

Annual Impact Report



2024 25



Forward from our Chief Executive

2024–25 has been a year of progress, partnership and pride for Age UK Bolton, and my first with the organisation! Across our borough, we've supported thousands of older people to live well, stay connected and feel valued — often at the times they needed it most.

From helping someone return home safely after a hospital stay, to unlocking vital financial support, or simply offering a friendly voice when loneliness feels overwhelming — our work is rooted in compassion and community. These pages capture that impact in numbers and in stories, but behind every achievement is something much more powerful: the people who make it happen.

I could not be prouder of the Age UK Bolton team — our staff, volunteers and trustees — whose professionalism, care and dedication shine through every single day. They are the heartbeat of this organisation. Whether on hospital wards, in community centres, or out in neighbourhoods across Bolton, they embody what it means to serve with purpose and humanity.

This report is deliberately littered with partners, and we make no apology for that. Collaboration is at the heart of who we are and how we work. A key outcome — as evidenced throughout the case studies — is connection, and we can't create that by working in isolation. Locally, regionally and nationally, Age UK Bolton prides itself on the partnerships it forges and the systems it helps to shape. Collaboration is key, and we thank every one of our partners for leaning into the opportunities, the work and the challenges alongside us.

The year has also been one of renewal and shared confidence. Together with our partners across health, local government, business and the voluntary sector, we are proving that Bolton's strength lies in its collective spirit. We are building a borough where older people are not defined by age or circumstance, but supported to live with dignity, independence and hope.

As you read this report, I hope you will feel inspired by what we've achieved together — and reminded that our work depends on the continued kindness and collaboration of others. Whether you've given your time, your expertise or your support, you are part of this story too.

Thank you for standing with us, for believing in what we do, and for helping us make Bolton a place where everyone can age well.



Lauren McKechnie
Chief Executive, Age UK Bolton

Please note, all the case studies in this report are factual, but have been anonymised to protect the individuals' identities.



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In 2024-25 we supported
13,796 older people.

£1,642,862.85 secured in benefits and entitlements

12,982 Strength and Balance class attendances

3,767 Home From Hospital clients

3,600 attendances in the Little Lever Ageing in Place Pathfinder project

5,084 hours of befriending

135 social prescribing referrals to Age UK Bolton

28,356 volunteer hours

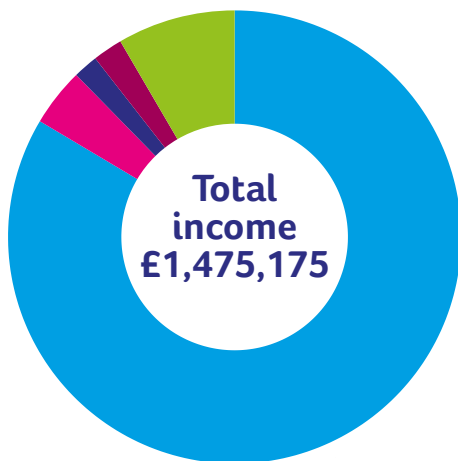
3,977 Facebook interactions

Our Trustees

Our Board of Trustees provides the strategic leadership, guidance and governance that underpin everything we do. Each brings their own experience, insight and dedication to ensuring Age UK Bolton continues to serve older people with integrity, compassion and impact. Thank you to our trustees:

John Cooper – Chair
Rupert Cecil – Honorary Treasurer
Margaret Rothwell
Darren Clare
Dr. Arun Kallat
Cllr. Andy Morgan
Stephen Smart
Emma Wood

Our 2024-25 Finances



Our total income for 2024-25 was £1,475,175. This came from the following:

- Grants and similar income.....£1,044,522
- Dividends.....£51,839
- Donations and legacies.....£22,151
- Ageing Well Centre.....£25,655
- Other incomes.....£105,220

In total, we spent £1,407,067 in 2024-25. This was spent across the following areas:

- Funded services.....£991,090
- Ageing Well Centre.....£167,324
- Other services.....£248,653

Communications and Engagement

Amplifying our Voice and Visibility

This year marked a turning point for Communications and Engagement at Age UK Bolton.

