

London Borough of Barnet

Annual Report:

**Neighbourhood Services and
Later Life Planning Service**

2017

***“Making a difference to the lives of Barnet’s
older people”***



Welcome to this combined Neighbourhood Services and Later Life Planning Service Annual Report

Age UK Barnet is ringing the changes this year. Instead of two separate documents, we are bringing you all our news for 2016–17 in one handy booklet.

This Annual Report covers both the Neighbourhood Services and Later Life Planning Service delivered by Age UK Barnet and the rest of the Provider Group. This covers most of the services we offer for older people in the borough and will provide you with an insight into much of the work we do.



Neighbourhood Services

Close to **3000 NEW** older people got involved with Neighbourhood Services in 2016–17. In the fourth year of the Barnet Provider Group, Age UK Barnet and the 12 partner organisations provided more activities, events and services than ever before for the borough's older people.

Together, we've reached **8302** people this year. That's **140%** more people than in 2013–14, which was our first year together.

The Provider Group's aim has always been to encourage older people to improve their general wellbeing by keeping active and engaged with the local community and the wider world. Age UK's recent research for their Index of Wellbeing in Later Life found that taking part in social, creative or physical activity, working or belonging to a community group increased a person's wellbeing by 20%.

What do we mean by wellbeing?

The Government recently defined wellbeing as “a positive physical and social and mental state”.

At Age UK Barnet's AGM in 2016, Trustee Dr Catherine Loveday, a leading cognitive neuroscientist and lecturer at the University of Westminster, explained how we can all aim for this by outlining her five key points for staying well in later life.

Exercise

Physical activity increases wellbeing by increasing alertness and energy as well as positive mood. It also improves brain health and can increase connections in the brain. Even walking fits the bill here, though you could also join the growing numbers taking part in Neighbourhood Services exercise classes across the borough. There's a whole range of classes available including seated yoga, aqua aerobics, movement to music and tai chi, so there really is something for everyone. There's also evidence that staying physically active reduces the risk of falls and Age UK Barnet has an extensive falls prevention programme: a simple nail cutting service encourages older people to look after their feet and targeted exercise classes help to increase strength and balance. The Handyperson service can also support older people with small jobs around the home, helping them to stay safe and independent.

Healthy diet

We all know the importance of eating fresh fruit and vegetables and getting our 'five a day' but it's also important to stay hydrated, drinking plenty of liquids, and eating regular meals, not skipping breakfast for instance. How can we help with this? There are a number of lunch clubs providing tasty meals in areas including East Finchley, High Barnet, Burnt Oak, Mill Hill, Whetstone and West Hendon. And for those looking to get busy in the kitchen themselves there are cookery courses covering a variety of cuisines and tastes. Working with volunteer cooks, older people have impressed friends and family with their new-found skills and made cakes, casseroles, curries, soups and breads. Originally aimed at men who were reluctant to get in the kitchen, some of these groups now also include a number of ladies keen to brush up their skills.

Sleep

Getting a good night's sleep can be challenging when we get older but it's more important than ever as that's when our bodies repair themselves. Not only that but our brains process memories and information at the same time and missing out on sleep can lead to anxiety and depression. Keeping active during the day can help you sleep better at night, which is as good a reason as any to try some of our activities. Together with our partners at the Wellbeing Hub, Age UK Barnet has held workshops on sleep hygiene – how to change your bedroom and night-time routine to improve the quality of your sleep.

Keeping your brain busy

It's not necessarily about 'brain training', though if you enjoy it then why not? Any activity that stimulates the brain whether it's crosswords, reading, watching a film, doing a quiz, a singalong, an art class or listening to music is good for the brain. There are plenty of opportunities for this with the Provider Group around the borough – check out a **What's On** for full details.

Social activities

Loneliness and social isolation are harmful to our health. In fact, research shows that being lonely is as bad for us as smoking 15 cigarettes a day so our social networks really couldn't be more important. The Provider Group has lots of opportunities for people to connect with old friends and make new ones over coffee, a musical afternoon, a cookery class or a sewing group. Our IT sessions can help older people stay in touch with family and friends far and wide as well as to find out what's happening close to home. For those older people who are unable to get out and about, our befriending services provide a vital contact to the outside world.

Case Studies – Neighbourhood Services in action

Mrs C, 85, has been attending Chipping Barnet Day Centre (CBDC) on Mondays and Fridays for the last four years. She looks forward to the days she spends there and says without it she probably *“wouldn’t be bothered to go out”*.

“It’s so lovely to be able to come here and just talk to other people. To sit and play Scrabble as we do in the afternoons keeps me going and it certainly keeps my brain active – some of the others are really very good!”

“I enjoy the lunches too as the rest of the week I just have soup, a sandwich or a salad prepared by my carer as I can’t cook anymore.”

Mrs C lived with a hip condition from birth and had a replacement four years ago. The operation relieved her of the terrible pain she had been in but unfortunately it left her with mobility problems.

“There’s nothing like being independent and I was,” she explained. *“But after the operation I had to start using a walking frame and I had to give up my car, which was heartbreaking.”*

A widow for the last eight years, Mrs C had also seen her circle of friends get smaller. *“I had a lot of friends but gradually they had all died. I am so glad I found CBDC though as it has become so important to me and it means I get to see more than my own four walls.”*

Mrs C particularly enjoys the day trips, most recently to Westcliff-on-Sea, and the warm and welcoming atmosphere at the centre.

“I feel safe here, a lot of the volunteers are former nurses which is reassuring and they are all so kind to us oldies. We have a lot of laughs too, we’re always laughing.”

And Mrs C says that without coming out to the centre she probably wouldn't get any exercise.

"The walk from the front door is as much as I can do but at home I wouldn't bother. We all enjoy the exercise classes, even though we all moan of course, and I'm motivated to do the exercises on other days when I'm at home – it's important to keep everything moving.

"I'd feel like I was in jail if I didn't come here. It is, quite simply, brilliant."

Miss JH is a regular at one of Age UK Barnet's library coffee mornings

Miss JH had spent 26 years living abroad when she returned to Barnet to care for her elderly mother in 2015. Such a move would be difficult enough at any stage of life but Miss JH had also been recently widowed and the move meant leaving behind her very caring support network.

Taking a break from caring for mum, Miss JH, now 72, decided to brush up on her technology and started going to an Age UK Barnet IT coffee morning drop-in at Edgware Library. Little did she know that as well as improving her computer skills it would also bring her new friends and a much needed social life.

"I had some old friends around but our lives had taken quite different paths," Miss JH said. *"Technology was the reason why I went to the coffee morning group in the first place but the people are the reason why I have been going for more than two years."*

The group now meets up outside their IT coffee morning to have lunch and many of the members have also joined a community choir. They have supported each other through illness and bereavement and when the library was closed for refurbishment this year they even secured an alternative venue themselves to keep their sessions going.

“The group has made me feel like a new person and I’d recommend it to anyone who was thinking of coming along to join us.

“We help each other and we’re good friends.”



Vera is a client of the Good Neighbour Scheme for Mill Hill and Burnt Oak

When we first met Vera at our Burnt Oak lunch club she was emotionally very vulnerable. Vera’s husband was in a home as he had Alzheimer’s and Vera was also living with dementia which made her anxiety even worse. When we approached her on her first visit we gave her our leaflet and told her of all the things we could do for her and that she was welcome to phone us any time for a chat if she needed to speak to someone. She burst into tears.

Several weeks later, Vera called one of the team over, waving our leaflet at us, wanting to know if she could come to our other lunch club as she has made so many lovely new friends. Vera has subsequently done a six week confidence building course and is now joining the Marillac Day Centre for a couple of days a week. We believe the Good Neighbour Scheme helped Vera in gaining the confidence to try new things.



Mr RJ attends Friend in Need (FIN)

Mr RJ was not eating when attending FIN but it was difficult for staff and volunteers to give him undivided attention and, on top of this, Mr RJ was becoming more and more restless. It looked like he may not be able to carry on attending. FIN staff suggested that a carer, giving her father one-to-one attention, could be a solution and pointed Mr RJ's daughter in the direction of Social Services. She asked about the possibility of a paid worker to assist her father. The social worker agreed that the idea sounded feasible and she

was supportive the idea but the case would have to go to a panel. This panel approved funding of three hours per day and since then Mr RJ has been more settled at FIN and, with the intervention of the care worker he has gained weight. His daughter is immensely pleased and while Mr RJ is still not eating much at home he is more settled and now sleeps at night.

Mrs LB uses Age UK Barnet's Befriending service

Shortly after retiring from her job as a social worker, Mrs LB had complications after knee replacement surgery and an accident, which resulted in debilitating injuries. Her busy life and expectations of an active retirement were dashed and she developed depression. She also lost touch with friends and her sons who lived far away.

She was introduced to a befriender of a similar age who has inspired her to learn how to use an iPad. Mrs LB thoroughly enjoyed being shown TV catch-up apps such as BBC iPlayer and started to take charge of her life again, re-establishing contact with some old work colleagues. The befriender also helped her to save money on her car insurance, take up swimming, and get a cleaner. Sadly, Mrs LB was then diagnosed with a benign brain tumour. The befriender helped her here too by showing Mrs LB a meditation app for her iPad which helps her with pain and to sleep at night. Mrs LB says, "She is my inspiration and friend. I know she is a volunteer but she is there for me and knows where I am coming from and what I need. Little things like helping me sort out my kitchen cupboards so I can reach the things I need mean so much. I look forward to her weekly visits."

