



Annual Report

2023-2024



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Message from the chair



As the Chair of Trustees, it is my privilege to reflect on another remarkable year for Age UK Westminster. In 2023/24, we faced many challenges, but thanks to the unwavering dedication of our staff, volunteers, and supporters, we continued to make a profound difference in the lives of older people across Westminster.

This year, we strengthened our commitment to tackling issues of isolation, loneliness, and financial hardship that impact so many older people in our community. The ongoing cost-of-living crisis demonstrates the importance of our work, as more residents turn to us for support and advice. From our Warm Hubs Lunch Club, which provided nutritious meals and companionship during the cold winter months, to our Digital Inclusion Service, which empowers older adults to stay connected in an increasingly digital world, every service has been designed with care and compassion.

The stories we've heard over the year—of friendships formed, confidence rebuilt, and independence regained—are a testament to the impact of our services. These successes would not be possible without our dedicated team, whose passion and expertise ensure that we continue to deliver high-quality services that truly meet the needs of Westminster's older community.

Collaboration has been central to our achievements. By strengthening partnerships with local businesses, healthcare providers, and community organisations, we have amplified our impact and expanded our reach. These partnerships are crucial as we prepare to meet the evolving needs of an ageing population in the years ahead.

We remain grateful for the generosity of our donors and funders, whose support has enabled us to adapt and innovate. Their contributions have allowed us to sustain existing services, and plan for a future where no older person in Westminster feels forgotten or left behind.

Looking ahead, we are committed to expanding our services, deepening our partnerships, and ensuring that every older resident of Westminster has access to the resources they need to lead fulfilling lives.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to our success this year.

Fiona Healy-Connelly
Chair of Trustees

Message from the CEO



As we reflect on another transformative year at Age UK Westminster, I am humbled by the incredible impact we have made together in supporting the older residents of our community. The past year has been marked by both challenges and opportunities, and thanks to your unwavering support, we have continued to provide vital services that address the needs of Westminster's older population.

This year, we strengthened our commitment to combatting loneliness, fostering independence, and ensuring older people are empowered to lead fulfilling lives. Our services have reached thousands of residents, providing not just services but moments of connection, care, and empowerment.

Our partnerships have been pivotal in expanding our reach and deepening our impact.

Collaborations with the NHS, local businesses, and the public sector have allowed us to tackle critical issues such as food insecurity, access to healthcare, and financial hardship.

This year also saw inspiring fundraising efforts, such as Orlagh Mannion's participation in the London Landmarks Half Marathon, which raised significant funds to support our services.

Stories like hers remind us of the power of community and the difference we can make when we come together for a common cause.

As we look ahead, our focus remains clear:

- To strengthen partnerships that enhance the delivery of our services.
- To adapt and innovate our services to meet the evolving needs of older residents.
- To champion the voices of Westminster's older people, ensuring their concerns are heard and addressed at every level.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to our staff, volunteers, donors, and partners. Your dedication and generosity make our work possible. Every meal delivered, phone call answered, and connection made is a testament to your commitment to our shared mission.

Thank you for standing with us as we continue to build a community where older people feel valued, supported, and empowered. Together, we can make Westminster a place where ageing is celebrated, and everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Mehfuz Ahmed

CEO



About us

Age UK Westminster exists to promote the well-being of older people in the City of Westminster and to help make their lives a fulfilling and enjoyable experience. We focus on services that reduce financial hardship, disadvantage and social isolation for older people in our local community.

Information & Advice Team

Age UK Westminster is a delivery partner for the "Westminster Advice Services Partnership", focused on the delivery of I&A services for older people in Westminster. We provide "drop-in surgeries" and appointments at community locations across the borough; outreach into the community, home visits for those who are housebound, and an enquires line for information and signposting.

Complex Needs Support Service

We provide Information, Advice, Advocacy & Support to older people and their carers in Westminster on and around a range of complex issues they are facing in their lives. This includes but is not limited to welfare benefits, housing & social care, health care, bereavement, family life and loneliness.

Cost of Living Advice

This involves supporting clients to maximise their income. The adviser assists clients by carrying out benefit checks and benefit applications. For those on means-tested benefits, low income, referrals are made on their behalf to the Cost-of-living support fund and for charitable grants.

Befriending

This project provides weekly visits by a volunteer to older people to reduce their social isolation, particularly when they are housebound. A telephone call is available for those who don't want a volunteer visit.

General & Older Volunteering

This project provides a wide range of volunteer opportunities suitable for all ages, needs and abilities with no upper age limit to who can apply.

Digital Inclusion

This project helps older local residents make the most of the internet and their electronic devices in later life and help towards preventing loneliness and isolation. Age UK Westminster offers both group sessions and 1:1 support.

CNWL Digital Inclusion

Funded by CNWL NHS Trust, the KCW Social Isolation project is delivered by Age UK Kensington & Chelsea and Age UK Westminster in partnership. The project provides digital inclusion learning and guidance to adults aged 55+ referred by the bi-borough Older Adults Mental Health team.



