



**Community Development Officer**

**Candidate Pack**

**February 2026**

# Contents

Welcome.....	4
About Age UK County Durham .....	5
Mission.....	6
Strategic aims .....	6
Values.....	6
Our Work.....	7
Chapter 50 -Future You .....	8
Job Description.....	12
Recruitment Timetable.....	15
Contact Us	



County Durham  
**ageUK**  
Let's change how we age



**The 'Go To' organisation for people aged 50+**

# Welcome

Thank you for your recent interest in the  
**Community Development Officer** role at Age UK County Durham

Age UK County Durham is the 'go to' organisation for people aged 50 + across County Durham. We have a strong Board of Directors who collectively bring a wealth of experience and knowledge across the North East. We have a committed and experienced staff team and a valued network of volunteers.

We are looking to recruit a **Community Development Officer** to oversee an exciting new piece of work, **Chapter 50 Future You**, across Weardale and Newton Aycliffe.

The post is fixed term maternity cover to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027

We are offering a starting salary of £26,421 with up to 5% pension contributions (37 hour week with flexibility options).

We want to give all people aged 50–69 the opportunity to age well, to retire well and to access all services that will enable them to achieve this. We want to remove the barriers and obstacles that prevent all people aged 50–69 living a healthy and prosperous later life.

As a first contact for a new project, **Chapter 50-Future You**, the post holders' aim will be to identify and support the people most at risk of missing out on a healthy and happy later life.

You will be practiced at identifying and drawing on their strengths and those of the people around them, enabling them to make positive health and financial choices and decisions.

We are looking for someone who has experience of working with rural communities, of health service provision and community development.

We need someone with great communication skills and empathy, someone who has patience and positivity, a great organiser, meticulous planner and finisher.

We are looking for someone who can generate positive effects and contribute to someone's ability to move forward towards their version of a good life.

The post will be subject to an Enhanced DBS check.

**We would welcome any calls prior to submitting an application, please contact Robyn Holmes on 0191 386 3856**

**Closing date:** Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026

**Interview date:** Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026

## **To apply:**

**By email:** [info@ageukcountydurham.org.uk](mailto:info@ageukcountydurham.org.uk) (quoting reference 26.01)

**By post:** write to Julie Nicholls, Age UK County Durham, 1st Floor Houghton House, Belmont Business Park, Durham, DH1 1TW

**Or download an application pack at:**

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/countydurham/about-us/work-for-us/>

## About Age UK County Durham

Age Concern Durham County (trading as Age UK County Durham) has been an autonomous registered charity since April 1974. Its area of benefit is the whole of County Durham. We currently employ 35 paid staff and have a further 80 volunteers.

We have over 40 years' experience of supporting people over the age of 50 years by influencing policies and practices that affect their lives, challenging views and improving understanding of the ageing process. Our aim is to promote the well being of all older people and to help make later life a fulfilling and enjoyable experience. We work toward this by offering an Information and Advice service, social activities, Mental Health support, Pre Frailty physio and exercise, Dementia support, clubs and outings. We have responded to 51,326 contacts and provided services to over 6700 people aged 50+ in the past year.

As an independent registered charity (1122008), we are governed by a local Board of Trustees who are drawn from the County Durham community and who meet regularly in our own offices.

We are responsible for our own fundraising and work with older people to decide how best to meet the needs of older people in County Durham



# Charitable objectives

**To promote the following purposes for the benefit of older people, principally but not exclusively, in and around County Durham:**

- Assisting people in need by reason of ill-health, disability, financial hardship, social exclusion or other disadvantage
- Preventing or relieving poverty
- Promoting equality and diversity
- Advancing education
- Promoting human rights
- Preventing or relieving sickness, disease or suffering

## **Our vision**

To positively transform the ageing experience in County Durham

## **Mission**

Enabling people to have happy, healthier, longer lives

## **Our values**

- **Ambition:** To make County Durham a healthier place to age
- **Development:** We continually improve our services and resources
- **Engagement:** We actively engage with our people and partners to plan and deliver our work
- **Respect:** We treat all people with equal respect and dignity
- **Integrity:** We do what we say we will do



## The need for our work

There are a number of key factors which impact on older people their families and carers across County Durham.

- County Durham is a large rural area with poor transport links
- An aging population means that support and information is needed to help and support people live independently at home.
- High costs and fuel poverty
- levels Poor health
- Social isolation and loneliness.

