



**Blackburn
with Darwen**

ageUK

ANNUAL REPORT

2024
- 25

YOUR LOCAL CHARITY FOR
OLDER PEOPLE

Welcome to our annual report

Chairman's Message

I am pleased to present our Annual Review and Impact Report along with our accounts for the year 2024/25 on behalf of the Board of Trustees. The year has been another busy year for the charity and we have had to work with increasing expenditure and income from all sources being severely challenged.

The organisation provides quality services to support people to improve and maintain their health and wellbeing, including assisting and supporting people living with dementia, and their carers. We continue to see increased demand for our Advice & Information service. We look to maintain and improve our core services for older people in Blackburn with Darwen.

We are extremely grateful for all the financial support from many donors and benefactors as well as Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council with whom we have very important contracts providing invaluable levels of financial support. Every penny received is used locally for the benefit of older people throughout Blackburn with Darwen.

Volunteers continue to be a vital asset to the organisation and are very much valued by the trustees. Their individual and collective contributions are immense and should be widely recognised as key to our continued positive impact on the lives of older people locally.

All the staff and volunteers are to be congratulated for their dedication and desire to continue to support older people in Blackburn with Darwen.

Best wishes



Tony Hedley
Chairman



Chief Executive's Message

Welcome to our Annual Review and Impact Report for 2024/25 which provides an overview of the work the charity has done during the year and the impact that this has on local older people. If you would like to know more about our work or services I would be pleased to talk to you.

We have continued to deliver our 2023-26 business plan priorities, maintaining a focus on developing and providing flexible service models which support earlier intervention and maximising independence along with ensuring our services are accessible to those who need them most. Our work to increase our reach across all the diverse communities in Blackburn with Darwen and to maintain a culture of continuous improvement have also been key priorities.

Once again the year was busy and challenging with our services supporting more older people who are experiencing increasing multiple challenges with physical and mental health and increasing numbers living with long term conditions including dementia, along with those struggling with the cost of living challenges. We have seen further increased demand for the Advice & Information service and all services are also supporting more people with complex issues, so whilst maintaining our core service offer we have also continued to develop new offers in response to what older people have told us they need with a particular focus on mental health and wellbeing support.

We have also continued to explore how digital technology can support us to deliver services and make best use of our resources, whilst still retaining that all important face to face and person-centred approach we know so many older people need and appreciate. I am pleased to report that despite the challenges we have maintained very high satisfaction levels and can demonstrate improved outcomes for many people we have supported.

Our people are our key asset, working hard to support so many local older people. Volunteers remain vital to us being able to support the many older people that we do and our team of volunteers have provided us not only with many hours of their time, but a huge wealth of experience and knowledge which really adds value to what we can offer. We have also been able to continue to develop our offer to host student placements during the year which we see as a key role for us as a community organisation. Our staff team have worked together in flexible and innovative ways to ensure that any older person who needs our support receives it in the best way for them. To support this, we have continued to offer a range of workforce wellbeing support and it was heartening that in our 2025 staff survey all staff who responded said that the organisation is a good place to work and that they feel valued.

In addition to our own service developments, we have maintained a focus on partnership working and influencing to ensure that the needs of older people are taken into

account in planning and delivery decisions. In particular, we have been actively involved in leading the Age Well Partnership on the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the borough and the priorities of the Place-Based Partnership with a particular focus development of a frailty management model; dementia support; and supporting people to age well. We have also continued to support the implementation of the Blackburn with Darwen Positive Ageing Framework which promotes the development of age friendly policy and practice across all local partnerships and delivery.

We are working in ever increasing financially challenging times with income levels from all sources under significant pressure and increases in expenditure resulting from changing national policy and therefore beyond our control. We are grateful for the support from our funders, donors and supporters who continue to provide vital resources to enable us to support more local older people, and we also seek to continue to diversify and expand our income generation activities to support organisational sustainability, including through new charged for service offers.

We remain focussed on supporting older people to have the best later life possible and continue to be flexible, innovative and resourceful in all that we do.



Vicky Shepherd
Chief Executive

Introduction

Our Vision - For all older people in Blackburn with Darwen to have the opportunity to live the life they choose

Our Mission - To listen to the diverse voices and views of local older people and use to influence both our own and others priorities. To deliver quality, person-centred services which meet local needs and maximise independence.

To deliver our vision and mission, and our strategic priorities, the organisation offers a range of services to improve the health and wellbeing of older people; to support people to remain independent as long as possible; and to be able to continue contributing to their community. We also work to influence the development of services for older people through a variety of mechanisms including delivery of the Age Well Partnership and sitting on a number of key strategic boards and groups, and through supporting national campaigns. We are pleased to be a member of the Age UK partner network, and we play an active role in this sub-regionally, regionally and nationally.

As a local, independent charity we have an ongoing and increasing need to raise funds from a diverse range of sources to support our work that is not funded through grants and contracts, including engagement and marketing and our campaigning and influencing work, along with the essential core functions that ensure the quality of our provision. During 2024/25 this has become even more of a priority as, despite making efficiencies wherever possible, we are faced with increasing employment costs and challenged income levels from all sources as a result of the external economic environment.

This review provides an overview of our activity during 2024/25 and seeks to illustrate the impact of our services on the lives of older people and the benefit to the local community that we provide.

1537

1537 people supported through our Health and Wellbeing services

5769

5769 enquiries to the Advice & Information Service from 3077 people

95%

95% of respondents to user surveys were very happy or happy with the support received

8524

8524 volunteer hours contributed during the year

60

60 volunteers were giving us their time at 31st March 2025

610

610 recorded compliments from our service users and supporters

11

5 complaints and 6 feedbacks received

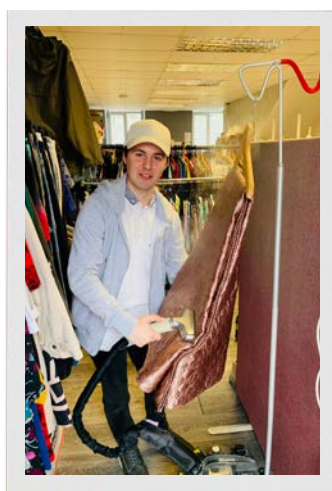
Volunteers

We would not be able to provide the services and activities that we offer without the incredible support of our volunteers, many of whom have volunteered for many years. Responding to the need to succession plan in our services which rely on volunteer delivery, volunteer recruitment has continued to be a priority across the year. However, it remains a challenging landscape with fewer people able to commit to regular, long term volunteering and in common with the national picture we saw a slight decline in our number of volunteers this year.

At the end of March 2025, the charity had 60 volunteers (64 in 2024) regularly giving their time across our services. In total volunteers gave us 8524 hours of time during the year which equates to a monetary value of £148,999 using the TOMS national social value rates and is equivalent to 5.3 full time members of staff. We are fortunate that our volunteer team is diverse in age, ethnicity and gender, reflective of the local population, and live across most wards of the borough.

Hosting student placements has been a focus for us and across the year we have hosted 38 students studying a variety of disciplines at both higher education and colleges including social work, medicine, pharmacy, accountancy, health and social care and public services. We have seen a huge increase in students wishing to gain the necessary work experience to attend medical school and demand has outstripped the number of placements we are able to offer.

Plans for 2025/26 include developing new volunteer roles to meet identified service needs, implementing a new web-based sharing platform to communicate better with volunteers and increase the capacity within our business support function.



Impact Story 1

Michael is a volunteer at our shop in Darwen. He joined us in early 2024 to gain some work experience and improve his social skills. Our shop provides vital unrestricted income and the volunteer team there are critical to enabling it to operate. Michael told us "I started volunteering because I wanted to do something meaningful with my time and help those that are going through difficult times, or who are more vulnerable and need to access support, advice or information, or even to talk, which is what Age UK is all about. Since then, volunteering has not only opened my eyes to how even small efforts, just by working behind the scenes can make a difference. It has also helped me in different ways. Not only does it make me feel good about myself coming here each week to help out and make even a small difference, but it has allowed me to grow as a person. By volunteering I have learnt how to be more empathetic to people, more confident by meeting new people, thus enhancing my skills in communication, independence and intuition also allowing me to gain valuable work experience. Most importantly it has shown me the value of compassion and connection in building a stronger, kinder community whilst making me more grateful and thankful for what I have."

