



County Durham
ageUK
Let's change how we age



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Welcome to our Age UK County Durham Annual report for 2024-25. This has been a special year for us as it marks 50 years of our organisation providing services to people aged over 50 in County Durham. Originally delivering as Age Concern Durham County and latterly as a network partner of Age UK.

It seems appropriate that it is in this year that we have developed our latest, exciting, initiative **Chapter50**. Focussing on supporting people aged between 50 and 69 this project will be launched in Summer 2025.

The challenges however remain with reducing funding streams and increasing demand for services. That being the case our amazing volunteers continue to be an integral part of our organisation, delivering our services and staffing our retail outlets. Without the volunteer community we could not achieve the outcomes for our service users across the County and we are truly grateful for their dedication and time. With more volunteers we deliver more and support more of those in need and therefore we are always seeking to recruit volunteers to join our team.

Once again , this year, our staff have worked tirelessly to deliver our charitable aims whether that is in our retail outlets or managing and delivering the services that enable people aged over 50 to receive the support they need.

Finally , I would like to thank the Management team who through the leadership of our CEO Robyn Holmes have continued to direct and successfully deliver our strategy in these uncertain times.

On behalf of the Trustees, I thank you all.



ROBYN HOLMES

**Chief Executive Officer
Age UK County Durham**

Age UK County Durham continues to see a rise in demand for services. Whilst affirming our commitment to offering support services that meet the existing and emerging needs of people aged 50+, we face significant challenges in operating in an uncertain funding environment.

We continue to put people aged 50+ at the heart of all we do, ensuring that we work collaboratively with people aged 50+ living in County Durham to live happier, healthier, longer lives.

Many new partnerships have resulted in new and exciting opportunities, a new focus on those aged 50-69 and a commitment to reduce loneliness and respond to increased living costs.

**6711
PEOPLE
SUPPORTED**

**53,348
CONTACTS**

APRIL 2024- MARCH 2025



A YEAR IN REVIEW

Our Vision

**TO POSITIVELY TRANSFORM THE AGEING
EXPERIENCE IN COUNTY DURHAM**

Mission

**ENABLING PEOPLE TO HAVE HAPPY,
HEALTHIER, LONGER LIVES**

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

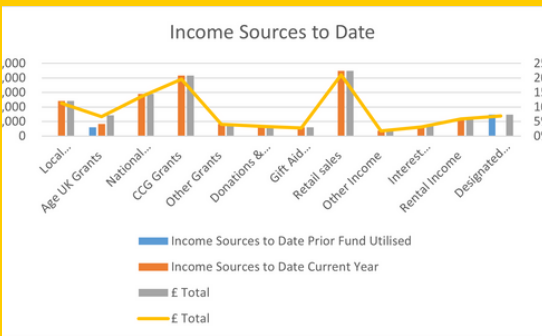
Overview

Age UK County Durham remains in a stable and healthy financial position, despite ongoing challenges in the funding environment. The Trustees regularly review our fundraising strategies to ensure the charity can continue to support older people across County Durham.

Income and Reserves

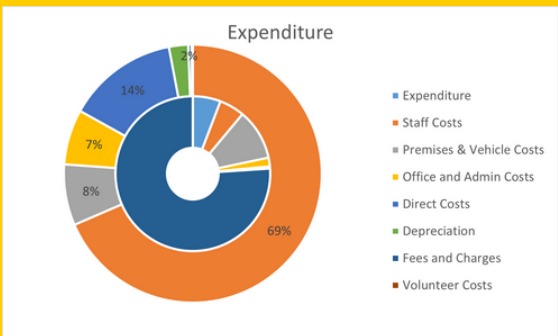
At 31 March 2025, total reserves stood at £2.7 million, with £580,000 held as restricted funds for specific projects. Free reserves, which are available for general use, were £1,087,000 closely matching our policy to hold reserves equivalent to one year's expenditure (£1,158,000). This prudent approach ensures we can continue operating and supporting our community even if there are interruptions in funding.

Income



£1,151,000

Expenses



£1,126,000

Designated and Restricted Funds

We maintain several designated funds to support our services and provide long-term financial stability. These include the Property Fund (£153,000) for Houghton House, our main premises, and the Investment Property Fund (£477,000) for the portion of Age UK House that is available for rental. Our Retail Development Fund (£62,000) was set aside in the previous year to support the growth and sustainability of our charity shops.

