



Bolton's Age
Friendly Strategy
2025-2028

Quarterly Impact Report
Q3 October - December 2025

A word from our CEO

As we reflect on Quarter 3, I am struck by both the scale of impact Age UK Bolton continues to deliver and the human stories that sit at the heart of our work.

Across the organisation, colleagues, volunteers and partners have supported older people through moments of vulnerability, transition and change — helping them to remain safe at home after hospital discharge, regain confidence through movement, access vital advice and entitlements, and feel more connected to their communities. The outcomes in this report speak for themselves: low admission and readmission rates, strong engagement across preventative services, and significant financial and wellbeing gains for older residents across Bolton.

What matters just as much, however, is how this work is delivered. Again this quarter, feedback from clients highlights the compassion, professionalism and relational approach that defines Age UK Bolton. Whether supporting someone to navigate complex systems, rebuild confidence after a fall, or rediscover routine following bereavement, our teams consistently put people first.

Quarter 3 has also seen us continue to strengthen our role as a trusted partner and system leader — convening, collaborating and contributing to place-based solutions that support both individuals and the wider health and care system.

As we look ahead to Quarter 4, our focus remains firmly on quality and continuous improvement. We will be preparing for our Charity Quality Standard audit, an important opportunity to reflect, learn and demonstrate the robustness of our governance, leadership and delivery. This comes at a time when demand continues to grow and the need for preventative, community-led support has never been clearer.

I am immensely proud of what has been achieved this quarter and grateful to everyone — staff, volunteers, partners and supporters — who make this work possible. Together, we remain committed to ensuring that older people in Bolton can age with dignity, confidence and choice.

With gratitude,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren McKechnie".

Lauren McKechnie
Chief Executive, Age UK Bolton

Voice and Influence

Age UK Bolton continues to play an active role in shaping local, regional and national conversations that influence how people age across Bolton and Greater Manchester.

As Co-Chair of Bolton's Age Well Partnership, alongside Be One Homes (formerly Bolton at Home), Age UK Bolton facilitated a luncheon for 25 older residents in the Mayor's Parlour to mark the International Day of Older Persons (1 October). Hosted by Bolton's first citizen, this was the second consecutive year the event has taken place and it is now confirmed as an annual fixture. Mayor Chadwick was presented with Bolton's new Age Friendly Strategy and publicly recognised the contribution of partners working to ensure Bolton is a place where everyone can age well.



In October, Age UK Bolton hosted Paul Farmer, CEO of Age UK, and colleagues from the Age UK Greater Manchester Collective. This face-to-face session provided an opportunity to reflect on the development of the Collective, strengthen alignment between local, regional and national priorities, and explore how we can work more intentionally to influence emerging systems, particularly Integrated Care Boards.

We attended the Bolton Wanderers Business Club, delivering a 60-second pitch to a room of local, regional and national businesses. As one of only three affiliated local charities, this remains a strategically valuable platform. The event supported volunteer recruitment for our Befriending Service and led to introductions with potential corporate partners in the finance and communications sectors, while reinforcing our partnership with Bolton Wanderers in the Community.

Alongside Garry Parker from Bolton Council, Age UK Bolton presented at a joint VCFSE and Bolton Council leadership session, which led to follow-on discussions and the early stages of brokering a new social value partnership.





Our Annual General Meeting, held at Bolton Central Library and Museum, was attended by nearly 100 trustees, volunteers, service users and partners. The event reflected a refreshed and modern approach to engagement, with positive feedback highlighting a strong sense of momentum and optimism for the organisation's future.

National profile was strengthened through a Good Morning Britain broadcast, where Art volunteer David spoke about his volunteering experience with Age UK Bolton and was unexpectedly presented live on air with the Covenant Volunteer Champion Award. This recognition celebrated David's contribution while further raising Age UK Bolton's profile across the Age UK network and beyond.

Finally, through their roles as Co-Chairs of the We Are Bolton Ambassador Board, our CEO Lauren McKechnie and Trustee Becci Martin hosted around 40 local business leaders and partners at a We Are Bolton Match Day at the Bolton Wanderers Stadium. The event provided a further opportunity to profile Age UK Bolton as a leading local charity, contributing to strategic conversations about supporting Bolton's people and place.

