

Quarterly Impact Report

Q4 January - March 2025

Introduction from our CEO

As we closed the final quarter of the 2024–25 financial year, Age UK Bolton continued to build strong foundations for the future — evolving our services, strengthening our partnerships, and ensuring we remain a relevant and resilient organisation for the current and future generations of older people in Bolton.

This quarter also marked a significant transition, as we said goodbye to our Deputy CEO, **Pat Kitchen**, who has left the organisation to embark on her next chapter. We thank Pat for her dedication and contribution over the last nine years. Her journey from volunteer to Deputy CEO is a rare one, and her long service to the charity will be remembered as part of Age UK Bolton's story.

While we look back with appreciation, we've also been firmly focused on moving forward. From delivering over **6,000 attendances** across our Ageing Well programme, to reducing hospital readmissions through our **Home from Hospital** service, our work continues to be rooted in person-centred care and practical impact. This quarter alone, our Information & Advice team secured nearly **£400,000 in financial gains** for local older people, while our **Strength and Balance programme** laid the groundwork for its first Postural Stability Instructor cohort and expanded our work into care homes.

Nationally, Age UK Bolton was one of only a few local Age UKs invited to speak at the **Age UK Influencing Conference**, where we showcased our work on falls prevention and specialist exercise. Regionally, we've taken a lead role in forming the **Age UK Greater Manchester Collective**, and locally, we continue to play an active role in shaping Bolton's future through **Brand Bolton** and cross-sector collaboration.

Looking ahead to 2025–26, our priorities include launching our refreshed **Nutrition and Hydration** offer, implementing a new **Senior Leadership structure**, progressing our **Age UK Bolton Enterprises** growth strategy, and deepening our understanding of value for money and impact — all while staying focused on the people who matter most: the older adults we serve.

Thank you, as ever, for being part of our shared journey.
Kindest regards,



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

Lauren McKechnie
Chief Executive, Age UK Bolton

Voice and Influence: Championing Ageing Across Sectors and Systems

This quarter has seen Age UK Bolton continue to strengthen our voice and influence locally, regionally, and nationally — not only as a trusted anchor institution in the borough, but as a recognised leader in shaping the agenda on ageing.

In February, our CEO and Strength and Balance Service Manager, Niall, were invited to speak at the national Age UK Influencing Conference — one of only a handful of local Age UKs selected to share best practice. Presenting to an audience of over 200 delegates, they showcased our work on falls prevention and specialist Strength and Balance delivery. Their joint presentation sparked a wave of interest and follow-up conversations across the UK network, with several Age UKs now looking to replicate elements of our model in their own areas.

That same month, Age UK Bolton played a leading role in the Brand Bolton Launch at the Octagon Theatre — a high-profile event marking the start of an ambitious place-branding programme for the borough. Our CEO, appointed Co-Chair of the Brand Bolton Board, was central to the day's success, helping to energise and connect stakeholders across sectors. Brand Bolton is a bold and progressive initiative focused on attracting investment, skills, and opportunity to the town — ensuring Bolton remains a brilliant place to live, work, and importantly, age. Our involvement reinforces our role as a key strategic player in the future of the borough.

Meanwhile, momentum has continued to build around the formation of the Age UK Greater Manchester Collective — a new collaboration of local Age UKs working together across the regional footprint. Age UK Bolton has been instrumental in driving this work forward, with our CEO appointed Chair of the Collective. While not a formal entity, the Collective represents a more intentional and organised approach to regional partnership working. Its aim is to strengthen our shared voice and visibility with bodies such as the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Integrated Care Partnership — positioning Age UKs as the go-to authority on ageing across Greater Manchester.

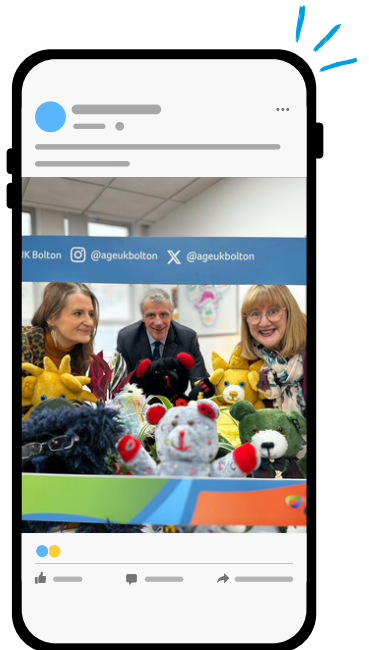


Communications and Engagement

We have continued to grow our social media following this quarter, gaining **180 new followers** across three social media platforms - a **60% increase** on the previous quarter. A sustained focus on LinkedIn after strong engagement on this platform in Q3 has contributed to this growth.