Where do we go from here?

The Provider Group is in the final year of its contract with the Local Authority and demand for our services continues to grow. In fact, we anticipate reaching even more older people as their numbers in the borough increase still further.

The council's own JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) reports that the over 65 population in the borough is forecast to grow three times faster than the overall population by 2030. The 65+ population will grow by 34.5% by 2030, whereas the 85 and over population will increase by 66.6%.

We've reached over **8000** people this year but we know there are even more older people in the borough who would benefit hugely from engaging with the Provider Group.

We will work even harder this year to make a connection with more of them

We will continue to do the things we are already doing well and which we know older people value so highly. There'll be more IT sessions, exercise classes and opportunities to socialise as part of our ongoing commitment to increasing wellbeing and reducing loneliness and isolation.

We'll focus on areas of the borough where loneliness has been recognised as a particular issue for older people through Age UK's Loneliness Heat Map. This identified areas where people aged over 65 are at increased risk of isolation. This includes Burnt Oak, Colindale, Childs Hill and Brunswick Park, where we will seek new partnerships to benefit older people.

We'll continue to provide practical support through the Handyperson service and through our growing numbers of volunteers. They take older people to medical appointments, physio and chiropody clinics and to social events and activities. Others provide companionship through befriending services, sometimes being an older person's key link to the outside world.

We'll continue to strengthen our relationship with the Prevention and Wellbeing team at the Local Authority. We hosted a Care Space in 2016–17, which brought council staff into the community to carry out their assessments in a holistic environment. Older people saw for themselves what could be available to them and many took up new activities after seeing them in action. By working together like this we can help achieve positive results for older people, supporting them to engage in their community and be as active in later life as they can be.



Who is in the Provider Group?

The Provider Group incorporates 12 groups and organisations along with Age UK Barnet. The British Red Cross and the Alzheimer’s Society Barnet are also members of the group and work closely with all the organisations but, as their activities and services are funded separately by the Local Authority, they are not reported on here. All of the groups including Age UK Barnet have spent time this year ensuring the data they provide to the London Borough of Barnet is as accurate as possible and we are delighted to see another increase in the number of people accessing activities and services.

During 2016–17 **Barnet African Caribbean Association (BACA)** had 75 regular clients attending sessions on Tuesdays at the Multicultural Centre in Hendon and on Fridays at Wood Court in Edgware. As well as a freshly made lunch, there’s always something happening at BACA, games and quizzes as well as arts & crafts. Once again, BACA teamed up with the Young Offenders Programme to provide volunteering opportunities for young people, which is proving a real success.

New clients this year	6	New volunteers this year	7
Total number of clients	75	Total number of volunteers	11
Clients left service	1	Volunteers left service	0

Barnet Asian Women’s Association (BAWA) meets on Tuesdays and Fridays at Friary House in Friary Park in Whetstone and is open to women of any Asian background. They enjoy social activities including exercise, Bollywood dancing and arts & crafts as well as lunch.

New clients this year	19	New volunteers this year	0
Total number of clients	101	Total number of volunteers	15
Clients left service	3	Volunteers left service	0

Barnet Elderly Asians Group (BEAG) also meets at Friary House on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Attendees can enjoy yoga, walks in Friary Park or aqua aerobics at Copthall Leisure Centre. There are a number of social groups which meet to chat over coffee, discuss current affairs or enjoy a quiz or game together.

New clients this year	6	New volunteers this year	2
Total number of clients	130	Total number of volunteers	25
Clients left service	4	Volunteers left service	0

Chipping Barnet Day Centre (CBDC) continues to provide a lively day out for its clients, and plays a vital role for older people in the High Barnet area. Clients have enjoyed outings to Westcliff-on-Sea, the Dutch Nurseries and to local theatres. They also enjoy reminiscence and exercise activities as well as time spent with young students from nearby QE Boys School who come in to play board and card games.

New clients this year	16	New volunteers this year	4
Total number of clients	52	Total number of volunteers	35
Clients left service	18	Volunteers left service	1

Colindale Community Club meets on Tuesdays for tai chi followed by coffee at the Hyde Church in Colindale. They are a very friendly group who enjoy talks and knitting as well as the occasional lunch together.

New clients this year	3	New volunteers this year	2
Total number of clients	44	Total number of volunteers	8
Clients left service	1	Volunteers left service	0

The Cultural Recreational Organisation for Tamil Elders (CROFTE) meets on Mondays and Fridays at Watling Community Centre in Burnt Oak. They focus on wellbeing, with exercise on both days and a healthy lunch made by volunteers. The group also enjoys social activities, games and outings.

New clients this year	10	New volunteers this year	1
Total number of clients	70	Total number of volunteers	7
Clients left service	2	Volunteers left service	0



Friend in Need (FIN) has three strands to its Neighbourhood Services provision:

Active Adults Health and Social Club has a varied programme of activities operating five days a week. It includes exercise classes such as yoga and tai chi, massage therapy and IT club as well as lunch, arts & crafts and reading groups.

Good Neighbour Scheme Neighbourly support for older people in East and New Barnet. This includes a befriending service, help with shopping and gardening as well as lifts to hospital and other appointments.

Helping Hands A charged for service which includes shopping, banking, paying bills, collecting pensions or prescriptions and managing documents/paperwork.

New clients this year	77	New volunteers this year	13
Total number of clients	302	Total number of volunteers	82
Clients left service	25	Volunteers left service	7

The Good Neighbour Scheme for Mill Hill and Burnt Oak

provides a very valuable service to older people in these two very different parts of the borough. As well as three thriving lunch clubs, it has a film club and a gardening service. Its busy foot care clinic saw 240 people last year. A key part of the scheme is providing lifts to medical appointments and last year they helped clients to keep 88 appointments. With the cost of a missed GP appointment estimated to be around £45 and a missed hospital appointment around £108 that represents valuable support to the NHS.

New clients this year	96	New volunteers this year	9
Total number of clients	235	Total number of volunteers	69
Clients left service	40	Volunteers left service	6

High Barnet Good Neighbour Scheme (HBGNS) serves older people in the High Barnet area and supports them with shopping and other errands, gardening and a befriending service. This year they also started afternoon tea get-togethers at a local pub. Like their counterparts in Mill Hill, they provide lifts to medical appointments and have supported older people to get to 195 hospital appointments in 2016–17 as well as 132 at GP surgeries and medical centres.

New clients this year	14	New volunteers this year	6
Total number of clients	117	Total number of volunteers	22
Clients left service	9	Volunteers left service	2

It's been an exciting year for **Jewish Care's** Sam Beckman Day Centre, which moved from Hendon to a state of the art new home in Colney Hatch Lane in Friern Barnet. The centre offers a programme of stimulating activities for people with memory impairment or a diagnosis of dementia.

New clients this year	19	New volunteers this year	7
Total number of clients	44	Total number of volunteers	15
Clients left service	13	Volunteers left service	0

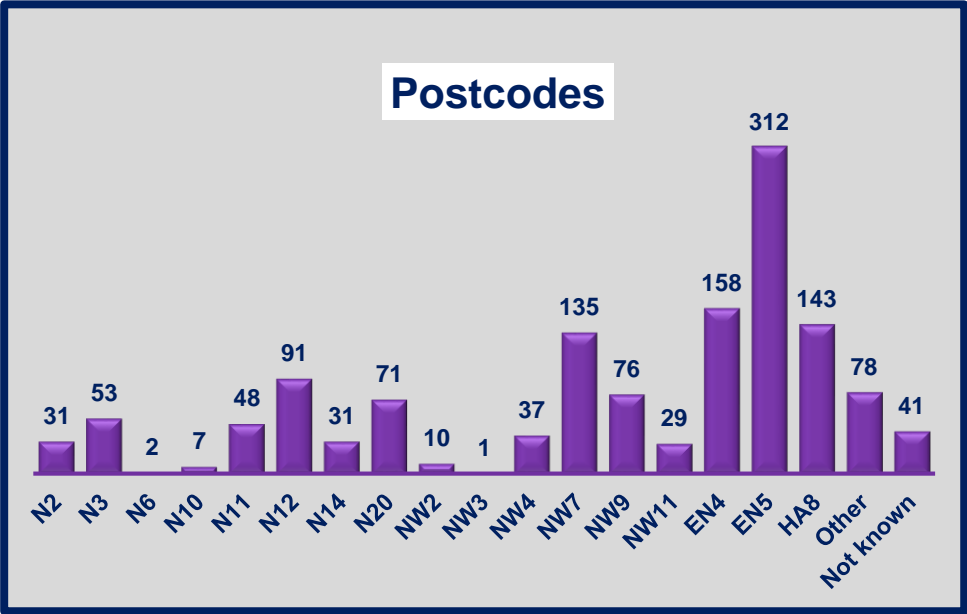
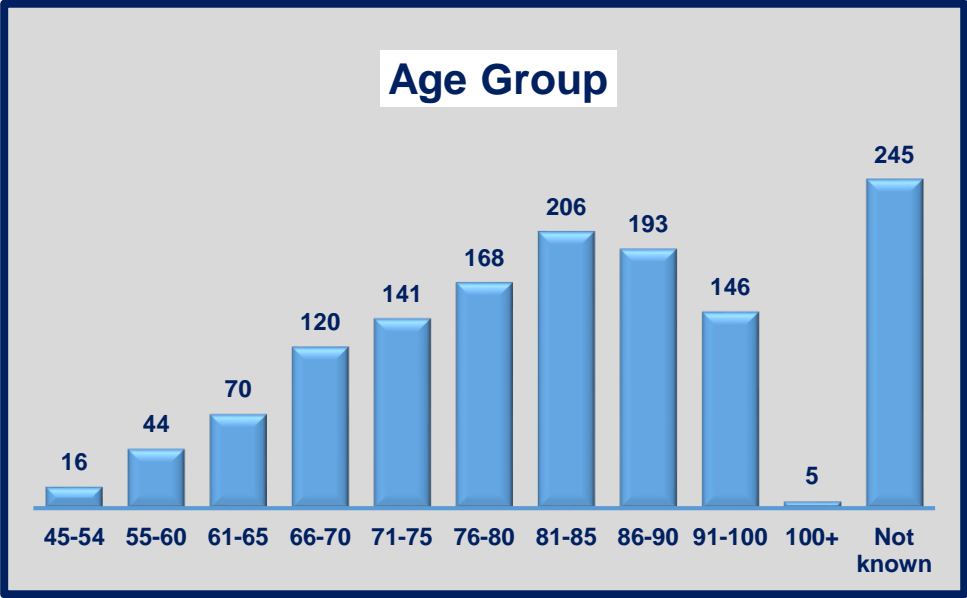
New Barnet Community Association meets in Victoria Road on Mondays for a social afternoon and Tuesdays and Fridays for a home cooked lunch. Post lunch entertainment often includes lively discussion and sometimes a game of bingo.