Under refreshed leadership, our internal and external communications were re-imagined to breathe new life into the Age UK Bolton brand and reaffirm our position as a dynamic, trusted, and highly regarded local charity within the national Age UK network.

A major focus was revitalising our social media presence through consistent posting, creative video content, and a platform-specific approach. In the final two quarters alone, we gained almost 300 new followers across Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Over a third of these came from LinkedIn, which has evolved into a key space for building local partnerships and sector visibility.

One post showcasing our collaboration with Bolton Wanderers in the Community achieved 88 reactions, demonstrating the reach and resonance of partnership storytelling.

Internally, a new bi-weekly staff newsletter has become an essential touchpoint for our 50 employees working across two sites and multiple community locations. It keeps colleagues connected through organisational news, system updates and good-news stories, reinforcing our sense of shared purpose.

Attention to detail also featured strongly: a new, unified email signature was introduced to strengthen consistency and professionalism across all external communications.

At the start of Q2, a new Public Relations and Media Plan was developed to strengthen our profile both locally and within the wider charity sector. In February, national coverage followed when Age UK Bolton was gifted 200 shares by local publishing company LetzCre8, featured by Civil Society magazine. This led to a further opportunity to contribute a thought leadership article on share gifting to Charity Finance magazine; a milestone moment for our growing sector voice.

Through these combined efforts, Age UK Bolton's communications have evolved from information-sharing to influence-building – increasing visibility, deepening partnerships, and strengthening our identity as a modern, forward-thinking charity rooted in the heart of Bolton.

3977 interactions
on Facebook



12 staff
newsletters



Information and Advice

£1,642,862.85

secured through benefits and entitlements



1203

new clients



4234

contacts made



Empowering Older People to live with **Dignity** and Security

Age UK Bolton's Information and Advice service remains a vital lifeline for older people across the borough — helping residents navigate complex systems, access their rightful entitlements, and regain financial stability.

Over the past year, the team has secured an incredible £1,642,862.85 in financial gains for older people through benefits checks, Attendance Allowance, Pension Credit, and other entitlements — ensuring that hundreds of Bolton residents receive what they are entitled to and can live with greater peace of mind.

Demand for the service has grown significantly, fuelled by changes to Winter Fuel Payments, increasing awareness of Pension Credit, and ongoing cost-of-living pressures. In response, the I&A team led from the front — taking a coordinating role in Bolton's Pension Credit Take-Up Campaign, working in close partnership with Bolton Council, Public Health, the GMCA, and local advice agencies. Together, we delivered joint communications to residents, hosted drop-in sessions at community hubs including Bolton UCAN Centres and Bolton Central Library, and met weekly to ensure no resident was left behind.

To keep pace with demand, the service underwent a mid-year redesign so that all new referrals could be seen within two weeks — effectively eliminating waiting lists and improving both efficiency and access.

Collaboration has remained at the heart of the I&A approach. The team worked with the Bolton Law Society to launch a free legal advice clinic, and co-led the revival of the Bolton Advice Services Forum alongside Citizens Advice (CAB) Bury & Bolton strengthening shared learning and system-wide coordination.

Behind these achievements are thousands of individual stories of older people whose lives have been eased, stability restored, and futures secured. Through expert guidance, compassionate support, and partnership working, Age UK Bolton's Information & Advice service continues to empower older residents to live independently, confidently, and with dignity.

Walter's Story

Unlocking Financial Support

Walter, a Housing Association tenant living alone and managing ongoing respiratory issues, believed he wasn't entitled to any further help. His reduced State Pension and two small private pensions made it appear that he didn't qualify for Pension Credit — a common misconception among older people whose modest savings can work against them.

During a benefits review with Age UK Bolton, our team identified that Walter might be eligible for Attendance Allowance, which could change his financial circumstances. We referred him to our partner organisation, Bolton Community Advice, who successfully secured the high rate of Attendance Allowance on his behalf.

With this in place, we completed a detailed benefits check which confirmed that Walter was also entitled to Pension Credit guarantee credit and savings credit, providing him with an additional £48.88 per week. This entitlement unlocked further financial support — including full help with his eligible rent and Council Tax — together totalling **£9,759.36 each year**.

This intervention transformed Walter's financial situation, easing the pressure of day-to-day living costs and ensuring he could afford the care and comfort he needs to manage his health and wellbeing.