In February, we shared the news that we were gifted 200 shares by local publishing company LetzCre8. The news was covered by leading charity media title **Civil Society**. Off the back of this, we were then asked to contribute a thought leadership piece on share gifting to **Charity Finance** magazine, written by our Communications Officer on behalf of our CEO. This coverage has contributed to strengthening media relations, as well as our voice and brand identity within the UK charity sector.

We also shared 6 staff e-newsletters and re-launched the volunteer newsletter, which was distributed via email and print to our 200 volunteers.



1509
total followers

+49
followers vs
previous quarter

727
interactions (likes,
comments, shares)

78,912
total content
views



495
total followers

+51
followers vs
previous quarter

150
interactions (likes,
comments, shares)

4758
total content
views



502
total followers

+80
followers vs
previous quarter

196
interactions (likes,
comments, shares)

5084
total content
views

Information and Advice

Every number in our Information & Advice team's caseload this quarter tells a story — of lives made easier, futures made more secure, and worries gently lifted. Through benefit checks, energy support, and compassionate guidance, our team continues to provide vital lifelines to older people across Bolton when they need it most.

Our team secured **£398,856** in confirmed financial gains for clients this quarter, supporting them to access entitlements like Attendance Allowance and Pension Credit — money that helps keep the heating on, food on the table, and dignity intact.

Between January and March, the I&A team handled:

Appointments conducted:

199

telephone appointments

97

office appointments

131

home visits

Contacts made:

1370

total contacts

413

total new clients

108

information or signposting

56

new energy clients

**£398,
856**

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

Core Support Areas

- **219** clients received comprehensive **benefit checks**
- **77** applications were completed for **Attendance Allowance**
- **20** claims were supported for **Pension Credit**
- **56** appointments for wills and **legal support**

Making Policy Personal: Pension Credit Campaign

This quarter saw our team invited to present our Pension Credit Take-Up Campaign at the Cost of Living Operational Group — a recognition of our leadership and collaborative work with Public Health, GMCA, Age UK and local advice partners. As the cost of living crisis deepens, we remain committed to reaching those missing out on what they are rightly entitled to.

Partnerships & Advocacy

We have been working with Citizens Advice Bolton & Bury to revive the Bolton Advice Services Forum — a key step toward strengthening shared learning and system-wide impact across the borough.

Project Spotlight: Warm Homes

From June 2024 to March 2025, Age UK Bolton was funded by Age UK National to deliver 660 welfare-benefit-related sessions under the Warm Homes initiative.

We exceeded this target by over 100 sessions — delivering 768 to 431 clients and identifying a total of £720,457.74 in financial savings, with an average gain of £1,671.60 per person.

While the funding period has now ended, we are awaiting confirmation on potential future rounds, and continue to deliver energy support through our core service.

Real impact, real lives

Mrs N, 78, was living in sub-zero temperatures, wrapped in blankets, terrified of leaving debts behind. Diagnosed with terminal cancer and too afraid to switch on the heating, her health was deteriorating rapidly. Following a home visit, our team liaised with her energy provider, uncovered over £1,300 of credit on her account, and helped her feel safe to warm her home without fear. The difference was immediate: her stress eased, her comfort returned, and she could finally rest.

“I was terrified of leaving debts for my husband... I’m ever so grateful. I’m no longer cold and I’m much happier in myself.”

Another couple, Mr and Mrs L, had been battling illness, confusion, and the emotional toll of an undiagnosed Parkinson’s condition. Through our Warm Homes outreach, we identified that Mr L was eligible for Attendance Allowance, unlocking over £1,300 in back pay and a higher-rate weekly payment moving forward. Mrs L was registered as a carer and received a £150 one-off support payment. She later returned, emotional but grateful, with chocolates and flowers, saying, “Without your help, I wouldn’t have known where to turn.”

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



Looking ahead...

- Continue embedding energy advice and cost-of-living support across all I&A pathways
- Secure ongoing funding for Warm Homes-style sessions to build on proven impact
- Strengthen partnerships with local and regional advice networks
- Target outreach to those most at risk of missing out on entitlements — particularly isolated older people, carers, and those living alone

The Information and Advice team is **more than a service**. It is a listening ear, a trusted guide, and a constant presence for hundreds of people navigating difficult times. We are proud of our team, our impact, and our unwavering commitment to standing beside Bolton’s older population — **one conversation, one claim, and one life at a time**.