New clients this year	3	New volunteers this year	0
Total number of clients	40	Total number of volunteers	7
Clients left service	2	Volunteers left service	2

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP) changed its name to **Vintage Volunteering** during this year. The aim remained the same, to give older people a chance to get active in their communities. This year saw their many volunteers busy doing quizzes, art groups and games in sheltered housing, leading knitting sessions in community centres, leading book clubs and befriending the isolated over the telephone. Many of them also help children with their learning in the borough's schools.

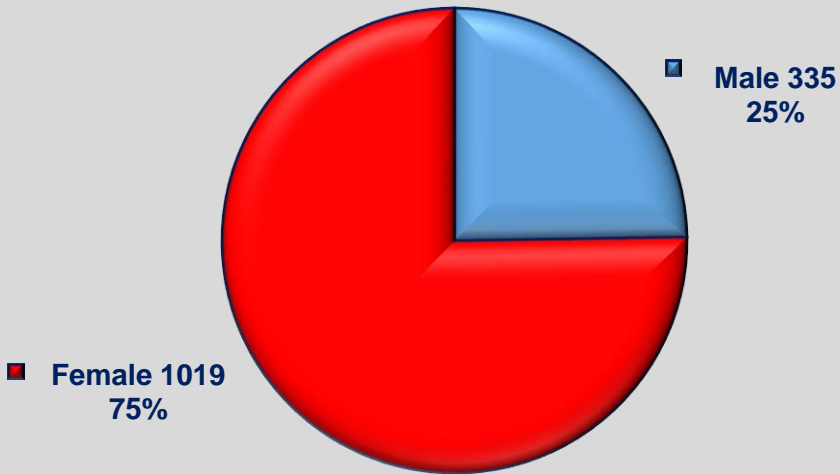
New clients this year	60	New volunteers this year	26
Total number of clients	135	Total number of volunteers	135
Clients left service	25	Volunteers left service	65

Provider Group Client Data

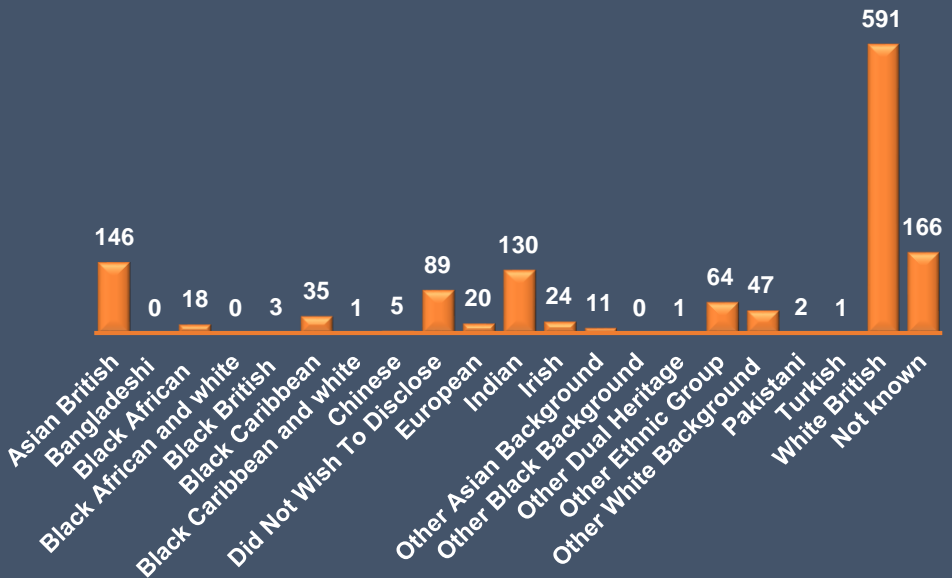


The postcode analysis reflects the areas with the highest proportions of older people in the borough. The “Not Knowns” in Age Group, Postcodes and Ethnicity also include those who “Prefer not to say”.

Gender



Ethnicity



Age UK Barnet

As the lead contractor in the Provider Group, Age UK Barnet works with the other organisations to ensure that together they are offering as wide a range of activities, social opportunities and programmes of support as possible. They receive monthly reports on this from the subcontractors and in turn Age UK Barnet reports quarterly to commissioners at the London Borough of Barnet.

This year Age UK Barnet took on the support of volunteers for the council's Ageing Well programme after it came to an end in February 2017. We have helped them to promote their knitting groups, IT classes and other activities and supported them to continue making their valuable contribution to the lives of older people.

With the departure of the Asra Housing Association from the Provider Group, we recognised the need to continue some provision for Barnet's older Asian community. We recruited new staff and set up two new groups, in Whetstone and East Finchley, to meet the needs of this group with exercise classes, social activities and lunch.

Age UK Barnet had 441 people taking part in group activities – they listened to a talk, came to a tea dance, took part in a sing-song or showed off their skills in an art class.

We set up new exercise classes and continued our link with the Falls Clinic at Finchley Memorial Hospital. Over 870 people took part in regular exercise with us.

More than 900 people had a visit from the Handyperson service which carried out close to 1100 jobs. Many more were signposted to Age UK London's Business Directory of Trusted Traders for specialist help at home from their vetted and recommended plumbers, electricians or other tradespeople.

Our volunteers were busy this year. Between them, our befriending volunteers supported over 100 people with one-to-one matches and less formally with lifts to social activities and special events. We recognise the need for befriending as a service for the most vulnerable and frail of our clients and we've sought innovative ways to expand our offer by teaming up with GoodGym, Henna and Age UK's telephone befriending service Call in Time. As a Provider Group we'll be focussing on befriending again this year.

Our team of cooking volunteers led 152 people in classes at four different venues, clocking up over 1500 'apron' hours between them.

Over 2500 people dropped in just to try out an activity with us, experiment with an exercise class, or get some one-off help at a library IT drop-in. Or they came to a Falls Awareness Day or other information events in the community.

Demand for help with IT is increasing as older people make the shift to online communication. We saw 249 people brush up their IT skills with us this year, 96 of them joining us for the first time. Age UK Barnet continues to work with schools and sixth forms in the borough, whose students volunteer to help older people get to grips with technology. This year saw 72 young people dedicate a total of 624 hours to this project, figures which are not included in our volunteer numbers on pages 28-29.

Age UK Barnet has become a partner in the Wellbeing Hub, which was developed as a collaborative process between people who use mental health services, a number of voluntary sector organisations and the statutory sector. There is a real need for such support for older people experiencing mental health problems. Nearly half of adults (7.7million) aged 55+ say they have experienced depression and around the same number (7.3 million) have suffered with anxiety, according to YouGov research for Age UK.

The research also found older people respond extremely well to talking therapies: the recovery rates for patients aged over 65 who completed a course of talking therapy through the Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies programme (IAPT) were shown to be positive.

This is an area we are very keen to explore further.