100
volunteers, partners
and service users at
our AGM

40
local business leaders
at the We Are Bolton
Match Day

Communications and Engagement

Overall Communications Activity

During Q3, Age UK Bolton continued to strengthen its communications reach and engagement across digital, internal and external channels, including:

- 137 new social media followers
- 6 staff newsletters
- 1 volunteer newsletter
- 2 community events and 1 partner event (AGM)
- 10 pieces of media coverage
- 2,595 active website users
 - Top pages: Activities and Events (976 views); Our Services (666 views)



61

new followers

481

interactions

16,667

total content views

189

page visits



43

new followers

1130

interactions

1130

total content views

3856

page visits



33

new followers

275

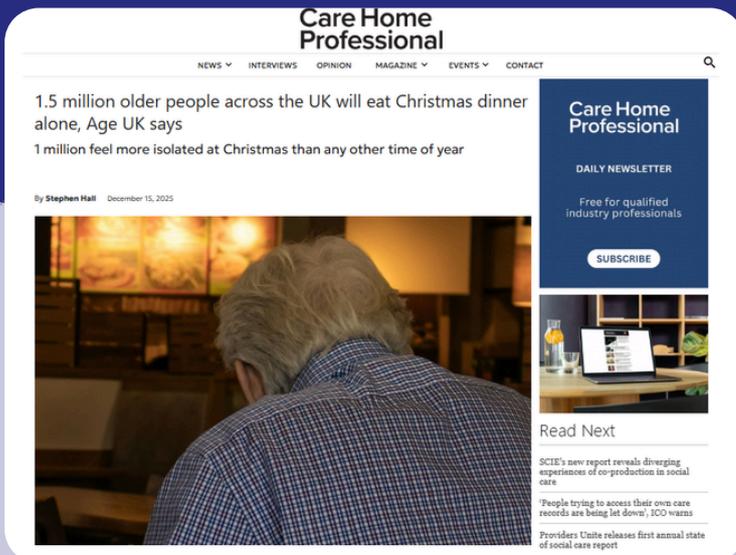
interactions

9104

total content views

57

page visits



Engagement and Reach

Our local and national presence continued to grow this quarter, supported by consistent social media activity, a refreshed and well-attended AGM, and strengthened relationships with both local partners and the national Age UK team.

While overall impressions and page visits saw a modest decrease, engagement reached its highest level this year, indicating stronger interaction and connection with our online audiences. **Instagram content interactions increased by 70%** compared to Q2, while **LinkedIn reactions rose by 60%**, reflecting improved resonance with both community and professional audiences.

In-person activity and PR played a key role in driving online engagement this quarter. Content linked to our AGM, the Good Morning Britain broadcast, and the visit from Paul Farmer, CEO of Age UK, generated increased visibility and interaction, demonstrating the value of aligning offline profile-building with digital communications.

137
new social media followers

10
pieces of local and sector media coverage

Information and Advice

Economic Challenges: Objectives 1 & 2

Social Implications: Objectives 1, 2 & 3

Quarter 3 Overview

Building on the strong outcomes achieved in Quarter 2, Age UK Bolton's Information and Advice service continued to provide trusted, person-centred support to older people facing complex financial, health and energy challenges.

Over the quarter, the service secured **£769,132.99 in benefits and awards** and **£30,419.67 in energy savings**, helping older residents to stabilise their finances, remain independent at home and regain confidence during periods of uncertainty. Alongside direct support, the service strengthened its wider influence through partnership working, helping ensure advice services across Bolton are better connected and responsive.

Supporting Older People at Scale

During Quarter 3, the service supported **354 new referrals**, delivering **373 one-to-one advice sessions** through home visits, telephone, office-based appointments and outreach.

Behind these figures are older people whose lives have been materially improved through timely, specialist support.

354

new referrals

185

successful claims

£30,419.67

energy savings secured

185

successful claims

Every £1 invested generates **£16.84** in financial benefit through welfare advice and **£4.70** in energy-related savings.

**£769,
132.99**

secured through
benefits checks,
Attendance Allowance,
Pension Credit and other
entitlements

Case Study: Restoring Stability, Independence and Peace of Mind

Mr and Mrs W, both in their mid-70s, contacted Age UK Bolton as Mr W's mobility and health had deteriorated significantly. A home visit revealed that both clients were living with **complex and limiting health conditions**, affecting their safety, independence and quality of life.

A full benefits check identified entitlement to **Attendance Allowance** for both, alongside underlying eligibility for **Carer's Allowance**. These awards passported the couple to **Pension Credit Guarantee Credit** of £192 per week, enabling maximum **Council Tax Support** and providing a further £12 per week.

