

Impact Report 2023-2024



Sutton
ageUK

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Meet Paulina: A story of resilience

Paulina was in her early 70s when she lost her husband, leaving her to navigate the heavy waves of grief and loneliness. Although she had friends, the COVID-19 pandemic had distanced her from them, and she found solace in the safety of her home.

Seeking connection and support, Paulina reached out to our Community Connectors service. With their assistance, she learned how to use Zoom, a crucial skill that enabled her to see her family's faces and hear their voices without having to leave the house when she wasn't feeling up to it. This newfound ability brought her a sense of closeness and comfort during a difficult time.

Equipped with these digital skills, Paulina was able to join Let's Connect's Virtual Friday Group. She quickly became an active member of this online community, finding joy and camaraderie in shared interests. One particular passion that brought her closer to the group was Creative Writing, which resonated with several other members. Together, they began discussing ways to further explore and share this interest, with plans to collaborate on writing projects in the future.

While Paulina remains hesitant to venture outside often, her participation in the Virtual Friday Group has provided her with a strong sense of belonging and community. She cherishes her new online friends and the regular video calls with her family, which have significantly mitigated her feelings of isolation.

Paulina's journey illustrates the profound impact of digital literacy and virtual communities in combating loneliness and fostering meaningful connections. Her story is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the importance of adaptability in maintaining social bonds.



Welcome

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our 2023-2024 annual impact report – we hope that you find the story of our year both inspiring and informative, shining a spotlight on the critical role that Age UK Sutton plays in older people’s wellbeing and welfare at a time when older people need it, providing information and support when needed and services that help them when life gets challenging.

The demand for our services is as strong as ever, with people living in Sutton continuing to find challenges that impact on their ability to live safe, well and independently at home. We continue to see people who are not “just managing” and, with the effect of increasing costs of living, are struggling to provide for themselves to keep themselves well and warm.

Over the year we have supported over 3,500 older people with direct support across our information and advice, health, community and wellbeing services, just over 10% of the Sutton over 65's population. We have continued to develop our relationships with organisations across the borough, ranging from those in health, social care and across the community sector. Our Let’s Connect service alone works closely with over 50 community organisations to enable people to access a range of services that support them with accessing community activities, and in particular to support people to find a route out of loneliness and isolation.

Also, during this last year, we have looked at how we can support people more effectively, by changing the way we operate our “front door”, through to how we deliver our core services of Community Support, Let’s Connect, Home from Hospital and Dementia services. This is bringing us efficiencies in our operational model, but also enables us to hone our person-centred approach to ensure we keep our client’s goals and wishes at the heart of all we do.

2023-2024 was a challenging year with changes in our leadership team, however we end the year stronger and with greater clarity and direction - we remain committed to serving the older population of Sutton and with your support, we can do even more.

We want to take this opportunity to thank our supporters, donors, funders, partners, friends, staff, volunteers and trustees – as an independent local charity, our connection to the community means everything to us.



Hilary - Acting CEO



Jan - Chair of Trustees

Our purpose

Who we are:

Age UK Sutton is an independent charity dedicated to supporting people over the age of 50 in the London Borough of Sutton.

What we do:

We are dedicated to empowering older adults to live vibrant, independent lives while maintaining strong connections to their community. Our comprehensive services are designed not just to support daily living but to enhance overall wellbeing. We collaborate with health, care, and voluntary organisations in Sutton to provide holistic support, ensuring that our clients are not only healthy and secure but also financially stable, socially engaged, and fulfilled in their day-to-day lives. Our goal is to help them thrive in every aspect of their lives, from physical health to emotional wellbeing.

Meet Bobby: A story of friendship

Bobby, in his 60s, was determined not to let age define him, but he struggled with feelings of loneliness. Seeking a solution, he accessed the Community Connector service, which helped him build the confidence to explore new social activities independently.

Bobby was introduced to the Friendship Group, which turned out to be a transformative experience for Bobby. The best part for him was the opportunity to interact with others, particularly meeting Ron, who also knew the pain of loneliness. At one of the sessions, a local Social Group, The Dolphin Warm Welcome, gave a talk about their activities, sparking Bobby and Ron's interest.