New clients this year	2463	New volunteers this year	73
Total number of clients	6948	Total number of volunteers	187
Clients left service	323	Volunteers left service	96

Some facts and figures

New PG clients	329	New AUKB clients	2463
Total number of PG clients	1354	Total number of AUKB clients	6948
PG clients left service	141	AUKB clients left service	323
New PG volunteers	75	New AUKB volunteers	73
Total number of PG volunteers	431	Total number of AUKB volunteers	187
PG volunteers left service	83	AUKB volunteers left service	96
<i>Weekly volunteer hours:</i>		<i>Weekly volunteer hours:</i>	
Provider Group	1052.5	AUKB	318
<i>Weekly staff hours:</i>		<i>Weekly staff hours:</i>	
Provider Group	370.5	AUKB	397
<i>Safeguarding incidents, investigated and concluded:</i>			
Provider Group	4	AUKB	1

Working in Partnership

The Neighbourhood Services Provider Group continues to work closely with other organisations in the borough. These include:

- Ageing Well until February 2017
- Action on Hearing Loss
- Alzheimer's Society Barnet
- Barnet Carers Centre
- Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group
- Barnet Community Transport
- Barnet Integrated Locality Team
- Barnet Homes
- Barnet Library Service
- Barnet Seniors Assembly
- Central London Community Healthcare
- Cherry Lodge Cancer Care
- Community Barnet
- Community Focus
- Contact The Elderly
- The Falls Clinic at Finchley Memorial Hospital
- 60+ Farsophone Group
- Fareshare
- Grange Big Local
- Greenwich Leisure Limited
- Healthwatch Barnet
- Home Instead Senior Care
- Inclusion Barnet
- Love Burnt Oak
- Made in Hackney
- The Memory Assessment Service/The Springwell Centre
- The Metropolitan Police
- Middlesex University
- National Westminster Bank
- Opening Doors London
- The Reader Organisation
- Santander Bank
- Saracens
- Stroke Association
- Tesco Ballards Lane
- Waitrose and the John Lewis Partnership
- The Wellbeing Hub
- Westminster University

Age UK Barnet Neighbourhood Services

Neighbourhood Services provided by AUKB	New clients this year	Total number of clients
Befriending	233	112 active matches
Community Help	34	35
Cookery	85	152
Digital Inclusion	96	249
Exercise and Falls Prevention	433	872
Group Activities	184	441
Handyperson Service	359	933
Information and Advice	750	1075
Lunch Clubs	39	102
Nail Cutting	42	152
Signposting	208	208
Community Events	-	505
Casual Attendances	-	2004
Outreach Activities	-	108
TOTALS	2463	6948

Age UK Barnet Feedback

We asked clients attending exercise classes for their thoughts – 170 responded

100% enjoyed the class they had been to

85% told us they felt fitter or had an increased sense of wellbeing

76% attended to improve their fitness

47% said they came along to meet people

Clients attending IT classes had this to say:

94% of the 39 who responded said they used new skills to keep in touch with family/friends e.g. email, text, Skype

94% told us they were using their device more frequently.

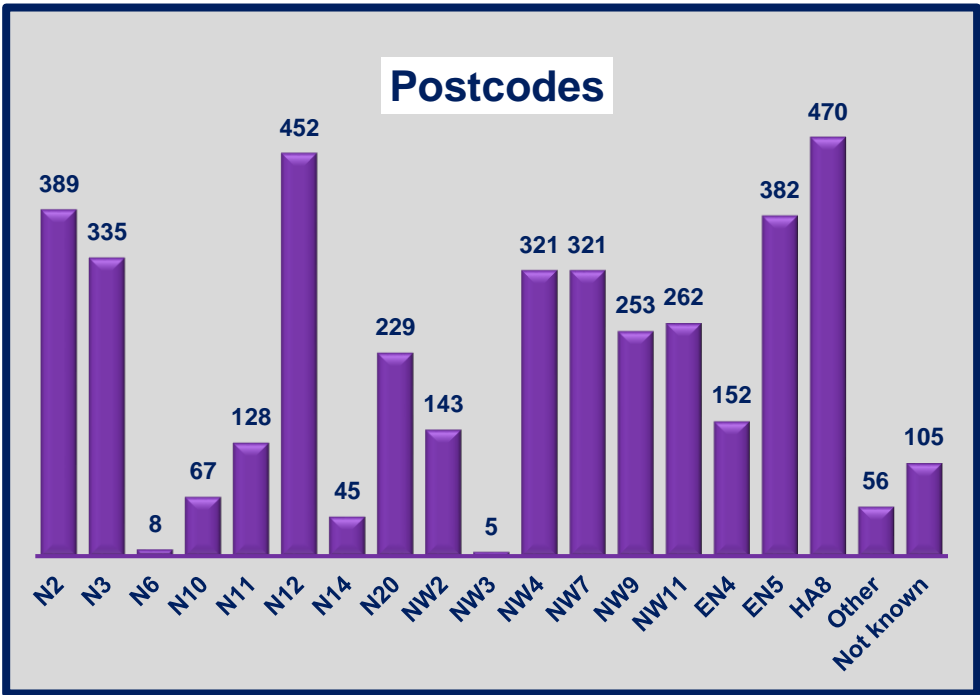
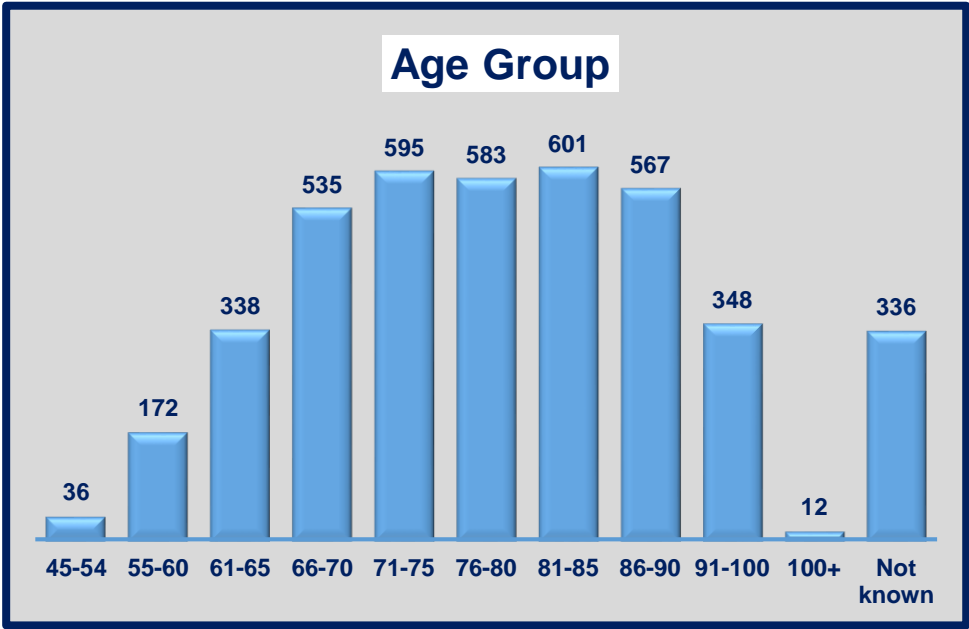
12 men and women regularly attend our Edgware Library social group – a coffee morning with some IT help. This is what they like about it:

- Just being with people of various religions and backgrounds.
- Relaxation and having a laugh with a mixed bunch of people.
- So many experiences and stories shared, plus practical help from friends from different roots/backgrounds.
- Meeting people from different backgrounds. Helping if you can in any way.
- Getting help with mobile and computer.

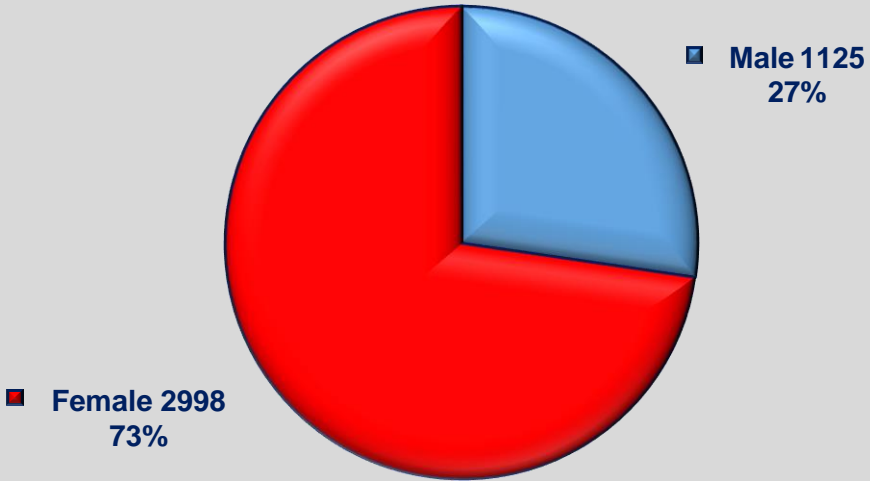
Age UK Barnet and Provider Group Volunteers

The benefits of volunteering are well documented so it's been good to see more and more people are giving back to their communities. With **618** volunteers clocking up over **65,000** hours this year, they've continued to give those without transport a lift to the doctor, the supermarket, the hospital or the dentist. They've become befrienders, providing a lifeline to those who can't get out and about easily, visited older people to complete important documents and paperwork, they've also led exercise sessions and cookery classes. *Please refer to pages 28 and 29 for the volunteer data.*