“David helped me solve an energy problem I’ve struggled with for two years. I can finally **relax**.”

“I just wanted to say how wonderful your staff are — you’re genuinely **changing lives**.”

“Emily, you’re wonderful. Thank you for your patience and help.”

A grateful client returned to the office in person to say thanks - with a £50 donation and a hug.



Strength and Balance

Across our Strength and Balance programmes, we remain focused on helping older adults live independently, confidently and well — reducing falls, building strength, and boosting social connection. This quarter, we've delivered services across three key areas: Core Strength and Balance, Falls Prevention in Care Homes, and Nutrition and Hydration Integration.

Reaching More People, in More Ways

From January to March, we delivered:

- **246** instructor-led sessions
- Supporting **518** older people
- Generating over **3,200** attendances

246

instructor-led
sessions

518

users attending
sessions

3200

total
attendances

This sustained activity is powered by a steady flow of referrals from GPs, physios, hospital discharge teams, social prescribers, and local partners — and is testament to the trust placed in us to deliver accessible, preventative support across Bolton's ageing well system.



Core Strength and Balance

Behind every session is a story — of someone regaining confidence, rebuilding strength, or simply enjoying a safe space to move, laugh and connect. Our community-based classes continue to offer graded, supportive exercise tailored to individual needs. When referrals come through our website or from partners, each person is carefully triaged to ensure they join the right class — and if our falls prevention offer isn't the right fit, they're directed to gentler Ageing Well sessions like Tai Chi or Gentle Dance.

This quarter, our focus has been on readiness and refinement.

We've been laying the groundwork for the launch of our **first Postural Stability Instructor (PSI)** cohort — a specialist 12-week programme starting in April. Participants have undergone detailed face-to-face assessments, including blood pressure checks, medication reviews and goal-setting — ensuring the programme is entirely person-centred from day one.

We've also continued our valued partnership with **Bolton Hospice** and the **Bolton Fibrosis Support Group**, where we deliver targeted group exercise to those living with pulmonary fibrosis and COPD. In Q4, **12 sessions** supported **23 participants** with **130 attendances** — and many of those attending are carers who benefit just as much, if not more, from the safe, supportive environment.

“You don't just see improvement in mobility... you see people come alive again.”

Falls Prevention in Care Homes

The care home arm of our service is developing into something powerful. We know that residents in care settings can be among the most vulnerable to falls — and that meaningful prevention needs to involve both staff and residents. This quarter, we re-engaged care homes through a borough-wide invitation, and **three homes** stepped forward to work with us in Q4: **The Withins, Southlands, and Millview**.

At **The Withins**, we took a new approach: staff training sessions were delivered first, followed by small-group exercise sessions across three lounges. While there were initial teething issues — such as ensuring residents were ready and available — this revised model is already showing signs of success, thanks to joint planning between staff and instructors.

At **Southlands**, group sessions are underway and well-received, with two staff members actively supporting delivery. Meanwhile, **Millview**, under new management, is beginning engagement through a block of three exercise sessions, with a view to expand further once organisational permissions are secured.

There are still challenges. Competing priorities, staff awareness and event clashes (karaoke, we're looking at you!) have sometimes impacted delivery. But there's also promise — in the homes that are engaged, we're seeing the beginnings of a more embedded culture of movement and awareness.

Nutrition and Hydration: Embedding the Essentials

Good nutrition and hydration are critical to falls prevention — and we're committed to embedding this understanding into all we do. This quarter, we've:

- Delivered two awareness-raising sessions for older people and frontline staff
- Begun adapting internal training to integrate key hydration and malnutrition messaging
- Added nutrition-related questions to our triage assessments
- Scheduled Strength and Balance team training on hydration awareness in Q1
- Integrated Nutrition & Hydration as a core theme for our upcoming Train the Trainer session in May

This quiet but important strand of work is helping ensure that our preventative offer is truly holistic, recognising the role food and fluid intake plays in overall strength, balance and wellbeing.

Looking ahead...