Income Generation

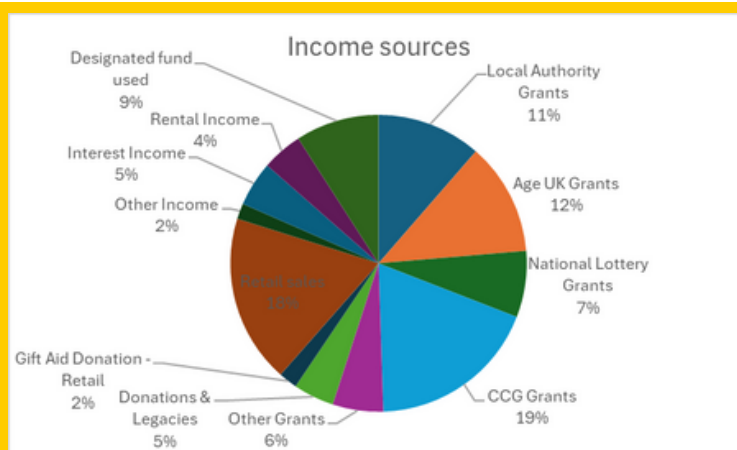
Our two retail outlets accounted for approximately 24% of total income. Retail income rose by 15% to £275,814, with Gift Aid rose 47% year-on-year. We continue to diversify income sources to reduce reliance on any single funder.

Risk Management

Our reserves policy and designated funds are regularly reviewed to address risks such as potential interruptions in funding. These measures ensure continuity of services and protect vulnerable older people who rely on our support.

Conclusion

Age UK County Durham is well-positioned to sustain and grow its impact for older people in the coming year.

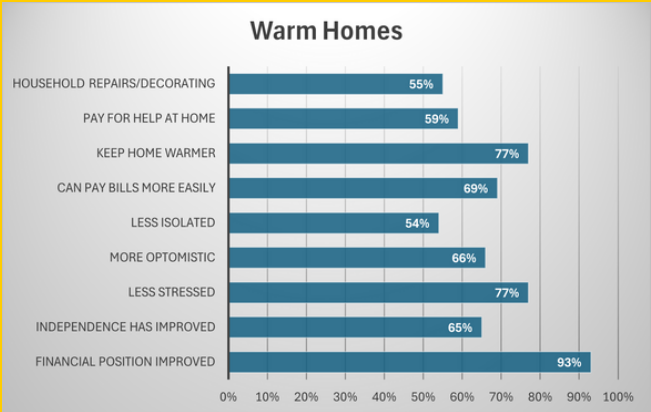
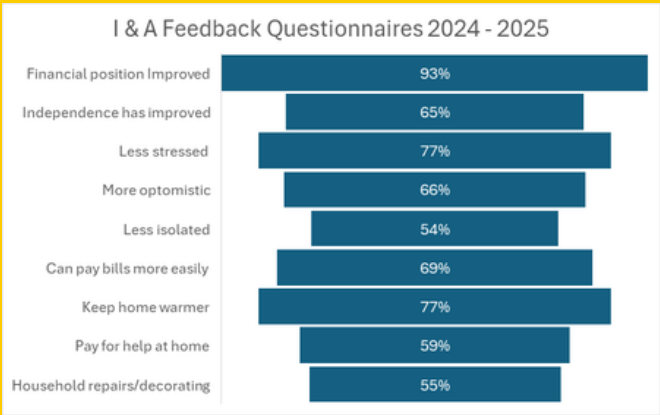


PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

Information and Advice

During the period April 2024 - March 2025 the I & A team managed **4645** referrals and **30,245** contacts.

£8,001,859.74 in unclaimed benefits were successfully processed for **1138** people aged 50+, averaging an additional income of **£7032** per annum per person.



CLIENT SUCCESS STORY



**I am overwhelmed,
Thanks to your hard
work and
dedication, I will
never forget what
you have helped me
with I would never of
been able sort the
paperwork out - you
have been a tower of
strength for me.**

You are a super star.