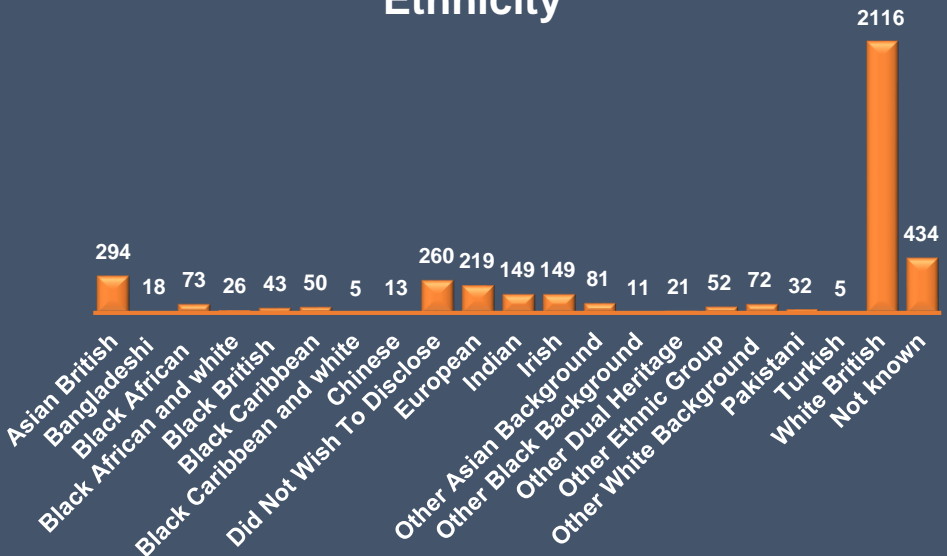
Age UK Barnet registered users data



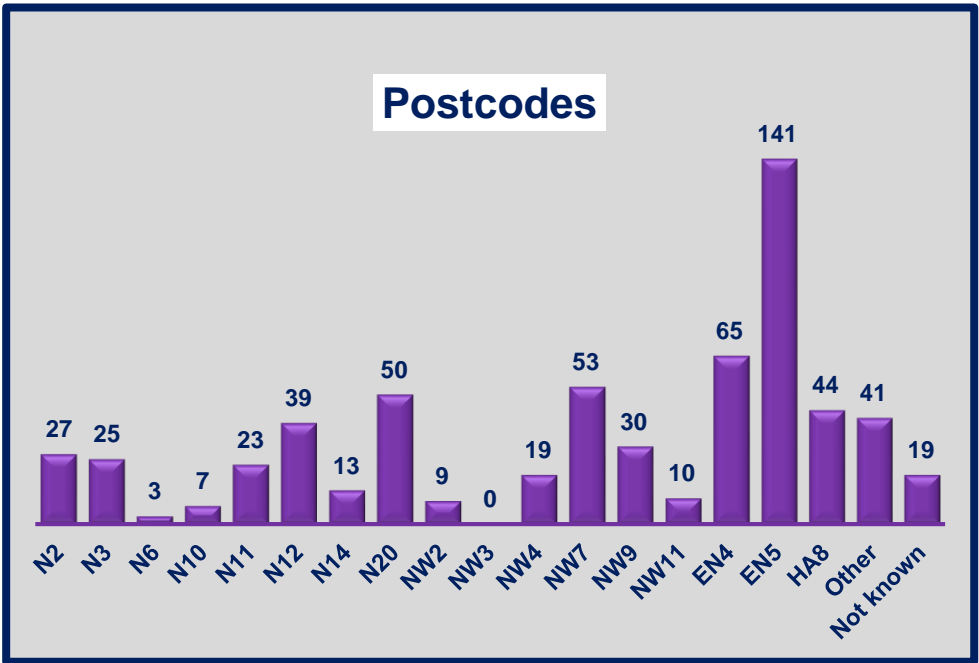
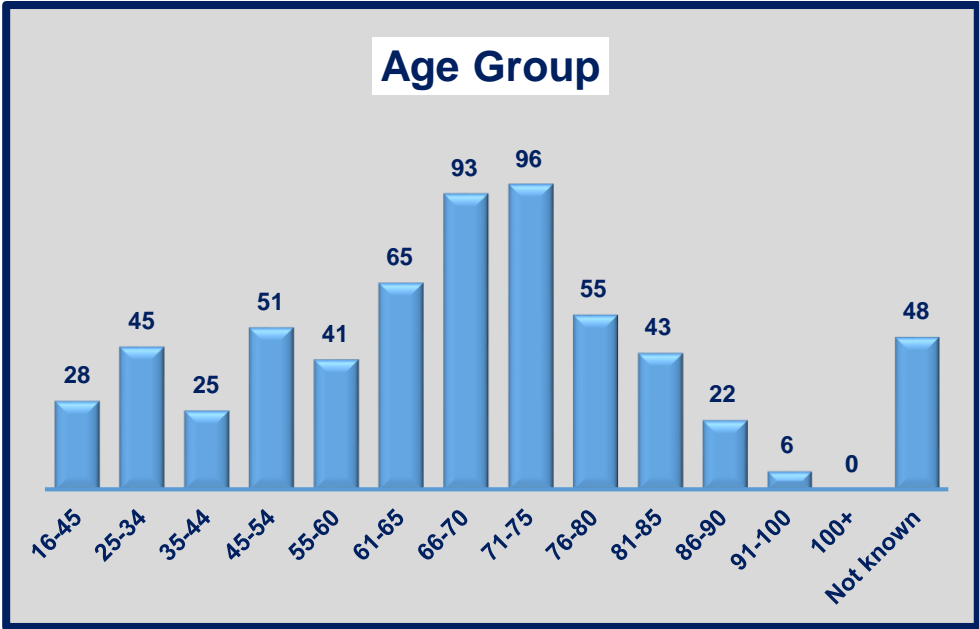
Gender



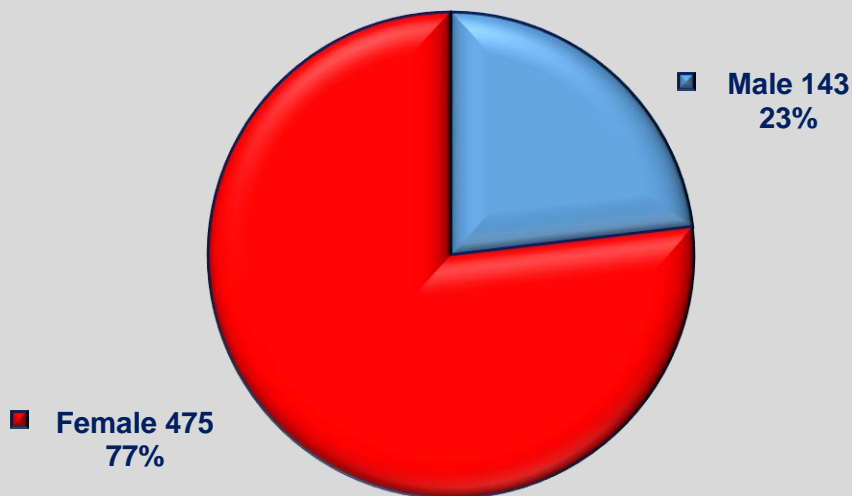
Ethnicity



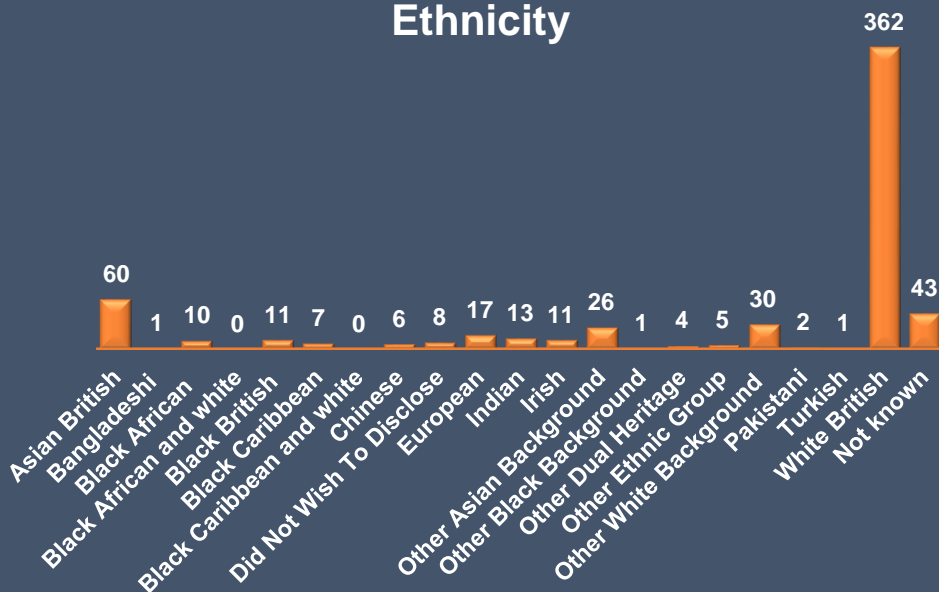
Age UK Barnet and Provider Group Volunteer data



Gender



Ethnicity



University of Westminster report

This year Age UK Barnet worked with researchers from the University of Westminster to look at how our services benefit those taking part. The full report is still in draft but here are some highlights:

Participants found that the sense of inclusion in the larger population, gained through Age UK Barnet services, to be one of the biggest benefits. Many felt that they were increasingly living on the outside of society and were no longer relevant. This was found to be due to a variety of reasons, some of which include the rapid changes in modern technology, and the decrease in social networks.