As we move into the next quarter, our focus sharpens around scale, depth and integration:

- **Launch our first 12-week PSI cohort**, and monitor outcomes
- **Deliver new 'Exercise at Home' filming sessions**, building a video resource library for wider use
- **Host our Train the Trainer event** (nutrition, hydration and falls awareness)
- **Expand care home engagement**, including new outreach to Egerton Manor
- **Strengthen data capture**, especially around residents' health status and fall history
- **Explore further integration** with the Falls Pick-Up Service and Admissions Avoidance team to reach those not accessing community classes

This quarter has been about laying foundations — for deeper engagement, better integration, and stronger outcomes. Whether it's a carer gaining strength, a resident smiling during a group session, or a newly referred older person setting personal goals at triage — the ripple effect of this work is real, and growing. As always, thank you to our partners, volunteers and commissioners for walking this journey with us.

Home from Hospital

Our Home from Hospital service continues to be a critical safety net for some of Bolton's most vulnerable residents — offering practical support, emotional reassurance, and a vital bridge between hospital discharge and sustained recovery at home.

Headline Impact This Quarter

In Q4, we supported a total of **1,363 clients** through our Discharge & Aftercare (D&A) and Admission Avoidance (AA) pathways, with **5,967 support contacts** delivered over the three months. This brings our annual totals to **4,724 clients supported** and over **17,000 contacts made** — a significant testament to the reach, responsiveness, and resilience of our team.

Keeping People Safe at Home - and Out of Hospital

Our readmission and admission rates continue to outperform borough averages.

Even amid rising complexity in client presentations — particularly around mental health, addiction, and cognitive challenges — our outcomes remain strong. This reflects the dedication of our team in delivering timely, person-centred interventions that reduce strain on NHS and adult social care services.

Meeting Growing Demand, with Compassion and Precision

Across both service arms, demand increased significantly in Q4:

- 443 clients accessed D&A support (up 91 from Q3)
- 341 clients accessed AA support (up 82 from Q3)

To meet need, we maintained our on-site presence at hospital wards, ensuring smoother transitions and faster response times — despite the added complexity of multiple ward closures this quarter.

Our team worked tirelessly to identify and support patients affected by service changes at Wilfred Gere and Laburnham Lodge, adapting quickly and proactively to shifting pressures.

Support Behind the Scenes: Peer Supervision and Staff Wellbeing

To help manage the emotional intensity and complexity of frontline delivery, we introduced peer-based supervision through our partnership with 1Point. These regular, informal support sessions offer our staff a safe space to reflect, debrief, and share strategies — and the feedback so far has been overwhelmingly positive.

Discharge & Aftercare:

443

clients accessed support

1.35%

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

0.45%

7-day readmission rate

Admissions Avoidance:

341

clients accessed support

0.88%

30-day readmission rate

0.59%

7-day readmission rate

100%

of clients would
recommend the
service

Client Voice: 100% Would Recommend Our Service

"I was broken, and she mended me."

"My coordinator goes above and beyond. I can't fault her."

"She deserves 100% — all positives."

These words from clients reinforce what the numbers show — that the service is trusted, valued, and life-changing.

Home from Hospital: Case Studies

Case Study: Discharge and Aftercare (D&A)

S, aged 52, lives alone and battles liver disease, alcohol dependency, and cognitive decline. When she was referred to us, her flat was unsafe, her medication was unmanaged, and her family relationships had broken down. Over five weeks, our team coordinated cleaning, medication support, home safety improvements, and emotional reassurance — all in close partnership with social care.

Outcomes:

- S's home is now safe and clean
- Her medication is monitored
- She's remained alcohol-free
- Her relationship with her daughter is healing
- She avoided readmission and is building hope for the future

Case Study: Admission Avoidance (AA)

Mr X, 75, was living alone above a shop, nearly blind, without heating. He was anxious, isolated, and overwhelmed. Over six weeks, our team arranged shopping support, helped secure a refrigerator, referred him for benefits, liaised with housing providers and sensory services, and walked beside him emotionally every step of the way.

“I had no idea what I would have done without you. Knowing I can always call Age UK gives me great comfort.”

Case Study: GM SORT

A 56-year-old man with COPD, struggling to eat, heat his home or manage bills, was referred by the Early Intervention Team.

We provided emergency food, coordinated a washing machine, supported energy applications, submitted benefits claims and housing requests, and referred him for mobility and blue badge support. His confidence and wellbeing improved visibly, and essential needs were met with care and urgency.

Looking ahead...