“Without your help, I wouldn't have known where to turn.”

Walter, Information and Advice client



Home From Hospital

A Bridge Back to Independence

For many of Bolton's most vulnerable residents, leaving hospital can be daunting. Age UK Bolton's Home from Hospital service provides a vital bridge between hospital discharge and life at home — helping people regain confidence, rebuild independence, and reduce the risk of readmission.

Over the past year, the service has supported 1,954 people through Discharge & Aftercare and 1,813 through Admissions Avoidance, achieving an outstanding 1.34% 30-day readmission rate — significantly below the Bolton average of 8.4%.

The complexity of cases continues to grow, with many clients experiencing challenges such as poor mental health, addiction, and cognitive decline. Yet through compassion, persistence, and teamwork, our coordinators have consistently risen to meet these needs.

Maintaining a seven-day presence on hospital wards, the team deliver rapid, person-centred interventions — from comprehensive needs assessments to practical and emotional support that helps people safely settle back at home.

Small but meaningful improvements have strengthened our visibility this year: branded T-shirts and jackets now ensure staff are easily identifiable across hospital and community settings, making it simpler for patients and families to approach them for help.

Even under pressure, the team's resilience has never faltered. In Quarter 4 alone, they supported 443 Discharge & Aftercare and 341 Admissions Avoidance clients — navigating ward closures and operational pressures without compromising care.

Behind the numbers lies an unwavering commitment to humanity. Peer supervision sessions introduced this year have provided space for reflection, helping staff manage the emotional intensity of their work and prioritise their own wellbeing — because compassionate care starts with a supported team.

Through dedication, partnership, and empathy, the Home from Hospital team continue to ensure that every discharge isn't just safe — it's a genuine step towards recovery and independence.

1.34% 30-day re-admission rate (Bolton avg. 8.4%)



1954 clients supported through Discharge & Aftercare



1813 clients supported through Admissions Avoidance





“ I was broken, and she [my Home From Hospital Co-ordinator] mended me. ”

Evelyn, 91, Home From Hospital client

Evelyn's Story

Restoring Independence and Confidence

At 91, Evelyn had always been fiercely independent. Living alone in her first-floor flat rented from Bolton at Home, she managed remarkably well despite poor eyesight and hearing. But after a sudden fall and a stay in hospital, everything changed.

She lost her confidence and found it difficult to cope with day-to-day tasks. With no close family for support, even managing her bills became overwhelming — her savings account wouldn't allow direct debits, and she'd misplaced her card, leaving her anxious about falling into arrears.

That's when Age UK Bolton stepped in.

Within just a few weeks, Evelyn began to regain control and independence. Our team helped her open a new current account, set up direct debits for her bills, replace her lost card, and arrange free delivery of her medication. Soon she was shopping independently again with her contactless card, safely managing her bills, and taking pride in handling her finances once more.

The support extended beyond the practical. We liaised with utility companies, helped her complete housing benefit applications, and accompanied her to appointments at the bank and our Information & Advice service. To help reduce isolation, we referred her to a befriending service and to Housing Options for Older People (HOOP) to explore future accommodation options. An occupational therapist also assessed her home to ensure it remained a safe and supportive environment.

Evelyn's story shows the power of person-centred support — addressing emotional, financial, and practical needs together to restore confidence and security.

When older residents leave hospital, they often face uncertainty and isolation. Through our Home from Hospital service, Age UK Bolton is there to guide them — offering practical help, emotional reassurance, and a bridge back to independence.

Strength and Balance

Keeping Bolton Moving, Connected and Confident



2189

individuals attending sessions



1049

instructor-led sessions delivered



12,982

total attendances at sessions



This year, Age UK Bolton's Strength & Balance programme reached more people than ever before — helping older adults across the borough stay strong, steady on their feet, and socially connected.

In the spring, we hosted our first 'Train the Trainer' event at the Ageing Well Centre, bringing together care home staff to share learning and overcome common challenges in keeping residents active. Discussions explored everything from motivating participation and managing distractions to adapting exercises for a range of health conditions and building staff confidence to deliver safe, engaging sessions.