About us

Maintenance Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (MCST)

Face to face sessions available for people living with dementia in Westminster. Group members take part in meaningful and stimulating activities through our weekly 24-session Maintenance Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (MCST) programme proven to help maintain memory and mental function. The groups provide a fun, supportive environment where people can build new relationships.

The Heart of Westminster Memory Cafe

The Heart of Westminster Café is a Memory Café for Westminster which offers a relaxed, informal setting for people with dementia and their family, friends and carers to get together. The Heart of Westminster Café provides a mixture of talks, information and advice, entertainment and activities.

Wellbeing & Connections Post Hospital Discharge

Age UK Westminster's Wellbeing & Connections Service provides vital assistance to older Westminster residents as they return home after a hospital stay or major health event. This free service from our Wellbeing & Connections team supports those aged 60 and over in making the adjustment back to independent living.

Exercise at home

Exercise at Home is a service that offers home-based sessions for individuals who might be housebound, living with chronic conditions, having mobility and balance issues, and find activities of daily living challenging.

Fit4Life

Age UK Westminster's Fit 4 Life project provides a range of activities and fun exercise classes at a range of community venues across the borough, as well as in the comfort of your own home. Classes are suitable for all, from gentle to more vigorous and challenging sessions.

Activities

Offering a diverse array of activities and services to support older people in the local community. Helping older adults live independently, stay active, and remain engaged with their local surroundings.

Our mission and values



Our Mission

Our aims are:

- To encourage choice and opportunity for older people.
- To be a direct service provider of high-quality services for older people.
- To ensure that older people are aware of, and have access to, the benefits to which they are entitled.
- To advocate on behalf of older people.
- To tackle issues such as isolation and loneliness within our local community.
- To promote positive attitudes towards older people and ageing.

Age UK Westminster will promote and support individual rights and choice within our services.

Users are entitled to:

- Have their cultural, ethnic, religious, sexual, and emotional needs respected.
- Enjoy freedom from threat, injury, insult, and ridicule in every aspect of their life.
- Enjoy their personal independence and personal choices and to receive help in achieving these.
- Users should be known by the name of their choice, be treated with dignity, and be assured that their personal and private matters will be treated in confidence.
- Care for themselves as far as they are able irrespective of how long this may take to accomplish.
- Be involved in decisions concerning the services they receive.
- Be kept informed of any future changes that may affect the services they receive.

Who we serve



Age UK Westminster is dedicated to serving the diverse needs of its residents across all demographics. In this annual report, we present a comprehensive analysis of the demographics of our clients, providing valuable insights into the population we serve.

77% of our clients are aged 65 and above. This underscores the importance of our efforts in addressing the unique requirements of this demographic, including assisting clients accessing all benefits they're entitled to and opportunities for social engagement.

Geographically, our clients are spread across various wards within the Westminster area, with notable concentrations in Church St (11%), Queens Park (9%), Marylebone High St (7%), and Harrow Road (7%). This information enables us to allocate resources effectively and adapt our outreach strategies to better serve the specific requirements of each community.

Age

- 26% are aged 50-64
- 27% are aged 65-74
- 20% are aged 75-84
- 9% are aged 85 or older

Wards or Areas

Abbey Road 6%, Bayswater 4%, Bryanston & Dorset Sq 1%, Church St 9%, Churchill 1%, Harrow Rd 7%, Hyde Park 3%, Knightsbridge & Belgravia 1%, Lancaster Gate 3%, Little Venice 7%, Maida Vale Ward 8%, Marylebone High Street 4%, Pimlico North 4%, Pimlico South 5%, Queens Park 7%, Regents Park 7%, St James 3%, Tachbrook Road 3%, Vincent Square 5%, Warwick Road 1%, West End 5%, Westbourne 6%

Our trustees

Our board of trustees are an elected group of individuals that has overall responsibility for the management of Age UK Westminster. The board seeks to ensure the best interest of service users in all types of management decisions.



Fiona Healy-Connolly
Chair of Trustees



Dr Ann Black
Vice Chair



Ian Adams
Trustee



David Durnford-Slater
Trustee



David Kent-Lemon
Trustee



Neil Carthy
Treasurer



Michele Mestrinaro
Trustee



Joel Levack
Trustee



Rasika Meena Kaushik
Trustee

Our impact



19,455

number of client contacts

11,440

volunteer hours donated

£1,102,020.62

financial gains for our clients

13,113

visitors to our website

10

Our services



3,739

contacts made with older people, their families and carers

1,359

older people supported by the service

220

older people signposted to other services

226

home visits

273

internal referrals

1,791

issues identified

Information and advice

Overview

The Information & Advice (I&A) team is dedicated to supporting older residents in Westminster by offering expert guidance and connecting them with a variety of services. Whether through Age UK Westminster or our trusted voluntary sector partners, we ensure individuals receive the assistance they need.

Our mission is to enable older people to live independently, confidently, and enjoyably by addressing their specific needs and challenges.