Our Services

All our services are based on the principles of working with individuals to provide person-centred, responsive, tailored support which builds on their own strengths and networks and enabling them to do as much as they are able. Our aim is to improve and maintain health and wellbeing and to enable people to remain independent for as long as possible.

Advice & Information

The provision of free, independent advice and information is one of our core functions and through this activity we offer older people and their carers holistic advice to enable them to make their own decisions based on timely and accurate information, and ultimately to improve their quality of life and wellbeing.

The service is provided at offices in Blackburn and Darwen through a drop-in service, appointments, by telephone and digital platforms and through home visits, providing advice, information and casework on the wide range of issues affecting older people. The service has continued to see significant increase in demand and year on year dealt with 10% more enquiries for 28% more people. The service has supported an increasing number of people reaching pension age and an increasing number of people living with increased health, care and support needs and the advice requirements that these changes bring. However, the majority of the increase in demand relates to pensioners struggling with ongoing cost of living challenges including changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility for winter 2024/25. In response, in addition to providing individual case work to support people to claim their full benefit entitlements we worked in partnership with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council to deliver a targeted Pension Credit take up campaign across the winter period. Through this we were able to provide information on entitlements to those

who may be missing out through targeted mailings, public information stands and marketing and promotion activity. We have also continued to be a direct delivery partner for the local Household Support Fund, again working with the council to encourage take up amongst pensioners. In 2024/25 the service was funded from a range of sources including The Henry Smith Charity, Age UK for specific delivery programmes, the Brian Mercer Trust, the Eric Wright Trust and the local authority's Household Support Fund programme, and we continue to seek sustainable and diverse sources of funding.

Achievements

- We responded to **5769** enquiries from 3075 people, with increased reach in areas of lower service access
- Local older people were assisted to claim £1,752,774 in additional entitlements and income, a year on year increase of £455,512
- Delivery of the Pension Credit Take-up Campaign in partnership with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- Successful delivery of all targets for funded programmes
- Successful retention of the Age UK Quality of Advice Standard
- 99% of survey respondents were happy with the service and would recommend it to others



Key Plans for 2025/26

- Continue to work flexibly to respond to the increased demand in a timely manner including recruitment of additional volunteers
- Participation as a partner in the continuation of the Household Support Scheme to maximise take up by pensioners
- Delivery of a targeted promotion campaign in Darwen, following the re-opening of the office there after a period of renovation in the premises
- Ensuring all targets for funded programmes are met including successful delivery of the new Age UK Bright Advice programme

Impact Story 2

When we started supporting Mrs L her husband had recently moved into permanent residential care and she was living alone in the house they had shared. She was dealing with the situation well with support from friends and family although she has her own health issues. During the period of time she was involved with our service her husband sadly passed away.

Mrs L, who is aged 71 contacted us to find out if she might be entitled to any benefits, having never considered it until her living situation changed. She has a medical condition which results in her having difficulty remembering and retaining information resulting in

her being anxious when dealing with authorities such as the local council or the Department for Work and Pensions. We were able to support Mrs L over a period of seven months via a number of home visits and telephone appointments to apply for the correct entitlements, challenging the decisions to ensure she was awarded correctly. We also assisted her in making the subsequent changes when her husband passed away. In total she was entitled to an additional £229 per week income through Pension Credit, Council Tax support and housing benefit. She was also entitled to £4700 in back pay.

Mrs L was guided throughout the process which she found challenging due to her situation and health issues. She now has a much better understanding of her entitlements and the processes that are necessary to achieve a satisfactory outcome. She also knows that she can rely on us for help and support with any future issues that she has which has taken away a lot of worry.

Mrs L told us *'I could never have done this without all of your help, it's been brilliant to be so well supported. You have made such a difference to my quality of life and peace of mind.'*

Community Day Care

This year, following a tender process, we were successful in securing a two year contract from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council to continue to deliver a community day care service in Blackburn. In October 2024 the new service was launched which is delivered from Accrington Road Community Centre 5 days per week. The transition of the service has worked well, particularly for service users and carers and the space at the centre offers a more vibrant and versatile space from which to deliver the service.

The Community Day Care service offers a range of support including personal care, transport and support with nutrition along with a varied programme of therapeutic, cognitive, physical and social activities. The community model provides support for frail older people and adults with a learning disability or difficulty. Those accessing the service must meet the Adult Social Care Services eligibility criteria.

We work with individuals and their carers to develop person centred support and care plans that aim to maintain good health and wellbeing and prevent a further deterioration in health and independence. We also provide support and respite for the carers of day care users and offer regular support to ensure they have the right support to maintain their own health and wellbeing and to prevent carer breakdown. Our dedicated team of volunteers enable us to provide individual support for a range of different activities to enhance the offer available.

For 2024/25 the community day care service was funded through a contract with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.

Achievements

- We supported and cared for **71** of the frailest older people and adults with a learning disability or difficulty.
- Successful tender submission and transition of the service to a new model using just one venue
- Hosting of a range of placements including medical and pharmacy students.
- Increased the use of digital devices and technology for service users and the delivery of the service

- Organised and hosted numerous celebrations including Christmas events, Eid parties and birthday celebrations
- Implementation of recycling schemes within the service, including food waste recycling

Key Plans for 2025/26

- Further develop and extend the activity programme to support longer term wellbeing with a focus on self-care, health promotion and prevention
- Explore options for self-funders to access the service
- Achieve the Recipe for Health Award.
- Explore learning opportunities for service users with adult education providers
- Increase the use of volunteers to support and continue to enhance delivery of the service

Impact Story 3

Leonard is a 91-year-old gentleman who lives on his own in sheltered accommodation, he has limited social contact and is dependent on others to access services and support. Leonard has a history of falls and he has limited mobility, using a rollator to move around. Leonard is unable to access outdoors due to his health conditions which resulted in him becoming more socially isolated, impacting on his mental wellbeing.

Leonard was referred for community day care by Adult Social Care due to a decline in both his physical health and mental wellbeing and he was allocated one day per week.

When Leonard arrived on the first day, he was anxious as this was the first time he had left the sheltered accommodation scheme to attend social activities. However, he was also quite excited that he had the chance to meet new people and try new activities. Over the course of the first couple of months it became apparent how Leonard's confidence increased getting round the centre using his rollator, along with how he was interacting with other service users at the centre. Leonard has now been attending the service since the beginning of 2024 and he feels very comfortable and relaxed with staff and others using the service and is often the life and soul of the activities. He has made many new friends, is confident in taking a lead with a range of activities, especially playing dominoes, and he's more than happy to help his peers who have cognitive impairment; however he does have a competitive streak! The ladies in particular have taken a shine to Leonard, who loves all the attention. Leonard is always very thankful when he attends the service and always makes a point of saying thank you to all the staff and volunteers when leaving. Leonard has reported that coming to day care has really helped with his mental wellbeing, that it keeps him busy and he gets to meet his friends every week.

Leonard said *"When the bus collects me in the morning, I know I'm off to the centre to have a good day and also have a great lunch. Coming to the centre makes me feel like I'm not out of touch with the world."*

Impact Story 4

Marylin is in her 80s and cares for her husband who has a diagnosis of Dementia. He was referred to the community day care service by their social worker who felt that the service would really support her husband whilst also providing much needed respite for Marylin.

It was agreed Marylin's husband would attend one day per week and a home visit was undertaken. As with all new service users we encourage them to come along to the centre for a taster session. However, Marylin was struggling to get her husband to visit the centre, despite lots of encouragement, due in part to a lack of insight he had regarding his condition and care needs.