Bobby and Ron decided to join the Social Group together. Since "graduating" from the Friendship Group, they often meet up for coffee or a bite to eat, creating a support system that enriches both of their lives.

Their newfound friendship has alleviated loneliness and infused life with a sense of purpose and joy.

[Read the full story here](#)



Our history:

For over 30 years, we have been a trusted part of the Sutton community, known for delivering high-quality services. We have a dedicated team with low staff turnover, meaning you see familiar faces when you seek our help.

Growth and challenges:

Our charity has grown a lot in the past four years, doubling in size, which reflects the growing need for support for older people living in our local communities. This growth has allowed us to offer more services, but we have also needed to continually improve our systems and processes to keep up.

Our Impact Goals



Create an Age Friendly Sutton

Support resilience and wellbeing in older people



Provide a friendly environment to create the best possible experience



Deliver high quality services for people living in Sutton

Amplify the voices of older people

Support independence among older people

Our Approach

In the face of a rapidly ageing population, the challenges confronting older people are multifaceted, ranging from declining health to unmet care needs and financial strains. Too often, these challenges leave older people feeling isolated and unsupported. At Age UK Sutton, we are unwavering in our dedication to enhancing the lives of older people, providing companionship, advice, and critical support to those in greatest need.

Age UK Sutton stands at the forefront of meeting the pressing demands of Sutton's ageing demographic, comprising over 32,000 individuals aged 65 and above. In the face of a challenging socioeconomic landscape exacerbated by a relentless cost-of-living crisis, our organisation has, for 33 years, remained steadfast in its commitment to providing vital support services.

With demand for our services 50% higher than pre-pandemic, we must evolve and support more people in creative and ambitious ways.

Meet Jean: A story of urgency and compassion

During a visit to Jean, an 88 year old widow, our hospital discharge service Home from Hospital team discovered that Jean had no food, no way to heat it, and her home was without heating. Additionally, her downstairs hospital bed was out of reach of a telephone, putting her at risk of needing to return to hospital.

Our team coordinated a safety inspection with the London Fire Brigade, arranged for a care assessment with Social Services, arranged for a pendant alarm to ensure she could call for help if needed, and provided Jean with essential items like a heater, blankets and food.

This situation highlights the importance of timely support and practical solutions in improving the quality of life for individuals like Jean. Our efforts helped her to stay safe and regain a sense of security in her home.

[Read the full story here](#)





Comprehensive Support Services

Our holistic approach ensures that older individuals receive integrated support tailored to their unique needs. Through person-centred assessments, we streamline the support process, empowering clients to address various challenges effectively.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, our commitment to supporting older individuals remains unwavering. The past two years have seen an unprecedented surge in demand for our services, with over 3,500 older people accessing support every year - an increase of 51% from pre pandemic years. As we navigate this new normal, we recognise the profound impact on older individuals, with many grappling with social isolation and diminished physical activity.

To address these challenges, we have maintained a strong emphasis on direct engagement. A significant 79% of all our interactions with older people have been either face-to-face or via telephone. This approach is crucial in building trust, providing personalised care, and ensuring that our clients feel truly supported, both emotionally and physically. Our focus on personal connection helps to alleviate the feelings of isolation and supports the wellbeing of older individuals, making a tangible difference in their lives.

At Age UK Sutton, our resolve to empower and uplift older individuals remains steadfast. With dedication and strategic partnerships, we are committed to ensuring that every older person in Sutton can receive the support and care they deserve when they need it, now and in the years to come.

 **We both appreciate all the check in calls and support provided, and knowing you are on the end of the phone really does mean a lot. We are so grateful.** 

Elaine - Dementia Peer Support client

Impact and Future Direction

Reflecting on our achievements in 2023/24, we facilitated substantial financial gains by helping people to access benefits, provided support to a growing number of individuals and launched innovative new programmes to meet evolving needs. **Looking ahead, we anticipate continuing to support over 3,500 older individuals in 2024/25, guided by our commitment to:**

Our commitment to person-centred support is ingrained in every part of our operations. We recognise that traditional methods may not suit everyone, where possible we tailor our services to individual needs. Understanding that many older individuals face barriers to accessing community support, whether due to mobility issues or technological limitations, we offer a multitude of flexible options to enable us to meet with our clients and to ensure no one is left behind.