The team provides support in several key areas, including:

- Applying for welfare benefits
- Managing debt and finances
- Resolving housing issues
- Handling consumer matters, such as energy bills
- Completing forms and paperwork
- Offering advice and referrals to additional services

£1,102,020.62 gained for older people in Westminster

“

The financial support I received helped to reduce my stress and anxiety, and I am now able to budget better. I worry less about money.

”

Information & advice case study

Rosie lives with her disabled husband in a one-bedroom Housing association property. Her husband suffers from severe COPD (he is on an oxygen machine 23 hours a day). He is also housebound due to severe mobility problems. She is his main carer. She approached Age UK Westminster because they were struggling to pay their electricity bills. They were receiving all their benefits but still struggling financially. They were using more electricity due to her husband's health conditions. They had an outstanding electricity bill of £570 that they couldn't afford to pay. Their energy provider was threatening to send their case to a debt collecting company.

Action taken/support provided

She met with Age UK Westminster's adviser, the adviser called their energy provider and asked them to put the outstanding debt on hold while they explored options to help her. The energy provider agreed to this. The adviser referred her to Green Doctor for energy saving tips and support. She also applied to one of our grants giving charities for a charitable grant to assist with the outstanding electricity bill. She was also referred to our in-house Cost of living support project for a Sainsbury's voucher worth £250 to assist with food support.

Outcomes

Rosie received a home visit from Green Doctor who arranged for draft proofing to be put into their accommodation to keep the place warmer, therefore less electricity is used for heating. She was awarded a charitable grant for the full amount of £570 which was owed for their electricity bill, and she was also awarded a Cost-of-living support fund (Sainsbury's voucher of £250 for food support).

Social policy impact on client

Rosie was extremely grateful for the support she received from Age UK Westminster. She said that the financial support helped to reduce her stress and anxiety, and she was now able to budget better. She worried less about money. The draft proofing provided by Green Doctor reduced the amount of heating needed which in turn reduced their electricity and gas bills. She said that "I never knew that help like this was available to people in our situation, I will recommend Age UK Westminster to friends in a similar situation."

91

befriending matches



2,069

befriending contacts -
in-person

5,457

befriending contacts -
telephone

11,440

befriending volunteer
hours

Befriending

Age UK Westminster is dedicated to tackling social isolation among older residents in Westminster, recognising the significant impact loneliness can have on both mental and physical health. To address this issue, we offer a one-to-one befriending service for older adults who are vulnerable, live alone, or experience social isolation.

This service carefully matches individuals with kind and supportive local volunteers who commit to weekly visits. During these visits, Befrienders provide meaningful social interaction, emotional support, and companionship. They also encourage an active lifestyle by joining them on short walks and helping with light tasks.

For those who prefer or require remote support, we also provide a telephone befriending service. Volunteers make weekly 30-minute phone calls to one or more older adults at risk of loneliness, offering connection and reassurance. Research shows that regular phone conversations can have a positive impact on the mood and well-being of older people.

Through these personalised befriending services, Age UK Westminster is committed to reducing loneliness and fostering a sense of community, improving the overall quality of life for Westminster's older population.

Befriending case study

A 68-year-old client was referred by a mental health charity to assist with his general wellbeing in the hope of decreasing his loneliness and isolation. Due to his limited mobility, he does not go out often. He sometimes speaks to his elderly brother on the phone or with district nurses and carers who come around, but he was keen to have some alternate social contact.

He was matched with a Telephone Befriending volunteer in February 2024 and both the client and volunteer reported that they enjoyed their weekly chats. They enjoy talking about travel, current affairs, and the volunteer's life as a university student.

In June of 2024, the volunteer contacted us to explore the idea of a one-time face-to-face visit, as she had recently been on vacation in Vietnam and wanted to share a postcard she thought that the client would like. The Befriending Coordinator facilitated this one-time visit and both the client and the volunteer were excited to meet in person.

The postcard was shared, and the client was delighted with it. They spent an hour chatting about the client's radio and his favourite radio shows, and the Client shared how grateful he was for the Befriending service, saying that their chats help him to 'feel young again'.

The volunteer also noted how impactful the project has been to her life, as she gets to understand more about what life is like for somebody with decreased mobility in the 60+ demographic.

Following the visit, they continue to call and share stories on the phone weekly. They hope to meet again in-person next year.

Other feedback

“ My volunteer and I come from different worlds, but somehow, we get on so well. We go out shopping together and share our cultural differences. It's an excellent match! ”

250+
volunteers

11
festive activities

9
corporates supported
the project

£14,500
raised

650+
older people
benefitted from the
project

Christmas project

Amid the cheer and festivities, the holiday season can amplify feelings of loneliness for older people. At Age UK Westminster, we strive to bridge this gap with our annual Christmas Project.

For over 20 years, this initiative has embodied the true spirit of the season, ensuring that no older person in Westminster spends Christmas Day without a friendly visitor, a thoughtful gift, and a festive meal.