Marylin was struggling to cope with her husband's condition, particularly regarding him completing daily tasks such as washing and dressing. This was causing her husband to be aggressive towards Marylin when he was asked to do them. He was also increasingly at risk of going out on his own and getting lost, forgetting his way back home along with not having any awareness of road safety. Marylin was at high risk of carer breakdown.

We continued to stay in touch with Marylin, providing ongoing support whilst also encouraging her to try different approaches to encourage her husband to attend the service. After three weeks she managed to persuade husband to visit the centre for a taster visit.

Upon arrival at the centre Marylin broke down in tears and whilst staff looked after her husband, the Service Manager sat with her as she explained how she was feeling alone and isolated with no one to help her.

The care assessment was completed there and then as it was a priority to get her husband to attend the service as soon as possible, to allow Marylin some much needed respite.

Although Marylin is able to drive, it was agreed that Age UK transport would be provided instead, as this was another 'pinch point' that caused her husband to become aggressive. It was also felt that staff would be able to encourage her husband to attend day care without the risk of him becoming anxious and aggressive, this approach worked. Marylin's husband started attending day service one day per week which over time was gradually increased to three days, he settled in very well and attends regularly and in Marylin's words "without it being a battle". He now participates in a range of activities whilst attending and engages well with staff and some of the other service users.

Marylin told us *"The service is fantastic- it's saved my life; I wonder at times if I would have still been alive if I didn't have this break Age UK provides. It's amazing to know I can ask you for help, it makes a whole lot of difference, and I am very grateful for that."*

Health & Wellbeing

The Health & Wellbeing service brings together our Active Ageing, Befriending, Dementia support, Digital Inclusion, Integrated Care, Nail Care and Social Inclusion provision under one umbrella. Throughout the year **1466** individuals accessed services, received support or attended activities. Through our programmes we provide a range of support, friendship, activities and services to improve wellbeing, prevent a decline in health, promote independent living and reduce social isolation. Throughout our services we use a strength-based approach to prevent dependency on support services and increase self – resilience. Across the services **89%** of people rated their **experience as very good** and **96% would recommend** to family or friends. **81%** of people reported **improved mental wellbeing** and **55% reduced loneliness**, demonstrating significant impact for the people we work with.

During the year we have continued to develop our offer based on feedback from local people. With funding secured through the Lancashire & South Cumbria Integrated Care Board Mental Health Transformation Programme, we developed and delivered the Brighter Futures Programme offering peer support social groups for people with a diagnosed mental health condition. We established three new groups which attracted a total of 36 regular attendees. The funding ceased at the end of March 2025, but we have continued to run the groups which are supported by trained volunteers.

During winter 2024/25 we developed and delivered a pilot Falls Prevention project in Darwen funded through the Integrated Care Board's Urgent & Emergency Care programme with the aim of reducing the number of older people who fall and injure themselves. The pilot project included direct support for people

aged over 65 to help reduce the risk of falls in the community, an awareness campaign and a community education programme which involved training up local community groups who then cascading the learning among other group members and the wider community. We also developed a strong working relationship with North West Ambulance Service and jointly delivered falls awareness sessions in care homes along with Progress Lifeline to increase knowledge of falls and safely lifting people to prevent hospital admission.

Using feedback captured through our dementia services, we organised an Afternoon Tea Party for people with dementia and their carers and families. The event was held in Darwen to coincide with Older People's Day in October 2024 and proved to be a great success.

The event was supported through funding from the Masonic Charitable Foundation and members of the local masonic lodge attended to help on the day *"It was lovely to meet you yesterday and what a great team you have. We all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves (especially Ray and Kevin - our new belly dancers!!) and we are so pleased to see our Masonic donation being put to such good use."*

During the year we have begun working with Spark (Drug & Alcohol Support Services) to offer targeted support for older people affected by alcohol use. The project is still in its infancy but the aim is to develop a partnership service offer that best meets the needs of older people. In support of insight work on people's experiences of urgent and emergency care, sponsored by national Age UK and the VCSE Health & Wellbeing Alliance, we conducted six interviews to capture local people's experiences of their unplanned hospital admissions. The

study, which has been reported directly into the Department of Health and Social Care, aims to ensure policymakers are equipped with knowledge and insight to build a picture of how better to respond to the specific needs of older people and their carers. Once again, we have worked alongside health services in the promotion of vaccinations along with supporting several consultation programmes including Bowel Screening, Falls Prevention and the Abdominal Aortic Aneurysms screening for men.

All Health & Wellbeing services have completed the Age UK Core Quality Standards, a self-assessment tool which is focussed on service improvement. The self-assessment produces an action plan with identified improvements which the staff teams have been implementing. During the year we have hosted several student placements including medical and pharmacy students, along with social work students who predominantly sit within the Integrated Care Service. All staff have completed Trauma Informed training, with a member of staff completing train the trainer and supporting the wider roll out of training across Blackburn with Darwen.

Through our physical activity and inclusion programmes and the Nail Care service we delivered **972** sessions which resulted in **6738** attendances.

The Nail Care service is paid for through customer fees. Wayfinder is funded through the National Lottery Community Fund, and Memory Makers through the Masonic Charitable Foundation. The remainder of the Health & Wellbeing services are funded by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council through their Helping People to Stay Happy, Healthy & Well VCFS commission and a range of other smaller grants, along with service user contributions.

Active Ageing

The Active Ageing service offers a range of regular physical activity sessions including exercise groups, walking sports and wild swimming at a range of venues across Blackburn with Darwen. Additionally, this year, we were successful in securing funding to develop a walking tennis programme targeted at South Asian women and older people living in Darwen. In total **248** people accessed activities during the year.

Achievements

- Further development of the Sheltered Accommodation Scheme Walking Programme
- Successful recruitment of additional volunteers and tutors to support the delivery of activities.
- Delivery of the Darwen Falls Project community education sessions and work with care homes.
- Partnership development with Ribble Rivers Trust and Lancashire Wildlife Trust to enhance the walking sessions
- Participation in the local We Are Undefeatable Campaign, aimed at supporting people with long term conditions to be more active
- Development and delivery of the new walking tennis project

Key Plans for 2025/26

- Develop targeted programmes for people with specific health conditions including people with dementia and Parkinson's disease.
- Explore opportunities to develop an ongoing Falls Prevention programme
- Increase the number of activities utilising outdoor spaces
- Develop a range of taster sessions to encourage people to try new activities

Impact Story 5

Dave W is a retired police officer and lives in Darwen with his wife. Dave R is a retired accounts manager and lives in Blackburn with his wife. Dave W and Dave R met when they first came to our 10 Pin Bowling Group some 20 years ago! They have been attending the group ever since and have seen many changes over the years including changing to a new venue and even having to stop for a short time whilst the bowling alley was closed. They have built a great relationship with each other over that time, as well as a healthy competitive streak when it comes to who is the best 10 Pin Bowler! Their friendship has been a real showcase of peer-to-peer support and has been a lifeline for Dave R who has had a really hard couple of years, having been diagnosed with cancer and undergoing immuno-therapy, which is significantly impacting on his health. Whilst trying to get through this and looking after his wife who has numerous health conditions, their son was murdered in his home. They subsequently had to undergo the gruelling process of the investigation and trial.

All of this has really taken its toll on Dave and his wife, and unfortunately the deterioration in his health means he can no longer attend the 10 Pin Bowling sessions. Fortunately, he has his friend Dave W who now visits him regularly at home. These visits really lift his spirits and are vital as the rest of his family live abroad. Dave W has offered to cut the grass as Dave cannot manage that anymore and they have even been known to go to the pub! The friendship they have built up over the years as a result of an Age UK activity is second to none; they have been there for each other through both happy and sad times and continue to be a great support for each other.