Sutton has over 20% of its population in the 65+ age group (32,184 residents) with 31% of those living alone, and a higher-than-average risk of digital exclusion.

In acknowledging that a significant portion of those we serve lack internet access or confidence in utilising technology, we remain steadfast in our role to drive inclusivity and accessibility. As one of the few, if not the only, voluntary sector support services in Sutton offering in-home support, particularly for essential services like information and advice, we are committed to maintaining this vital lifeline for those who have no other means of access.

1.4 million older people in the UK are often lonely. Loneliness is a major issue facing our older people and is now widely recognised in society.

I am so thankful for Age UK Sutton's help. It has made a world of difference to my life

Ann - Dementia Peer Support client

Meet Mandy: A story of strength

Mandy never imagined she would receive the level of support she found through the Let's Connect team at Age UK Sutton. Reflecting on her journey, Mandy expressed that she feels like her life is finally getting back on track.

Mandy had battled agoraphobia, a symptom of her anxiety, low mood, and depression. Recently, she faced new physical challenges after being diagnosed with leukemia, a condition that severely affected her daily functioning and increased her frailty.

Determined to remain active and avoid falling into old patterns, she asked a friend to accompany her to the Friendship Group's Tuesday lunchtime gatherings. Mandy enjoyed the relaxed and welcoming social environment. The friendships she formed there became a source of strength and encouragement.

[**Read the full story here**](#)



Meet Annette: How a little help made a big difference

Annette, a 71-year-old widow living alone in Sutton, faced significant challenges after a severe stroke left her unable to walk without assistance. Struggling with daily tasks and financial worries, she received vital support from Age UK Sutton. A home visit uncovered her eligibility for additional financial aid and addressed immediate practical needs, such as replacing her broken microwave.

The assistance has greatly improved Annette's quality of life, allowing her to live more comfortably and independently.

[**Read the full story here**](#)



Our year

£1,113,318

Financial Support: We helped put £1,113,318 back into the pockets of local older people through our Information and Advice service. We helped 208 people gain, on average, an extra £5,352 a year.



Staying Connected: We made 26,213 contacts through home visits, community visits, office meetings, phone calls and emails. This includes 3,044 home visits.

26,213

2,044

Together for Sutton: In partnership with seven local organisations, Age UK Sutton provided free and confidential information and advice services to 2,044 unique people.



Frailty Support: We piloted a Frailty Support service and supported over 130 people in nine months to achieve goals for improved practical and wellbeing.

130

570

Hospital Discharge Service: We helped 570 people return home and stay supported after being in hospital.



Help at Home: Our social enterprise supported 277 individuals with essential daily activities such as shopping, light domestic tasks and companionship, enabling them to maintain their independence at home.

277

in numbers

567

Community Connections: 567 people were connected with their community through our Let's Connect programme, helping those who feel lonely or isolated.



Volunteers: 66 amazing volunteers helped us throughout the year, in roles including Welcome & Information, Walk & Talk, Community Connectors and Activity Buddies.

66

200

Dementia Support: We provided specialist support to 200 people living with dementia or caring for someone with dementia through one-on-one and peer support.



Mental Health Support: 127 people received specialist support for their mental health and wellbeing, mostly aged between 50 and 75.

127

Outreach: We started a new outreach programme to reach more people who don't usually access our services, in partnership with community groups and events across the borough.



You have reminded me that there are nice people out there who care about us older people.

Harry - Let's Connect client

Our income

With rising costs and growing demand for our services, managing our financial health is crucial for our future. This year, we have supported more people in more ways than ever before. We have also secured funding for new projects, with plans for even more initiatives on the horizon.