On Christmas Day 2023, Age UK Westminster and St. Paul's Boys School united to deliver 300 festive lunches to Westminster's most vulnerable older residents.

Each delivery was far more than a meal. Volunteers, brimming with holiday spirit, knocked on doors with meals, gifts, and warm smiles. For many, this visit brought immense comfort.

Age UK Westminster also made December 2023 truly special for older residents by hosting 18 festive events. These included:

- Christmas lunches
- Afternoon teas
- Carol singing events
- Art and craft workshops like wreath and card making.

These activities brought together 378 older people, fostering connection, joy, and new friendships throughout the festive season.

This ambitious project was only possible thanks to the generosity of donors, supporters, and volunteers. Funding came from trusted partners such as Edward Harvist Trust, Paddington Charities, Kindness Studio, and corporate supporters including GIC Singapore, Wallacea Living, and Urban Leisure. Contributions from BAIN & Co, Johnson Matthey, and Wates further bolstered the initiative.

536

clients participated in activities

325

activities held

4,896

attendances

Activities

Age UK Westminster offers a diverse array of activities and services to support older people in the local community. As a charity with over 70 years of experience, we are deeply committed to helping older adults live independently, stay active, and remain engaged with their local surroundings.

During the 2022/2023 period, this included:

Exercise Classes: We provided a variety of exercise classes designed to help older people maintain their strength, balance, and flexibility, enabling them to stay active and healthy.

Social Clubs: Our social activities and events offered older adults the opportunity to make new friends and enjoy a range of enriching pursuits, such as arts and crafts, games, and outings to local attractions.

Coffee Mornings with Informative Talks: These allowed our clients to learn something new in the company of like-minded older adults, fostering a sense of community and intellectual stimulation.

Through this diverse array of activities and services, Age UK Westminster is dedicated to supporting the overall well-being of older people in our local community.

■ ■

Thank you for all the marvellous events and meetings you and your colleagues arrange for golden oldies in Westminster. I get to as many as I can and they are always so welcoming.

■ ■

Activities case studies

Angel, attends our Fit4Life class

Why did you join this class?

I needed to be more active and joined the class 12 months ago after some minor surgery. Firstly, I joined the level 1 class which is less vigorous and when I became more agile I transferred to the level 2 class.

Do you have a favourite part of the class?

What a wonderful tutor Sharon is, her happy disposition is infectious her manner is adorable, her teaching is excellent. The tempo of the music that Sharon plays makes you want to get up and move. The friendly social in between classes provides information about other activities that are organised by Age UK Westminster.

How has this class impacted your overall wellbeing?

For a few weeks, I was not very steady on my legs and feet, and I hadn't been able to attend the class for 3 weeks due to family commitments. I couldn't put my finger on what was wrong with me until I resumed the Fit4Life class with Sharon. After the session I was back to my old self and walking well. Sharon is a life saver, for me and I'm sure all will agree a pleasure and treasure to us all.

Jane, attends our coffee mornings

Why do you attend our coffee mornings?

The coffee mornings at Hotel 63 and Regent Hall are so welcoming and friendly. The guest speakers especially Chris provide informative and interesting presentations on art and culture.

Do you have a favourite part of the coffee morning?

Each coffee morning is different. There are talks on Art and Culture but there are talks on health and others provide valuable information about transport and life in Westminster in general.

How has attending the coffee mornings impacted your overall wellbeing?

I have made friends with other like-minded members of the group and we often meet at other events that Age UK Westminster organise. I feel less isolated and have made lasting friendships.

162
clients

1045
client contacts

50
1:1 sessions

59
group sessions

Digital inclusion

Age UK Westminster helps residents aged 50+ gain confidence and knowledge in using digital devices like smartphones, tablets, iPads, and laptops.

The service offers both group sessions and one-on-one support, catering to individual learning preferences and needs.

Whether it's connecting online to access local services, shopping online, learning to use Zoom for virtual activities, setting up email and WhatsApp accounts, or staying in touch with loved ones through video calls, Age UK Westminster's Digital Inclusion Service is here to help.

Becoming digitally connected can significantly reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness while enhancing physical and emotional wellbeing.

Topics covered include:

- Computer basics
- Email and Skype
- Using the internet
- Internet security
- Music and audio
- Smartphones and tablets
- Social networking
- Government services, shopping, and banking online

“
I had the good fortune to meet with your volunteers at a library digital support drop-in and they sorted me out with WhatsApp on my new phone.
”

Digital inclusion case study

A 55-year-old, Arabic speaking female suffered a stroke which caused memory loss, slight mobility issue and suffering from depression joined the project in May 2024. She wanted to learn how to use devices including her mobile phone. We provided her with a loan tablet and introduced her to some helpful sites.

Although client have stated no hobbies or interests, she was happy to learn further, and we supplied her with a refurbished laptop for her personal use.

Client wished to improve her English, so we did a bit of research regarding online learning sites we also looked up swimming classes for improving her mobility. We continued her training, but client was suffering from fatigue and could not fully concentrate on during her training sessions and so were cut short or cancelled on various days. In July her doctor changed her medication and a month later her energy level significantly improved.