Befriending

Our Befriending service provides home visiting and a Phonelink for housebound and isolated people, as well as a Keeping in Touch calls with people who do not wish to have a weekly regular call or visit. We also offer short term support to encourage people to engage or re-engage in community activities following a life transition. During the year we supported **174** of the most isolated and vulnerable older people through these offers.

Achievements

- Secured funding to further extend the Stepping Out offer to support people to get out and about again and join in community activities
- Recruitment of additional volunteers to support isolated older people
- Review of service users on Keeping in Touch calls and using a strength-based approach helped them to move on to wider social activities

Key Plans for 2025/26

- Development of a peer-to-peer offer
- Explore digital options to enhance the service and support the telephone and visiting offers
- Increase the knowledge of volunteers on other local services and support available

Impact Story 6

Ann is 82 years old and lives alone in Blackburn. She has a cleaner and a hairdresser who visit every week. Ann was originally referred by her GP to our Integrated Care service in 2017 as she was struggling with her mental health and coming to terms with the loss of her husband who passed away in 2008; Ann had never had bereavement therapy or support.

The Integrated Care service made a referral for Ann to receive bereavement counselling, along with an Adult Social Care referral to assess daily living needs and install grab handles and a toilet seat to make things easier at home for her. At the time family were providing regular support including with shopping and appointments. Ann then managed well for a couple of years, but over time unfortunately her family ceased contact and support for her.

Ann was referred to the Befriending Service by her cleaner due to her increased isolation and declining mental health. Ann has been on our Befriending service since 2019 and in the early days was supported by staff, particularly through the pandemic. Ann was also supported through our Covid Support service and taken for her vaccinations several times.

Ann decided she would prefer only a monthly call which staff carried out on a regular basis. She loved to chat and could sometimes be on the telephone for an hour. It was clear Ann was still struggling with her mental health and we supported and advised her of services that could support her but Ann declined any additional support and was happy with us ringing her once a month.

Because of Ann's fluctuating moods we did not match her to a volunteer and felt a member of staff would be best to make the calls.

More recently, Ann has told us that she is having more positive conversations with her family and has more contact with them.

Because of Ann's more upbeat mood and improved relationship with her family, she eventually agreed to being matched with a volunteer on the Phonelink service.

On a recent call to Ann, we asked how the calls were going with her volunteer, and she said *"My volunteer Jan is a lovely lady and we're getting on very well. Thank you for all your support over the years."*



Digital Inclusion

Through our Digital Inclusion service, we offer one-to-one support to help increase digital skills, knowledge and confidence, both at community venues and in people's own homes.

We provided a range of devices for people to 'try before you buy' along with free data packages.

In total **69** people were supported through this service. In addition, all new people coming into the organisation also have a 'digital diagnostic' to identify level of digital need and any support they may require to increase their skills and knowledge.

Achievements

- Continued to develop one-to-one provision for people who are housebound
- Secured and distributed devices and data for people including Komp devices for people to make video calls with family
- Contributed to the Digital Inclusion Network for Blackburn with Darwen
- Distributed information and provided advice for people on the roll out of the national Digital Voice telephony programme

Key Plans for 2025/26

- Recruit additional volunteers to provide tuition to people
- Explore opportunities to develop digital drop-in sessions
- Further develop and expand our equipment and data offers
- Provide individual support to people affected by the Digital Voice programme

Impact Story 7

Jessica is 79 and contacted us as she wanted help to connect to the internet as she was feeling not only digitally isolated but socially isolated as well as she rarely left her home due to having skin cancer and very poor mobility. She lives in rented accommodation which excluded her from a 6G referral for broadband. Our Digital Inclusion Co-ordinator noted Jessica receives Pension Credit, making her eligible for social tariffs, however Jessica felt the £15-20 per month cost was beyond her affordability.

We put in a referral to the Digital Tablet Donation Scheme run through the national Age UK charity, which was accepted and Jessica was provided with a sim enabled tablet with a 6 month data allowance. Digital lessons in Jessica's home were organised, and she was shown the different things she could do with her tablet including accessing the internet.

Jessica didn't wish to do her food shopping online as she uses Morrisons phonenumber service and is quite happy with this, however she was thrilled that she could browse the Morrisons website using the app on her tablet to see what was on offer so she could order different things each week. She was also happy about being able to use BBC iPlayer and have it linked to her TV so she could watch the news and catch up on her favourite TV programs. As Jessica is unable to leave her home to go shopping unaided, we also helped her to set up an Amazon account so she could shop online and get items delivered. We showed her how to search for items and compare prices and demonstrated the checkout process.

After a couple of months, we visited Jessica again as she contacted us to say that she was having problems

connecting her tablet to the internet and her internet experience was very slow. We were able to do some basic maintenance and troubleshooting on the tablet but explained that she might want to consider broadband to speed up her connectivity, however, she said she couldn't afford it.

After a further few weeks, Jessica again contacted us with another issue on the tablet which we were able to sort out for her. During this visit, Jessica told the Digital Inclusion Co-ordinator that she needed a new mobile phone, and was also looking to purchase a new tablet. We helped her with her research, explaining some of the terminology and what was available in her budget and exploring the customer reviews. Jessica came to a decision and made her choices and ordered a new tablet and phone there and then using the skills she has learned through the digital lessons.

The following week we returned for another home visit and supported Jessica to set up her new tablet and phone, transferring her data to the new devices and swapping the sim cards. In no time Jessica was up and running and happy with her purchases.

Jessica was very pleased with herself that she was able to use her newfound digital skills to make her purchases, however, she was quick to point out that she would have never been able to do it without the help and support she has received from Age UK. She said *"because I rarely go out, being able to do research and make purchases online to have goods delivered right to my door has been invaluable in helping me to keep independent at home."* She said to the staff member *"You are my knight in shining armour. Thank you so much for all your help."*

Integrated Care Service

Our Integrated Care service is part of the Blackburn with Darwen Integrated Neighbourhood Team, working closely with GP surgeries across the borough and alongside health, social care and voluntary sector colleagues to provide support for older people who have long term conditions. Our key role is to provide holistic assessments and coordinate packages of environmental and social support for people most at risk of hospital admission. This year we have provided support to **439** older people through this service.

Achievements

- Provided in-depth case management and support to 439 individuals
- Actively participated in the review of the local neighbourhood delivery model
- Played an active role in the delivery of the Trauma Informed training programme for front line staff in Blackburn with Darwen
- Attended all local INT meetings across the 4 neighbourhoods
- Developed a new partnership with Spark to offer support with alcohol use issues

Key Plans for 2025/26

- Further embed the service offer within local health and social care pathways and structures.
- Explore opportunities to provide advanced care planning support
- Further develop the alcohol support project in partnership with Spark
- Maximise opportunities to embed the service through the local frailty model
- Continue to offer placements for Social Work students

Impact Story 8

Sandra lives alone. She was referred to the Integrated Care service following a hospital admission, due to breaking her back. She has no family locally and had recently lost her sister. Sandra had experienced three bereavements in the past 12 months. Sadly, Sandra had been discharged from hospital without the necessary support being put in place.

There appeared to have been conflict between different professionals with regard to the discharge which had left Sandra feeling very upset about the whole situation. Sandra was left at home without the support needed to help her with basic care and her first night home was very difficult as she could not access the toilet or other essentials, resulting in Adult Social Care having to arrange crisis care, following which we received a referral.

One of our Integrated Care Co-ordinators visited Sandra, who told us that whilst she was initially being supported by the Reablement Team, going forward she would like to have carers and would be happy to pay for them.

Although not able to recommend a specific care agency, we provided her with several options for her to explore and choose one she felt comfortable with. Information was also provided on options for cleaning companies as Sandra is very house proud, and given her broken back, was unable to manage her household tasks. Several other referrals were also made including to Specsavers at Home for an eye and hearing test' she has since been provided with new glasses and hearing aids.