Recognising the practical challenges they faced at home, the adviser also referred the couple to the **Independent Living Service**. They are now receiving a walk-in shower, stair lift and additional aids and adaptations, allowing them to remain safely and comfortably in their own home.

The couple later shared that contacting the service had **"completely changed their lives"**, describing it as the best decision they had ever made.

Additional case studies and client feedback are included in the appendix.

Volunteers at the Heart of Delivery

Volunteers remain central to the success of the Information and Advice service. In Quarter 3, **11 volunteers contributed 420 hours**, supporting service delivery, increasing capacity and ensuring older people receive timely, compassionate support

Strengthening Systems Through Partnership

Alongside direct client support, Quarter 3 saw continued leadership within Bolton's advice and energy ecosystem. Key developments included the launch of the **Bolton Energy Forum**, bringing together Citizens Advice Bolton & Bury, local advisers and industry representatives to improve coordination and shared learning.

The service also contributed to National Energy Action's '**Nation's Biggest Housewarming**', helping to spotlight fuel poverty locally, and continued engagement through **Bolton CVS** networking and the Monday **Advice Capacity Group** at Bolton Market. This reflects a consistent trajectory from Quarter 2, positioning Age UK Bolton as both a provider of advice and a trusted system convener.

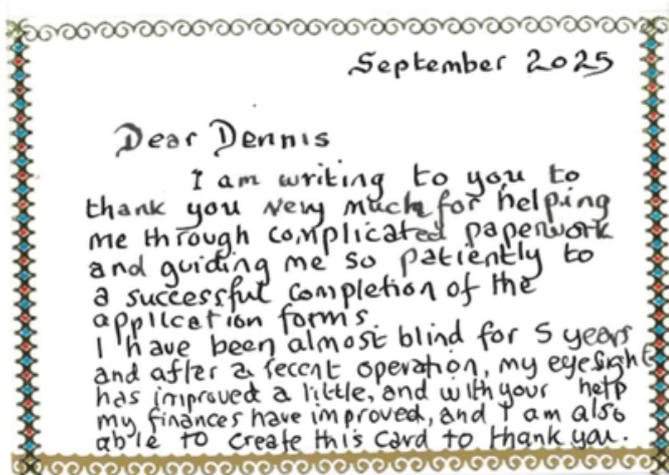
Looking ahead...

In the next quarter, priorities include:

- Expanding the Specialist Benefit Advice Take-Up Pilot into Little Lever
- Building the case for extending the pilot into 2026/27
- Preparing for the CQS audit and further strengthening quality and compliance
- Through this work, Age UK Bolton remains committed to ensuring older people across Bolton can access the right advice, at the right time, to live with greater security, confidence and peace of mind.

“Thank you so much for your help. **It's a weight lifted.**”

Aisling, 61, Energy Service User



Thank you letters from Information and Advice clients.

Dear age.UK. Jamie, Emily & David
Just a little card, filled with love, and many many thank, for all, you have. help. care, when I. needed most. Enclosing a cheque, as, a Big thank you for £100. May God Bless you all always, for being so wonderful.

x x God Bless x x
lots lots of love

Home from Hospital

Health and Wellbeing: Objectives 1, 2 & 3 **Social Implications:** Objectives 1, 2, 4 & 5
Economic Challenges: Objective 2

Age UK Bolton's Home from Hospital service continued to act as a critical safety net for older people during Quarter 3 — supporting safe hospital discharge, preventing avoidable admissions, and providing reassurance at times of vulnerability and transition.

Between October and December 2025, the service supported **1,163 older people**, delivering **5,744 support contacts** across both Discharge & Aftercare (D&A) and Admission Avoidance (AA) pathways. This equates to an average of **5.5 contacts per client**, reflecting the complexity of need and the relational nature of the support provided.

Once again, the service achieved **exceptionally low admission and readmission rates**, significantly outperforming borough benchmarks and continuing to relieve pressure on acute and community health services

Discharge & Aftercare:

608

clients accessed support

0.72%

30-day readmission rate
(vs Bolton average 8.4%)

Admissions Avoidance:

555

clients accessed support

0.72%

30-day readmission rate

0.00%

7-day readmission rate

Case Study: Rebuilding Confidence After Discharge

J, a 93-year-old retired teacher, was referred to the Home from Hospital service following discharge from Royal Bolton Hospital after pneumonia, dehydration and complications related to heart failure. Widowed and living alone, J had previously led an active and independent life, regularly driving, socialising and managing his own affairs.