She wishes to move, and we registered her with Westminster Housing solution online and we found out that she was already registered so we received the telephone number for her advisor and continued to train her on how to bid online for suitable accommodation.

She also requested that she was ready to learn "better" English, so we proudly registered her with Westminster Adult Education Services for ESOL course. Client had problems with her utility bills, and we registered her online to provide her own metre readings for gas and electricity.

She still prefers to do her grocery shopping by venturing to her local supermarket, so we had a walk down to her local coffee shop for a training session. We went through the NHS App. She lasted the whole hour but wanted to leave once more patrons entered the coffee shop.

We will shortly be completing her training and will introduce her to activities and events.

45

specialist MCST sessions

11

Heart of Westminster
memory cafes

381

attendances at group
sessions

82

clients accessing the
project

Dementia support

Age UK Westminster provides a range of activities designed to support memory and cognitive function for people living with dementia.

Through the Maintenance Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (MCST) programme, participants engage in meaningful and stimulating activities proven to help maintain memory and mental abilities. These sessions offer a fun, supportive environment where individuals can connect with others and form new relationships.

MCST activities include:

- Group discussions
- Word games
- Quizzes
- Physical exercises
- Creative and musical activities

Additionally, the Heart of Westminster Memory Café, run in partnership with The Salvation Army's Regent Hall, offers a relaxed and welcoming space for individuals with dementia, their families, friends, and carers.

At the Memory Café, attendees can enjoy a mix of informative talks, advice and support, entertainment, and engaging activities, fostering a sense of community and connection.

“

I enjoyed my time with the others in the MCST sessions, we were like a family. I can only join Memory Cafe now. I like it here as well.

”

Dementia support case studies

Case study 1

After a diagnosis of vascular dementia 10 years ago Lexi (76) began to find herself not being invited out with friends and began to find herself increasingly isolated. Lexi worried it was because she could not keep up or contribute to conversations as she used to which only exacerbated her feeling of isolation and depression.

Our Maintenance Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (MCST) programme has given Lexi a place where she can be herself and be with people who share the same issues as her. It has helped her connect to a network of support and make friends. There is no judgement in the group -as she said-, the participants can be themselves, there is lots of laughter and lots of understanding.

Case study 2

May (79), who is originally from Asia, was diagnosed with dementia 6 years ago. May has been living in a care home where there is not enough activity for people living with dementia. May often looks sad when she arrives to the MCST sessions. She then speaks her native tongue with tears in her eyes. She misses her Asian family and always wants to go back home to see them.

During the MCST sessions she is supported by one of our volunteers who can speak with May in her native language. May's interaction with the volunteer lifts her mood and helps her participating in the sessions. We can often see May laughing during the sessions and she also speaks English with other group members. By the end of the sessions May is usually happy and has a smile on her face as she waves goodbye.

Case study 3

Zara (82) was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease 8 years ago. She attended the MCST sessions for more than a year. Zara was a core member of the MCST group which also served as social activity for her. Zara does not have family and relied on the help of friends and social workers. She was always taken to the venue because she could have been easily lost. As Zara's dementia has progressed, she found it difficult to participate in group discussions and conversations. Moreover, her orientation skills have suffered significantly. Her helpers were not always available to collect her after the group sessions therefore our leaders walked her home on those occasions.

It is very sad when a participant's cognitive decline is so advanced that it hinders them from group discussions or group activities. In this case, as it happened to Zara as well, the group is no longer suitable for them, and they have to exit the group. Our leaders, however, supported Zara to find alternative solutions for her.

32

clients who participated in
Lunch Club

23

sessions

306

attendances

Lunch club

Age UK Westminster's lunch club provided a welcoming and supportive space for older residents in the Lancaster Gate ward during 2023-2024. This initiative offered not only a nutritious meal but also an opportunity for social connection and access to vital support services.

Designed for individuals aged 50+ at risk of isolation or loneliness—whether living alone or without nearby family and friends—the lunch club served as a lifeline for those affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Attendees were greeted with warmth and care, enjoying hot meals while receiving information and referrals to additional Age UK Westminster services, such as befriending, dementia support, and benefits advice.

The lunch club also celebrated special occasions and holidays, fostering a sense of community and togetherness. For many, it served as an entry point to the broader range of services offered by Age UK Westminster, raising awareness about ways to enhance independence and overall wellbeing.

This essential service highlighted Age UK Westminster's community-focused approach, addressing immediate needs like food insecurity while proactively combating the long-term impacts of loneliness. By bringing people together and providing practical support, the lunch club embodied the charity's mission of helping older residents lead fulfilling and connected lives.

Ukrainian response team support

NEW! Launched June 2024

3

clients

Age UK Westminster partnered with the Ukrainian Response Team to introduce a specialised support initiative aimed at older Ukrainian residents in Westminster.

This person-centred project offered tailored assistance through a dedicated link worker available one day per week, supported by a small team of Ukrainian-speaking volunteers.