The client, aged 77 and widowed, lives alone after sadly losing her husband two years ago. She has one son who lives a few miles away, works away but supports his mother as much as he can. The client has a number of health conditions, which impacts on her mobility and suffers from anxiety and depression which has worsened since the loss of her husband. The client contacted Age UK County Durham to ask for a benefit check following the government's changes to the eligibility criteria for the Winter Fuel Payment. A case worker conducted a benefit check based on her current income and savings details and determined she was not eligible for Pension Credit and therefore was not eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment. The client's income was not a high one and she had very little in savings – she mentioned how poor her health was and how she was worried about heating her home.

Further discussion took place about the clients health and it was determined that she met the criteria for Attendance Allowance.

A case worker carried out a home visit to complete an application for Attendance Allowance. Further benefit entitlements occurred because of this, and the case worker supported the client to ensure these were implemented.

The client was awarded the high-rate Attendance Allowance, which led onto an entitlement to Pension Credit and therefore full help with rent and Council Tax. Overall, the client is **£251.45** per week better off – she is now also entitled to full Help with Health costs and a free TV license.

The client now feels more able to heat her home and to afford other necessities without the anxiety of debt.

During 2024-25, we:

Supported older people to receive **£8,001,859.74** in previously unclaimed benefits

Made **1268** home visits.

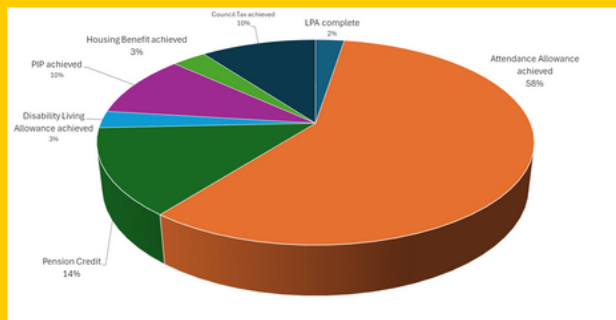
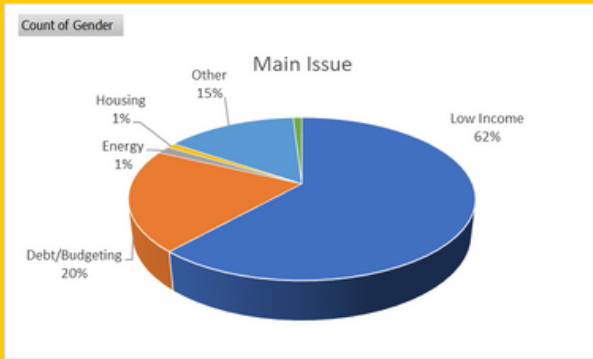
Completed **1033** disability benefit forms

Completed **1003** Warm Home sessions as part of the Eon Warm Homes Project

Supported **100** older people with food vouchers, energy vouchers and household goods through the Household Support Scheme

Provided **243** older people with holistic I & A support by Age UK Cost of Living Funding.

Launched the **Chapter 50 Information and Advice project** to work intensively with the most vulnerable presenting clients to resolve the issues that cause or exacerbate financial vulnerability or crisis



DIGITAL INCLUSION

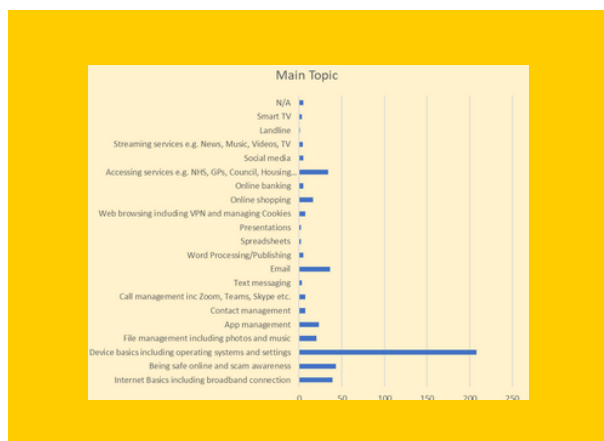
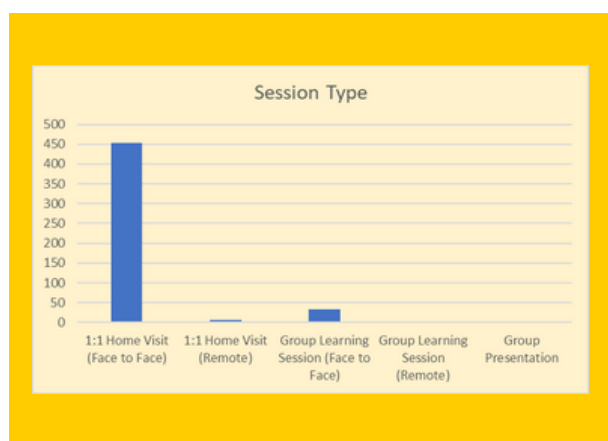


Age UK County Durham's Digital Service addresses and reduces digital exclusion and enables equal access to benefit from the opportunities of the digital world for people aged 50+ living in County Durham.