Following his hospital stay, J experienced a significant loss of confidence. He made the difficult decision to surrender his driving licence, which in turn increased feelings of isolation and anxiety — particularly around food shopping, transport and rising energy costs as he spent more time at home.

Through **weekly Home from Hospital visits**, the service provided reassurance, emotional support and practical assistance, including help with food shopping and referrals to befriending services. J was also referred to Age UK Bolton's **Energy Advice Service** to ensure priority support with utilities, and received help to apply for a bus pass and register with **TFGM Ring and Ride**.

Recognising J's preference for familiar routines, the team also provided **digital support** to help him download and use the Ocado app, enabling continued access to his preferred M&S food deliveries.

As a result, J regained confidence, maintained independence, reduced isolation and remained safely at home — with a significantly reduced risk of readmission. This support not only eased his recovery, but also prevented escalation back into acute services.

This case highlights the importance of timely, relational and coordinated support following hospital discharge, particularly when loss of independence has a profound emotional impact.

Case Study: Preventing Crisis Before It Happens

The **Admission Avoidance pathway** continued to play a vital role in preventing escalation for older people at high risk of crisis.

One client, a 70-year-old woman living alone with recent complete sight loss, was referred following safeguarding concerns raised by neighbours. Through persistent, relationship-based support, the team helped stabilise her situation — supporting daily living, managing correspondence and medication, coordinating with Adult Social Care, and gradually building trust to enable engagement with formal services.

Although the client declined some interventions initially, the support provided significantly reduced safeguarding risk, prevented escalation and enabled her to remain safely at home, demonstrating the importance of proportionate, person-led intervention.

Client Voice

Feedback throughout the quarter consistently highlighted the value of the service's relational approach.

The personal touch and the upbeat feeling it created... I looked forward to her coming."

"Mum has really enjoyed her welfare visits each week... she's had a good laugh, which has perked her up every time."

Looking ahead...

For the remainder of 2025–26, priorities include:

- Strengthening referral pathways and partner collaboration within the **ITOCH model**
- Working with **Digital Den** to improve digital access and confidence for patients and carers
- Supporting timely **medication delivery at home** to prevent discharge delays

Through this work, Age UK Bolton will continue to ensure that older people can recover, rebuild and remain where they most want to be — safe, supported and well at home.

"The coordinator is a tonic on her visits"

Home From Hospital Service User

Strength and Balance

Health and Wellbeing: Objectives 1, 2 & 3 **Social Implications:** Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5

Age UK Bolton continues to deliver a diverse, preventative physical wellbeing offer, supporting older people to remain safe, confident and independent in their homes and communities.

During Quarter 3, our integrated approach to **strength and balance, falls prevention and nutrition and hydration** focused on reducing fall risk, improving mobility and strengthening early intervention across community and care settings. Together, these services delivered **2,574 attendances and engagements**, supporting older people to stay active, confident and connected.

Strength and Balance in the Community

Strength and Balance sessions continued to provide a safe, inclusive alternative to mainstream exercise, particularly for people living with multiple long-term conditions and at increased risk of falls. Participants reported improved strength, balance and confidence, reduced fear of falling, and greater ability to carry out daily activities safely. For many, the sessions also supported sustained engagement in physical activity where other options felt inaccessible.

Case Study: Regaining Confidence Through Movement

Ms P, aged 65, began attending Strength & Balance sessions in October 2025 after several falls and a growing loss of confidence. Living with heart disease, COPD and arthritis, she found mainstream exercise classes too demanding and needed a supportive environment where she could move at her own pace. Over time, Ms P noticed steady improvements. By early December, she reached a significant milestone: she felt confident getting up and down from the floor independently. This became clear while playing with her grandchild — a moment that marked a powerful shift from fear to confidence. Ms P described the sessions as giving her a renewed sense of achievement, enabling her to enjoy family life with reassurance and ease.



360

participants at Strength and Balance sessions



116

community Strength and Balance sessions



1262

total attendances



Falls Prevention in Care Homes

The Falls Prevention in Care Homes programme focused on adapted, enjoyable movement, ensuring residents of varying abilities could participate safely and with dignity. Sessions supported improved mobility and confidence, increased engagement following isolation, enhanced staff knowledge, and a stronger culture of prevention within care settings.

Practice Insight: Abafield Care Home

Following prolonged isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, many residents at Abafield Care Home found it difficult to re-engage with structured activity. Sessions were therefore designed to prioritise enjoyment and familiarity, using music and gentle movement to reduce anxiety and encourage participation. Care staff joined in alongside residents, creating a supportive atmosphere. The result was improved mood, increased engagement and shared moments of connection — demonstrating the value of inclusive, relationship-led activity.