The goal was to enhance access to Age UK Westminster's services and community activities while fostering trust and engagement within the community.

Project Activities

- The link worker offered personalised guidance and encouragement for older Ukrainian residents to participate in Age UK Westminster's activities, access support services, and connect with external local resources.
- An escorting service assisted individuals in attending activities and appointments.
- A small team of Ukrainian-speaking volunteers provided escorting, and offered companionship as befrienders.
- Surveys and focus groups conducted with older Ukrainian residents to identify their preferred activities and services. Feedback gathered will be used to adjust and tailor Age UK Westminster's services to better align with the community's needs.

15

contacts

364

number of client
contacts

42

clients accessing the
service

168

exercise sessions
delivered

62

supported walking
sessions

Exercise at home

At Age UK Westminster, we understand the importance of staying fit and active, especially for those who may find it more challenging. Our Exercise at Home sessions are designed to improve mobility, build strength, and help reduce stress levels.

This service provides tailored, home-based exercise sessions for individuals who may be housebound, living with chronic conditions, experiencing mobility or balance issues, or struggling with daily activities.

“

It's not just about staying physically active; it's about building a routine and maintaining discipline. I never expected that committing to these sessions would bring me such a sense of purpose and achievement.

”

“

Each session brings me one step closer to independence. I feel stronger and more confident in managing my own health, and I'm so thankful for the support I've received from my volunteer.

”

Exercise at Home case study

Introduction

Maria, a participant in the Age UK Westminster Exercise at Home project, has been engaged in regular sessions with a volunteer over the past few months. This program, tailored to support older adults, has positively influenced her daily life, particularly in maintaining mobility and fostering a sense of routine.

Background

Maria experiences chronic knee pain, which causes significant swelling and limits her mobility. Additionally, she has long-standing back pain that further complicates her ability to stay active. Before joining the project, she found it difficult to incorporate movement into her daily life due to these physical limitations.

Engagement with the Program

Maria joined the Exercise at Home program after learning about it through Age UK Westminster. She viewed the project as "a very good idea" and "very necessary" given her situation. Prior to participating, she often took the "lazy option," avoiding physical activity, which she recognised wasn't beneficial for her health.

The project provided Maria with structured sessions tailored to her capabilities, encouraging her to engage in movement regularly. Despite her knee and back conditions, she found the exercises manageable and a step in the right direction toward maintaining physical activity.

Impact on Daily Life and Wellbeing

Since participating in the program, Maria has seen a positive shift in her daily routine. While her knee condition hasn't significantly improved due to the nature of her injury, she notes that the sessions "gets me moving, which is a good thing." The regularity of the sessions has instilled discipline in her, helping her avoid sedentary habits and embrace a more active lifestyle.

Before joining, Maria often struggled to motivate herself to move, but the structured sessions have created a new routine. She recalls one day when she felt particularly fatigued and tempted to skip her exercise session. However, she remembered the commitment she made to herself and her volunteer. **"It's like a promise I've made," she said. "Once I start, I feel better afterwards, and I can't let myself down."**

This newfound discipline has helped Maria cultivate a sense of accomplishment beyond just physical activity. The sessions have provided her with a routine, enabling her to "move around a bit more," and contributing to her overall sense of wellbeing. Maria feels more confident in her ability to stay active, despite her physical challenges.

Wellbeing & connections

55

clients accessing

Age UK Westminster's wellbeing & connections service provides essential support to older residents in Westminster as they transition back to independent living after a hospital stay or major health event. This free service is available to those aged 60 and over, helping them adjust and regain confidence at home.

Once a referral is received, our team conducts an initial home visit to assess the client's immediate needs. We offer short-term assistance with essential tasks such as light shopping, collecting prescriptions, contacting GPs, and providing a friendly point of contact during the critical first weeks at home.

Following these initial visits, clients are connected to ongoing Age UK Westminster services such as Befriending, Exercise at Home, and Digital Inclusion, as well as to other relevant charities, council services, and community organisations. This holistic approach ensures a smooth transition and promotes long-term independence.

Referrals can be made directly by older adults or through family, friends, health workers, or medical professionals.

The service reflects Age UK Westminster's dedication to empowering older residents to age well. By easing the transition home, we help build a foundation for sustained independence and improved wellbeing.

646

contacts

"Thank you for helping my sister to get in touch with her GP following the complications of her operation. Even though I'm in New Zealand, it's been great being able to contact you about our concerns for her and know that you would be in touch with her directly."

Wellbeing and Connections case study

This 81-year-old client was referred to us by a physio at Imperial Trust following an A&E admission for back pain. After a few days in hospital, they discovered that she had a fracture in one of her vertebrae and was discharged. I arranged to meet the client in her home.

She was happy to see me but was unsure of my role, despite having a conversation over the phone about the service we provide. Her friend was there helping to put away some groceries and explained that the client's memory was giving her trouble. She had no family in the area to help her.