Since then, Train the Trainer has evolved into a quarterly Peer Networking and Support event, co-hosted with Bolton Wanderers in the Community at their Community Hub. The sessions have created a growing network of confident, motivated practitioners embedding movement into everyday care.

Throughout the year, the Strength & Balance Team refined their referral process to ensure that every participant receives the right support. Each person is individually triaged, ensuring they join the most suitable class — and if our falls prevention offer isn't the right fit, they are signposted to other Ageing Well activities such as Tai Chi or Gentle Dance.

During the year, groundwork was also laid for the first 12-week Postural Stability Instructor (PSI) programme — "Get Strong, Get Steady". Designed for people most at risk of falling, the model is person-centred from day one, combining structured group exercise with tailored one-to-one support. This development reflects Age UK Bolton's ongoing commitment to innovation and excellence in falls prevention.

Partnership working has been central to this success. We deepened collaborations with Bolton Hospice and the Bolton Fibrosis Support Group, running specialist exercise sessions for people living with pulmonary fibrosis and COPD. In local care homes, new relationships with The Withins, Southlands, and Millview have started to embed a genuine culture of movement for some of Bolton's most vulnerable residents.

There have been challenges along the way, but the enthusiasm and engagement from residents and staff have been remarkable. Through collaboration, creativity, and compassion, our Strength & Balance programme continues to prove that movement is more than exercise — it's confidence, connection, and quality of life.



“ I really don’t know what I would do without Age UK Bolton’s classes. I know I would have deteriorated even further if I hadn’t attended these sessions.”

Pat, 65, Strength and Balance client

Pat’s Story

Regaining Strength, Balance and Confidence

At 65, Pat had always lived an active life. But when she began experiencing balance problems two years ago, her confidence started to fade. Although she hadn’t fallen, the fear of falling took hold — limiting her independence and leaving her feeling anxious and isolated.

Her GP referred her to the local Balance and Activity Clinic, but with a waiting list of 48 weeks, Pat needed support sooner. In November 2023, she turned to Age UK Bolton’s Strength and Balance Service.

Pat began attending weekly sessions designed to improve strength, balance and mobility. The classes didn’t just help physically — they offered companionship, encouragement and a renewed sense of belonging. She later joined a Backward Chaining class at Nuffield Health, learning practical techniques to safely get up from the floor if she ever did fall.

When her NHS clinic appointment was cancelled in June 2024, Pat was relieved to know she could continue progressing with Age UK Bolton. With each session, her confidence grew. Today, she feels stronger, more independent and far better prepared for the future.

Key outcomes included:

- Improved physical strength and confidence
- Reduced social isolation
- Ongoing falls prevention training and support

Pat’s story shows how early intervention and community-based support can prevent decline, reduce pressure on health services and, most importantly, restore confidence and independence.

Ageing Well

Connection, Creativity and Community

This year, Age UK Bolton's Ageing Well service continued to bring people together across the borough — offering friendship, food, creativity and care at a time when many older adults face isolation, rising costs and health challenges.

Volunteer-led lunch groups saw their **highest attendance since 2020**, a testament to their enduring value. Members at Hulton Lane described the groups perfectly: “good food, good value, and even better company.”

Our **Befriending Service** has continued to change lives in quiet but powerful ways. For some, a weekly visit is the highlight of their week — a chance to chat, share memories, and feel truly seen. When one volunteer, Billy, began visiting Ken twice a week, what started as a match soon became a genuine friendship. Another volunteer, Geraldine, still visits her befriender even after his move into residential care — proof that these relationships last far beyond circumstance.

The Ageing Well Centre has flourished into a vibrant hub for learning, laughter and wellbeing. In **Quarter 4 alone**, we hosted **70 weekly activities** — from Zumba Gold and Pat-a-Cake cookery to craft sessions, book clubs and lively tea dances. Special highlights included an intergenerational **Friendship Café**, showcasing a local artist's handmade models and performances by local schoolchildren — moments that filled the Centre with warmth and joy.

A major milestone this year was securing £20,000 from the **Omaze 'No Home for Loneliness' Fund**, enabling recruitment of a **third Ageing Well Coordinator**. This role will expand our community offer and strengthen befriending matches, ensuring more older people have the companionship and connection they deserve.