Inclusion was important to all groups, but the IT class participants found this theme to be at the core of how it benefitted them. One man explained this experience as:

“We were in the digital exclusion, and now you sit on a bus today and you will see most of the people with their tablet, playing around, taking messages, and taking pictures... So we want to stand in line with the rest of the people, don’t want to be excluded from the digital technology.”

A sense of playing *“catch up with recent age and environment”* was gained by participating in this class, as *“everything is coming new day-to-day”* when it comes to technology. A female participant said that before taking part in IT classes she felt *“left behind, watching others, they are doing all the computers and we are sitting on the side.”*

The factor that seems to drive all participants to continue using Age UK Barnet services is the social aspect of them all. Not all participants started attending for this reason but it is what keeps

them coming back week after week. Comments like those found below were common:

“It’s been good fun, a nice social group”

“It’s a lovely atmosphere, everyone’s very friendly”

“I come for the social reasons, because I like to meet other people and talk, I’m quite good at that”

“It’s something to look forward to when you sit in a house for 12 hours a day”

Many participants explained that the program they took part in was an important part of their weekly schedule and often encouraged them to get out of the house more. *“I think we’re very fortunate to have Age UK Barnet help us to get out...and yeah, to go and meet other people to do something for yourself.”*



A participant of a men’s cookery class explained that when he got started *“I thought actually I’m not doing a lot at the moment. Anyway, one of the reasons I came was to actually get me out of the house on a regular basis.”*

These services have become a social event that they plan and look forward to on a weekly basis. Socialising with other participants

and volunteers is what drives continued participation and the interactions experienced increased perceptions of quality of life.

“Oh, well it makes quite a lot of difference because she is such a cheerful person and it’s like bringing a ray of sunshine into an otherwise lonely life.”

Prevention frequently came up in discussion when the question of what drew participants to begin using these specific services. Many were aware of the physical and mental decline that can come with old age and all wanted to put off those effects.

“Well, for me, it’s flexibility and keeping the joints that are, or were, injured working. So I can still go walkabout and things like that. Don’t get stuck, sit in a chair and get stuck in it and can’t get out.”

Participants spoke about how they found out about services, and many were recommended by GPs or friends as a way to prevent the side effects of old age, with Falls Prevention and exercise classes recommended by their GP due to injuries or declines in overall health. All participants felt the benefits of taking part and that, not only were they feeling better, they were keeping themselves healthy for the future.

One Falls Prevention member explained *“I don’t fall like I used to. I had lots of falls, damaged myself in small ways, repeatedly. But I fall very much less since I’ve been doing the tai chi.”*

A woman in the exercise class explained that she came because it kept her fit and she worried that without it she would become dependent on medication. This was met with agreement throughout the group who said this class helped them keep moving and prevented them turning to medication to feel better.

Age UK Barnet will publish the research report from the University of Westminster in full in due course.

Later Life Planning Service

The Later Life Planning Service has successfully delivered three years of support for Barnet residents who have had a diverse range of questions and issues around later life planning. The service has helped **3309** older people and their carers over the past three years and has exceeded delivery targets each year.

The service has achieved this with a team of three staff and 14 volunteers. The team approach has always been flexible and holistic when it comes to providing support. We have found that people accessing the service are speaking to us about more complex matters. Consequently, we have worked closely with local and national organisations to support those clients who require more specialised help around issues such as housing, future care planning options, and changes to welfare benefits.

The greatest demand for information and advice is usually linked to times of personal, medical or financial change or crisis, which is often when people are least able to seek the support they need.



Although written information can be sufficient for many older people, those with the greatest need may require information and advice delivered to them either face-to-face or by telephone, often with practical support and active encouragement to resolve their problems.

The service continues to be supported by a growing volunteer team who have generously provided **1600** hours of their time each year. Much of their time is given helping people in the comfort of their homes in completing complex and lengthy benefit forms.

It has been proven that information and advice services can be most effective when they are designed to target the specific needs of identified groups, such as older people.

Older people find it difficult to access information and advice for a range of reasons, so our services are delivered in different community locations and in different ways – from scheduled appointments to information events open to all.

The continued need for high-quality, up-to-date and impartial information and advice is particularly important for older people in Barnet. Increasing digitisation of services can make older people feel excluded and, whilst we are encouraging them to make that ‘channel shift’, we also recognise that it’s just not an option for some.

Our aim has always been to support and empower people later in life to make informed decisions about their futures. We have continued to support people with a range of issues and highlight the most pressing topics which people have asked us about during 2016–17.

Welfare Benefits

- 1 in 6 pensioners (1.9million or 16% of pensioners in the UK) live in poverty, defined as having household income of less than 60% of median household income after housing costs.
- A further 1.1million pensioners have incomes just above the poverty line (more than 60% but less than 70% of median income).
- Single people are more likely to be in poverty than couples, and older pensioners (especially those aged 85+), tenants and black and minority ethnic pensioners are at particular risk.

(The above statistics were provided by Age UK.)

This year the Later Life Planning Service assisted people to claim benefits to the annual value of **£527,272.20**.

Talking about health

Our clients and their carers have asked many questions and sought advice about their health and about accessing health services. We have assisted in a number of ways, providing information:

- on how people can access specialist support to manage their long term health conditions whilst remaining independent at home.
- about home visiting teams who test sight and hearing, as we know if someone has poor vision or hearing this can lead to falls inside or outside the home;
- on how to register or change a GP. We also found many people did not know they can also call their GP surgery and request a call-back to speak with their GP or pharmacist for medical advice if they are worried about their health, rather than waiting for a face-to-face GP appointment. We also provide information about NHS health check.

Much of our work to support our clients with these queries has been made easier by a strengthened working relationship with local GP surgeries, Barnet Council statutory services and many more organisations and groups. We have also worked closely with Healthwatch Barnet to help raise patient concerns around accessibility, in particular transport.



Non-residential care

We have had many questions from clients and their relatives and carers on how they can be supported in the community to continue living independently. We have worked closely with the prevention teams in Barnet and have been able to advise people on how to access assessments that could lead to receiving practical support at home or adaptations to help them remain safe. This has included helping people to obtain pendant alarms. These may be small changes but have made a positive impact on their lives.

Housing

This continues to be a topic of great concern, and the Later Life Planning team have dealt with 274 queries in relation to housing during 2016–17. We have seen people looking for advice and support with evictions, downsizing and finding more suitable places to live when faced with health conditions that ultimately mean their own property is no longer suitable for them.

We have a volunteer housing options adviser who has assisted with many enquiries and has worked with clients to navigate the system and seek the right support for their housing needs.

We have continued to build up strong relationships with housing providers in Barnet.



End of Life Planning

The Later Life Planning team have continued to speak with people accessing our services about the importance of setting up wills and Powers of Attorney. We have noted that these conversations are becoming less difficult to have with people and we continue to provide people with the options available to them.

What next for the Later Life Planning Service

The Later Life Planning Service completed its three year contract, which was then extended to run for a further year until April 2018. However, our work is far from over, and there is much more that needs to be done to support older people in Barnet approaching retirement or facing changes to their lives during retirement.

- There have been changes to pensions, welfare benefits and an increased need for support with advising older people around housing options. We will continue to support, empower and assist older people to navigate around complex processes.
- There is a greater need for the service to ensure that people approaching retirement age are able to make informed choices about their futures and that those already into retirement are made aware that they still have the opportunity to make changes and different choices in their lives.
- The service has been complimented with the support from volunteers and during 2016–17 this doubled. We will continue to seek the support of more volunteers to help with service delivery.
- We are building on our working relationships with local GP surgeries, pharmacies, community police, high street banks and small retail businesses in raising awareness of the work we do with older people. By working in partnership we can support

older people to remain safe, healthy and continue to live independently in the community.

- We will continue to work in partnership with other organisations and groups to ensure that our presence is made known throughout the borough.
- The service will continue to highlight the importance of setting up Powers of Attorney, wills and end of life planning.

The Later Life Planning Service recognises that the pressures of having to deal with a complex range of problems can often lead to anxiety and depression in some cases. The team will work hard to encourage older people to access the many services offered in the community. This can lead to a healthier lifestyle, increased wellbeing, a sense of security and a reduction in isolation.



Partnerships

The Later Life Planning service will continue working closely in partnership with other community and voluntary organisations including:

- Advocacy in Barnet
- Alzheimer's Society Barnet
- Barnet Carers Centre
- Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group
- Barnet Homes
- Barnet Mencap
- Barnet Neighbourhood Services Provider Group
- Barnet Seniors Assembly
- Citizens Advice Barnet
- Department for Work & Pensions
- Elderly Accommodation Counsel
- Financial Conduct Authority
- Healthwatch Barnet
- Inclusion Barnet
- Jewish Care
- London Borough of Barnet statutory services
- Mind in Barnet
- My Care My Home
- Outreach Barnet
- Relatives and Residents Association
- Social Care Direct
- Stroke Association

These strong working partnerships are integral to ensuring that older people have the right support at the right time during their intervention.

Case Studies

Case Study 1

Mr BK says *“The service was terrific.”*

Mr BK aged 85 lives alone with long term disabilities such as arthritis and severe sight impairment.

