues to be so to support people with **cost-of-living pressures**. There is a recognition that **local groups** are essential to ensuring there are help points for different communities and needs. In 2023-24 **5,632** referrals were made to external partners.



We also work closely with our colleagues at **Age UK** and the **Age England Association** on our common aims for older people and are active members of the various Age UK West Midlands Networks as well as working closer with the Age UKs in the East Midlands, finding there is much to learn from each other in dealing with the challenges we are presented with.

We were grateful to Age UK for their recognition of the significant impact the cost-of-living crisis was having on older people, and their wish to help local Age UKs to continue to support and help people during this difficult time. They launched a **£5.3 million Cost of Living Response Fund** and offered grants of up to **£40,000** to each Brand Partner to deliver services for older people most affected by the crisis. Our Home Support Service, Befriending and Clubs, and Home from Hospital Services all met the criteria, and was an immense help during this very challenging period.

We were pleased to support the **University of Birmingham** in its excellent research project entitled **'When the money runs out – Capital depletion and transition out of self-funded care'**, looking at people's experience of asking for support, and what happens when there is a change from self-funding to council support.

Supporting older people

**through a wide range of services delivered
in the way that older people want**



144 volunteers support our **Linking People Together Service** on a weekly basis, by **visiting** or **telephoning** a lonely older person, or helping at our **social clubs**.

Highlights

Age UK Solihull is committed to giving older people advice that is accessible, confidential, clear, and most of all, independent. Our **Older People's**

Information and Advice Service dealt with **1,789** people, with **7,415** contacts generated in 2023-24.



This is a specialist service which requires staff to have a high level of knowledge and experience in a wide range of areas including housing, care and independent living and a whole host of other issues which impact on the lives of older people in Solihull every day.

The **Housing Related Support Service**, providing specialist support to residents of Sheltered Housing Schemes in Solihull, provided support to **198** residents over the last year, with **803** contacts generated.



Age UK Solihull's **Linking People Together Service** supports older people to maintain social interaction and remain vital members of their local communities.



During the year, there were **186** attendees at the clubs while **133** people benefited from having a befriender either as a home visitor or having a regular telephone call. **144** volunteers are involved in all aspects of the service, whether as home visitors, telephone befrienders or helping out at the clubs, and some an amazing mix of all three!

Working With and For Older People

in very practical ways to promote their health, wellbeing and independence.



Our **Digital Champions Project** helped **1,538** older people learn how to use a tablet, smartphone or laptop computer.

Highlights

Age UK Solihull's only chargeable service, the **Home Support Service** was hit very hard by the pandemic years as clients feared the transmission of Covid-19 into their homes. We are still working towards achieving pre-pandemic levels but like many similar services, our main challenge is the difficulty in recruiting to the Home Support Worker role, amid huge competition for a scarce resource. During the last financial year, **5,640** visits were undertaken to **139** clients, totaling **7,912** hours.



The **Home from Hospital Service** enabled timely discharges from hospital together with post-discharge support. It worked closely with the Hospital Social Work Teams and provided a range of practical help and support to help a person settle back into home following a stay in hospital. Hospital stays can often be unexpected and cause anxiety, particularly for those older residents who do not have family or friends nearby. In 2023-24, **284** people (2022-23: 153) were supported by the service to be safely discharged home. The funding for the service was time limited and came to an end in March 2024.



Our partnership with the South Central Solihull Primary Care Network delivered social prescribing services to **174** patients of **4** GP Practices in 2023-24. The **Social Prescribing service** aims to support patients with non-medical issues and connect them to services and activities to meet their wider wellbeing and social needs. In addition, a **Care Coordinator** role was added in September 2023. **44** patients have been supported to date.



Our **Postural Stability Instruction** classes funded by **Birmingham and Solihull ICB** (Integrated Care Board), are the only evidence-based strength and balance exercise for those suffering frequent falls. The service has again exceeded its target number of **136** with **150** people starting the 20-week programme in 2023-24. The outcomes for those using the service are outstanding, with **92%** of those successfully completing the programme not having had another fall in the post programme monitoring period and **98%** continuing to undertake exercise following their completion of the course. Of the **8%** who had experienced another fall, only **1%** had needed to call an ambulance.