During this financial year we successfully delivered a person centred **Digital Inclusion Programme** across the County.

The programme supported over **191** individuals aged 50+ to embrace digital technology and services through the delivery of over **459** face to face, one to one sessions together with raising digital awareness through meaningful conversations, presentations and information sessions.

To date 50% of the individuals we have supported are aged between 60-64 years.



DIGITAL ACCESS TO HEALTH

A short programme of work was commissioned by the ICB to support people over 50 improve their digital skills enabling them to access health services. This has been particularly necessary as health services begin to move toward digital access, appointments, prescriptions and assessments. The aim to reach 150 clients has been successful and will inform future developments and opportunity for access.

BELIEVE HOUSING

Working in partnership with believe Housing, we aimed to support residents in Willington and Crook develop skills and confidence in engaging with the digital movement and aid them in access a range of services that improve their health and wellbeing generally.

An additional small piece of work supported Public Health 'no smoking' campaign. Information and publications were disseminated amongst a range of groups to raise awareness of the health benefits and support available to give up smoking



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

This programme of work is designed to be responsive and in doing so, establish community based, accessible services that meet the emerging needs of older people's mental wellbeing, include services that address the issues underpinning poor mental and physical well-being and offer a seamless and responsive pathway to secondary mental health services if appropriate. The purpose is to offer a service to people that prevents them entering secondary services. In addition the programme offers people living with poor mental health due to long term health or mobility conditions, Physio and Occupational therapies, building confidence and strength.

The Bereavement Groups offers those coming to terms with loss and grief, a place for support and reflection.



Referrals

462

Wellfare Service

**180
individuals**

Contacts

7186

Bereavement
Support

**111
individuals**

Improved
mental health

66%

PHYSIOTHERAPY

The Age UK County Durham Physiotherapy service is tailored to help people whose mental health is negatively impacted upon by a mobility problem; for example, a person with a long-term physical condition such as Parkinson's, or someone with a falls history. The service is also directed towards people who have a mental health condition such as dementia and is struggling to engage in mainstream physiotherapy services.



Working in partnership with Teesdale Day Clubs, we held Physiotherapy led strength and balance sessions in Cotherstone.

Over a 3 month period, we welcomed 16 participants to each of these sessions.

How has Physiotherapy impacted on your life?

'Gives me incentive to be more motivated'

'Improved attitude'

'Improved my daily life'

'To move around my home without falling'

DEMENTIA THERAPIES

Cognitive Stimulation

Therapy (CST) is a brief, evidence-based treatment for people with mild to moderate dementia. Twice weekly sessions were held at accessible venues across County Durham; Ferryhill, Seaham, Durham and Barnard Castle.

There was also the ability to run CST maintenance (MCST) sessions of once per week for 26 weeks.

42 people living with Dementia attended.

Of those that engaged, **47%** were living with mild dementia, **32%** with moderate and **21%** with more advanced dementia.

58% had additional long term health conditions, hearing, visual and mobility.



Dementia therapy across County Durham



**Fun and enjoyable activities
for anyone aged 50+
with mild to moderate dementia**

**“Really enjoy the friendly
group.”**

**“Look forward to attending
sessions.”**

**“Feel down when the
sessions are not on.”**

**“Enjoy talking to people in
the same situation.”**

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

516 BENEFICIARIES

6528 COMBINED ATTENDANCES

CULTURE COMPANIONS

Visits included Museums,
Gardens, Cinema,
Locomotion and Markets

183 members

45 sessions

LUNCH CLUBS

8 CLUBS ACROSS THE COUNTY

74 SESSIONS

92 NEW PARTICIPANTS

1373 MEMBERS

EXERCISE AND SPORTS

461 sessions of various
exercise programmes

including

Yoga

Music

Dance,

Walking Tennis,

Curling

Water Sports

422 new members

1651 people

participated



HOT MEALS

(Household Support Fund)

Working in partnership with **14** local community providers, we delivered **7550** hot meals to people less able to access services during the winter months November to March. The service was made available to **577** new people as identified through community partners.