Income

Over the year we generated £1,365,062 in income enabling us to deliver services to support older people

Expenditure

£1,439,788 was spent supporting older people in Sutton this year

Social Enterprise

£389,781 of income was raised via our enterprise initiatives

Financial Support

This year we facilitated substantial financial support for both existing and new projects via £377,149 of new grant income

I really appreciate all of the support Age UK Sutton have given me. My support worker Carol is lovely and has made a real difference to my home.

George - Help at Home client

Meet Michael: A story of support

Michael is 73 years old and lives alone in Sutton. He suffers from several long-term health conditions and relies on Attendance Allowance, a small State Pension, and Pension Credit to make ends meet.

With his health deteriorating and the Cost-of-Living crisis intensifying his financial struggles, Michael was concerned about his financial stability. Being under significant stress was exacerbating his health issues.

A Community Support Adviser was able to report a change in circumstances to the DWP and increase his Disability Benefit award to the maximum level. The Adviser also supported him to purchase a much needed new mattress to improve his physical and mental health. Having an overall positive and life changing impact on Michael.

[Read the full story here](#)



Meet Tina and Chris - Living well with Dementia

Tina is 81 living with Dementia, she is supported by her partner Chris who cares for her daily needs. Chris had stated he had felt overwhelmed with his caring duties as he was managing all tasks and responsibilities himself whilst also managing his own health needs. By accessing the Dementia Peer Support Groups Chris was able to seek support and comfort from others in the same situation and get guidance and advice from the staff team around what is available for both him and Tina.

Chris and Tina were supported to live well with Dementia by accessing information and guidance, hearing talks from professionals and gaining peer support.

Tina said that “she could be herself and wasn’t being judged”. Chris shared that he felt he had made friends at the group and attending them was an important highlight each month for both of them.

[Read the full story here](#)



Our Achievements

What we said we would do

What we did



Grow our Community of Voices to ensure older people's views and ideas are centred in our planning and develop ways of demonstrating our impact.

Launched the Sounding Board as part of our Let's Connect programme, providing us with valuable guidance on development of our services.



Continue to challenge ageism and champion principles of an Age-Friendly Sutton – supporting and challenging local partners to do the same.

Our management team participated in several strategic boards and steering groups to represent older people's voices, including the Dementia Strategy Steering Group, the Mental Health Partnership Board, and the Sutton Health and Care Place Board.



Embed mental health and wellbeing across services and develop specialist support for older people in Sutton.

Our mental health peer support team, in partnership with Sutton Mental Health Foundation, Off the Record, and Sutton Carers Centre, provided peer support for older people with mental health needs, working alongside the Mental Health Older People's Team.



Expand our Community Support service to provide information, advice, and casework support through appointments and outreach.

Secured funding to expand our community support team. We introduced a Welcome and Information team to focus on initial needs, allowing staff to provide in-depth advice and support through office appointments and home visits. We also launched a pilot service to support those living with frailty, funded by the Integrated Care Board Innovation Fund.

What we said we would do



Develop our Help at Home social enterprise to meet local needs and generate vital income for the charity.



Continue to develop our volunteer programme to broaden our offer to the Sutton community



Reach deeper into communities across the borough of Sutton, ensuring our organisation is present and accessible to everyone who needs us.



Secure long-term funding to continue and grow our Dementia Peer Support service.

What we did

Our Help at Home service had its best year, supporting more people and providing flexible work opportunities for support workers. The service made a significant contribution to the charity's income.

We developed our volunteer programme, introducing new roles to meet the needs of volunteers and our clients. We now have a strong team of volunteers supporting various programmes. We also applied for the Investors in Volunteering accreditation to enhance our volunteer management practices.

Through our partnership with Together for Sutton, we secured a grant from the London Borough of Sutton and the Greater London Authority. This allowed us to conduct outreach in more deprived communities and support those in crisis or at risk of crisis who may not have known about our services.

Continued to develop our Dementia Wellbeing Peer Support service, running monthly groups and providing one-on-one support. We also conducted focus groups, resulting in the "Living Well with Dementia in Sutton" report, which informed the development of a Dementia Strategy by the London Borough of Sutton. We secured a contract to deliver a full dementia support programme for 2024-25.