The cleaning company is now coming in regularly and Sandra also has a private carer who supports with a personal care routine, meaning that there are others providing regular welfare checks. Sandra feels comfortable ringing us when she has any issues or questions. She feels that her mental health improved knowing there is someone out there that she could rely on because she had been let down with her discharge experience. Sandra said *"You have been amazing. I feel more at ease knowing you are there to support me. I have also been supported by the Advice and Information team and it's all been a positive experience."*



Memory Makers

We continued to further develop our Memory Makers programme this year, which offers sessions for people with memory problems that provide a broad range of therapeutic, physical and cognitive activities, based on the evidence-based Maintenance Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (MCST) approach. We facilitate three small group sessions each week and have seen **41** people attend the sessions throughout the year.

Achievements

- Secured funding from the Masonic Charitable Foundation to support the programme for three years
- Relocated all three groups to more suitable settings
- All groups have increased in numbers and consistency in attendance
- Hosted intergenerational activities with a local nursery
- Evidenced improvements in participants abilities and confidence with a focus on living well with dementia

Key Plans for 2025/26

- Explore opportunities to develop additional groups
- Develop a culturally appropriate group for South Asian older people
- Increase the range of activities offered, working with more partners
- Organise more social events

Impact Story 9

Sheila was referred into our dementia Wayfinder Service after a recent diagnosis of dementia; she was also diagnosed with Parkinsons three years ago. Since Sheila's dementia diagnosis she had lost interest in previous activities she used to once enjoy, such as a craft group and gardening.

Sheila had no concerns over managing her personal care and is able to make herself something to eat and drink and her house has had a wet room fitted downstairs to make it easier for Sheila to access independently. On our first visit Sheila told us that she was struggling with her confidence and looked for reassurance from her husband and daughter with all decisions she was making. She said she didn't feel she was able to do things she used to. Sheila used to enjoy being in social environments but had lost all confidence and was lacking motivation.

Sheila was happy for her family to be fully involved in her support and to share their opinions of how they feel the diagnosis had affected her. Sheila's daughter Ashleigh believed her mum was still capable of doing a lot of tasks but had become very reliant on her husband Peter to do things for her. Peter on the other hand was very protective of Sheila and didn't want her to struggle doing things.

Peter and Sheila had been researching about dementia and just taking the negative points and assuming the worst outcomes. Ashleigh was keen to try social activities with Sheila, as she thought this may give her more confidence and regain a bit more independence and show she is still capable of being involved regardless of her diagnosis.

We had a conversation about how one person's experience with dementia is different to another, and that not everyone was the same. We discussed that Sheila was still able to live well with dementia and that was our aim, to ensure that Sheila's diagnosis did not define her.

We gave Sheila and her family information on some local groups that Sheila may wish to be involved in including our own Memory Makers groups. We also signposted them to Mind to Muscle which supports people with Parkinsons Disease, and the Carers Service. Sheila decided that she would like to give the Memory Makers groups a try as they were small groups.

Ashleigh brought Sheila to the first session and stayed with her for the first half hour to help her settle in. Sheila soon got chatting and recognised others in the group that lived local to her. Sheila now gets involved in all the activities and she likes to use her wit to entertain others in the group.

Since joining Memory Makers Sheila has developed more confidence and now attends other groups such as 'Talk and Tunes' with her husband Peter. Sheila's daughter Ashleigh said *"Mum is becoming her previous self which is lovely to see."* Sheila commented *"I really enjoy coming to memory makers, it's like a little family."*

Nail Care

Through our Nail Care service, we offer a toenail cutting service for people no longer able to care for their feet and who are not eligible for NHS Podiatry. Once again, this year we have had a focus on relocating the remainder of our sessions to clinical sites in Blackburn and Darwen. **174** people received treatment during the year.

Achievements

- New clinics established at Barbara Castle Way and Darwen Health Centres
- New streamlined triage and assessment processes established
- Increase in number of Nail Care customers with all clinics running at full capacity

Key Plans for 2025/26

- Increase the number of clinics to meet demand
- Review and streamline service administration and finance processes
- Achieve the Age UK national Nail Care Quality Standard



Impact Story 10

Ethel is 76 years old and lives in Darwen with her husband, she enjoys cooking and catching up with her friends. Ethel and her husband have had some health issues over the last few years and when they attend their appointments, they like having a good catch up and discussing any issues which are ongoing with their health. Ethel has been attending the service for 6 years; her husband starting using the service in 2021.

On a recent appointment it was noticed that one of Ethel's big toes was extremely swollen and red near to the cuticle, it was also evident that it was infected.

Ethel was advised to go to the GP whilst she was at the health centre and a note was given to Ethel to pass onto the receptionist, detailing the concerns and to hopefully get an appointment as soon as possible. An urgent NHS Podiatry service referral was also made.

Ethel contacted us a few days later to let us know that she had an appointment with the NHS Podiatry service and was on a course of antibiotics to treat the infection. Ethel said "The note that Emma gave me helped me get an appointment and I was given antibiotics on the same day to clear the infection. I received an NHS Podiatry appointment very quickly too, if I had to contact them myself it would have taken longer. The antibiotics cleared the infection, and I had some treatment from NHS Podiatry which has got my toe back to normal. Emma was very helpful, thank you for sorting everything quickly for me."



Social Inclusion

The Social Inclusion programme provides a varied weekly programme of activities to reduce social isolation and help to maintain and improve people's wellbeing including Men's Groups, Brighter Futures and 'Talk and Tunes'. The programme also includes linking in with other services and referring people into non-Age UK social inclusion activities. During the year **150** people were supported through the programme. Through this programme we also worked in close partnership with Lancashire Mind to deliver the Flourishing Minds project, which provides more specialist one to one or group mental health support.

Achievements

- Increased number of people attending activities
- Continuation of the Brighter Futures peer support groups following cessation of funding
- Delivery of awareness raising sessions by partners to promote other services and support available locally to group members
- Group volunteers have built up a good relationship and now deputise at each other's sessions

Key Plans for 2025/26

- Recruitment of additional volunteers to help support the delivery of group sessions
- Explore opportunities to expand the 'Talk and Tunes' sessions to other locations
- Develop programmes to meet identified specific gaps in provision

Impact Story 11

David lived in Chorley with his wife Sandra, who suffered a stroke and was in hospital for 3 months when, due to the Covid restrictions David was unable to visit her. Sadly, Sandra died a short time after being discharged home for palliative care, which had a devastating impact on David.

In October 2023 David sold his house and moved in with his daughter, Caroline, a social worker, and her family in Darwen.

David joined the Police Cadets in 1964 and enlisted in the Royal Navy in 1965 travelling the world. He then had a career in both the Prison Service and the Atomic Energy Police based in Cumbria where he worked until he retired in 2000 serving in several roles including firearms officer. During his career David received injuries in the line of duty both in the Navy and again whilst serving as a Police Officer. Although he was able to return to work, he was eventually diagnosed with PTSD and later with Combat Stress and has been on medication since diagnosis.

After the loss of his wife, David's mental health went into decline. He underwent two courses of psychotherapy treatment, following which he experienced a decline in mood. He visited our Advice and Information office in Darwen and was informed about the Brighter Futures Mental Health Peer Support service. Following referral David soon became a regular attendee of the peer support group in Darwen. He also started attending the Coffee and Chat group every Monday.

After only a few weeks of attending David's daughter Caroline said that she could see the difference in him already. He started meeting up with some of the other members outside the group meetings for coffees, lunch or visiting members who were in hospital. He now has started a relationship with one of the ladies who attends the group and in David's own words he *"feels like a teenager again."* He has made friends and forged relationships through the group and gets out of the house nearly every day now.