Through friendship, creativity and shared experience, Age UK Bolton's Ageing Well service continues to prove that growing older doesn't mean growing isolated — it means growing together.



5084 hours of befriending



6965 hot meals served





3600 attendances at activities in Little Lever



18 different activities delivered



Ageing in Place Pathfinder: Little Lever Belonging, Purpose and **Community** Pride

From supper clubs to choirs, the Ageing in Place Pathfinder in Little Lever has given residents countless opportunities to connect, share experiences and celebrate life in their village. Over the year, 18 activities attracted over 3,600 attendances, building community spirit and lasting friendships.

Our two project coordinators became familiar, trusted figures in the area — so much so that two outdoor art installations in Crompton Court were named in their honour, a lasting symbol of their impact.

The Pot Luck Club, launched this year, has become a valued bridge between residents of Lever Gardens and the wider Little Lever community. Meanwhile, the Village Voices Community Choir continues to grow in both size and reputation, bringing people together through the joy of song and shared purpose.

Listening to residents has inspired new and meaningful initiatives. The Little Lever Supper Club, for example, was created after conversations about loneliness among widowed residents. Now hosting over 15 participants per session, it provides a safe, welcoming space for shared meals, laughter and connection.

Residents are also shaping the future of their community through forums, partnership meetings and local strategy discussions, ensuring their voices guide what happens next. The introduction of Community Reporters has amplified these voices even further — sharing the spirit of Little Lever across Bolton and beyond.

As the Pathfinder enters its final year, it continues to reduce isolation, nurture friendships and strengthen community belonging — leaving a legacy of pride, participation and togetherness.

Village Voices Choir

Breaking Down Barriers Through Music and Friendship

In Little Lever, community spirit took centre stage at a community concert organised as part of the Ageing in Place Pathfinder.

The event brought together people of all ages and backgrounds for an afternoon filled with music, laughter, and connection. Age UK Bolton's Village Voices Choir performed alongside Happy Signs CIC, creating a truly inclusive celebration that bridged generations and abilities.

Among the performers were members of Bolton Cares, a group of younger older adults, who took to the stage with confidence — performing to an audience of over 100. Their energy and enthusiasm inspired everyone in the room and created a powerful sense of shared pride and belonging.

Many participants came with their families — some with several generations attending together — reinforcing the concert's central theme of togetherness. The event didn't just entertain; it strengthened bonds across the community and reminded everyone of the joy that comes from connection and inclusion.

This concert is a shining example of how projects like AiPP create ripple effects of positivity — breaking down barriers, nurturing intergenerational relationships, and building stronger, more connected communities across Bolton.

Poem by Muriel,
95, about 'You,
Me and a Cup of
Tea'; an AiPP
social club in
Little Lever

It's Club Day!
Sitting at home on my chair
I really didn't care
About getting out and about
It didn't make me want to shout
A different life I have, enclosed
Getting about in my night clothes
Friends always phone me
The problems I don't see
This is usually me
I wake up in the morning
When I've finished yawning
I'm going to get out
So 'Yes!' I'm going to shout
I'm going to the club
I'll be listening to the hub
I'll hear all the stories
And hear what they have to tell,
It's like someone has rung a bell
It's really very good
I was asked to join the club
It's like I know everyone
I look forward to the day
Hear what people say
As I walk through the door
They pull up a chair
So we can all share
The biscuits and tea
For us all to see
From the lovely people
Who have set us free
No more being alone
Sitting on my chair at home
So 'Thanks for today!'
I'm on my way.

Volunteering

The Heart of Age UK Bolton

Volunteers remain at the heart of everything we do. This year, **over 200 passionate individuals** gave their time, skills and care to support older people across Bolton, from running lunch clubs and doing regular befriending visits, to helping at our offices and community activities.

Behind the scenes, improvements to recruitment and onboarding have strengthened the **volunteer journey**, ensuring that everyone joining Age UK Bolton feels welcomed, supported and valued from day one.

Some of our volunteers have given their time for decades! At the beginning of the year, we proudly celebrated Ann, who reached an incredible **25 years of voluntary service** at the Wright Place lunch club in Harwood — a true example of the commitment and kindness that defines our organisation.