100 people received vouchers for food and essential items totaling **£4,400**



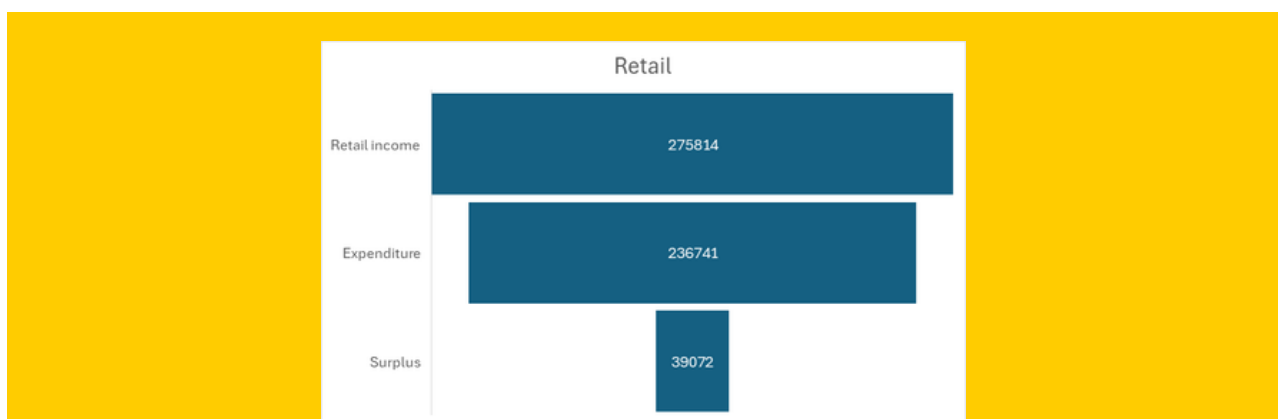
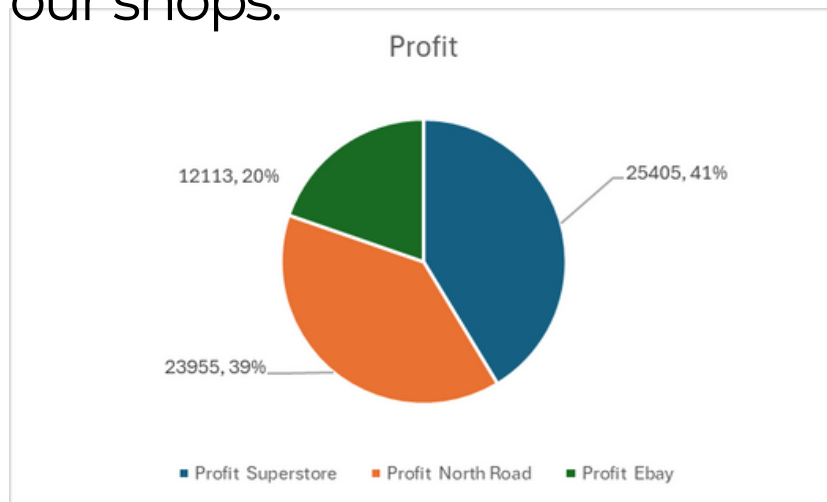
ENGAGEMENT

During the year, we established local focus groups, giving people aged 50+ a voice in decision making and development. The North East Combined Authority and Police Commissioner welcomed opportunities to seek the views and challenges of local people

RETAIL

Another successful year of trading at both the Superstore, North Road and also eBay. Income was up by 11% on last year with Gift Aid peaking at 53% (the national average is 32%).

New volunteers have been recruited throughout the year, their contribution is vital to the success of our shops.





WITH THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS VOLUNTEERS

**Those who make profit happen in the retail outlets
Those without whom the Lunch clubs would not run,
the craft sessions come together, isolated people
receive shopping and many activities run smoothly.**

**BELIEVE HOUSING
AGE UK
SKY COMMUNITY FUND
BALLINGER TRUST
DURHAM COMMUNITY ACTION
DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL
NATIONAL LOTTERY
ICB
SPORT ENGLAND
COUNTY DURHAM COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
(POINT NORTH)**

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