Our Volunteers

The vital role of our volunteers

Our volunteers are the cornerstone of Age UK Sutton, playing an indispensable role in the success of our programmes and the well-being of our clients. Their dedication, compassion, and unwavering support have made a profound impact on the lives of countless individuals in our community.

Creating connections and building trust

Volunteers like Ronnie and Sue exemplify the transformative power of human connection. Ronnie, who became the "Chief of the Welcoming Committee" at the Friendship Group, has been instrumental in creating a warm and inclusive atmosphere. His ability to make new attendees feel welcomed and valued has significantly contributed to the group's success. By sharing his stories and ensuring everyone feels comfortable, Ronnie has fostered a sense of belonging and community spirit.

Sue, another remarkable volunteer, has provided consistent companionship and encouragement through the Walk & Talk programme. Her efforts have not only helped clients like Clare to overcome grief and loneliness but also to regain confidence and joy in their daily lives. Sue's empathetic approach and genuine care have made a lasting difference, illustrating the profound impact of dedicated volunteer support.

Meet Norman: A story of the impact a volunteer can make

Norman, a retired banking professional and Sutton resident whose background included serving as a trustee on the Board of Age UK Sutton was driven by a desire to volunteer and directly contribute to the community.

For over a year, Norman has been an invaluable volunteer in the Community Support team. This contribution allows our team of advisors to focus on providing advice and managing more complex cases, significantly enhancing the team's efficiency and capacity.

"I really look forward to my time in the office each week, loving the vibe, banter, interactions, and support, as well as the immense satisfaction of having helped the people who contact AUKS for help and support."

Contributions made by Norman, and our other volunteers, have been transformative as we can assist significantly more clients than would be possible without such support.

[Read the full story here](#)



Empowering through education and skill building

Our volunteers also play a crucial role in empowering clients by teaching new skills and promoting independence. For instance, the support provided by volunteers in digital literacy has enabled clients like Paulina to connect with their families and join virtual communities. This newfound ability to navigate digital platforms has significantly reduced feelings of isolation and enhanced their quality of life.

Making connections

Volunteers are adept at providing personalised support tailored to the unique needs of each individual.

They can encourage active participation and foster independence among clients, for example, supporting them to move through a journey from isolation and loneliness to connection and wellbeing.

The heartbeat of our community

Our volunteers are the heartbeat of Age UK Sutton. Their selfless contributions, whether through companionship, skill-building, or personalised support, create a ripple effect that touches the lives of our clients and their families. The dedication and passion of our volunteers not only enhance the effectiveness of our programmes but also embody the spirit of community and care that defines Age UK Sutton.

We extend our deepest gratitude to every one of our 66 volunteers for their invaluable contributions. Their unwavering commitment and heartfelt service continue to inspire and drive our mission forward, making a tangible difference in the lives of older adults in our community.

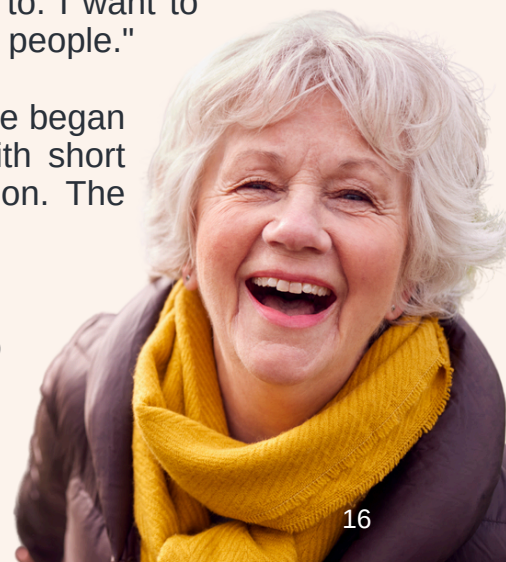
Meet Caroline: A story of overcoming physical barriers and reclaiming an active, fulfilling life

When Caroline started working with her Community Connector, she set clear goals. She shared, "I am not living my life the way that I want to. I want to make the most of my remaining time and I need to get out to see people."