This has had a dramatic positive effect on his mental health with David telling us that he hasn't had to contact Combat Stress Support since coming to the groups and his symptoms and signs of PTSD have reduced by a good 60%. He says he looks forward to coming to the groups and now feels less lonely and isolated. *"It's the company. For the first time I am making real 'non-service' friends. I have become more confident and can now go out more on my own. When I first started coming to the group I was in a very dark place, not suicidal...yes (he then admits) ...suicidal. This group has saved me."*



Wayfinder

The Wayfinder service provides support, advice and a point of contact for people post diagnosis to help them better plan for the future and enable them to live well with dementia. The service provides support not only to the individual but also to family and carers. In total **345** people have accessed support through the service.

Achievements

- Developed the model to provide a holistic, open-door service, enabling people to access support whenever they need it
- Additional training completed to enhance and improve staff skills, awareness and approach
- Joint assessment visits with the Memory Assessment Service
- Provide targeted support to enable people to attend activities through reducing or removing the stresses and barriers

Key Plans for 2025/26

- Deliver more regular social activities for people with dementia and their families to enjoy together
- Further strengthen partnerships to enhance the service offer
- Develop and deliver Dementia Empowered Conversations training for carers and families
- Continue to further develop our service offer in response to the needs of people with dementia, their carers and families



Impact Story 12

Thora was referred to the Wayfinder Service after her annual check-up with her GP. It had been identified that Thora was receiving a lot of support from her brother Michael and we were asked to make contact to see if any further support was required or could be offered.

After a couple of discussions Thora and Michael decided that at that time they didn't require any support but had our contact details in case anything changes.

After a few months, Michael contacted us to explain that Thora's memory had deteriorated quite rapidly and she had been wandering at night trying other people's front door handles, was struggling to manage her basic care needs and having panic attacks. Thora had already been seen by a doctor who was concerned about Thora's condition and had referred them to Adult Social Care.

Michael had contacted us to see if there was anything the Wayfinder Service could do to support. We visited Thora and Michael again and it was clear from the visit that Thora required support sooner rather than later. Thora said that she didn't feel safe in the situation she was in and expressed that she couldn't settle and wasn't sleeping. She knew her memory was getting worse and it was worrying her so much she was having panic attacks. Thora lived in a flat in an extra care sheltered housing scheme with a care package in place but she understood that the accommodation may now not suit her needs and wanted to know what other options there were.

We discussed other care facilities and Thora said she would feel more comfortable and safer in a care home. Michael had previously attempted to contact Adult Social Care to explain how urgent a review was needed but he said he felt that he was just getting passed around with no one listening to the concerns.

Following our visit, we contacted Adult Social Care to express our concerns, and it was agreed that a more urgent assessment was required and that we would accompany the social worker on a joint visit.

At the visit Thora expressed her wishes of being in a care home and the social worker agreed this was the more suitable setting for her. Within three days Thora moved into a local care home and settled in immediately.

Michael fed back *"Hi Sarah, just letting you know Thora is now a resident at the care home. I got a call this morning and we went to view, she was happy so she stopped for dinner whilst Carol and I got some of her clothes. Unbelievably when we were leaving she said she was going to have a lie on the bed for an hour. We're still in a state of shock. Just letting you know that we are really grateful for all your help. You were the only person who listened, so thank you very much. You're an absolute lifesaver."*

Influencing Policy & Practice

Our range of campaigning, influencing and partnership activities play a key role in contributing towards us accomplishing our mission to enable the voices and views of older people to be heard and influence service planning and delivery. Blackburn with Darwen has a growing older population with reduced healthy life expectancy and an increase in people living with long term physical and mental health issues. Delays in the provision of health and care and pressures on public sector services more broadly are also impacting significantly on the lives of local older people, along with the ongoing cost of living crisis. In response we continue to spend a significant amount of time influencing policy and service planning, commissioning and delivery. We aim to ensure the needs of older people are taken into account, and support good practice development. We participate in a range of Boards, networks and groups on a wide range of local issues. Key areas of focus this year have included frailty and falls prevention, dementia, mental health and wellbeing, digital inclusion and working with the local authority to ensure older people access all the benefits and entitlements available. We have also led discussions on improving ways to support older people to age better and be more active in later life. We play an active role within the local voluntary sector, with the Chief Executive taking on the role of Chair of the Community Network board during the year, and also providing representation on the Health and Wellbeing Board, and the Place Partnership Board.

Age Well Partnership

We have continued to coordinate the Age Well partnership for the borough which is the strategic body made up of representatives from the main commissioning and provider organisations in the borough and which is responsible for the oversight, development and implementation of the Age Well priority within the Blackburn with Darwen Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The partnership has delivered on some key pieces of work during the year including the development of the Blackburn with Darwen dementia action plan and falls prevention action plan.

The partnership has also supported the development of the local frailty management framework, the Blackburn with Darwen digital strategy, and a new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment chapter on falls, along with oversight on services such as bowel screening and substance misuse services.

We have also continued to support the local authority in promoting and embedding the Positive Ageing Framework and the Age Friendly Employer pledge and this remains an ongoing focus.

Campaigning

During the year we worked with our national Age UK partners to raise awareness of the impact of a number of key issues including the change to eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments and digital exclusion driven by the move to 'digital by default' delivery.



Age UK Structures

During the year we have actively contributed to development of a new Shared Strategy for the Age UK network, and in November 2024 signed the new Network agreement which underpins the relationship between all local Age UK partners and national Age UK. The new Shared Strategy and agreement provide strengthened opportunities to collaborate across the network working towards our common aim to improve the lives of older people. The Chief Executive has also chaired the national Services for Older People Committee working with Age UK on services development. We work closely with our colleagues at Age UK Lancashire including through our jointly owned community interest company, Age UK Greater Lancashire.

Quality Management & Generating Funds

In order to achieve our priorities, we need to ensure the organisation is organisationally and financially sound and that it meets the requirements for being an Age UK network partner and other relevant quality standards.

Quality , Sustainability and Diversity & Inclusion

We recognise the importance of supporting and developing our workforce, both paid and unpaid, through training, coaching and skill sharing, and we have continued to prioritise this during the year with an ongoing focus on supporting staff to respond to the mental health challenges presenting through our services, including adopting a trauma-informed approach to support. We have also continued to enhance our workforce wellbeing offer for staff and volunteers. We have retained all the quality standards we hold including the Age UK Charity Quality Standard and the ISO9001 external quality mark. We continue to develop and deliver our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action plan with a sustained focus on ensuring our services are accessible and appropriate for older people from all communities, including targeted marketing, improved access to provision in a range of languages and additional training for example on deaf awareness. This year we have also had a particular focus on delivery of the implementation plan to support our Environmental and Sustainability Policy, with key priorities being increasing recycling and reducing waste.

Social Value

We continue to develop and evidence our social value impact and key activities to support this delivered during the year include hosting a range of placements, offering volunteering and work experience opportunities for young people, sponsorship of the local Pride and Community Volunteer Awards along with recycling and waste reduction, including through our shop which resulted in 12,400kg being saved from landfill.

Generating Funds

As an independent charity Age UK Blackburn with Darwen must raise funds from a variety of sources in order to sustain our services and essential core functions and meet increasing and changing demand. This year has again been a challenging and uncertain period with increased operating costs along with challenged income levels from public sector contracts, increased competition for grant funding and fundraising impacted by the cost-of-living challenges people and businesses are facing. Throughout the year we retained our core commissioned contracts for the health and wellbeing and community day care services and have been able to secure grant income to support our advice provision and other service development programmes. However, we continue to need to increase the amount of unrestricted funds we can raise to support our unfunded work, including campaigning and influencing activities; volunteering support; and our core business support and management functions.

Charity Shop

High street trading continues to be challenging, and our shop, in Darwen, has not been immune to this. Rising operating costs for fuel, waste disposal and service supplies along with more stringent regulations with regard to waste have impacted the contribution that the shop has made to the charity again this year, however it has still made a vital contribution to the core costs of the charity which otherwise would have to be secured from other sources.