Following on from the initial partnership with Public Health Solihull to deliver a **Digital Champions Project**, we were successful in bidding for an 18-month programme funded by the national **Age UK**. **21** amazing Digital Champion volunteers reached **1,538** people through **128** sessions. **54%** of the sessions were group sessions and **46%** were one-to-one sessions and there were **29** tablet loans to get people started. Raising awareness of the benefits of being online is a key part of motivating people to explore technologies.



Our **Volunteers** have been absolutely amazing again this year, contributing their time, energy, enthusiasm, knowledge and expertise to all that we do. **269** people actively volunteered during the year. Without their compassion and care, we could not do a fraction of the work in supporting our clients with information, benefits claims, befriending, clubs and supporting our services with administration help and so much more.



How we raise our funds



Age UK Solihull's unrestricted income in 2023 -24 was **£412,522** which was derived from our **charity shop** and **social enterprise** and **donations**, allowing us to deliver on our core objectives of **improving later life**.

Highlights

Sales during 2023-24 at our shop at Hobs Moat Road, Solihull totalled

£102,445



Income from our Home Support Service amounted to

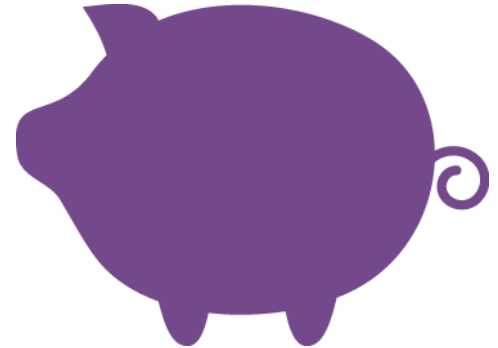
£176,016



Our Fundraising Team raised

£98,660,

of which **£78,991** was unrestricted.



We were pleased with the success of **Flourishing Fivers** activity with local primary schools, our **Ruby Anniversary Celebration Evening**, and **Christmas** fundraising activities.

We are grateful to the local organisations and businesses who supported us during 2023-24 including **Blossomfield Grange Care Home** for whom we were Charity of the Year, **CPW, Knowle & Dorridge Rotary, Warwickshire Masonic Charitable Association, Sydney Mitchell LLP, John Lewis** and **Knowle & Dorridge Lions**.

Financial Review

In 2023-24 our total incoming resources were **£1,873,000** and our total expenditure was **£1,794,000**.

93p in every £1 was spent on our charitable activities.

Income by source



Voluntary income
£86,000



Retail
£102,000



Charged for services
£190,000



Income from charitable activities
£1,455,000



Fundraising activities
£13,000



Interest
£27,000

Charitable Expenditure - total **£1,661,000**



Enabling older people
£886,000 (53%)



Promoting positive attitudes
£8,000 (1%)



Supporting older people
£298,000 (18%)



Working with and for older people
£469,000 (28%)

Other Expenditure



Cost of generating funds
£133,000



Age Concern Solihull trading as Age UK Solihull, started life as Age Concern Metropolitan Borough of Solihull in March 1983 in response to considerable research and strong evidence of the need for an organisation to provide services and to work in partnership with the local authority for the benefit of older people.

Age Concern Solihull is a charity - registration number 1055887. It is a company limited by guarantee - the company number is 3180062. The registered office is The Core, Central Library Building, Homer Road, Solihull, B91 3RG.

Age UK Solihull is a member of the Age England Association (which replaced the Age Concern Federation following the merger of Age Concern England and Help the Aged in April 2009). In September 2010, Age UK Solihull became a brand partner of the new national charity Age UK, with a shared commitment to working with older people, shared values and aims. In 2016, we agreed a new Brand Partnership which is due to be renewed in 2024.

Today, Age UK Solihull is a medium sized organisation, employing 60 staff (full and part time) and has one of the largest volunteer help-forces (300+) in the borough.



Charity Number: 1055887