## The impact of our work

We are proud of our proven track record in developing new services, project management and delivery. Working independently and in partnership with others we support over 10,000 older people each year through our services and activities which include:

- Information & Advice Service helping people access welfare benefits and entitlements to help people live independently in 2024-2025 reclaimed £8m in un-claimed welfare benefits
- Social activities programme enabling older people to take part in regular activities to reduce social isolation and promote mental and physical wellbeing. The programme includes a network of lunch clubs, crafting , exercise and dance groups. We currently deliver 30 regular activity sessions each week with over 10,294 attendances each year
- Digital Inclusion programme aims to tackle digital exclusion by recruiting and training Digital Champion volunteers to provide support for older people to improve their digital skills, as well as providing loan technology to those older people without access
- Mental Health and Wellbeing programme, offering free person centric therapies to all those aged 50+
- Dementia Therapy – Cognitive Therapies for those living with mild to moderate dementia
- Befriending and social engagement activities including Culture Companions
- Research, and Advocacy , giving the people of County Durham aged 50+ a voice

## Plus much more

We have launched a new service developed and designed by and delivered specifically for people aged 50–69 across County Durham.

The aim to offer a programme of services and activities that will improve the quality of later life, particularly for those most likely disadvantaged due to health inequalities.

Traditionally our brand is associated with supporting older, infirm people at the older end of the age spectrum (70yrs+). We recognise that the needs of our client base differ greatly, for example, the needs of those aged 50-69 compared to the needs of those aged 75 and upwards. Against this background we will develop this project, to address inequalities and place the emphasis on prevention, specifically for adults aged 50-69yrs, with a focus on the most deprived communities and those most affected by health inequalities.

This project aims to make significant differences with relatively straightforward interventions; to connect to and provide opportunities to encourage and empower individuals that they may build social networks within their communities; maintain good health through positive choices; to keep mentally and physically active; to consider the necessities of retirement both financially and socially; to plan for a financially secure and engaging later life. To live and age well.

Project development will always be underpinned by co production. Our recently established 'Future You' forums offer residents the opportunity to influence the content and direction of our services, to highlight the issues, obstacles and prospects that would support people to live longer, healthier, happier later lives.

These forums are based in urban and rural communities across County Durham at which local residents are consulted on issues that have an impact upon their wellbeing, county wide consultations and national strategies such as social care.

The older persons forums are recognised by the Local Authority and discussions are beginning to constitute an Older Persons Council.

Evidence collated to date clearly demonstrates the lack of affiliation to the Age UK brand from people aged 50–69, yet a significant demand for financial, health and social information and engagement opportunities designed by this community of interest for this community of interest.

It is not only important to involve our current and future clients in the development of services but also to work collaboratively with all agencies to avoid duplication, to ensure that the work we are proposing has value within the communities and measurably reduces health inequalities.

We want to demonstrate how this work can reduce the health gradient across County Durham and give those less able to engage an equal chance to improve their health, financial, emotional and social wellbeing and live their best later life. We aim to achieve this by advocating for and instigating methods of increasing equal access to services for those less financially secure, less mobile and rurally isolated.

Most of the statutory services are delivered within leisure centres at a cost or membership and we aim to signpost to these services where access and affordability are not a barrier to inclusivity.

For this reason, we will focus this two year pilot firstly on the most westerly rural area of **Weardale** where the people aged **50-69** account for **34%** of the population and where transport links and higher than average living cost due to rurality exclude many from essential services that contribute to good health and wellbeing.

We will then focus on **Newton Aycliffe** which remains one of the most deprived areas in the County.

Working with the local focus groups we will identify the gaps in accessible services and activities. Age UK County Durham will develop a peripatetic programme of sessions, including exercise, learning and social opportunities in local halls and community venues, accommodating times and places for those retired and employed. The wider determinants of health also include active engagement with life and access to learning .

Data clearly shows people experiencing loneliness are less likely to age well than those actively engaged within their communities. We know that learning and mental activities support good longer term mental health. The range of activities, at times and places to suit the clients will include water sports, walking sports, exercise, language and art classes, talks and culture.

To compliment this holistic approach to ageing well will be an offer of digital support. The aim is to reach those who are least likely to access digital services including GP appointments, housing, finance and general information.

Both group and one to one introduction and upskilling sessions will be delivered across the identified communities, supporting inclusion and access to services.

All clients will have access to Age UK County Durham's wrap around services including, counselling, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and welfare support.

For those still in employment, we have begun to engage with local businesses and their employees including Amazon, Zumbotel and Husqvarna in sharing their views on how our services should be shaped to meet the needs of older adults working towards retirement.

We will work with local financial and estate planners to deliver a minimum of 10 workshops a year to local groups and businesses.

We have already begun to establish working relationships with Thorn Lighting, Amazon (Spennymoor) Husqvarna plus Durham Business Network and the Better Health at Work Officer and will continue to expand the range of large and small businesses to promote the project and retirement planning workshops.

The aim of the workshops targeted at the 50+employees is to offer an understanding of and planning tools for a financially secure, well informed and actioned retirement.

In addition, Age UK County Durham will offer a minimum of 10 'Future You' – road to good health sessions per annum within community settings across County Durham.