Our revised service model, developed in response to reduced funding, will:

- Focus delivery during core weekday hours
- Prioritise safe, planned discharges and early intervention
- Continue to work closely with hospital teams and community partners
- Maximise every available hour to protect outcomes for those who need us most

The Home from Hospital service remains a pillar of preventative support across Bolton — catching people before they fall, and walking alongside them as they rebuild. We are proud of our impact, grateful to our funders and partners, and committed to evolving our delivery with integrity, care, and client dignity at the centre.

Ageing Well

This quarter marked one of our most vibrant and wide-reaching periods since the pandemic. With **over 1,000** older people engaged across a rich and varied programme of activities, events and support, we continue to put connection, wellbeing and community at the heart of everything we do.

A Boost for the Future

We're thrilled to share that we secured an additional £20,000 from the Omaze and Age UK No Home for Loneliness Fund, enabling us to recruit a third Ageing Well Coordinator on a 12-month fixed-term post starting May 2025. This added capacity will help us grow our community offer and better support the matching of befriendees to volunteers — especially crucial as demand continues to rise.

Activities & Engagement

In Q4, we ran up to **70 weekly activities**, with over **6,000 attendances** and **1,000+ unique participants**. Demand continues to grow — a reflection of how valued and impactful our offer is to older people across Bolton.

New highlights included:

- Chair-Based Exercise groups launched at Windsor Road and St Peter's Parish Hall
- Scam Awareness sessions in partnership with Age UK Manchester
- A visit from the DWP 'Delivery Van' promoting employment support for older adults
- Revitalised longstanding sessions such as our community Art Group, which was re-energised through the involvement of a local artist.



Befriending

Despite a temporary pause in referrals to strengthen our matching process, the Befriending Service still supported:

- 64 active matches (44 face-to-face, 20 telephone)
- Over 1,200 volunteer hours
- More than 750 calls and visits

Demand remains high, with 111 people on the waiting list at the end of Q4. But the heart of this service remains strong:

"I visit Ken every week, come rain or shine... I get just as much from it as he does." – Billy, volunteer

64

active matches
supported

1200

volunteer
hours

750

calls and visits
to befriendees

Lunch Groups and Social Events

Over 1,480 hot meals were served this quarter across five lunch clubs and a weekly coffee morning — supporting both nutrition and social connection for 162 older people. One volunteer summed it up perfectly:

“Ann is able to do anything and everything... she has been exemplary.”

Meanwhile, our social events programme included Afternoon Teas, Friendship Café sessions and Intergenerational performances from local schools

While our Lads@Lunch pilot came to a natural pause due to declining attendance, it laid strong foundations for reaching older men — and we are already planning its next chapter.

Ageing Well Centre

Our central hub continues to thrive, welcoming new members and growing attendance across popular sessions like:

- Pat-a-Cake cookery group
- Zumba Gold and Tea Dances
- Craft workshops and book club sessions.

Tutors and volunteers remain at the heart of the Centre's warmth and energy.



Ageing in Place: Little Lever Pathfinder

Our Ageing in Place work in Little Lever, funded by GMCA via Bolton@Home, continues to create meaningful local impact. In Q4:

- **278 individuals** took part across **18 sessions and events**
- Highlights included the Supper Club, Village Voices, a pop-up museum, and a community choir concert

Led by our brilliant coordinator Keith, this programme shows the power of local delivery to reduce isolation and build community belonging.

Looking ahead...

As we prepare for Q1 and beyond, our focus will be on:

- Embedding our new Coordinator to enhance delivery and reach
- Developing the next phase of our befriending strategy and matching capacity
- Refining our exercise offer, aligning with Strength and Balance to streamline support
- Exploring new models of meal provision like our Supper Club, ensuring sustainability

The Ageing Well service continues to be a lifeline — and a launchpad — for older people across Bolton. Whether it's a warm meal, a creative outlet, a meaningful friendship or a chance to move more, this quarter has shown once again just how essential and far-reaching our work truly is.

Our priorities for Q1 2025-26

- 1** Launch of the Age UK Greater Manchester Collective, a collective of Age UKs in the Greater Manchester area.
- 2** Host the first Brand Bolton Ambassador Breakfast in collaboration with We Are Bolton.
- 3** Start delivery of the new in-house Nutrition and Hydration offer and improved Falls Prevention in Care Homes service.
- 4** Work in partnership with PWC-UK as part of their #OneFirmOneDay initiative to better understand the Value for Money calculations for our Home from Hospital service.
- 5** Establish our renewed Senior Leadership Team structure with a focus on middle-long term staff development, succession planning and scope for operational growth.