He has a few close family members who check up on him daily and Mr BK says that he is trying to remain as independent as possible. However, with his severe sight impairment it has become difficult at times for him to manage, such as bumping into furniture and unable to make hot drinks without spilling the water out of the cup, this being despite receiving a gadget from the occupational therapist.

Mr BK said that he had made an application for Attendance Allowance himself but was turned down and approached Age UK Barnet for help to assist with appealing the decision. He said that prior to seeking our help he had called a number of other agencies to assist with the appeal but had not received any help or simply did not receive a call-back. Mr BK said he was adamant that he wished to appeal the DWP's unjust decision.

The Age UK Barnet adviser explained to the client that, although the decision letter said he only had one month to submit a Mandatory Reconsideration, the guidelines say you can appeal within 13 months.

The adviser was unable to go along and see Mr BK; therefore, her assistance with the appeal was conducted via email and telephone between the client and the adviser. Mr BK did not have a copy of his original Attendance Allowance application, which the adviser would have used to check that Mr BK had submitted all the relevant information with the application.

Some time was spent by the adviser over the telephone with Mr BK putting together the appeal and carefully going through the daily and nightly challenges he faced trying to look after himself. The adviser also sent a covering letter to the DWP explaining the reasons for submitting a late appeal.



The benefits of having a pendant alarm were then discussed with Mr BK as he had mentioned that he lives alone.

After assisting the client, the first call the adviser received from Mr BK was a thank you for telling him about the pendant alarm. *"I feel so much safer in my home, now that I have this around my neck."*

The second call was to say thank you again. *"I have now been awarded Attendance Allowance at the higher rate of £83.10 per week and they have backdated it to my original application and I have received £900 in a lump sum."*

The adviser explained to Mr BK there could also be additional benefits he could claim now that he was in receipt of the higher rate.

Mr BK said he is paying for his pendant alarm and if he needed could now pay for someone to help out at home. This extra money would help.

The adviser spoke to the client about end of life planning, such as Powers of Attorney and wills – both of which he already had in place.

Mr BK sounded more happy and confident over the telephone and said he looks forward to going out with friends for a drink.

He said he does not know how to thank the adviser and Age UK Barnet for their intervention. He commented that the service was efficient and informative from beginning to end.

Quote from Mr BK:

“I now wear the pendant alarm and feel much happier and safer when alone in the flat. The worry of what could happen when alone has now vanished, help is but inches away with the press of the button. Grateful thanks for making life better and easier.

“The service was terrific, questions answered almost by return of telephone call e.g. the personal alarm 48 hours after phoning was set up; the adviser has been a wonderful support for which I thank her, especially with my appeal for Attendance Allowance.”

Case Study 2

Mr PT says “I feel better informed and supported.”

Mr PT is aged 84 and lives alone. He has severe hearing impairments, mobility and heart conditions. He does have some support from a close relative.

The client contacted Age UK Barnet following a telephone call to Citizens Advice Barnet, who advised Mr PT we could provide him with a home visit. He required assistance to complete welfare

benefit forms and wanted to ask for a review of his current disability benefit award because he felt his care needs had increased.

As he was unable to read or write, the Age UK Barnet volunteer assisted Mr PT to complete the form, spending two hours carefully going through the form and completing the relevant sections.

Mr PT also wanted help to explore his housing options because he currently lives in a private rental property and does not feel secure living there. We were able to let him know the housing options that were available to him in Barnet.

The client was provided with a housing options profile and a referral made to Outreach Barnet to support him further with his housing needs.

He was provided with a benefits check and, although there were no further entitlements at the time, Mr PT was grateful to learn that he is currently receiving the correct benefits.

Mr PT said he is interested in attending local activities and the volunteer provided him with information on local lunch groups with activities which he could attend.

He commented that the volunteer was very kind and patient with him and he would be calling back for assistance to understand the decision letter once he receives the outcome from the DWP. The volunteer also provided Mr PT with details of Age UK Barnet local partners, Helping Hands who could also support him where possible.

- Mr PT was able to submit an application to review his benefit award.
- He will be assisted to explore housing options.

- He now has more information on organisations who will support him in the future.
- Mr PT is considering getting out of the home and socialising.



The client said he feels better informed and supported. In particular, he was pleased he was able to be seen at home, which put him at ease.

Mr PT said *“10 out of 10 for the volunteer who helped me.”*

Case Study 3

Ms RA came to the Later Life Planning service for support with her housing needs which were due to her homelessness and disability. She had been homeless for the past four years, moving from place to place. Ms RA stated she had been staying with a friend in the borough since April 2014 and this had always been a temporary address. Due to her increasing health and disability needs she could no longer be accommodated by her friend and was asked to leave.

In particular, due to her increased care needs over the years she became unable to manage the 28 stairs which she needed to negotiate in order to access the main rooms in her friend's flat. Ms RA was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation which was exacerbated by having to walk up and down so many stairs. She also has arthritis in her spine and a weakening right leg and was left with excruciating pain after using the stairs. Ms RA said she often stayed in her room without food or drink for two to three days because she was in so much pain.

Ms RA stated she felt isolated as she could not entertain her children, grandchildren or friends and also has a limited income. She is in receipt of Personal Independent Payments and was hoping Age UK Barnet would be able to help her apply for Housing Benefit.

The adviser provided Ms RA with details of local housing providers and generated a Housing Report for her, ensuring that the search included ground floor accommodation with a lift and level surfaces due to her limited mobility. Ms RA felt able to contact these housing providers herself.

The client received assistance to make an application for Housing Benefit. However, she was unable to receive Housing Benefit whilst living in her friend's accommodation due to the nature of the living arrangement.

Ms RA advised the adviser that her income from benefits was mainly going towards rent and therefore she had little money left over for food. The adviser was able to provide her with vouchers for the food bank.

Approximately three months later Ms RA was offered sheltered accommodation from one of the local housing providers. She will need help to furnish her new flat and will receive some help from personal grants provided by Age UK Barnet and the Retail Trust Hub.



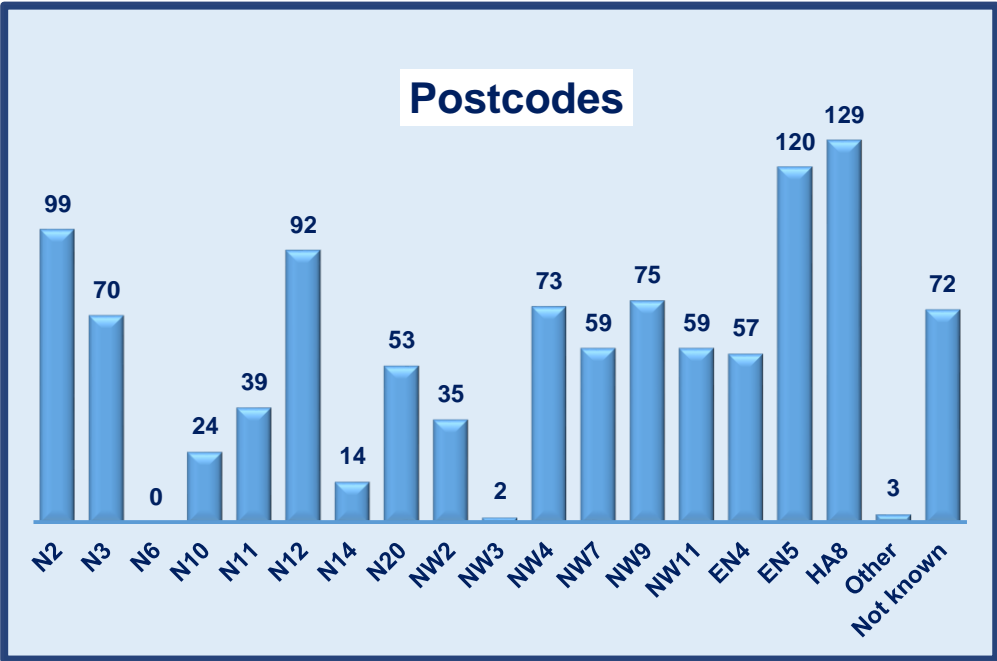
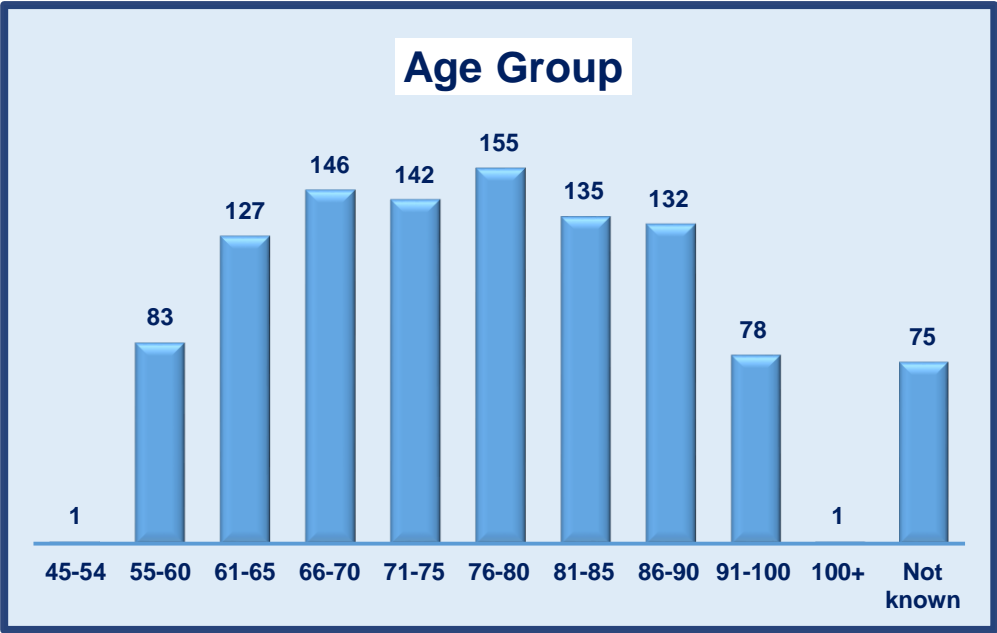
Ms RA feels less isolated because her flat is now on one level, and she is able to prepare a healthy meal. She will also be able to accommodate her family when they come along to see her. She is no longer at risk of being made homeless and feels safe and secure.