Her goal of gaining independence seemed within reach when she began participating in Walk & Talk with a volunteer. They started with short walks, gradually increasing in confidence, strength, and duration. The conversations during these walks became a highlight for both.

Caroline's determination paid off. She shared, "I feel brilliant! I feel like I have achieved something. My family is amazed. I'm so glad I took up the offer."

[Read the full story here](#)



Our plans for 2024 – 2025

With **new Leadership** in place, the new CEO Peter Glass will be guiding the future efforts of Age UK Sutton, as a team we commit to; **updating, developing and strengthening** services, with particular focus on our health and wellbeing programmes, **Frailty Support, Home from Hospital, Dementia and Mental Health Support**, enhancing **Life Changing services** that support people in the community and in their own homes.

We will continue work to ensure we effectively record and use **intuitive data to evidence** the impact of services delivered whilst also identifying trends, gaps and needs of the community. Sharing this knowledge widely within the systems across Sutton.

We will aim to **strengthen existing partnerships** across South West London, with particular focus on our role as **experts in Sutton** and what makes Sutton an **Age Friendly** place. We will do this while amplifying the **Community Voice** of older people, through consultation and encouraging engagement with local strategies especially in health and social care during a pivotal time.

We will grow our **Let's Connect** offer, supporting people to be even **better connected** and feel less lonely whilst also **tackling Digital Exclusion** by supporting older people to get online and connect digitally.



How to Get Involved

Join us in making a difference

We achieve our goals because of people like you. Our impact is made possible through the dedication of our volunteers, trustees, staff, clients, partners, donors, and our community. Here are some ways you can get involved:

Donate: Make a financial contribution

Volunteer: Give your time to help

Fundraise: Organise events or activities to raise funds for us

Spread the word: Help raise awareness about our work

Support older Sutton residents

As an independent local charity, we rely on the generosity of local people to support older residents in Sutton. All funds raised through donations, grants, and other contributions stay within Sutton. Here's how you can help:

Donate by text:

Text AUKSGIVE and your donation amount to 70450

Donate by cash or cheque:

Drop off or mail your donation to -
Age UK Sutton, Sutton Gate, 1 Carshalton Road, Sutton SM1 4LE

Leave a Legacy

Consider leaving a gift to Age UK Sutton in your Will. Your legacy can make a lasting difference.

Volunteer with us

If you're interested in flexible volunteering opportunities, reach out to us today!

Email: volunteering@ageuksutton.org.uk

Phone: 020 8078 0002

Website: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/sutton/get-involved/volunteer/>

Thanks to Our Partners and Supporters



A heartfelt thank you

We want to extend our deepest gratitude to all our partners and supporters. Your unwavering support and generosity make it possible for us to serve the older residents of Sutton. Together, we are creating a community where older people can thrive.

Our partners

Thank you to our incredible partners who collaborate with us to deliver essential services and programmes:

Health and Care Organisations:

Working together to provide comprehensive health and wellness support.

Voluntary Sector Groups:

Joining forces to ensure no one in our community is left behind.

Local Businesses:

Contributing resources and expertise to enhance our initiatives.

Community Groups:

Helping us reach more people and build stronger connections.

Our supporters

We are immensely grateful to our supporters who contribute in various ways:

Donors and Funders:

Your financial contributions allow us to continue our vital work.

Volunteers:

Your time and dedication bring our programmes to life and make a real difference in people's lives.

Clients and Families:

Your trust and engagement inspire us to keep improving and expanding our services.

Our community

A big thank you to the entire Sutton community for your ongoing support and encouragement. Every contribution, big or small, helps us to provide the best possible support for older people in our area.

Together, We Make a Difference

Without your support, our achievements would not be possible. Thank you for being an essential part of Age UK Sutton's journey. We look forward to continuing our work together to make Sutton a more Age-Friendly place



If you would like to read our client and volunteer stories in full, please scan the QR code above or visit www.ageuk.org.uk/sutton/about-us/our-stories/



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Registered charity no. 1085875

Age UK Sutton is an independent charity operating in the Borough of Sutton and is working to make Sutton an age friendly borough