



## Our Organisation

Age UK Bury is a caring, friendly and helpful charity, that puts the needs and aspirations of older people first and foremost in our work. Our mission is to support older people living in the Borough of Bury to improve their quality of life.

The roots of our charity come from the six Older People's Welfare Committees of Bury, Prestwich, Radcliffe, Ramsbottom, Tottington & Whitefield, which supported older people during the Second World War. In the 1970s, these committees united and became Age Concern Bury. In 2011, the charity rebranded as Age UK Bury. Throughout the years, our charity has adapted to the challenges of the time and has gained a good solid reputation in the borough of Bury.

Our charity supports older people with the following services:

- **Information and Advice:** We offer a free, confidential, Information and Advice Service for older people, their families and carers. In the last decade, this service has helped to put over £12 million of unclaimed welfare benefits back into the pockets of older people in Bury.
- **The Jubilee Centre & Café:** The Jubilee Centre offers over twenty activities every week which includes gentle exercise, yoga, Tai Chi, Pilates, line dancing, sequence dancing, Men's Keep Fit, Ladies "Dance. Fit. Fun.", exercise classes, indoor bowling, "Knit and Natter" groups, a walking group, a community choir, and a quiz & bingo afternoon. The centre also has a popular café overlooking the beautiful Clarence Park Lido so visitors can watch the ducks, geese and swans as they enjoy a homecooked meal. Around five hundred older people visit the Jubilee Centre every week. The centre has brought many older people together, enabling them to form new friendships and become part of a community.
- **Friends Together:** We run four "Friends Together" groups in the Prestwich, Radcliffe and Whitefield areas for up to sixty frail older people per week, who need a little extra support to get out for the day.
- **Home From Hospital:** This new service provides extra support for isolated older people being discharged from Fairfield Hospital to prevent readmission. This service is aimed at people who don't have family and friends who can support them. It offers advice and moral & practical support. This service is currently supporting sixty older people per week.
- **Handy Person Service:** Our service helps with small DIY and repair jobs around a person's home. Its main work is fitting key safes and grab rails to prevent falls to enable older people to live independently.

- Footcare Service: In conjunction with Phoenix Footcare, we offer a foot care service to help maintain and improve people's mobility.
- Two charity shops which sell donated goods and promote the work of the charity on the high streets of Bury and Ramsbottom.
- The Dumers Lane Centre: This is a centre where we run activities for older people in Radcliffe. We currently offer Cyber Surgeries there to help older people get online safely.

Age UK Bury is an independent charity (Number 1141901) and company limited by guarantee (Number 7506866). It is governed by an Executive Committee, which comprises of seven local older people who are passionately committed to making a difference for older people in Bury. The Executive meets at least 8 times per year and sub-committees focus on relevant topics. The profiles of the trustees are available at <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/bury/about-us/our-trustees/>

The charity has a team of 30 staff members and the support of over 70 fantastic volunteers.

The charity is an Age UK brand partner and works with the national charity Age UK and other brand partners across the north-west.

More information about Age UK Bury is available online at [www.ageukbury.org.uk](http://www.ageukbury.org.uk)

The Charity's accounts are available at <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5012877>

## **Our Befriending Service**

### ***The Telephone Service***

The telephone service offers older people with a weekly friendly call from a volunteer. The calls are friendly, informal and the volunteer's role is to be a listening ear and a supportive friend. The volunteers do not provide any professional services, such as counselling or therapy but they can signpost the person being befriended to other services if needed.

This service is not time-limited and will continue for as long as a befriender needs the service and we can provide it.

The Telephone Befriending Officer recruits and supervises suitable volunteers who either work from the office or from home.

## ***The Cluster Groups***

The cluster groups are aimed at people who use the telephone service, who live close by one another. The groups are friendly and informal and based in people's neighbourhood, encouraging stronger community connections and individuals to meet people from their community in a supportive face-face environment.

The groups that are up and running are

- Dumers Lane, a mixed group on every Tuesday afternoon and a men-only on Friday morning once a month;
- Ramsbottom on every Thursday.

We aim to set up new groups in Greenmount, Whitefield and Prestwich and work with other local providers to develop the groups.

## ***Face to Face Befriending***

Face-to-face befriending is offered to those where a phone call is inappropriate (as some people struggle to use a phone) or insufficient. It is aimed at those who are housebound and therefore unable to get to cluster groups. Housebound could be due to physical ailments or mental health issues. The volunteer befriender visits a person in their home on a regular basis, providing companionship and friendship, and helps to reduce the person's feelings of isolation and loneliness.

The frequency of visits will vary depending on the needs of the person being befriended. It could be once a week, fortnightly, or monthly. The visits can last for an hour or more, and the befriender and the person being befriended can do whatever they like together. This could include chatting, playing games, going for walks, or just sitting in silence.

## ***Drivers***

Volunteer drivers transport socially isolated people who cannot access other forms of public transport so they can get to social events, such as the cluster groups or the activities at the Jubilee Centre. Occasionally, volunteer drivers may be asked if they would be willing to take a client to an appointment.

It has proven difficult to recruit volunteers to this role as there are other charities competing for volunteer drivers. However, we want to keep this as a distinct volunteer role within our service, as we know the demand is there.

## **Online Befriending**

This is a new role for the Befriending Service and will strengthen Age UK Bury's online presence, develop online communities, and inform older people and the public of

- sources of help and advice.
- health and wellbeing initiatives.
- relevant social, recreational and leisure activities in the borough of Bury.
- volunteer opportunities.
- good news stories about our work to inspire and motivate others to get involved with our work – this will include personal stories and anonymised case studies.

The new Online Befriending Officer will

- produce and send out bi-weekly email newsletters to the Age UK Bury mailing list.
- set up an internal bi-monthly newsletter for befriending staff and volunteers,
- populate, monitor and respond to the Age UK Bury Facebook and X (Twitter) feeds, ensuring quality content and engagement with participants.
- pilot online meetings and activities (e.g., a Quiz evening), appropriate for older people,
- produce online and hardcopy adverts, posters and promotional material,
- recruit volunteers to support online work.

## **Development of Online Befriending**

Before the pandemic, our Charity had a web presence with its own website, 2,000 followers on X/Twitter and 400 supporters on the old Facebook page. During the pandemic, we began a new email newsletter as a way of communicating with older people throughout Bury. This contained news about support available, clarification about the Covid rules, and signposting to online activities. The newsletters now go out to over 700 subscribers and are well received. However, the promotion, content and distribution of online content is "haphazard" as there no one co-ordinating the newsletter or social media content.

In reviewing our befriending service, prior to this application to the National Lottery Community Fund, it was identified that we should be using the newsletter and social media more strategically and proactively to promote the work of the service and to inspire people to volunteer by sharing our "good news" stories. It was also identified that we should look at providing online activities (in the way we did during Covid) to reach out to those online but still unable to get out of the house.

This post is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund until December 2026 and we are really grateful for their support to our Befriending Service.