The client's main concern was pain relief. She described being in 'agony' and I could see the pain she endured when trying to rearrange herself on the sofa. She had carers coming in four times per day for assistance, but was frustrated that the hospital had sent her home with only paracetamol. She said she had spoken with her GP three times and that they were meant to be sending some pain relief to her home, but they had forgotten, so she had been waiting for almost a week.

I agreed to email the GP urgently on her behalf to make sure they arranged this. During my visit, I asked about how she was getting food, and she said that her friend was helping her for now but she would not be able to assist long term. I introduced Westminster Connects' volunteer shopping service and she thought it might be useful down the line, but that pain relief was her main concern and was all she could focus on at that time.

Following the initial home visit, I contacted the GP on the same day and explained what had been happening. The clinic reached out to her that day and pain relief was delivered, as confirmed by my phone call to the client the following day. She was exceptionally grateful for our assistance in getting this expedited.

When I called the client the following week to check in and see if she might need the shopping service, she had been admitted to St Mary's hospital following a 'cracked hip'. She was unsure how long she would be admitted.

She reached out following her second admission and requested a referral to the Westminster Connects Shopping Service, which I did for her. She also asked for help around getting a gym membership to encourage her back into gentle exercise, so I found a few close to her and talked through their facilities with her and she chose one which she wanted to register with.

When she was discharged from the project, she shared her appreciation for the service and said that it was a 'lifesaver' for her to be able to lean on after her hospital admissions.

172

Age UK Westminster
volunteers

202

corporate volunteers

11,440

volunteer hours

24

volunteers aged 65+

£165,109.20

equivalent value of
volunteer hours*

Volunteering

Our volunteers play a vital and irreplaceable role in enhancing the lives of older people in Westminster. With a diverse range of skills, extensive experience, and boundless creativity, our volunteer team achieves remarkable results, delivering invaluable support and services to our community.

We warmly welcome individuals of all ages and backgrounds who are keen to dedicate their time to supporting older people in Westminster. Our volunteer opportunities cover a wide variety of impactful roles, including:

- Exercise at Home Programme
- 1:1 Walking Support
- Marketing and Communications
- MCST Dementia Support
- Telephone Enquiries and Signposting
- Digital Support
- Befriending
- Information and Advice
- Fundraising
- Charity Shop Operations
- Administrative Support
- Client Service Support
- Volunteer Recruitment Assistance
- Translation Services

By harnessing the unique talents and unwavering commitment of our volunteers, Age UK Westminster delivers comprehensive, tailored support to meet the varied needs of the older population in our community. We are deeply grateful for the dedication and contributions of our volunteers, whose efforts have a transformative impact on the lives of those we serve.

*based on the information supplied in the National TOMS Framework platform. This is a platform which is used to measure social value.

Volunteering case study

Before coming to Age UK Westminster, I had experience within social welfare law, volunteering at the Bristol Law Centre in their Welfare Benefits team.

I decided to volunteer at Age UK Westminster in the Telephone Enquiries and Signposting role as I was excited by the opportunity to gain frontline experience in advice work, supporting what is a vital organisation for older people as well as providing information on a broad range of issues. During my time volunteering, I was exposed to a great variety of situations with each call being different and challenging in its own way. As someone with existing experience, I found the role was particularly useful in gaining a new set of skills in quickly being able to understand the nature of the client's situation and provide appropriate and effective advice. You're often dealing with new areas of information with clients that can be vulnerable and emotionally challenging, so the work never feels repetitive or uninteresting.

I am particularly grateful to the support and training that I received from the Information and Advice team. I felt incredibly welcomed and included in the team and felt that my work was valued and important to the wider organisation. A particular highlight was the opportunity to sit-in on a team meeting with the Head of Services which gave me a better appreciation of the wider complexities of advice work. I was also grateful to be invited to attend Age UK Westminster's Away Day at Kensington Place where I was able to meet the wider team.

I would highly recommend the role to anyone considering applying. As someone entering their final year of their degree, volunteering at this stage gave me a better sense of what I would like to pursue post-university and the sort of environment I would enjoy working in. Thank you Age UK Westminster!

Awareness raising campaigns

Smart Meters Awareness Raising

Age UK Westminster successfully conducted a Smart Meters Awareness campaign aimed at older residents to improve understanding and adoption of smart meters for energy efficiency. Key activities included:

- Training staff and volunteers to provide guidance on smart meter usage.
- Distributing printed materials and holding information sessions at community centres.
- Reaching residents with tailored support and advice.

1,210

people reached

650

people given telephone & face to face advice

Earlier Detection Cancer Screening Awareness

In collaboration with the NHS, Age UK Westminster led an awareness initiative focusing on the importance of early cancer detection through screening. Key elements included:

- Hosting health talks in local venues.
- Sharing screening guidelines via leaflets, social media and newsletters.
- Directly supporting residents to attend screening appointments.

1,090

people reached via face to face interactions

2,500

people reached online and via printed communications

Future plans

As Age UK Westminster looks ahead, we remain dedicated to building on our successes and continuing to provide vital support to older people in our community. Our focus for the coming year is centred on three priorities: strengthening partnerships, enhancing our impact and creating a community hub.