We are grateful to all of our donors and especially to those who are able to gift aid their donations. Through increasing the number of donors as well as changing the way that we process our stock we have increased the percentage of sales, and therefore income, from gift aided donations this year which has helped the shop to continue to be an important source of income for the charity.

The shop could not operate without the support of our fabulous volunteers, many of whom have volunteered with us for many years and we are also pleased to have recruited some new volunteers during the year. The shop has also hosted students on work experience and a team of corporate volunteers from Praetura Lending in November 2024.

We remain committed to Darwen and are proud members of the #shopDarwen scheme taking part in the Christmas and Summer trails and maximising opportunities through the local Darwen events.



Our plans for 2025/6 are to increase income both from shop and online sales, maintain and continue to improve our gift aid sales percentages and to continue to actively look for an additional shop premise.

Fundraising

Income generation from a diverse range of sources continues to be a key priority for the organisation and we are grateful to all those who support us with donations and support in kind as this is essential unrestricted income for the charity. During the year we refreshed our donations and legacies materials and it is pleasing to note that both income and number of donors have increased year on year. We were fortunate to receive legacies from four people this year who had taken the time to remember us in their Will, recognising the support provided to them. This income makes a huge difference in helping to support our unfunded costs. We are thankful for those people and their families who chose to ask for donations in memory to support our local work.

Support from businesses and organisations has been vital to us this year, with Blackburn Mall allowing us to offer a Christmas wrapping service each year and Blackburn Road Runners once again supporting us with the very well received Christmas hampers for service users.

The national Age UK partnership with Dunelm has allowed us to work successfully with our local Blackburn store helping us to reach more older people and to take part in their Delivering Joy initiative at Christmas.

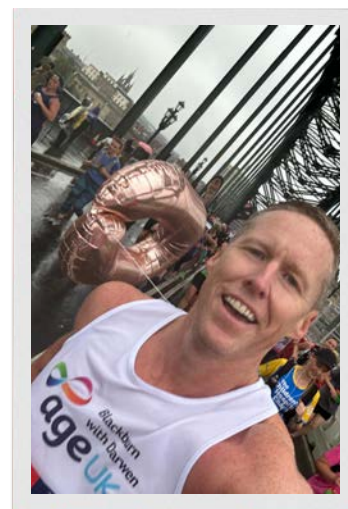
Support comes in many forms, with local people supporting us through the Big Knit, hosting a collection box in their premises, participating in sponsored events such as the Great North Run, donating items that we can raffle or holding a fundraising event for us. We were also nominated by Ribble & Lune 41 Club to receive a donation from the proceeds of the annual charity bonfire held in Witton park Blackburn in November and are pleased to continue to build this relationship, with them also recently donating some planters for the community day care service.

Working with schools is important to us as part of our intergenerational work. We were pleased to receive support for our 'Wear it Woolly' dress down day from two schools this year and to also receive some lovely 'Brew in a Bag' presents from year 3 Willow Class at St Silas primary school to give out to those older people who may be struggling a little. We are also grateful for the ongoing support of the Public Health students at Blackburn College helping us with store collections.

We were delighted to be chosen as the Charity of the Year, along with Age UK Cheshire, by Praetura Lending following their volunteering sessions with us in the run up to Christmas 2024. This positive partnership which started in January 2025 has already raised important funds and helped increase awareness of both our services and need for support. We were also pleased to be chosen as joint Charity of the Year by Pleasington Golf Club for the calendar year and members have already organised a number of initiatives to raise funds.

We have been actively participating in a number of collaborations with organisations across the Age UK network to maximise fundraising opportunities, an example being the Christmas Omaze raffle, with the resulting funds supporting our social inclusion work in 2025/26.

Our plans for 2025/26 are to continue to implement new models of community fundraising, increase promotion on the difference that donations and legacies make and maximise income from our corporate partnerships.



Financial Review

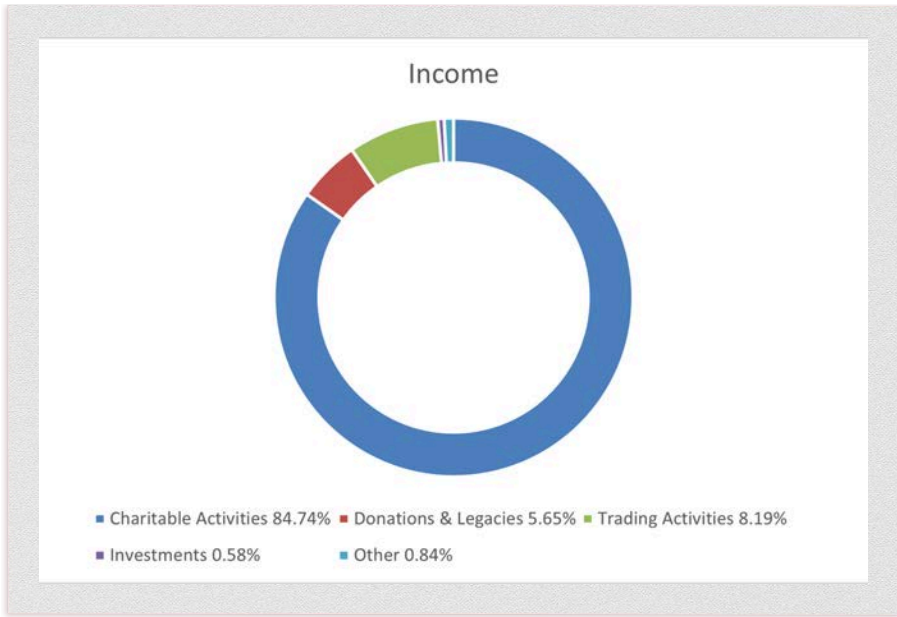
In the year to 31st March 2025 the charity reported a deficit of £49,837 from an income of £1,058,886. This was made up of a surplus of £14,656 on restricted funds (funds which are to be used for specified purposes as laid down by the donor/funder) and a deficit of £64,493 on unrestricted funds (income received or generated and available for general use)

81% of the organisation’s annual income came from grants and service contracts from a variety of sources with the remaining income raised through donations, fundraising, the charity shop and service charges along with investment interest.

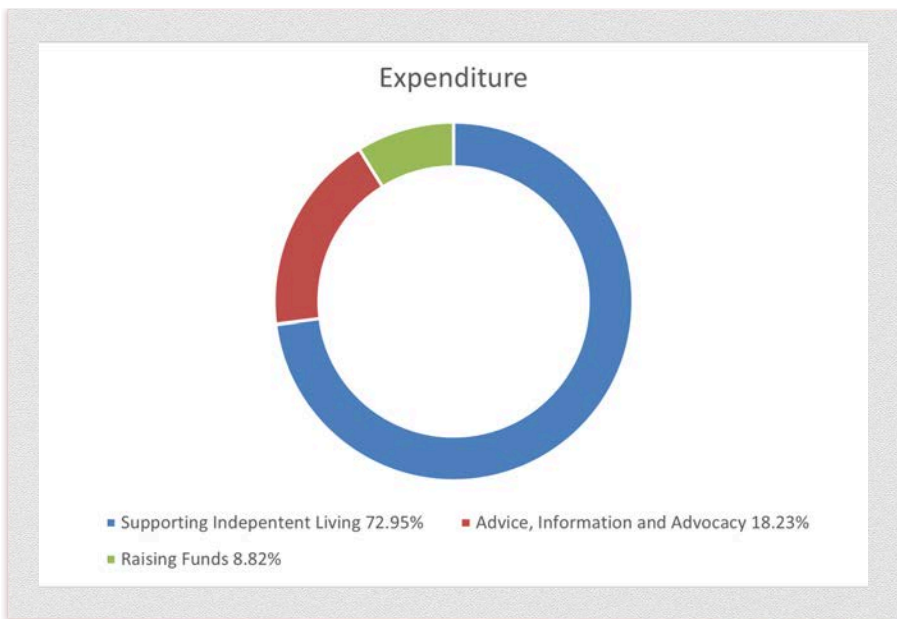
The organisation is operating in increasingly financially challenging times. We started the financial year with a significant deficit budget due to pressure and uncertainty around most income streams, particularly to support our essential core running costs, along with some increases in operating costs. We have continued to have a focus on careful cost control wherever possible without compromising the quality of our services, along with generating increased levels of income from a range of grant sources, donations and fundraising, however all of these sources are under pressure due to the ongoing cost- of-living challenges and increased competition for funds. The combination of these factors has resulted in the deficit on unrestricted funds at year end which have been used to support essential core running costs.