12

Falls Prevention in Care Homes sessions



48

care home residents involved in Falls Prevention sessions



27

care home staff members trained in Falls Prevention

Nutrition and Hydration: Supporting Wellbeing from the Inside Out

During Quarter 3, the Nutrition and Hydration service continued to strengthen early intervention and reduce malnutrition risk through community-based, preventative activity. The service reached **1,583 individuals**, with **7 people identified at risk of malnutrition**, often linked to bereavement, isolation or reduced confidence around food. All received personalised guidance, practical support and onward referrals to social and activity-based services.

Delivery remained closely integrated with Strength and Balance, reinforcing the link between nutrition, hydration, mobility and falls prevention. A dedicated event for Strength and Balance clients combined physical activity, interactive learning and a Diwali celebration, strengthening engagement and routine-building.

Case Study: Rebuilding Routine After Bereavement

Ms H, aged 76, moved into Alexander Bryant Court following the death of her husband. During this transition, she experienced low mood, reduced appetite and weight loss.

Through informal engagement around nutrition and hydration, Ms H received tailored guidance and later self-referred to a Strength & Balance class. She reports improved appetite, healthy weight gain, new social connections and increased emotional wellbeing.

Looking ahead...

For the remainder of 2025–26, priorities include:

- Expanding volunteer-supported and dementia-friendly Strength & Balance sessions
- Extending Falls Prevention delivery and embedding ad-hoc support models in care homes
- Rolling out new Nutrition, Hydration & Activity resources, including Sip, Swap & Stretch sessions

Together, these services will continue to strengthen Bolton's preventative system — enabling more older people to stay strong, steady and well for longer.

Ageing Well

Health and Wellbeing: Objectives 1 & 3

Social Implications: Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5

Transportation: Objectives 1 & 3

During Quarter 3, the underlying theme across Ageing Well has been bringing people together — older and younger, disabled and non-disabled, those already engaged and those more hidden or isolated. This included participants, volunteers and partners, creating spaces where people feel welcomed, valued and connected. Attendance continued to grow, with **total attendances reaching 7,405**. Participation remained steady across regular classes and events, with clear growth in social, creative and arts-based activity.

7405
total attendances

Connection, Creativity and Community

New projects continued to emerge this quarter. No Home for Loneliness reached its highest attendances to date, achieving **85,980 friendship minutes**. We also launched **The Art of Belonging**, an arts and befriending initiative designed to reach people who are often “hidden” due to health or mobility issues.

Although formal funding for the Ageing in Place Pathfinder ended, the work continued to flourish. The Ageing Well Coordinator supported a new heritage group and helped establish a community allotment in Little Lever, led by volunteer George, who first joined through the Little Lever Men’s Fellowship. The allotment will offer opportunities to socialise, build everyday physical activity and learn new skills.

Activities That Matter

Creative, exercise and social activities remained well attended. **Afternoon Tea welcomed 54 attendees** to its Christmas celebration, with entertainment from John Inman and our “house band” The Cat Nippers. Emerging from our guitar group, the band now performs more widely across the area.

Our new social event, *Bloom*, continued to attract new participants, with the partnership with **Sapphire Partnership** proving particularly impactful. Sapphire volunteers supported events end-to-end, welcoming guests, serving refreshments, sharing poetry and creating handmade decorations. The partnership also sparked further collaboration, including an Age UK Bolton volunteer now delivering an art class at Sapphire’s centre.



Bloom Christmas Party



Christmas Afternoon Tea



Little Lever Men's Fellowship Christmas Party

Food, Friendship and Everyday Support

Our Lunch Groups and Coffee Mornings continued to offer warmth, nourishment and connection, serving **1,236 meals** this quarter. The Wright Place lunch club continued to offer entertainment after weekly lunches, adding further social value.

Meanwhile, **Pat-a-Cake** continued to offer cookery skills to a small group of older people, with November sessions baking pies and sourdough bread. Ann shared that while she enjoys recreating the recipes at home, it is the companionship and conversation that she values most.

A new Creative Textiles group, developed with **Densal Global**, also showed promise. With interest from younger participants ahead of its first session in 2026, we are exploring ways to link this group with our knitting group to encourage skills-sharing and intergenerational participation.