Volunteers were also recognised at our **Annual General Meeting 2023/24**, where the **Mayor and Mayoress of Bolton** presented long service awards to those with 5, 10, and 25 years of dedication. It was a moment to reflect on the extraordinary people who make Age UK Bolton what it is — a community built on care, compassion and connection.



200 active volunteers



28,356 hours of volunteering



Social Prescribing



426

total referrals to Rumworth PCN for Social Prescribing



135

referrals made to Age UK Bolton services



Connecting People, Place and Purpose

Delivered in partnership with the **Bolton GP Federation**, Age UK Bolton's **Social Prescribing** service has continued to support residents experiencing isolation, loneliness and long-term health conditions — helping people reconnect with their communities and improve their wellbeing.

Working closely with local partners, including the **Neighbourhood Lead** and the **Rumworth Community Alliance**, the team coordinated support and identified opportunities for community engagement — from local events to regular drop-ins at GP surgeries.

A highlight of the year was progress at the **Wild and Fruity Community Garden**, now a thriving local resource that brings people together through shared activity and purpose. After opening a dedicated bank account, the project successfully secured **£9,561 from the National Lottery's Awards for All** programme to fund improvements and future initiatives.

Volunteer days at the garden focused on preparing new areas — including a fire pit and greenhouse — with support from local businesses such as **Asda**, who donated paint and spring bulbs. A major clean-up day was also supported by **Bolton at Home**, who provided a skip to help revitalise the space.

Through these initiatives, Age UK Bolton's Social Prescribing service has strengthened community connections, enhanced local facilities, and provided residents with meaningful ways to engage, contribute and belong.

Harold's Story

Rebuilding Confidence and Mobility

After years of declining mobility, Harold found himself increasingly housebound. Living alone, he relied on furniture and a walking stick to move around his home and hadn't been able to leave the house independently for more than two years. A recent fall — which left him with a head injury, though thankfully not requiring hospitalisation — had shaken his confidence even further.

When his GP referred him to **Age UK Bolton's Social Prescribing Link Worker**, Harold explained that he spent most of his time in the kitchen, where the smaller space made moving around easier. Previous home adaptations, including a handrail on the stairs and a shower seat, had helped, but he still struggled with mobility and independence.

Recognising the difference that coordinated support could make, the Link Worker referred Harold to the **community therapy team** for physiotherapy and occupational therapy input. They also encouraged him to consider using a **rollator** to help him regain confidence and get back out into the community.

Six weeks later, a follow-up call revealed real progress. The therapy team had provided Harold with a wheeled walker, and he was now receiving regular physiotherapy sessions. Most importantly, his outlook had completely changed.

"They have been absolutely brilliant, and I am now more determined about getting out. I feel so much more confident. Thank you."

With a little encouragement and the right support, Harold has taken huge steps — both literally and emotionally — towards independence. His determination and renewed confidence are a powerful reminder of how early intervention can transform lives.

“I am now more determined about getting out. I feel so much more confident.”

Harold, client referred to Age UK Bolton's social prescribing link worker



Looking Forward and Thank You

As we look ahead to 2025–26, our focus remains clear: to build on strong foundations while continuing to evolve as a modern, values-led charity rooted in the heart of Bolton.

The year ahead will see the **establishment of the Age UK Greater Manchester Collective** — a powerful new platform that brings together local Age UKs across the city region. This collaborative network will amplify our collective voice of influence and advocacy for older people, ensuring that their experiences, challenges and aspirations are heard across Greater Manchester's systems and decision-making spaces.

At the same time, we will continue to invest in **our people and culture** — ensuring that Age UK Bolton remains a progressive, values-driven and person-centred employer. By nurturing our workforce, we strengthen the quality, compassion and professionalism that define our services.

Sustainability will also be a key focus. We will work closely with **existing and new partners** to secure long-term funding, protect essential services and ensure the charity's financial resilience for years to come.

None of this work would be possible without the unwavering commitment of our **staff, volunteers, trustees, partners and supporters**. Your compassion and belief in what we do continue to shape the lives of thousands of older people across Bolton — helping them feel valued, supported and connected.

Together, we are building a future where everyone, at every age, can live well and age well in Bolton.





Thank you to our corporate partners this year.
If you're interested in working with us, please get in touch.

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