Welfare Benefits report and totals claimed

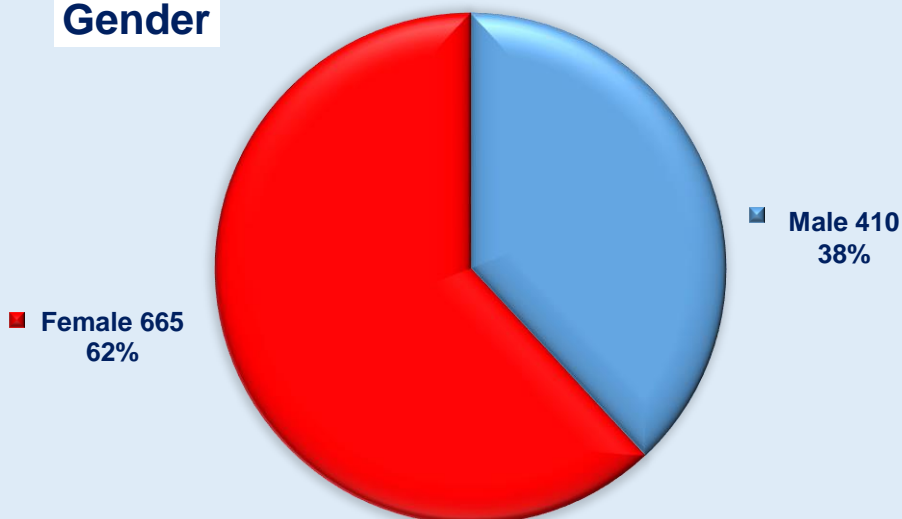
2016–2017

Benefit	Number of Claimants	Weekly Benefit Value	Quarterly Benefit Value	Yearly Benefit Value	Benefit Arrears	One-off Payments
Attendance Allowance	124	6,539.50	85,013.50	340,054.00	26,080.40	0.00
Carer's Allowance	1	62.70	815.10	3,260.40	0.00	0.00
Disability Living Allowance	15	798.35	10,378.55	41,514.20	2,877.50	0.00
Housing Benefit	4	401.54	5,220.02	20,880.08	0.00	0.00
Income Related ESA	4	380.85	4,951.05	19,804.20	1,450.00	0.00
Income Based JSA	2	73.10	950.30	3,801.20	0.00	0.00
Pension Credit Guarantee	9	584.63	7,600.19	30,400.76	230.48	0.00
Personal Independence Payment	16	1,190.50	15,476.50	61,906.00	1,116.30	0.00
Severe Disability Premium	1	37.10	482.30	1,929.20	0.00	0.00
State Pension	2	71.58	930.54	3,722.16	0.00	0.00
AUKB Personal Grant	11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,669.00
Other Charitable Grant	10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,223.00
	Number of Claimants	Weekly Benefit Value	Quarterly Benefit Value	Yearly Benefit Value	Benefit Arrears	One-off Payments
	199	10,139.85	131,818.05	527,272.20	31,754.68	12,892.00

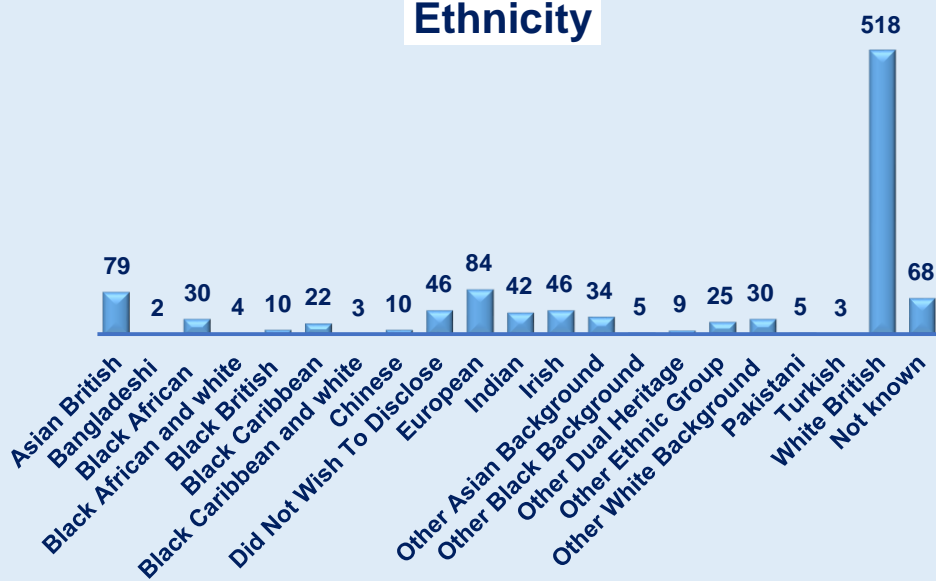
Later Life Planning Service Client Data

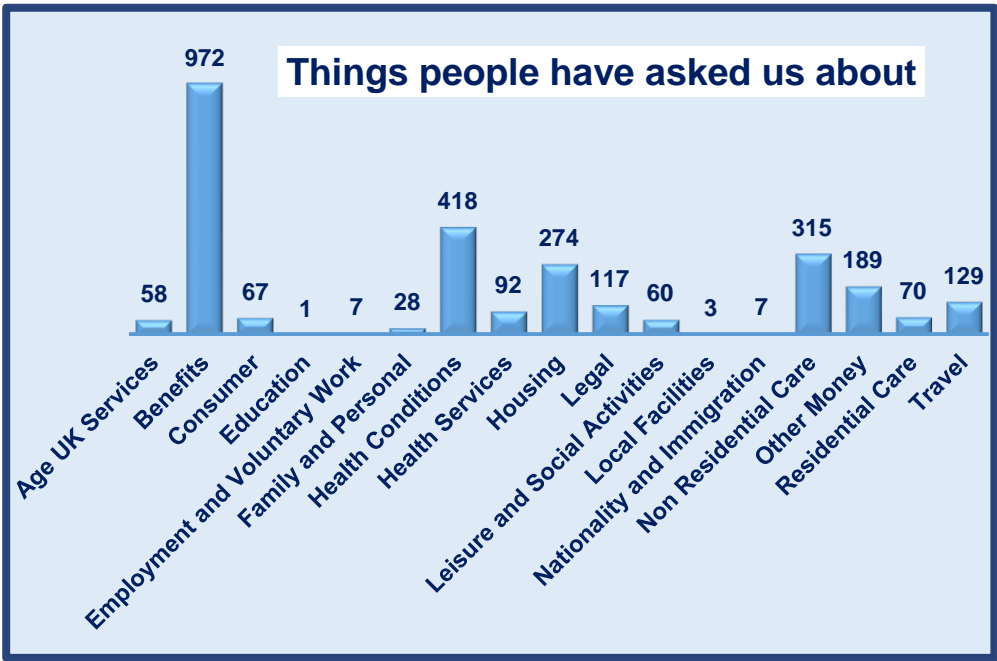


Gender



Ethnicity





Client Feedback

We asked **191** clients who had used the Later Life Planning Service a number of questions. The percentage of those who said “Yes” to each question is outlined below.

Did you find the service helpful?	100%
Has your quality of life improved?	82%
Do you feel better informed?	64%
Has it made a financial difference?	70%
Were you satisfied with the service?	74%
Would you recommend the service to others?	100%

The average score rated for the Later Life Planning Service on a scale of 1 to 10 was **9.6**.

About Age UK Barnet

Age UK Barnet is a voluntary organisation existing to serve and promote the interests of all older citizens of the London Borough of Barnet, from all walks of life and ethnic communities.

We provide many activities, services and information about issues of interest to older people through our centres and in the community.

Activities and services include:

- Later Life Planning including benefits advice
- Fitness and exercise classes
- Befriending service
- Handyperson service
- Computer training and assisted computer access
- Lunch clubs, social groups and other activities

Age UK Barnet

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Our strategic aims and objectives

- To provide, commission or support others to deliver a range of quality services and initiatives that address those issues which are important to older people in the London Borough of Barnet
- To reduce isolation and promote an independent lifestyle for older people in the London Borough of Barnet
- To promote a positive view of the contribution that older people make to society
- To help older people in the London Borough of Barnet to remain living in their own homes for as long as they wish to do so
- To campaign to improve services locally

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