Befriending: Relationships That Endure

Demand for the Befriending Service remained high, with **69 active matches** supported and a waiting list of **135 people**, reflecting growing need and the closure of other local befriending services.

The quarter also saw the return of two experienced volunteers. Joe rejoined after a year of travelling, while Diane returned following the death of her previous befriender and has since been matched with Mary, another blind befriender. These returns reflect the strength of our volunteer relationships and the supportive culture within the service.

Digital Inclusion and Partnerships

Our partnership with **Bolton Digital Employment and Skills Team** continued. Digital skills sessions in the Digital Den were oversubscribed in October, highlighting ongoing demand. While digital skills volunteers remain difficult to recruit borough-wide, conversations are underway and further sessions are planned for February. The quarter ended on a festive note for the Little Lever Men's Fellowship, who enjoyed a Christmas lunch at Morrisons.

Volunteering

Health and Wellbeing: Objective 1
Economic Challenges: Objective 2

Social Implications: Objectives 1, 2, 3 & 5

Volunteers continue to be at the heart of Age UK Bolton's ability to respond to growing demand, adapt to change and deliver high-quality, person-centred support across the organisation. During Quarter 3, our volunteer community continued to grow, with **20 new applications received** and **11 volunteers recruited**, supporting services experiencing increased pressure. Importantly, this growth has been matched by a strengthening of our volunteer culture, with experienced volunteers supporting new starters through shadowing and knowledge-sharing.

New volunteers have brought a wealth of experience and fresh perspectives. This quarter saw volunteers moving into roles supporting Nutrition and Hydration and providing flexible cover across both our offices, as well as the recruitment of our first volunteer for **The Art of Belonging**. This flexibility has significantly strengthened our ability to maintain continuity when demand increases.



244 active volunteers



20 volunteer applications received



12 volunteer interviews held



11 new volunteers recruited

Mei now works as a Catering Assistant



Volunteer Story: Mei's Journey

Mei Ki Chan joined Age UK Bolton in December 2024 and began by shadowing a volunteer receptionist at The Square, then supporting a Strength and Balance class.

Through volunteering, Mei grew in confidence and developed her language skills, quickly becoming a valued part of the class.

In July 2025, Mei secured a part-time role as a Catering Assistant at Heaton Fold Garden Centre, crediting her volunteering experience as instrumental in building the skills and confidence needed for employment. Importantly, this role has allowed Mei to continue volunteering on Mondays — something she was keen to do.

When our Volunteer Team Leader visited Mei at the café in December, her manager highlighted how valuable her volunteering experience had been in preparing her for the role. We are incredibly proud of Mei's journey and the role volunteering has played in it.

Engagement, Recognition and Belonging

This year's **Annual General Meeting** took a refreshed approach, with a dedicated volunteer celebration held separately to ensure volunteers were properly thanked and recognised. **36 volunteers** attended, gaining a clearer understanding of the impact of their contribution across the organisation.

Two new reception volunteers also supported delivery of the Bloom social event and featured in a short promotional film shared with stakeholders at the AGM — a great example of volunteers contributing beyond their core roles. We also welcomed **33 volunteers** to the **Volunteer Christmas Party** at the Ageing Well Centre. Alongside celebration, the event generated valuable ideas for service improvement and future activities, reinforcing volunteers' role as active contributors to the organisation's development.

“I love seeing people leave with a smile.”

Afternoon Tea volunteer

“Everyone [is] kind, welcoming and full of energy”

Reception volunteer

Learning, Partnership and Visibility

The Volunteer Team Leader continued to attend collaborative and promotional events throughout the quarter, including the **Volunteer Development Network** with **Bolton CVS**, community forums, **Asian Elders AGM**, and learning exchanges with neighbouring Age UKs. These conversations often have a direct and immediate impact. One attendee shared:

“I met you last year at this event and booked an appointment with Information and Advice the following Monday. They've sorted out all my finances — including things I didn't know I was entitled to.”

Celebrating Contribution

This quarter also saw volunteers recognised beyond the organisation. David Morley, a volunteer art tutor of seven years, was invited to London to appear on Good Morning Britain to talk about his volunteering journey. During the broadcast, he was unexpectedly presented with an award linked to the 1 Million Minutes campaign, recognising time given to reduce loneliness. David has also featured in our corporate materials, helping to bring the story of volunteering at Age UK Bolton to life.

Volunteer David on ITV Good Morning Britain



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Thank you to our corporate partners this quarter. If you're interested in working with us, don't hesitate to get in touch.