Total reserves at 31st March 2025 amounted to £521,503 including restricted and designated funds. The level of unrestricted, undesignated reserves held at 31st March 2025 is in line with the organisation’s reserves policy that the greater of either six months unrestricted running costs or three months running costs plus the cost of all liabilities will be maintained as reserves.

Where our income came from: Total £1,058,886



How we spent our income: Expenditure £1,108,723



Thank you

We would like to thank all the organisations and individuals who have provided financial or in-kind support over the last year, including all those who donated items to our charity shop and those who donated through our collecting boxes and buckets or who gave anonymously. Your support makes a big difference to what we are able to do for local older people. Thank you.

Companies, organisations & community groups

Acer Lodge	Cherry Tree Library	Praetura Lending
Age UK Bolton	CMAC Group	Regal Foods PLC
Ahmaddiyah Muslim Women's Association	Darwen FC	Residents of Lingfield Court
Albion Mill	Darwen Health Centre	Ribble and Lune 41 Club
All You Knead	Darwen Leisure Centre	Rock Inn
Asda Blackburn	Darwen Market	Rocket's Car Repairs
Barbara Castle Way Health Centre	Darwen Tennis Club	Rotary Club of Blackburn
Blackburn Bid	Dunelm Blackburn	Rotary Club of Darwen
Blackburn Library	Hawkshaw Suite	Rummage Rescuers
Blackburn Cathedral Knit and Natter Group	Heron Foods	St Cuthbert's CE Primary School
Blackburn Charity Bonfire	HLR Construction Law Services	St James Church
Blackburn College	Jubilee Tower Credit Union	St Oswald's Mothers Union
Blackburn Northern Tennis Club	Kingsfold Pharmacy	Ten Pin Blackburn
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	KTZ Dance	Tesco Blackburn
Blackburn with Darwen Integrated Neighbourhood Teams	Lancashire Constabulary	The Mall Blackburn
Blackburn Market	Lesley's News	The Observatory
Blackburn Road Runners	Mayers Fishmongers	The Sound Lounge
Brekkies and Brews	Mellor St Mary CE Primary School	Traders Arms
Bright Street Methodist Church	Middleforth Pharmacy	Valetech Solutions Ltd
	Nurses League	Willow Tree
	Open Door Café	Uniting Communities
	Pieper's Fabrics	Organisation UCO
	PM & M Ltd	

Funders

Age UK	Lancs and South Cumbria ICB VCSFE CMHT grant scheme
Age UK Walking Tennis programme	Lancs and South Cumbria ICB VCSFE Falls Prevention Grant
Age UK Warm Homes programme Eon and British Gas	Lancashire Mind
Age UK Winter campaign	Masonic Charitable Foundation
Age UK UEC Insight project	National Lottery Community Fund Awards for All
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities
Brian Mercer Charitable Trust	Regeneration and Inclusion North
Delphi Medical Consultants Limited	Sky Cares Community Fund
Department of Transport	
Eric Wright Charitable Trust	
Henry Smith Charity	

Individuals

I Addison	I & Y Colquhoun	J Harrison	A Patel	G Waring
D Ainsworth	D Cooper	R & A Hartley	Y Patel	F Watson
M Ashraf	M Cooper	J Haworth	C Porter	B & V
S Ashton-Morris	P Counter	J Hewitt	K Rawcliffe	Weatherburn
B Astley	C Crompton	M Holden	M Riley	L White
A Barnes	T Curran	P Holgate	S Roberts	C Whitehead
J Barnes	H Daley	B Houghton	J Robinson	E Wiggins
J Baron	J Davies	L Houghton	M Rushton	J Wild
D Barrow	A Dears	E Howarth	K Ryan	I Wilkinson
T Barrow	M Denton	G Hughes	G Sears	T Wilson
R Battersby	A Dixon	J Hulme	A & N Shaikh	E Wood
B & D Benson	A Eames	D Hunt	B Skelton	M Wood
C Berry	T Eames	S Hunt	R Slavin	J Worswick
M Bolton	D Edwards	E Jarrett	V Smart	P Wright
A Bowers	R Entwistle	J & J Kemp	I Snape	P Young
M Bradshaw	A & I Espley	G & J Langlands	M Stevenson	
C Briggs	R Farnhill	N Linaker	F Szandurski	
L Brindle	JA Fay	L & R Loft	H Talbot	
P Broadley	A Fenton	S Longworth	S Taylor	
S Broughton	J Few	C Lowe	A Tennant	
I Brown	M Finnigan	F Marriott MBE	A Thompson	
A Bury	C Fishwick	R Moorby	C Thompson	
M Butchart	J Floyd	R Morgan	M Timms	
M Charnley	R Fox	J Morrin	M Turner	
M Chimejczuk	J Graham	J Morris	M Turner	
L Clark	S Gregson	M Muradam	P Turner	
T Clark	W Hailstone	M & T Noone	P Walker	
J Cobb	P Hall	R O’Kane	F Walmsley	
L Cocker	T Hannon	S Parkinson	F Walsh	

Donations in Memory

Grace Duckworth
Walter Gillibrand
Thomas Knowles
Graham Law
Margaret Trengrove
Terrence and Kathleen Turner

Legacies

Kenneth Cutting
Audrey May Dawson
John Lever
Marian Pilkington



About Us

Age UK Blackburn with Darwen is an independent registered charity (number 1143809) and a charitable company that exists to support local older people. As an incorporated body Age UK Blackburn with Darwen is governed by Articles of Association. Within these the object of the organisation is to promote the wellbeing of older people in any

manner which now or hereafter may be deemed charitable by law, in and around the Borough of Blackburn with Darwen. Our services and activities are available to older people in Blackburn with Darwen and our charitable services are provided either free of charge or charged by us at a reasonable cost, based on the cost of delivery.

The charity owns a subsidiary company Age UK Blackburn with Darwen Trading Ltd (registered company number 2965744) which was dormant during the year. The charity also owns a 50% shareholding of Age UK Greater Lancashire CIC (registered company number 10086085).

This Annual Review and Impact Report should be read in conjunction with the full Trustees Report and Financial Statements to provide a complete picture of the organisation's financial activity and governance.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall governance, management and control of the organisation, working with the Chief Executive and senior staff management team on strategic and organisational development. Decisions about day-to-day operation are taken by the Chief

Executive and senior management team; and decisions on matters with significant implications are brought to the board of trustees. The trustees have overall responsibility for ensuring that the charity has appropriate systems of internal controls in place across the organisation and for risk

management. The trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on Public Benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities, which is an annual process.

Officers and Trustees of Age UK Blackburn with Darwen 2024/25

Chairman

Anthony Hedley

Vice Chairman

Faith Marriott MBE (resigned 13th November 2024)

Honorary Financial Advisor

Vacant

Trustees

Sophie Bell-Gray
Fran Breckell
Helen Daley
Yvonne Hulse
Faizal Patel
Christopher Porter

Chief Executive

Vicky Shepherd

Registered Office

4 King Street, Blackburn, BB2 2DH

Auditors

Rotherham Taylor, 21 Navigation
Business Village, Navigation Way,
Ashton upon Ribble, Preston, PR2 2YP

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Registered Offices 4 King Street, Blackburn BB2 2DH