The project launched as a 2 year pilot, focussing on the deeply rural west of the county and Newton Aycliffe, a more urban and left behind neighbourhood with pockets of acute deprivation. The aim is to engage with a minimum of 500 people aged 50-69 in each year. A baseline profile of each individual will inform the journey taken and health outcomes and profile at year 2.

Each individual will have a personal journey to take and case studies will form the basis of recording outcomes. We aim to record a positive outcome for each individual including social engagement, physical and mental health improvement and increased activity.

## OUTCOMES

In each of the focus areas the population of people aged 50-69 is 34%, slightly higher percentage for women save for Bishop Auckland where men make up 36% of the population. This equates to approximately 10,820 individuals. We know that 9% of that population are lonely, that 17% live in poverty so we propose to work with approximately 10% of each population (1000 individuals ) during this pilot programme.

The key to the success of the 'Future You' programme is to create a profile of an individual at the point of engagement, to establish goals, identify aspirations, challenges, opportunities, finance and health barriers to a better later life. This profile will be digitally created for the client so that during their journey they can reflect upon their journey, giving opportunity for modification and pride but also identifying and responding to their needs, changes to their circumstances, opportunities and choices. An additional profile will be created at the end of their journey to reflect the differences and goals achieved.

We want to be able to measure a change, to evidence a contribution to the narrowing of the health inequality gradient and to demonstrate the value of a service directed by and for people on the cusp of retirement and life changes. The hope is to remain in contact with clients on a quarterly basis to inform longer term health and social impacts.



## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **Community Development Officer Responsible to Senior Management**

**Fixed Term maternity cover to  
31<sup>st</sup> March 2027**

Based at Age UK County Durham, Houghton House, Belmont Business Park, Durham DH1 1TW, the post holder will also be required to work at other locations if and when required.

#### **Hours of work**

37 hours per week (part time/job share considered).

Monday to Thursday 8.30am –  
4.30pm Friday 8.30am – 4.00pm

Some evening and weekend work may occasionally be needed for which time off in lieu will be given.

#### **Salary**

£26,421 per annum plus up to 5% pension contribution to Organisation's Pension Scheme. Salary progression available depending on experience.

#### **Holiday Entitlement**

36 days per annum including statutory holidays and Christmas closedown, which we observe.

#### **Purpose**

- To launch a new service that will support less engaged people aged 50 -69 years to lead healthy and prosperous later lives.
- To identify and support the people most at risk of missing out on a healthy and happy later life.
  - Addressing inequalities
- To lead on initiatives that promote wellbeing and a reduction in social isolation of people aged 50+

## **Key tasks**

1. To develop activities in partnership with other agencies, in accordance with the project plan that meet the needs and aspirations of people aged 50 – 69 years.
2. To address all barriers that cause inequalities
3. To develop effective links with local community groups and organisations.
4. To create personal profiles for each participant, creating longitudinal evidence of positive outcomes.
5. To recruit and support volunteers and community champions
6. To represent the Organisation at external meetings.
7. To maintain accurate records and provide reports and statistical and written information as required
8. To accurately complete all administration and documents in accordance with the agreed procedures and service standards.
9. To ensure effective communication between all levels of employee and volunteers.
10. To undertake personal development as agreed between yourself and your Line Manager
11. Work as part of a team with other Age UK County Durham staff and volunteers.
12. Undertake any other duties that may be reasonably requested

### **General terms and conditions**

There will be a requirement to travel therefore a current valid driving licence and daily access to a car is essential for this post.

Mileage rates as agreed by our Board of Trustees will be paid for the use of a car for business use.

The appointment will be made subject to the receipt of references and an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check that meet the requirements of the organisation.

Age UK County Durham operates a no smoking policy in all of its premises

**Age UK County Durham is an equal opportunities employer**

# Person Specification

## Essential

- Experience of community development & engagement.
  - Understanding of health improvement services
- Proven track record in developing & shaping services for and with older adults.
  - An understanding of the needs of and an empathy with older adults.
    - Good interpersonal skills.
- Ability to take a flexible and creative approach to involving and consulting with service users and researching their views.
  - Experience of recruiting, training and supporting volunteers.
    - Ability to manage and prioritise a diverse workload.
    - Good communication skills both written and oral.
- Self-motivated with the ability to work both alone and as part of a team to meet objectives and deadlines.
  - Excellent IT skills including Microsoft Office and databases.
  - Ability to assimilate information, maintain accurate records and produce concise, clear reports.
  - Knowledge of basic financial management, budgets and cost control.
- Flexible attitude to work (some evening or weekend work may be required for which time in lieu will be given) and the ability to travel throughout the county.
  - Good general standard of education.
  - Commitment to Equal Opportunities.
- Due to the nature of the post it is essential that the post holder has a full driving licence and daily use of a car.



**We would welcome any calls prior to submitting an application, please contact Robyn Holmes on  
0191 386 3856**

**Closing date:** Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026

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