Strengthening Partnerships

We aim to deepen our collaborations with local organisations and stakeholders to expand our reach and resources:

- Collaborating with healthcare providers
- Partnering with local businesses
- Co-ordinating with other organisations

Enhancing Our Impact

We are committed to ensuring our services continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of older residents:

- Adapting and improving services: Through regular review and refinement, we will evolve our programs to better meet the changing needs of our community.

We are excited about the future and remain steadfast in our mission to enrich the lives of older people in Westminster. By working together with our partners and stakeholders, we can continue to make a lasting and positive difference in the community we serve.

Create a community hub

To further enhance our service delivery and ensure a warm, welcoming space for older people in Westminster, we plan to create a community hub that will serve as a central point for access to information, advice, support, activities, and resources. This hub will be designed to foster social connections, provide vital services, enable older people and their family members to feel engaged, supported, and feel part of a larger community. It will also offer a place where individuals can easily access reliable information and guidance on a variety of issues affecting older people residing in Westminster, from health and financial matters to local services. We believe this hub will play a crucial role in reducing isolation, promoting health and well-being, and empowering older people to live independently.

Funding

Age UK Westminster is funded through a variety of sources, including grants, donations, and income generated from our own fundraising activities.

Donations

We also rely heavily on donations from individuals and organisations. These donations come from a variety of sources, including members of the public who want to support the charity's work, local businesses, and philanthropic organisations. Donations are typically used to support specific projects or initiatives, such as funding our dementia support program or digital inclusion services.

Grants

One of the biggest sources of funding for Age UK Westminster comes from grants. We receive funding from both local and national grant givers, which helps to support our core programs and services. This grant funding is often provided on a yearly basis and is subject to certain conditions and requirements.

Fundraising Activities

In addition to grants and donations, we also generate income through our own fundraising activities. This can include events, online campaigns, and other initiatives. The funds raised through these activities are used to support the charity's ongoing work and to help expand our programs and services.

We are deeply grateful for the support of all our funders, whose generosity enables us to continue providing vital services and support to older adults in our community.

£14,885.75

in donations

£699,518.95

trusts and grants
funding

9

new funders secured

Fundraising stories

London Landmarks Half Marathon 2024

Orlagh laced up her running shoes and supported a mission close to her heart: supporting older residents in Westminster to lead fulfilling, independent lives. As part of her fundraising efforts, Orlagh took on the London Landmarks Half Marathon 2024, a challenge that reflects her dedication to making a difference.

Orlagh raised £600, surpassing her initial target of £500, with the generous support of 26 donors. Every pound she raised will go towards Age UK Westminster's vital work, including services that tackle loneliness, support those living with dementia, and provide advice to older adults struggling with financial hardship or navigating the challenges of ageing.

For Orlagh, this wasn't just a race—it was a personal commitment to a cause she deeply believes in. Her dedication mirrors the spirit of Age UK Westminster, which has been supporting older people in the borough for over 70 years.

**Thank you
Orlagh**



£730
raised

Funders

We couldn't be there for older people in Westminster without the much-needed support we receive from the following funders:

- Bayswater Ward Funding
- Big Give
- Black History Month 365 Fund
- City Bridge Trust
- CNWL
- Edward Harvist Trust
- Good Things Foundation
- Groundworks
- Howard de Walden
- Hyde Park Place Estate Charity
- Lancaster Gate Ward Funding
- McLay Dementia Trust
- Mercers
- National Lottery Awards for All
- National Lottery Cost of Living Fund
- Paddington Charity
- Percy Bilton
- Pimlico Ward Budget
- Skipton Building Society Charitable Foundation
- Smart Meter Great Britain Funding Programme
- Strand Parishes Trust
- The Ann Rylands Small Donations Programme
- VHC Community Chest Grant
- WCC Community Contribution Fund
- WCC Community Priorities Programme
- WCC Cost of Living Fund
- Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) Community Learning Fund
- Westminster Almshouses
- Westminster Amalgamated Charity
- Westminster City Council

Organisations and corporates

These companies and organisations provided vital support to Age UK Westminster

- American School London (ASL)
- Bain & Co
- British Museum
- CREATE
- Dance West
- ENO (English National Opera)
- Equans
- GIC Singapore
- Goodera
- Gordon Hospital
- Halcyon Days
- Hotel 63
- Howard de Walden
- James Hambro
- Johnson Matthey
- Libraries: Church Street, Marylebone, Mayfair, Paddington, Pimlico
- Lords Cricket Ground
- Newton Europe
- Pubmatic
- Regent Hall
- RMG
- Royal Palaces
- St Marylebone Parish Church
- St Pauls School
- Tate Britain
- TikTok
- Urban Leisure
- Victoria BID
- W Hotel
- Wallacea Living
- WATES
- ZSL (Zoological Society of London)

Volunteer awards ceremony 2024



Activities highlights





Visit our website

